

Barnes | Heininen | Lackenbauer | Exner-Pirot

THE RUSSIAN ARCTIC IN THE 2010s AND 2020s

SELECTED ARTICLES FROM THE
ARCTIC YEARBOOK



**ARCTIC
YEARBOOK**

THE RUSSIAN ARCTIC IN THE 2010s and 2020s

**Selected Articles from the *Arctic
Yearbook***

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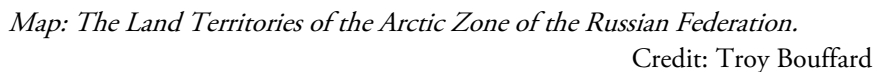
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**Selected Articles from the *Arctic
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Edited by

Justin Barnes, Lassi Heininen,
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Credit: Troy Bouffard

Table of Contents

Introduction by Lassi Heininen, Justin Barnes, P. Whitney Lackenbauer, and Heather Exner-Pirot iv

Russia as a Eurasian, European and Arctic State: Background Context by Lassi Heininen xiii

Section 1: Russian Policy: Discourse and Strategy 1

1. *Foreign and Domestic Discourse on the Russian Arctic* by Ieva Bērziņa 2
2. *The Political Economy of Russia's Reimagined Arctic* by George Soroka 22
3. *The Ongoing Formation of Russia's Arctic Policy: A New Stage?* by Eduard Galimullin & Yuri Matveenko 63

Section 2: Resources, Development, and Infrastructure 87

4. *Re-Tracing Development Paths: Exploring the Origins and Nature of the 20th Century's Northern Development Paradigms in Russia and Canada* by Andrey N. Petrov 88
5. *Scramble for the Arctic Offshore Oil & Gas Resources in Russia* by Nadezhda Filimonova 106
6. *Resource-Based Development & the Challenge of Economic Diversification in the Mining Communities of the Murmansk Region* by Tuomas Suutarinen 126
7. *Regional International Cooperation in the Arctic & Subarctic Zone: A View from Karelia* by Igor Shevchuk 156
8. *A Complex Efficiency Assessment of the Development of Arctic Oil and Gas Resources in Russia* by Mansur H. Gazeev, Natalia A. Volynskaya and Anatoly B. Rybak 160
9. *Constructing the Russian Arctic as a Special Economic Zone* by Alexandra Middleton 175

Section 3: Sustainable Development and the Environment 203

10. *Social License to Operate for Mining Companies in the Russian Arctic: Two Cases in the Murmansk Region* by Larissa Riabova and Vladimir Didyk 204
11. *Main Expected Changes in the Legislative Regulation of Environmental Protection for Environmentally Hazardous Facilities in the Russian Arctic* by Tatiana Alieva 219
12. *Managing the Barents Sea: Comparing Norwegian & Russian Offshore Oil Spill Prevention Policies* by Troy J. Bouffard 229
13. *Authoritarian Administration: An Environmental Paradox in the Russian Arctic* by Troy J. Bouffard 259
14. *Stable Development of the Natural Environment in the Arctic Region of the Russian Federation* by Irina Chesnokova, Emma Likhacheva & Aleksandra Morozova 284
15. *Indexing Arctic Urban Sustainable Development Planning Strategies: The Case of Russia* by Alexander Sergunin 300
16. *The Sustainable Development of the Russian Arctic Zone: Challenges & Opportunities* by Daryana Maximova 315

Section 4: Indigenous Peoples 337

17. *At the Margins: Political Change and Indigenous Self-Determination in Post-Soviet Chukotka* by Gary N. Wilson & Jeffrey J. Kormos 338
18. *Security of Indigenous Peoples in Russia's Arctic Policy: Exposing the Oxymoron of State-Determined Self-Determination* by Agne Cepinskyte 360
19. *Indigenous Women as Water Protectors, Men as Firefighters? Gender and Indigeneity in the Context of Climate Change in Sakha (Yakutia)* by Daria Burnashev 383
20. *Indigenous Peoples of Russia During Wartime* by Ekaterina Zmyvalova 407

Section 5: Cross-Border Cooperation 435

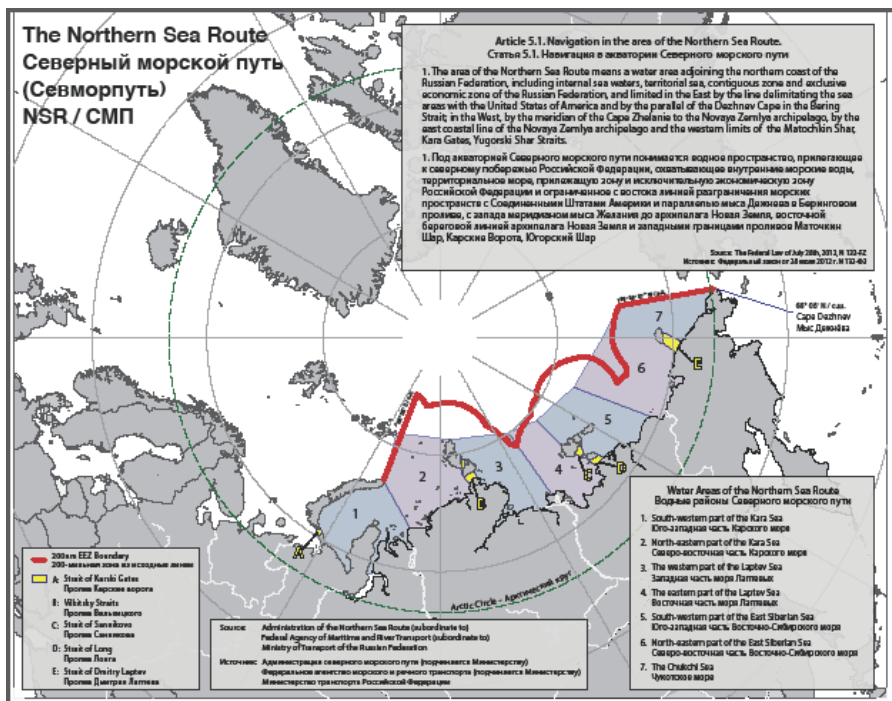
21. *Kirkenes-Nikel: Catching a Second Wind of Twinning?* by Pertti Joenniemi & Alexander Sergunin 436
22. *The Barents Region: The Arctic Council as a Stabilizing Magnet* by Florian Vidal 463

23. *Innovations for the Arctic through Cross-border Cooperation* by Ekaterina Shlapeko 477
24. *Strategy, Competition, and Legitimization: Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation* by Sergey Sukhankin, Troy Bouffard & P. Whitney Lackenbauer 483
25. *Implications for Sino-Russian Cooperation on the Polar Silk Road* by Yu Cao 521
26. *Looking Beyond China: Non-Western Actors in the Russian Arctic after February 2022* by Sergey Sukhankin & P. Whitney Lackenbauer 541

Section 6: Russia, Arctic Security, and Militarization 579

27. *Russian Military Build-up in the Arctic: Strategic Shift in the Balance of Power or Bellicose Rhetoric Only?* by Barbora Padrtová 580
28. *Russian Military Activities in the Arctic: Myths & Realities* by Alexander Sergunin & Valery Konyshev 607
29. *Russian Air Patrols in the Arctic: Are Long-Range Bomber Patrols a Challenge to Canadian Security and Sovereignty?* By Frédéric Lasserre & Pierre-Louis Têtu 611
30. *Combining Critical Security Studies in the Barents Region* by Matthaïos Melas 635
31. *Human Security: An Alien Concept for the Russian Arctic?* by Maria Goes 654
32. *The Forgotten Spirit of Gorbachev* by Benjamin Schaller 678
33. *The War in Ukraine as a Critical Juncture: China, Russia, and Arctic Collaboration up to 2035* by Liisa Kauppila & Sanna Kopra 681
34. *Can Cooperation Be Restored?* by Pavel Devyatkin 703
35. *Can the Arctic Remain a Region of International Cooperation in the Context of the Ukrainian Crisis?* by Valery Konyshev 713
36. *Russian Media Coverage of Arctic Issues: Changes Since the Invasion of Ukraine* by Mathieu Landriault 719

Afterword: The New Russian Arctic by Alexander Pelyasov 726



Map: The "Actual" Northern Sea Route.

Credit: Troy Bouffard

Introduction

Lassi Heininen, Justin Barnes, P. Whitney Lackenbauer, & Heather Exner-Pirot

In the current state of world disorder dominated by great power rivalries, hot and proxy wars, militarization, and ecological catastrophe, it is critically important to view environmental and world politics holistically. To do so, open access to relevant information is required all over the world. This includes understanding a globalized Arctic that includes Russia – a state that makes up around half of the entire region – due to its high geostrategic and ecological importance.

Although the Russian Arctic has been available for visits since the end of the Cold War period, the region is geographically large. Long distances mean that many parts of Siberia are not easy to reach owing to logistical and financial constraints. Hence, Russia's Arctic region is neither well known by the citizens of that country, nor experts of other Arctic nations. Furthermore, in Western European countries and North America there is a lack of understanding and knowledge about Russia and its history, as well as its relations with Western nations and other Europe states. Consequently, it is difficult to understand the nature of regional tensions when many discussions are rooted in misperceptions or stereotypes of Russia.

At the same time, across the Arctic, civil society, the business community, policy makers, the news media, as well as researchers and students have shown a heightened interest in the Russian Arctic and Russia's policies in the Circumpolar North. Growing attentiveness to Russia's activities in the Arctic in the 2010s made it increasingly apparent that sophisticated English-language scholarship was needed to encourage debate and avoid superficial characterizations of the region from taking hold.

English-language research publications by Russians help to address this need (e.g. Konyshchev, 2023; HSE, 2021; Lagutina, 2019; Konyshchev & Sergunin, 2014; Yarovoy, 2014). Since its establishment in 2012, the *Arctic Yearbook* has published a rich array of scholarly articles focused on the Russian Arctic and Russia's policies for the region. For this volume, we have selected a sample of the work by Russian and non-Russian authors that has appeared in its annual

volumes from 2012-2024, including the 2022 volume with the theme “The Russian Arctic: Economics, Politics & Peoples”.

The Russian Arctic and Russia in Arctic cooperation

For the Russian Federation, “it was the North that predetermined the identity of Russia historically..., economically..., and geopolitically... (Golovnev. 2022: 440-441). Russia’s Arctic is highly relevant to every aspect of Arctic politics, economics, security, governance, and the environment, owing to its geographical location; the size of the land territory, coastline, and population; and economic activity.

The Russian part of the Arctic region, officially described by the Russian government as the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation (AZRF), comprises over half of the Arctic’s land surface area, covering several vegetation zones, with the largest extent of permafrost in the world. Russia’s Arctic territory includes half of the coastline frontage and half of the collective Exclusive Economic Zones of the Arctic coastal states in the Arctic Ocean. The AZRF is rich in natural resources, from forests and phyto- and zoo-plankton to hydrocarbons, diamonds, uranium and strategic minerals. The region yields “93% of natural gas, 75% of oil, 100% of diamonds, cobalt, platinum, and apatite concentrate, 90% of copper and nickel, 65% of gold, 15% of coal, as well as contributes around the half of the total forestry and fishing products” of the entire Russian Federation (Gerasimova, et al. 2021: 2).

Despite being largely covered by permafrost, the Russian Arctic contains large cities and numerous towns and villages with diverse livelihoods spanning from reindeer herding to industry, and connected by road networks, railways, and airfields. The population of the AZRF comprises almost 70% of the total number of Arctic inhabitants. Among them, Russia recognizes forty distinct “small-numbered Indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia, and the Far East” who live in the Russian Arctic and surrounding regions.

A new period of Soviet foreign and security policy emerged in the 1980s with a European orientation. Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev’s 1987 Murmansk Speech (Gorbachev, 1987) included several initiatives promoting disarmament and cross-border cooperation in the Arctic. This new direction helped Russia play an important role in establishing and developing regional cooperation and governance in the late twentieth century and into the current one. Russia (which was still the Soviet Union at the time) attended the first ministerial meeting of the eight Arctic states in 1991, which adopted the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS), and signed the Rovaniemi Declaration on the Protection of the Arctic Environment. Russia also became a

co-founder and member of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council in 1993 and the Arctic Council three years later, and is a co-founder and member of other international institutions including the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC), the International Arctic Social Scientists Association (IASSA), and the University of the Arctic (including the Thematic Network on Geopolitics and Security, the original publisher of the *Arctic Yearbook*), concerning the Arctic region and Arctic cooperation.

Russia held the Arctic Council Chairship from 2021-2023, promoting priorities that aimed to take “a major step forward in development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation and welcomes mutually beneficial cooperation of Russia with its Arctic partners and, besides, interested non-regional states... [and] safe and beneficial all-season navigation” of the Northern Sea Route (Vasiliev, 2021). This blending of regional and national ambitions fits with Russian strategic objectives – enhanced economic cooperation, investments in Arctic urban infrastructure, healthcare, education, Indigenous welfare, as well as the “restoration of consensus in the Arctic Council on climate change” – as well as articulating a thinly-veiled critique of the Trump Administration’s stance during the Arctic Council ministerial meeting in Finland in 2019.

The strong emphasis on the “rational use of natural resources,” presented in the language of stewardship and socio-economic well-being, reinforces Russia’s plans to further develop its energy resources in the region (Nilsen, 2021). In seeking to illustrate “the serious, holistic and constructive approach of Russia to its forthcoming Chairmanship,” Russia’s former senior Arctic official Anton Vasiliev (2021) ended with the declaration that “*Russia bears special responsibility for the state of affairs in the Arctic* and counts on support from its regional partners” (emphasis added). Some chapters in this volume provide critical insights into how Russia envisages this “special responsibility” for regional affairs and what this means for rightsholders and stakeholders both within and beyond the Russian Arctic.

Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 22 prompted a unified condemnation of Russia’s actions by the other Arctic states, who “paused” their involvement in the work and official meetings of the Arctic Council during Russia’s Chairship (see Andreeva & Rottem, 2024). Some Arctic Council work resumed after the eight Arctic states and Permanent Participant organizations (representing Arctic Indigenous Peoples) agreed to new guidelines for the Council’s working groups in summer 2024. The smooth transition of the Council chairship from Russia to Norway in May 2023, with the latter committing to “work to ensure that the Arctic Council remains the leading international forum for Arctic issues” (Norway 2023), and the subsequent

handover of the chairship from Norway to the Kingdom of Denmark in May 2025, has kept the Council alive – but it is not “business as usual” amongst the eight Arctic states (see Lackenbauer & Barnes, 2024).

Impacts of the Russian war in Ukraine

Russia severely tested the stability of the so-called “Arctic model” of cooperation when it annexed parts of Ukraine in 2014 and then with its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, which elicited condemnation and sanctions by the seven other Arctic states. Russian officials insist that the war of attrition in Ukraine, or what the Russian government calls a “Russia’s special military operation” (Pelyasov, this volume), is a response to NATO enlargement towards Russian borders since 1999.

Whatever the case, Russian aggression in Ukraine has increased global instability and dramatically changed the European security environment. The war triggered significant increases in military budgets across NATO states and a new willingness for the alliance to speak directly to Arctic issues. Finland and Sweden’s accession to NATO and their Defense Cooperation Agreements with the US, as well as the latest U.S. defense strategy for the Arctic (US Department of Defense 2024), are redefining the Western Allies’ geostrategic and global interests in the Arctic. This includes increasing attentiveness to and anxieties about Chinese and Russian activities in the region, with closer Sino-Russian cooperation perceived as a threat and indicator of a more fundamental change to regional geopolitics. This shift, however, has not altered the balance of nuclear weapons between Russia and the US in the Arctic. Nevertheless, arms control and nuclear disarmament have not been on the US-Russian agenda, or on the Arctic security agenda, for a long time (e.g. Exner-Pirot, 2020).

The war has also further constrained cross-border cooperation among Russia and the seven other Arctic states. Moral concerns, sanctions, and a spate of new regulations limit or prevent Indigenous Peoples, local and regional authorities, universities, and research institutions from the seven “like-minded” Arctic states from interacting with their counterparts from Russia. The loss of scientific cooperation with Russian universities and academic institutions has inhibited data-sharing on impacts of melting sea ice and permafrost thaw in the Russian Arctic, with deleterious impacts on understandings of environmental dynamics and predictive modelling at a time of accelerating climate change. Individual researchers who wish to continue in-person cooperation and communication in the current social, political and media environment face a host of logical challenges, as well as a risk of punishment by their universities or institutions (e.g. Rosen 2023; Heininen 2024b; Wråkberg 2024).

All eight Arctic states and the Permanent Participants of the Arctic Council approved a joint declaration at Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting in May 2025 that reaffirmed the commitment of “maintaining peace, stability and cooperation in the Arctic” (Romssa – Tromsø Statement 2025). The absence of confidence-building measures or institutional structures for scientific cooperation between Russia and the seven other Arctic states makes this difficult. Despite the spillover impact of Russia’s belligerent actions in Ukraine and elsewhere on Arctic governance (and European stability more broadly), Russia cannot be overlooked or downplayed as a structural actor in circumpolar relations. What shape will Arctic affairs take, what topics will remain on the agenda, and who will be involved in pursuing specific courses of action remain central questions without clear answers.

The Arctic, a region that is strongly integrated into broader international and planetary challenges, sits at a crossroads. Since February 2022, commentators in conferences, workshops, media, and the *Arctic Yearbook* have reconsidered assumptions about established methods for Arctic cooperation, including how to maintain regional peace and stability in the Arctic. Behind these discussions remains a strong awareness of the high value of constructive international Arctic cooperation, with the Arctic Council at its center. Lessons learned from period when Cold War confrontation transitioned to geopolitical stability in the region lead some commentators to promote the importance of keeping channels open for communication, scientific cooperation, and data sharing. Other commentators emphasize that the desire for Arctic cooperation cannot be a way to legitimize or minimize the seriousness of Russia’s actions in Ukraine, suggesting that geopolitics will always trump the ideals of free scientific exchange – and that Russia clearly prioritized the former when it invaded its sovereign neighbour in 2013 and 2022. Whatever side one takes on these issues, effective communication – which is essential to avoid unintended escalation or allowing global dynamics to unwitting undermine regional security and well-being – requires a commitment to know one another. Non-state actors, including academic researchers, play a functional role in this important regard.

The *Arctic Yearbook* has, from the beginning, sought to contribute to pan-Arctic cooperation between states, nations, peoples, civil societies, and NGOs by facilitating an interdisciplinary dialogue between diverse experts, stakeholders and rightsholders, as well as transdisciplinary sharing of Indigenous and scientific knowledge. By deepening and broadening our understanding of the peoples, economies, politics, infrastructure, and environment of the Russian Arctic, we can shape conversations, policies, and relationships that are more attentive to both commonalities and distinctive contexts across the Circumpolar North.

About the special edition

This special edition on the Russian Arctic and Russia's policies on the Arctic brings together diverse analyses by Russian and non-Russian researchers and experts published in the *Arctic Yearbook* between 2012 and 2024. Much has changed over this period, but the articles in this volume provide important perspectives and context for how Russia's and the West's view of the Russian Arctic have evolved over this timeframe.

The thirty-seven articles in this special volume span several aspects of the Russian Arctic that reflect the immense interest on the topic over the years. The aim is not driven by quantity, but more by "a need for sophisticated English-language scholarship on the Russian Arctic, especially from Russian authors themselves [as] the region is often either not known, and/or misunderstood to external audiences and stakeholders, with superficial characterizations proliferating due to a lack of up-to-date information," as we wrote in the introduction of the 2022 edition of the *Yearbook*.

While reporters, politicians, and academics have discussed the war in Ukraine and its implications on regional relationships and fora such as the Arctic Council, the scholarly articles in this volume cover more general and basic issues: science collaboration, environmental systems, regional (economic) development, food (in)security, Indigenous peoples and Indigeneity (in climate change), Arctic cooperation vis-a-vis exceptionalism, and the Sino-Russian relationship. This reinforces the importance of broad-based understanding of the Russian Arctic and Russia's policies in the Arctic region – not only the Russian-Western crisis or the effects of the war in Ukraine on regional stability.

We began preparing this volume in 2021 and planned to release it in March 2022 before international developments intervened. In 2025, we believe that the diverse voices and subjects are more relevant than ever. As editors, we have not sought to agree with every submission, but rather to respect diverse positionalities and assessments. After reading through the articles that we have selected to reproduce in this volume, we hope that you will come away with a deeper and broader understanding about Russia's approaches to Arctic affairs and what these mean for the Circumpolar North more broadly.

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Russia as a Eurasian, European and Arctic State: Background Context

Lassi Heininen

“All of Russia is the North... ‘The North is a will, hope, a country without borders’” (Golovnev 2022, 448).

With its Arctic Zone covering a half of the Arctic region, the Russian Federation has a high relevance in every aspect of Arctic politics, economics, security, governance, the environment, as well as it is “way ahead in the race to control the Arctic” (Reiss 2017), and “The Number One Actor in the Arctic” (Laruelle 2014). If the Arctic is geostrategically more important than ever – due to its rich resources, the deployed nuclear weapon systems, as well as its impacts to world climate –, Russia is, without a doubt, the most influential player there.

Although the Russian Federation has been largely available for visits after the end of the Cold War period, its northernmost parts, in particular Siberia, geographically large with long distances are not easily reachable – logistically and financially –, as mentioned in the introduction. Due to this fact, and a lack of information and knowledge about Russia, its geography and history, for example when defining European civilization, the world’s largest country is neither well known by citizens nor even experts of other nations. In addition, Western prejudices and stereotypes of Russia are causing mis-/dis-perceptions of its politics and relations with other Arctic countries and Western nations, for example when analyzing the original nature of Arctic militarization.

Since the 19th century, in Western European countries there has also been existing ‘Russophobia’ – similarly as ‘Islamophobia’ at the early-21st century – with various roots – not least by ideological and ethnic lobbies, the legacy of Soviet studies and ‘Kremlinology’ in Western universities, as Lieven (2001) argues. This is causing “inherited hatred, blind, dogmatic hostility toward Russia [and leading] to bad policies, bad journalism, and the corruption of honest debate”. Russia’s constructive role has also been neglected like for example, the reforms based on the “New Thinking” by Mihail Gorbachev (e.g. English 2000); Russia’s recognition of the independence of the other Soviet republics making the split of the Soviet Union mostly peacefully; Russia’s constructive engagement to international agreements (e.g. UNCLOS, the Kyoto Protocol, the Polar Code); and participation in international organizations and forums (e.g. United Nations,

Conference for European Security and Co-operation), as well as that in Arctic cooperation and cooperative structures (e.g. Arctic Council).

Interestingly, the so-called ‘Russian thinking’, i.e. different thoughts and other ways of thinking, has been often interpreted (in Western countries) according to the standards of ‘Western thinking’ expecting Russians to do the same, and if they do not, as often happens, to be disappointed (e.g. Adzubei 1988, 6). As a long-term result, this kind of Western attitude has been to treat Russia differently in world politics by explaining the Soviet Union’s / Russia’s foreign and security policy as a “Russian behavior” (Lieven 2001). Contrasting the idea and purpose of ‘Strategic partnership’ – the European Union’s method toward Russia at the early-2000s – this has often led Western countries to neglect Russian security interests, in particular their support to NATO’s enlargement to the East including former Soviet republics, with severe impacts, as we have recently seen in the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Most importantly, Western leaders have not really understood the message of Russian reaction to interpret the Eastern enlargement of the military bloc into its borders as a serious provocation (e.g. Mearsheimer 2025).

Interestingly, IR theories – Classical geopolitics, (New) Realism – find parallels between the ‘Sphere-of-influence’ policy, which dominates the contemporary Russian foreign policy towards the Slavic countries and Central Asia, and the USA Monroe doctrine towards Latin America, as well as the French influence-policy in Africa. Neither ethically acceptable nor fair according to international law, security interests and the related demands of any great power are contemporaneous, and in line with those of other great powers – it is not only about “Russian behavior”. The Cuban crisis, in 1962, serves almost as an analogous case to the impacts of NATO’s enlargement, when, by transporting and deploying nuclear missiles to Cuba, the Soviet Union’s aim was to show that it, as well as other powers, could also act by the same (arrogant) way, as the USA use to do, and to put this being recognized by the counterpart (e.g. Adzubei 1988, 206). It worked then, as the Soviet Union withdrew its tactical missiles from Cuba, when the USA did the same to its missiles from Türkiye, and the world was saved from Armageddon.

In a world of disorder with global “polycrisis and systematic risks” (Cascade Institute 2022), and broadening gap between the Global North and the Global South – much dominated by the security nexus of great power rivalries (especially between China and the USA), hot and proxy wars (in Gaza and the West Bank, Sudan, and Ukraine), and constant warfare and strikes (e.g. Israel’s and USA’s to Iraq, Iran, Syria), as well as the ecological catastrophe, including the climate crisis and the sixth mass extinction – it is critically important to have open discussions

and dialogues going on – across borders, globally – as well as to share information and knowledge with others. Furthermore, based on that to draw up a holistic picture on the environment and world politics, as well as to analyze what is/are the most relevant issue(s).

On the contrary, the new policies, regulations and sanctions of Western countries have led to terminate all cooperation with Russia and its institutions, and limited that with China, similarly as Israel's colonialism and genocide of the Palestinians led its armed forces to ban foreign media's reporting and kill journalists. This recent tendency of 'securitization' and 'militarization' of societies, including open science, violates academic freedom and has led governments of most EU / NATO member-states "to impose direct and indirect restrictions on research concerning Russia and China" (Nojonen 2024).

All this relates to the globalized Arctic, including the Russian part covering a half of the entire region, due to its high geostrategic, geoeconomic and ecological importance, and that for science. For these reasons, there is an Arctic-wide increasing interest – by civil societies, businesspeople, policymakers, media, as well as researchers and students – towards the Russian Arctic and Russia's policies on the Arctic. As responses, there are also more English-language research publications by Russian authors (e.g. Konyshov 2023; HSE 2021; Lagutina 2019; Konyshov and Sergunin 2014; Yarovoy 2014) drawing up both a holistic picture and deeper understanding on Russian Arctic and Russian policies there. In addition, there are plenty of articles covering these topics, by Russian and non-Russian authors, at Arctic Yearbook, in 2012-2024, in particular the 2022 volume devoted to the Russian Arctic.

This special edition consists of those 37 scholarly articles. Interestingly, while the Ukraine war, Western policies and sanctions towards Russia and the pause of Arctic Council's work are being much discussed and speculated in media, politics and academia, the topics of these scholarly articles cover more general and basic issues. Among them are Arctic environmental system vis-à-vis science collaboration, regional (economic) development, food (in)security, Indigenous peoples and Indigeneity (in climate change), Arctic cooperation vis-à-vis exceptionalism, and the Sino-Russian relationship. Followed from this, the focus of this special edition is neither Russian-Western crisis nor the war in Ukraine, it is all about the Russian Arctic and Russia's policies in the Arctic region.

Similarly, this chapter – as a substantial background introduction – consists of a retrospective narrative and analyses of Russia as a Eurasian and European country with a variety of Russian-Western relations, from arms control agreements to disagreement on NATO enlargement; the importance of the

Russian Arctic for the Russian Federation with a variety of Arctic policies; ramifications and impacts of the Ukraine war and new East-West crisis to Arctic cooperation and Arctic security; the importance of maintaining pan-Arctic (functional) environmental and scientific cooperation and data-sharing.

The aim is, on the one hand, to bring less familiar information, unorthodox interpretations and Russian points of view in order to draw up a more holistic picture of the Arctic and its dynamics with Russia's role. On the other, an aim is to avoid superficial information, as well as interpretations of the "Politics of fear", and those of threat-picture building by mainstream media describing single facts as potential threats to national security, as Lasserre and Tetu (2011, this volume) analyze (also Serguinin and Konyshev 2015, this volume). It is more about pragmatism, neither to look the Russian Arctic nor Russia's Arctic policies in the context of the existing Russian foreign and security policies, but as parts of the current state and future development of the entire Arctic region.

Behind is the importance of being open-minded towards different points of view, keeping channels open for communication, discussions and (science) diplomacy, being critical toward mainstream interpretations by bringing alternative information into discussions. A part of this is to study lessons learned from history, in this case those of the Arctic transformation from the Cold War confrontation into geopolitical stability and cooperation between the former rivals. Finally, there is a respect for 'freedom of science,' - a task of (social) sciences, hopefully not forgotten - to give a holistic and understandable picture of the surrounding reality. This freedom matters only if implemented, and in the case of the Russian Arctic most urgent is 'data-sharing'. All this is logical, and ethically the only way, for a scholar and for an academic journal.

Russia as a Eurasian and European state - a retrospective narrative

The Russian Federation, geographically the world's largest country, is an important part of Eurasia and the Eurasian civilization. As Halford Mackinder (1904) visioned in his Heartland theory, in the beginning of the 20th century, that Eurasia together with Africa consists of the most important seat of power, and Russia governs and controls its pivot area. Hence, the following Russian interpretation is no surprise: "the substance of Russia's 'Eurasian position' is the same as ever [even though] the geopolitical map of the world has been transformed" (Akulshina 2002, 31). Followed from this, the recent increasing Sino-Russian cooperation is logical and a win-win situation to both neighbors.

Similarly, Eurasian geopolitics has been playing an important role in Russian academic discourses and political discussions, when defining Russia and its *idea*. Here the Russian North, with the Northern Sea Route and old Northern

settlements, has played as “the hub of Russian exploration of the Arctic and Siberia” (Golovnev 448-449).

On the other hand, Northern European networking has defined Russia from the very beginning, as the state of Russia was established in Novgorod, to the South from the Ladoga Lake, around 860s AD. As a historical perspective, the Slavic Russia was tightly integrated into Fennoscandia and the Viking world by trade with Finno-Ugric nations and the Scandinavian Varangians (see the Nestor Chronicle (Nestorin kronikka 1994)) on the one hand, and on the other, into Byzantium, the Eastern Roman Empire, after becoming its ally, and taken Christianity and becoming baptized. Interestingly, although Novgorod with northern routes and as a trade hub played an important role, Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine, was the capital and strongest center of the early-Russian State.

Hundreds of years later, Europe and Europeanization, again, defined Russia and its modernization. Czar Peter (the Great) borrowed “from his capitalist enemy its major weapon – the nationally organised bureaucratic state, the regular army and navy and technology advanced for its time” (Derlugyan 1991, 85), and moved the capital to the just-built Saint Petersburg in the beginning of the 18th century. Followed from this, “there can be no doubt that Russia... is part of a broader European civilization” (Sakwa 2000, 6), in particular, when thinking important contributions by the Russians to European arts, culture, science, thought, and the entire European civilization. This is no surprise, as “the common heritage of Byzantium..., which forms the religious, and to a large extent, the cultural foundation of Russia and of Greece, among other countries, is still much alive... [as] Russia received its Christianity... from Byzantium... [that] the Russians have not gone through the important spiritual reappraisal... the Renaissance and the Enlightenment” (Gounaris 2004).

In spite of this, and also although Europe is a part of Eurasia, it has not been always obvious for Western European nations that Russia is interpreted to be a part of Europe historically, culturally, politically, and actually is geographically. Or, even if the majority of the Russians really think so, when taking into account the classical Russian debate and controversy, since the mid-19th century: Zapadniki, or the Westernizers, in favor of orientating to Europe vis-à-vis the Slavophiles arguing for Russia’s own (Eurasian) identity.

Geostrategically, in the foreign and security policies of Russia, as well as in those of the Soviet Union, the dualism of ‘Engagement’ / ‘Strategic partnership’ vis-à-vis ‘Containment’ / ‘Isolationism’ has been playing an important role. The Bolshevik Revolution, in October 1917, did not only include the “Ten days that shook the world”, as American writer John Reed (1977) has described, in 1919.

It also threatened Western European and Northern American leaders and elites, and consequently, a few of them (e.g. Britain, Finland) financed and assisted the so-called White Russian generals in the Russian Civil War.

In contrast, the Second World War – between the Axis powers consisted of Nazi Germany, fascist Italy and Japanese Empire (also supported by Finland), and the Allies consisted of United Kingdom, China, France, Poland, and later the Russian Federation and the USA – meant a new kind of division and rivalry between European states. Now the Soviet Union was one of the Allies and fought against the Nazis – a real strategic partnership. Britain, France, USA and Soviet Union shared common (strategic) interests, yet it was the Soviet Union, in particular Belarus, Russia, Ukraine, Poland and the Jews, who paid the heaviest human price in deaths. While the Holocaust is not forgotten among the Jews nor Israel and Germany, though the war ended several generations ago, the fact that Western European nations were deeply divided, and major NATO member-states were allied with the Soviet Union is not anymore (well) remembered in Europe.

After the war ended the Allies were split and the Soviet Union disintegrated, as the Cold War with its comprehensive propaganda started. The USA containment policy, combination of patience and firm containment, towards the Soviet Union, designed by Diplomat George Kennan's "long telegram" became the main Western doctrine in the Cold War period. The containment attitude was also behind the Western chocks due to the Sputnik, in 1957, the first (hu)man in Space, in 1961, and the USA panic due to Soviet missiles in Cuba leading to the Cuban crisis, in 1962.

Yet, within this period there were a few 'thaws' between the Soviet Union and the USA resulting in several arms control agreements, based on bilateral negotiations, as concrete outcomes, such as the Partial Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (PTBT), in 1963, the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), in 1968, and the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM-Treaty), in 1972. Also, the Helsinki Final Act, signed at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), in 1975, including Russia as a member-state; CSCE was transferred into the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

The containment policy became less applied in the second half of the 1980s, as the last peak of the Cold War period, due to the new Soviet-USA thaw, which meant a new period in the Soviet foreign and security policy with a European orientation. This was clearly indicated by President Gorbachev's "Common European House concept" with all-European structure and neutrality principle, and his Murmansk Speech (Gorbachev 1987), including several initiatives for

disarmament and cross-border cooperation in the Arctic. Important to remember that the first ever ministerial meeting of the eight Arctic states, in June 1991, resulted in the Rovaniemi Declaration (1991) on environmental protection cooperation, though based on Finnish initiative, was already included the Murmansk Speech; interestingly, it was the Environment Minister of the Soviet Union who attended the meeting and signed the declaration on behalf of the Union, as well as the Russian Federation.

This Soviet Union's engagement policy, based on the New Thinking and supporting detente, i.e. peaceful cooperation between different systems, was only flourishing for a short period. It, nonetheless, resulted for example, in the Soviet Union's acceptance of the reunification of Germany – symbolically very important achievement for Germany, and geostrategically that for the entire West – yet, on the precondition that “NATO forces would not be positioned in what is currently the GDR”, as USA State secretary James Baker promised to President Gorbachev (e.g. Newsweek Febr 19, 1990; also Winther 2025, 13-16).

The collapse of the Soviet Union, in December 1991, was followed by a new thaw between Western (European, Northern American) nations and the Russian Federation, the successor of the Soviet Union. Importantly for both sides, through two cruel wars in Chechnya, which were interpreted by many Western leaders as fights against international terrorism, the Russian Federation managed to avoid a split, which would have been a nightmare for the USA. This time, the Western orientated foreign policy was according to the principles of ‘Atlanticism’ and ‘Liberalism’ – two Russian foreign policy schools – to build a “partnership with the West and joining Western economic, political and military institutions” (Sergunin 2016, 84-111). Followed from this, Russia was very positive, in particular the then Foreign minister Andrey Kozyrev, towards Pan-European cooperation and joining new governmental cooperative structures, such as the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), founded in 1992 by the region's foreign ministers, Russia was suspended in 2022; the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, established in 1993, based on the Norwegian initiative, Russia withdrew in 2024; and the Arctic Council, established in 1996, based on the Canadian initiative.

As a result, Russia was (re)defined, yet for a short period, as “an integral part of Europe” and a strategic partner in European Union policies (e.g. Gounaris 2004; European Union 2006), although without a membership and visa-freedom. Interestingly, though the original idea of the Northern Dimension was to create an EU policy, on certain functional areas, towards the European Arctic, including the entire Nordic region and the Northwest Russia, for stability and sustainable development (e.g. Heininen 2001), the initiative was transferred, by

Brussels, into an EU policy towards the Russian Federation with an idea to build strategic partnership with, if not to Europeanize, Russia.

As a part of “regional expression of the Common Spaces EU/Russia” the new ND framework aimed to provide “a common framework for the promotion of dialogue and concrete cooperation, strengthening stability...”, and prioritized, among others, economic cooperation, particularly on energy, and trade, freedom and security, particularly against international terrorism, research, the environment and social welfare (European Union 2006).

A kind of metaphor of this Western-orientated period and détente in Putin’s Russia was, when for the first time USA, UK, French, and Polish troops “marched alongside Russian soldiers and Russian nuclear missiles” on Red Square on May 9, 2010 (Matthews and Nemtsova 2010b); unlike the celebrations of the 80th anniversary of the end of the 2nd World War in 2025. While the West interpreted this as a victory, even indicated an “end of history”, the Russian Federation, like the Soviet Union earlier, was looking for, in addition of peace dividend, a certain political recognition as an “equal partner in its relationship with the EU”, as Trenin (2014) argues. As well as that Russia would be treated and recognized, by the USA, as the other major nuclear weapon power, similarly whom most arms control agreements have been signed with (see, the US-Russian Summit in August 2025).

The Russian interpretation (e.g. Sergunin 2016) of this Western orientation did not, however, necessarily mean that the former rivalry would be transferred into a true engagement towards Russia in and by the Western policy. Indeed, “Brussels had long ignored this shift” (Trenin 2014), and hence, despite the thaw and the implementations of the new policies, Russia was neither taken as an equal partner nor its security interests were taken seriously into account. Even if Moscow would not interpret the hesitation of Western policy towards Russia as real, the ultimate aim of the West could be interpreted as an uncertainty, if not a threat, among the Russian foreign policy elite and security establishment. Behind were the ‘broken promises’ of the USA, and its unilateral withdraws of treaties, such as the ABM Treaty, as well as the Cold War legacy, including the Western rhetoric of Soviet occupation. They were easily transferred into a public mis-perception of a unilateral USA threat among the Russians, as it happened during the Cuban crisis (in 1962) and the Euro-missile crisis (in the early 1980s).

Against Western foreign policy elites’ expectations that Russia, after managing to stabilize its economy and consequently its domestic politics, would copy Western policies and adopt Western values, further steps towards partnership, such as membership in unions, with the West were not taken, as there were neither reciprocity nor confidence. Consequently, Russia decided to

choose a different path towards Eurasian powers, such as China, or Türkiye (e.g. Bremmer 2017). This “Moscow’s pushback against Western policies” was followed by military activities towards the neighboring countries – Georgia, Ukraine – after the NATO Bucharest Summit, in 2008, had declared, without a plan how to get there, that Ukraine and Georgia would join the military alliance (Rumer and Sokolsky 2021).

Hence, the pendulum went, once again, into another direction, and approximately since 2012 Russia can be interpreted to turn “its back to the West and looks forward to cooperation with the East... the protection of Russia’s national interests in the Arctic in peacetime was assigned to the Russian armed forces... [at the same time] the Russian strategists believe that Russia should share with the West an interest in halting and reversing the slide toward confrontation, bridging the gap that divides them, enhancing predictability, and developing effective channels for cooperation” (Sergunin 2016, 15, 164, 208-209).

Whether to call it ‘spheres of influence’, mainstream Russian foreign and security policy experts like for example, MP Aleksei Puskov, the chair of Russian Duma’s Foreign Affairs Committee (HS 2014) interpret the enlargement of NATO to the East, as if a wall was being moved to the Russian borders. Hence, the NATO Eastern enlargement has been the main disagreement between Russia and NATO member-states: The red line for the Russian Federation has been interpreted “that Ukraine, Georgia, Sweden and Finland must retain their neutral status as ‘buffer countries’” (Sergunin 2014), or otherwise Russia’s security interests are neither understood nor taken into account.

Correspondingly, Russia’s interference in Georgia and Ukraine, in particular the annexation of Crimea in 2014, were difficult to accept by the West, and Western interpretations of Russia’s demands of ‘security guarantee’ have been collided, as was culminated by the cold response of Western leaders to President Putin’s letter on Russia’s security in December 2021. As a result, a cruel war in Ukraine is going on.

Behind is seen a fundamental factor of the unified state system, much emphasized by New realism and Classical geopolitics, that States, in particular great powers, share most fundamental and core security interests, such as “the preservation of sovereignty and the protection of territorial integrity”. This also applies to the Russian Federation, as the world’s largest country “from one end of Eurasia to the other... it remains both a European and an Asian power... [and is] inevitably a player in four different regional security alignments; Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and the Far East” (Miller 1994). This combination of the original nature of the unified State system, power and geography has brought

the geostrategic predicaments for Russia's security that "it is ringed by relatively powerful states" (e.g. China, Germany, Japan, Türkiye) and by "suspicious neighbors [which] will form coalitions against it – that is, that they will be hostile as well as, in many instances, powerful" as a part of a military alliance or other coalition, such as a Coalition of the Willing. Hence, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia had a pursuit of security interests in Eurasia, in particular in Asia, and as a result, by 2005, 53 treaties were signed with Eurasian states "identified as involving with security issues... in the transformation of the post-Soviet states" (Willerton and Beznosov 2005).

After the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, in 2022, it is clear that the promise of a NATO membership to Georgia and Ukraine showed to be one of the most devastating decisions by NATO member states, as John Mearsheimer and a few other Western realists have publicly argued (e.g. Isokangas 2025). Hence, it "would be wise to accept neutrality for Russia's western neighbor" instead of a war (Kinzer 2021), according to the core of Finland's foreign and security policy in the Cold War period (e.g. Heininen 2025a). Though this sounds afterwisdom, the conclusion is relevant when searching for an end to the war in Ukraine and negotiating a lasting and robust peace between the parties, before the war will be escalated further; similarly as European NATO member States are continuing to weaponize Ukraine, Russia is dangerously testing NATO readiness by drone barrage over Poland. The only sustainable solution, and precondition for confidence-building, is political – i.e. a peace treaty or ceasefire via negotiations – not via military strength.

Understandable or not, among many Western leaders there was a combination of a naïve belief, based on Western superiority, in their own expectations that the weakened and transformed Russia would accept Western rules and adopt its values, and a lack of knowledge on contemporary political history and its lessons learned: while the split of the Soviet Union included real risks of violent ethnic conflicts, such as the two Chechnya wars, indicating a danger of a split of the Russian Federation, it was "probably the greatest, and most bloodless imperial retreats in history" (Lieven 2001). Less known and discussed is the fact that the split created a potential risk of military conflict, as suddenly there were four (new) nuclear weapon states (Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, Ukraine) instead of one (Soviet Union). The risk was defined as a nightmare by the USA political elite and military, less so in Europe, as all the arms control agreements were only signed with the Soviet Union (see, Allison et al. 1996).

All in all, the Russian Federation, as well as its Arctic zone, is an important part of Eurasia and the Eurasian civilization, and Europe and the European

civilization. In the more than millennial history of the Russian state there are phases of both European and Eurasian dominance, the latest a transformation from European to Eurasian one. The question “Is Russia a part of Europe or not?” is again timely, both in Russia and the West.

Importance of the Arctic

Among Russian historians and anthropologists there is a notion that “it was the North that predetermined the identity of Russia historically (starting from the critical role of Ladoga and Novgorod in ancient times), economically (taking into account furs, oil, gas, gold, and other resources), and geopolitically (due to spatial predominance in high latitudes). The Northernness manifested itself clearly at least twice in Russian history, and both times in dialogue with Scandinavia, proving the emergence of ancient Rus’ in 9th century and Russian Empire in 18th century.” Further, there in Russia is a general understanding that “all of Russia is the North... [and] based on its Northernness [as] ‘The north is a will, hope, a country without borders’”, a certain kind of new aura created by Vladimir Vysotsky. (Golovnev 2022, 440-441, 448)

Finally, with its Arctic the Russian Federation has a high relevance in every aspect of Arctic environment, politics, economics, security, governance, as mentioned in the introduction. This is shown by the geographical location, sizes of territories and coastline, that of population, volumes of minerals and the related economy, as well as indicated by the rich variety of this volume’s articles.

Although the Arctic has not usually played a strategic role in the Federation’s foreign policy, the Russian Arctic has played, and plays, an important role geostrategically and militarily, as well as economically, for the entire Federation. The region’s economic volume with multiple fields of exploitation, mostly oil and gas, is more than 70% of that of the entire Arctic region. Its major contributions to the Russian economy are the utilization of hydrocarbons and minerals, and the Federation’s economy has been heavily reliant on the export of hydrocarbons from the Arctic. To fulfill the growing demand of energy production, in the 2010s-2020s, new onshore gas fields were opened, and an LNG factory with a deep-water harbor was built on the Yamal Peninsula.

As a side-effect, there is an “energy dilemma” – i.e. a nexus of energy security, economic globalization, climate change, ‘resource-curse’ – when the economy is being so heavily reliant on export of hydrocarbons. No surprise that two antinomies of the modern Russia are the dualism of energy-dilemma – benefit vs. curse - and the related export of raw materials causing a tension between economic interdependence and great power politics (e.g. Kivinen 2021).

This makes diversification and modernization of economy, as well as leaning on brains and innovations like for example, the “Russian Silicon Valley” Skolkovo, challenging to implement and develop further (e.g. Bradshaw 2012; Matthews and Nemtsova 2010b). Further, this is with heavy socio-economic impacts in the Russian Arctic areas (e.g. Gaseev, et al. 2018), and hence the State and private enterprises are challenged to minimize negative impacts on the environment, if efficiently meet the socioeconomic expectations of the official policy documents (e.g. Alieva 2014, this volume).

More importantly, the mass-scale exploitation and built infrastructure have polluted, and still pollute, lands, waters and air, and produce more CO₂ emissions, and consequently cause environmental degradation of the fragile ecosystems, and related human health problems (e.g. AMAP 2002, 2019). No wonder, that in the Russian Arctic there are the biggest local sources of pollutants and CO₂ emissions in the entire Arctic. While the emissions impact the climate of the entire Northern Hemisphere, they create insecurity and instability for the people living in the Arctic, as Goes (2019, this volume) argues. As a response, as Middleton (2022, this volume) notes that Russian officials have constructed the AZRF as a Special Economic Zone to address myriad challenges related to more sustainable development.

Populated Russian Northern centers, many of them single-industry mining towns – or “mono-towns” based on the Soviet time (e.g. Suutarinen 2014, this volume) – experience this, as they are surrounded by advanced infrastructure consisting of gas / oil fields, mines, smelters / factories, harbors, airports, as well as naval and other military bases. In the mono-towns, for example on the Kola Peninsula, mining companies use to dominate, and local societies play a minor role, as Riabova and Didyk (2014, this volume) argue. Yet, modern Russian Arctic cities and municipalities also view sustainable development strategies as an important policy priority in urban planning, and aim to develop planning system for that (Sergunin 2018, this volume).

Interestingly, there is a transfer, possibly temporary, from environmentally risky drilling of offshore resources into onshore one, as Flimonova argues (2013, this volume). And, according to the exploration of Bouffard (2018, this volume), there are key differences in policies and behaviors between onshore and offshore economic activities.

The Russian Arctic, including the long coastline of the Arctic Ocean, used to be all about ice and permafrost, a real natural obstacle causing challenges for the utilization of resources and built infrastructure, such as industrial complexes, settlements, or roads. Nonetheless, the long coastline is with built infrastructure – settlements, ports, icebreakers and other transportation means, radars – for the

Northern Sea Route, the only commercially used sea route of the Arctic Ocean. Consequently, the Russian icebreaker fleet is large in numbers and modern in technology, including several new-generation nuclear-powered vessels. While permafrost still covers about 65% of the entire territories of the Russian Federation, mostly in its Arctic Zone and Siberia, it is melting fast. Hence, “A narrow interpretation of Classical geopolitics (by Spykman 1936): ‘the Arctic ports of Russia will not thaw’ is a failure”, as it did not take into consideration climate change (Heininen 2016).

One more relevant aspect: Since the time of czarism, Russian scientists and scholars have explored the Arctic and the Arctic Ocean, and conducted fieldwork studying geography, terrestrial and marine ecosystems, climate and cryospheric sciences, glaciers and sea-ice, minerals, as well as languages, cultures and livelihoods of diverse groups of Indigenous peoples, and those of settlers. Further, Russian regions are being used fields for several domestic and international scientific expeditions and projects like for example, the floating ice stations since 1930s (Papanin 1981). Consequently, Russian scholars, scientists and students have been contributing for decades to Arctic research – locally, nationally, regionally, internationally – and been an invaluable part of international Arctic research.

As a matter of fact, the Russian Arctic has been a perfect ‘laboratory’, or ‘workshop’, for multi-disciplinary research and international scientific cooperation, making the region an important part of the entire Arctic to understand the dynamics of the complex Arctic ecosystems. Though, Indigenous worldviews and knowledge have often been denied or downplayed in important dialogues related to climate mitigation and adaptation, as Burnasheva (2022) argues in this volume.

The fact that Western researchers have done research in the region and among its Indigenous peoples, and that Western institutions cooperated with their Russian colleagues, has often been taken as guaranteed in Western countries. Even those researchers have brought funding and modern equipment with them, they have, nonetheless, benefited professionally and from fundraising by leaning on Russian data and assisted by Russians (Zaika 2024). This often seems to be forgotten among Western scientific communities, and could be remembered and appreciated, instead of trying to isolate Russian researchers (within Russia) and scientific institutions, in particular when geopolitical pressure and sanctions are on.

Russia's Arctic policy: discourses and strategies

Among hundreds of Russian expeditions in the Arctic, the *Arctic-2007* one to the bottom of the North Pole, in July-August 2007, was the largest expedition within the Russian framework of the IPY-2007/08 program, and internationally the best known. Its mission was to collect bottom soil samples from the shelf under the North Pole (IPY-2007/08 News 2007). The expedition of a “record-breaking dive... to 4,300 metres, [as] the mini-subbs Mir-1 and Mir-2 collected water and sediment samples from the seabed” (The Guardian 2007), was done under the auspices of UNCLOS and according to the requests of the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS). Circa 15 years later, the CLCS “recognized the legitimacy of Russia’s submission, thereby granting it exclusive rights to explore and exploit natural resources on the seabed in the designed area” (Bhardwaj 2025; also CLCS 2023).

Although successful, the expedition is the most controversial, causing lot of cry, misinformation, and speculations. It was politicized by some Western politicians and misinterpreted by mainstream media (e.g. The Guardian 2007) as an annexation (of the North Pole). As a consequence, “the entire mood in the world had suddenly changed dramatically. Russia became a target of criticism from Brussels, Washington D.C., Ottawa, Oslo, London” (Lomagin 2008). The expedition was interpreted as another example of a ‘Russian behavior’.

Among immediate and important ramifications of the claimed “Arctic Race”, though it did not really exist, were firstly that the five littoral states of the Arctic Ocean – Canada, Kingdom of Denmark, Norway, Russian Federation, and USA – chattered to their first ever ministerial meeting, in May 2008, in Ilulissat, Greenland. In the accepted joint declaration (Ilulissat Declaration 2008) the Arctic Five, including Russia, approved the principles and procedures for governing the Arctic Ocean without any special treaty, in spite of geopolitical uncertainties much due to misinterpretation and misinformation. Interestingly, here Russia acted, and was taken, as a liable party among the littoral states to normalize the situation and increase geopolitical stability. In contrast, the ‘left-overs’ – the land-locked Finland and Sweden, and Iceland – and Indigenous peoples’ organizations were not invited.

Secondly, a new Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Security Council stated that “the Arctic should become a core of strategic resource base of Russia... [and] if partners are not prepared for joint action, Russia will be forced to act independently for the protection of its national interests, but always based on international law”. Furthermore, a new law related to the exploration of Arctic resources underlined that the continental shelf is Russia’s “national heritage”, and

the development of the entire Russian Arctic will be left to State-run companies, such as Rosatom, to ensure “rational use of this national wealth” (Lomagin 2008).

Indeed, in July 2008, for the first time since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia sent warships to patrol Arctic waters (Nowak 2008), which could be interpreted as a routine “flag-waving”, or an aggressive action. Interestingly, unlike old Western stereotypes of the Russian, Byzantine-kind, secrecy, since the Czardom era, the Russian Security Council used to invite, in the 2010s and until the COVID-19 pandemic, diplomats, researchers and other foreign experts from the Arctic states and the Arctic Council observer states to annual seminars. Taking place in different parts of the Russian Arctic – e.g. Naryn Mar, Russian Far East and Bering Strait, Sabetta on Yamal – these meetings made it possible to experience Russian Arctic regions and know about their developments, as well as to discuss various issues and cooperation with Russian authorities and experts (e.g. The Security Council of the Russian Federation 2017; Heininen 2016).

Thirdly, the Russian government adopted, for the first time, a modern strategy for the Arctic, titled “Foundations of a State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic until 2020 and Beyond” (Russia TRG 2008). The 2008 Arctic Policy prioritized economy, security and (maritime) safety, infrastructure, and international cooperation. President Putin had, already in 2004, called “for developing an intelligent and long-term policy with regard to [Russian] northern regions... [and] diversification of the economy in the North” (ITAR-TASS 2004). Interestingly, adopted after the hype of the Western-orientated period, it can be interpreted to bring Russia, the leading Arctic state, back to Arctic geopolitics and into international pan-Arctic cooperation (e.g. Lagutina 2019, 1).

The 2008 document was followed by the 2013 updated strategy (Russia TRG 2013), in the series of Russian Arctic state policies with the same kind of structure (Lagutina 2019). The strategies highlight infrastructure and economy, or industrial development, as cornerstones of Russia’s policy in the Arctic (see also Maximova 2018, this volume). While the 2008 strategy emphasized more security, the 2013 reflected the human dimension, including the protection of Indigenous peoples as a key objective, yet it did not refer to the recognition of their self-governance (see, Cepinskyter 2019, this volume). Comparing to the overall priorities of the policy documents of the other Arctic states, based on the coding of 14 indicators (Heininen et al. 2020, 108-121), the Russian priorities of economy, human dimension, environmental protection and science are mostly in line with the others, unlike that of governance clearly lower and that of infrastructure a way ahead.

Correspondingly, the 2020 updated policy “Basics of the State policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic for the Period till 2035”, approved by Decree of the President No. 164 (2020), emphasizes more safety and security, less economy and less infrastructure. Concerning the new trends of Arctic governance, the document supports state domination based on geopolitical stability and sovereignty. So far, the latest (updated) Strategy for Spatial Development of Russia until 2030, adopted in 2024, demonstrates another kind of relevant tendency for the Russian Arctic, “to strengthen border territories by expanding them geographically by connecting them to internal territories”, as Pelyasov writes in this volume.

Although the intensity of Russia’s participation in pan-Arctic cooperation has varied within the last decades, the Russian Federation has actively been involved in pan-Arctic cooperation, in particular in the Barents Sea area and the Bering Strait area (e.g. Heininen 2004), as a co-founder and member of several intergovernmental organizations: the Arctic Council and its Working Groups (WG), the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (though it withdrew from the Council in 2023) and its Indigenous peoples’ Working Group and regional council, the International Arctic Science Commission, and the University of the Arctic (e.g. Joenniemi and Serguinin 2013; Vidal 2016; Shlapenko 2017, this volume). It is fair to argue, as was largely discussed and analyzed in the 1990s and 2000s (e.g. The Barents Region 1994; Dreaming of the Barents Region 1996), that it was Russia, originally the Soviet Union, which made this cooperation functional – on environmental protection and science – and meaningful based on the 1980s political thaw. Behind were the principles of ‘Atlanticism’ / ‘Liberalism’, as well as those of Functionalism, to decrease military tension (of the Cold War) and increase political stability (in Northern Europe and the Arctic) by building confidence via cross-border cooperation.

In particular, the Arctic Council, with its WGs, - consisting of the eight Arctic states, including the Russian Federation, and six Indigenous peoples’ organizations - is the backbone of cross-border cooperation. Russia held the Arctic Council’s rotating chairship, in 2021-2023, with the aim to develop Russia’s Arctic Zone and mutually beneficial cooperation with its Arctic partners. Interestingly, as Vasiliev (2021) argues, in addition of strategic objectives (e.g. enhancing economic cooperation, investments, health care, Indigenous welfare, and education), among Russian ambitions was the “restoration of consensus in the Arctic Council on climate change”, a thinly veiled critique of the Trump Administration’s stance during the ministerial meeting in Finland in 2019. It is fair to mention that, despite heavy geopolitical pressure and sanctions against Russia due to the Russian 2022 invasion, the transfer of the Council’s chairship, from Russia to Norway, went smoothly, though online for the first time.

In sum, the Russian Arctic policy has traditionally been interpreted in different ways: some Western experts see aspects of expansionism, aggression, even ‘gunboat diplomacy’, or at least a ‘Russian behavior’, whereas some others see mutual beneficial aspects, in addition to national interests. Correspondingly, some Russian experts emphasize the country’s primary national (economic, military) interests, and “the vast majority of authors... try to objectively analyze Russian interests, motivation, behavior and strategies in the Arctic” (Heininen et al. 2014, 4-5). Despite this, and although Russia has been actively involved in Arctic cooperation, the Western mainstream argumentation goes that, after attacking Ukraine, Russia ruined mutual confidence and lost this position – that the occupation changed everything. Counterarguments, as well as the Arctic states and Indigenous peoples’ organizations, highlight an importance of maintaining valuable cooperation on science and environmental protection. And, to respect and implement the (legally binding) international agreements, and maintain the well-functioning international cooperative structures, when facing the emerging climate crisis.

When searching for impacts and ramifications of the Ukraine war and new East-West crisis on Arctic cooperation, it seems to be that many things, but not everything, have changed. Importantly, despite slow progress in the development of the Council’s work (e.g. Introduction of AY 2024), the Arctic Council’s and its WGs’ work continues, after a short pause in 2022-2023, even if it is not business as usual.

Ramifications of the Ukraine war / new East-West crisis to Arctic cooperation...

Among impacts and collateral damages of the Ukraine war is cross-border cooperation in the Arctic – by Indigenous peoples, local and regional authorities, universities and research institutes –, as (official) cooperation with Russian authorities and institutions is being, almost totally, abandoned by new governmental policies, restrictions and sanctions of the seven (NATO) Arctic states. The short, temporary pause of the Arctic Council’s work increased common concern, throughout the entire circumpolar Arctic, about the environment, climate change and Indigenous rights, as well as raised calls for non-State actors to play a pivotal role in maintaining and potentially restoring cooperation, as Devyatkin (2022, this volume) argues.

Although, person-to-person scientific and development work is officially accepted between Arctic states, individual researchers, with personal ethos to continue cooperation with Russian (individuals), are having real difficulties – logistically, financially, and in data-sharing – in reality when trying to do that. It

is challenging to continue communication and discussions in this toxic social, political and media environment, as it includes a risk of punishment by one's own universities / institutions (e.g. Rosen 2023; Heininen 2024a; Wråkberg 2024). The tension does not seem to be eased, and impacts might also become deteriorated. This is a danger which for example, the international scientific community and Indigenous peoples of the Russian Arctic have faced as their contacts and cooperation with other peoples has dramatically decreased (Zmyvalova 2023, this volume).

The Arctic Yearbook has clearly spoken on behalf of, and sought to contribute to, pan-Arctic cooperation across national and other borders, as well as between Indigenous knowledge and scientific knowledge, both through interdisciplinary discourse and by implementing the interplay between science, politics, and business. This approach is backed by International Relations theories – e.g. Functionalism, Globalism – arguing that functional cooperation in environmental protection, science, and culture, as fields of low politics, are means to decrease military tension and increase stability, and thus to build trust between parties.

Similarly, protecting the environment and tackling climate change will bolster political stability and “help maintain stability in international relations [in particular] at a time when environmental problems threaten the stability of the entire world” (Myers 1993, 33). Correspondingly, stability-building is good for people, and confidence-building measures – for example oil spill response, fisheries management, or search-and-rescue – will make it easier to protect the environment and increase (maritime and other) safety. Neither confidence nor stability-building are, nonetheless, either automatic or determined, but require dedication, motivation, and strong visions for the benefit of collaboration, and willingness to collaborate.

Here the post-Cold War Arctic, with its high geopolitical stability, and the region's States being committed to maintain peace and cooperation (e.g. Reykjavik Declaration 2021), has contributed to a high level of geopolitical stability. This model of regional governance and cooperation, in the context of the Arctic Council – also called an “Arctic model” – is neither necessary exceptional nor unique but rare, together with the Russian-US cooperation at the International Space Station (e.g. Time 2019), in the world politics of the 2020s (e.g. Heininen 2017, 2024b). Similarly, the Arctic region, including the Russian parts, has potential to play an important role as a ‘laboratory’ of the Anthropocene, and a ‘workshop’ of governance, transdisciplinarity and transculturalization (e.g. Heininen and Finger 2018).

The Council's rotated chairship was smoothly transferred, in May 2025, from Norway to the Kingdom of Denmark. Despite the war, East-West tensions, and the short pause in pan-Arctic cooperation, the Arctic States, supported by Indigenous peoples' organizations, reaffirmed their commitment "to maintaining peace, stability, and cooperation in the Arctic" (Romssa – Tromsø Statement 2025). Indeed, the Arctic Council showed, again, its resilience being able to continue its work.

The motivation behind is formulated and shaped by three factors: firstly, the Arctic states and Indigenous peoples continue to reiterate the desired end of their Arctic policies and activities, noting the challenges the region faces in managing regional affairs and mitigating climate change in an increasing polarized world (e.g. Vuorimäki 2025). Behind are certain common interests – maritime safety, search-and-rescue, marine oil-spill response, fisheries, and mitigation of climate change – which, as a matter of fact, they still share; secondly, and even more importantly, several special features of Arctic geopolitics and Arctic security – the original nature of Arctic militarization, no armed conflicts, high degree of international legal certainty, self-governing, and soft forms of governance – are still in place (Heininen 2024b); Thirdly, there is an awareness of the high value of intangible things – knowledge, learned lessons, hope, and confidence – as human-made achievements. The geopolitical stability and cooperation of the Arctic is one of those.

This gives a hope, also worldwide, to consider that the Arctic States are willing, and the entire unified State system is capable efficiently, to face and manage global environmental challenges – the climate crisis or the plastic one – created by industrial civilization. Since February 2022, several individuals and a few non-governmental institutions at different fora and media, including the Arctic Yearbook and the Geneva Centre for Security Policy's High North Talks, have actively been speaking on behalf of, and supporting, to maintain the cooperation. Behind is a conventional wisdom that trust is easy to lose, yet hard and time-consuming to restore, when deep disagreements and conflicts between parties are being transferred into a fear and threat-pictures, and finally into enemy-pictures (e.g. Harle 1991).

Whereas none of the rhetoric or deeds, so far, have produced a miracle, these substantial contributions are bringing fresh ideas for further thoughts. One of those is to differentiate, as proposed by Heininen (2024b) and Konyshov (2022, this volume), the Arctic States' foreign, security, and climate policies to allow cooperation in science, environmental protection, and climate change mitigation. The flexible structure of the Arctic Council and its WGs – like an international

‘Epistemic Community’ – would make it possible, as well as it would act as a confidence-building measure.

Even if the war in Ukraine would end, hopefully but not necessary soon, by a ceasefire – based on a UN Security Council resolution, in February 2025, supported by China, Russia, and the USA – or by a peace treaty – pushed by President Trump and agreed between him and President Putin at the Alaska Summit, in August 2025 – the breach of trust would still have impacts on cooperation between Russia and other Arctic States for long. A few questions would be raised, such as: how will Russia, which is claimed as a pariah in world politics and to distract the rule-based international system, be interpreted by others as a credible partner, in respecting the agreements and soft law arrangements related to the Arctic? Under what conditions will the seven other States be willing to resume cooperation with Russia, and vice versa?

Furthermore, is there willingness to maintain mutual confidence, and if not, what would be lost then, and whom the price will be highest to, if there would no longer be pan-Arctic cooperation? Or, if State-to-State relations seem unlikely to function, would Indigenous peoples, who live in the region, and their organizations, want to lean on their own cooperative structures?

Answers depend on how the Arctic States and Indigenous peoples, as well as local governments, civil societies, and the scientific community, define the value and necessity of Arctic cooperation, involving the Russian Arctic, for the future. And whether there are other credible options and frameworks for (successful) multilateral Arctic cooperation. According to experimental speculations, relevant alternative cooperative frameworks would be NATO and BRICS+.

Seven Arctic States – five Nordic countries, Canada and the USA – are already closely cooperating within NATO, militarily supporting Ukraine, and have declared sanctions against Russia. There have been constant NATO military exercises in the Arctic, and they are being intensified, since February 2022. Also, new joint structures for military cooperation and exercises are established. Yet, the deployed USA nuclear weapon systems with the related command, control, communications and intelligence (C3I) system in the region are under the USA’s control.

While cooperation between these seven States (there is no articulated ‘Arctic Seven’) was looking obvious before January 2025, the situation has become unclear due to President Trump’s intention to take over Greenland, as well as to annex Canada as the 51st state, due to USA national security, and have an access to the island’s strategic rare earths. Though it is not the first time the USA proposed to purchase Greenland, and though the USA has had militarily control

over the island, based on the 1951 US-Danish defence agreement (Jacobsen and Olsvig 2024; also International Herald Tribune 2000), since the Second World War, Trump's (double-down) idea and claim – “We'll get Greenland. Yeah, 100%”, Trump said.” (NBC News March 2025) – has raised tensions between Washington D.C. and the Kingdom of Denmark (Copenhagen, Nuuk), as well as unprecedented diplomatic action (between NATO member States) by the Kingdom's government; interestingly, it is a Greenlandic representative who chairs the Arctic Council in 2025-2027.

Yet, Greenland is not “for sale”, as clearly and repeatedly stated by the Greenlandic Home-Rule Government and that of Kingdom of Denmark. The other Nordic States have stated supporting Greenland's self-governing and the Danish Realm's independence (Statement by five Nordic PMs in May 2025), as well as Canada does. However, there are no good options for Copenhagen and Nuuk, when they seek how efficiently to counter this hostile offer (Thorsson 2025), if the USA Administration does not respect the sovereignty and integrity of the Kingdom of Denmark and the self-governing of Greenlanders. Further, there will be more pressure if Russia and the USA would revive their economic cooperation on the utilization of resources – oil and gas, rare earths and other minerals in the Arctic -, as being indicated by US-Russian discussions and the Alaska summit.

Finally, Trump's “coercive diplomacy strategy to take Greenland by force or the threat of force and trade sanctions, NATO will condemn the action”, as Steve Lamy argues (Wachtel 2025), although a continuity of the United States' “securitizations of Greenland” (Jacobsen and Olsvig 2024), causes disturbance to Arctic geopolitics and Arctic security. It would mean some reactions, though not necessary military ones, from the others, which could lead Canada and the European member-States, including five Nordics, into a new collective defence organization, without the USA. As a result, a NATO option for Arctic cooperation seems to be rather fragile and would cover only a half of the entire region.

Correspondingly, the Sino-Russian “no-limits” partnership and trade (e.g. The Economist, May 2024) – including cooperation on energy, rare earths, nuclear power, information and communication technologies, and space exploration – not least through China's Polar Silk Road initiative (see, Cao 2022, this volume) could easily being strengthened. President Putin (2022) has envisioned cooperation “on the broadest agenda within BRICS+, the Russia-India-China framework, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization as well as other multilateral frameworks... [for] the social and economic development of Siberia and the Russian Far East”. In addition, China and India – together with three

other states from Asia (Japan, Singapore, South Korea) unanimously accepted as observer States of the Arctic Council, in 2013 – have strong components of Polar studies, as well as activities on the Arctic, the Antarctic, the Himalayan “Third Pole”, not least due to their concern on impacts of climate change, and hunger for energy.

“The Arctic: Territory of Dialogue” forum in Murmansk, in March 2025, was stated by the organizers to highlight “Russia’s strategic focus on expanding its economic and military presence in the region [and sought] long term infrastructure and resource development while asserting its dominance over the Northern Sea Route”. Behind this expansion of cooperation into Eurasia, and broadening partnership with BRICS+ countries, is Russia’s ultimate need for more resources, when trying to develop its northernmost regions and the Northern Sea Route (e.g. AA Türkiye 2025; Blokova 2025). On the one hand, this indicates, “an intense search for new, internal and external, sources of investment in projects and the social sphere of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation”, as Pelyasov (this volume) argues, and on the other, this forms a potential risk, in the longer run, of Russia becoming overly dependent on China. Yet, these relationships cannot fully replace the depth and breads of cooperation with other Arctic states, as Sukhankin and Lackenbauer (2024, this volume) argue.

All in all, as a consequence of the Ukraine invasion a classical Russian debate continues in a new context of a widening distance, and new collision between Russia and the West, though the West is no monolith here. This was manifested by a difference in strategic thinking between President Trump and Western European leaders, i.e. how to end the war in Ukraine by going straight to a peace treaty, or having a ceasefire as the first act. Interestingly, the work of Arctic Council and its WGs is continuing, and neither the NATO framework nor the BRICS+ option, as alternatives, look promising for successful pan-Arctic cooperation.

... and to Arctic security

The full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, or officially a “special military operation” by the Russian government (e.g. Pelyasov, this volume), which followed the Russian annexation of Crimea, in 2014, and the NATO enlargement towards the Russian borders, since 1999, is dramatically changing the European security architecture and increases instability in Europe, in particular in the Black Sea area. Among outcomes are Western countries’ sanctions against Russia and military support for Ukraine, war economies in Russia and Ukraine, as well as a new arms race in Europe by a dramatic increase of military budgets – up to 5% of GDP – and the related strengthening of

military capabilities of the (European) NATO states, already earlier demanded by the USA government. This dramatically increases militarization in European societies and media, as the “Talks by hawks” kind of discourse, together with mis-/disinformation, easily creates war panic and strengthen threat / enemy pictures among citizens.

The war *per se* did, however, neither start the new arms race and modernization of nuclear weapons of great powers, nor escalated armed conflicts and wars in the Middle East and Central Asia. These were started earlier, not least by Israel’s aggressive occupation of Palestine and strikes on Gaza, the USA invasion of, and strikes on, Afghanistan and Iraq – officially as parts of the fight against international terrorism – as well as the USA-Sino great power rivalry over the Indo-Pacific. Further, the several rounds of Western sanctions and military support for Ukraine, and the related bloc- and coalition-building – NATO, Coalition of the Willing – could be interpreted to complete the emerging East-West crisis by trying to isolate, or even collapse, Russia, or at least make it a pariah in world politics – by naming it a “Russian behavior”.

Nonetheless, the war – indirectly – could easily delay and postpone, if not ruin, plans and programs, including the great EU “Green Transition”, for a transfer from hydrocarbons to alternative energy production by decreasing the motivation for, and changing the political priorities of, to make the hard decisions and allocate funds and investments for climate change mitigation.

For NATO member-States, and most of EU States, those causes include, first of all, the Russian 2022 invasion of Ukraine, less so the 2014 annexation of Crimea, as a violation of international law and integrity of Ukraine’s sovereignty. Unlike for Russia, they are Ukraine’s military alignment in NATO (especially as the membership was included the Ukrainian Constitution after the NATO 2008 summit), Crimea and control of the easternmost, mostly Russian-speaking provinces of Ukraine.

Neither the NATO nor EU member-States are, however, unanimously supporting the sanctions and military assistance for Ukraine, nor Israel’s strikes on neighboring counties escalating the war in Gaza. As a result, there is a fragmentation in Western coalitions, much depending on where the USA would like to stand on. The visit of European leaders at the White House, in August 2025, which followed the Alaska Summit between President Putin and President Trump, a few days earlier, was all about a debate on two competitive perspectives / discourses on the preference: a ceasefire or peace treaty first, and what are the root causes of the war.

From the point of view of the Russian Federation, the annexation of Crimea would geostrategically make sense, and was largely taken as a ‘de-facto’ fact by many Western experts. A NATO naval base in Sevastopol, Crimea would be a geostrategic and military security nightmare for Russia, though possibly a fantasy for some NATO generals. More importantly, this strategic change of military balance in the Black Sea area would dramatically increase tension in the area and the entire Europe. It would also be a big risk of a possible armed conflict between Russia and NATO – a sort of “1962 Cuban crisis” moment for European nations.

In contrast, the full-scale invasion is neither understandable nor should it happen in the first place. It could be prevented, on the one hand, if there would be ongoing dialogues, with mutual respect’ and functioning structures for arms control and confidence-building, between European, Russian and Northern American leaders, after the end of Cold War and collapse of the Soviet Union; and on the other, if the (national) security interests of all the parties, security interests of the Russian Federation, and security guarantees of Ukraine, would be seriously taken into consideration before and parallel to the NATO enlargement, if the latter would be necessary at all. Similarly, if certain words, familiar in the end of the 2nd World War, even in the Cold War period, and in the 1990s-2000s – such as ‘prevention’, ‘arms control’, ‘disarmament’, ‘cooperation’, ‘peace’ – would be high on the political agenda and parts of the used vocabulary of State leaders and their advisers, as well as more used by media.

Despite some speculations (e.g. Schaller 2019; Kauppila and Kopra 2022, this volume) of renewed tension and the fundamentally altered Arctic geopolitical landscape, impacts on Arctic security have been, so far, less dramatic, and not structural. While broader notions of security and militarization had already earlier influenced societies of the Russian Arctic, as Melas (2019, this volume) notes, the war increases tension and is changing Russian media coverage of the Arctic, moving towards a heightened focus on frames about a race for resources, as Landriault (2024, this volume) argues.

The reason behind it has all to do with the global deterrence of nuclear weapons. It is the core of the nuclear weapon system, and hence ultimately the most important thing for nuclear weapon powers. The logic of deterrence, based on mutual-assured-destruction (MAD) and a balance between the two major nuclear weapon powers, is that a power based on nuclear weapons is directly dealing with the capability to conduct the second – i.e. revenge – strike. For the USA and the Russian Federation, this capability is being deployed, in addition of ICBMs in silos and nuclear bombers on lower latitudes, in strategic nuclear submarines patrolling in Arctic waters, and in the case of Russia in nuclear bombers (e.g. Miller 2023; Heininen 2024b). Therefore, the Ukrainian strikes

on Russian strategic nuclear bombers, parked in open-air, on a Kola Peninsula airfield – being the first military attack in the Arctic for 80 years –, might have long-term consequences, as it was, as a matter of fact, a hit against the Russian nuclear triad.

This original nature of Arctic military, and the fact that it is one of the preconditions for the military balance between the major nuclear weapon powers, has been known for long. And that it works, if only any party would not try to break other's capability for the revenge strike, if it would even be possible technologically. The "Golden Dome for America", initiated by President Trump, might sound good for the USA's homeland security, yet it could be interpreted by Russia as a new Missile Defense System, i.e. a system which is technologically capable to eliminate the Russian second strike.

It has also been known, at least by experts, since the deployment of nuclear weapons in the Arctic that an armed conflict / war in any other part of the globe, that involves the USA and the Soviet Union / Russian Federation, could have spill-over effects in the Arctic. Following from this, a state of the nuclear deterrence is, geostrategically, a real indicator to measure a level of Arctic military-security and stability, as well as ramifications of the Ukraine war to the Russian-US relations.

Another indicator is that despite heavy military structures of the deployed nuclear weapons systems, the Arctic has been without armed conflicts / wars for 80 years. Most likely, geopolitical stability will be continued. Although Finland's and Sweden's NATO memberships, and the Nordics' Defense Cooperation Agreements with the USA, sound as a fundamental regional geopolitical change, they do not alter, though include potential for altering, the nuclear weapon balance between Russia and the USA.

Contrarily, a real transformation of Arctic security, in addition of possible efforts to break the second strike capability, would be if the new USA defense strategy for the Arctic (U.S. Department of Defense 2024) – redefining USA geostrategic and global interests by interpreting the activities of China, as well as the closer Russian-Sino cooperation, in the Arctic as threats – would be implemented. Trump's repeated claim to the purchase of Greenland, in fact a new step of the USA securitization of Greenland and the entire Arctic, as well as a part of international great power competition (Jacobsen and Olsvig 2024), could be interpreted as implementation. Or, if the Ukrainian strikes on Russia's strategic bombers parked in open-air, instead of nuclear strike protective bunkers due to the obligations of the New START Treaty, would be retaliated by a (tactical) nuclear blow in response. According to conventional wisdom, both would be very

risky, and in contrast with all arms control and disarmament treaties, as well as diplomacy in general.

Following from this, a more meaningful effect, in the long run, on Arctic (military) security, is a lack of arms control and nuclear disarmament, as well as the lack of new initiatives for denuclearization and nuclear-weapon-free zones in the Arctic (e.g. Exner-Pirot 2020). Furthermore, the new START, the only existing arms control treaty between the two major nuclear weapon powers, will expire in February 2026. This reflects the bigger global picture that, on the agenda of the USA-Russian relations, there are neither initiatives nor real discussions for further arms control and disarmament. Contrarily, military activities and solutions, which only increase environmental degradation and global warming (e.g. Heininen 2025b), seem to be prioritized, instead of cooperation and cooperative structures, yet we face the climate crisis, the most severe security challenge in the Arctic and planetarily.

In fact, it is not only about new policies, restrictions and sanctions, or closed borders (in the case of Finland), nor about Russia. It is also about the “Politics of fear” in international politics, and a ‘fear’ towards ‘the other’, and that threat / enemy pictures are easily drawn up and manipulated by different political systems. There is a contrast, even conflict, between two kinds of perceptions of the Arctic’s future: A sort of revised Cold War legacy of intolerance, based on hostile rhetoric, among state leaders and authorities, security establishment and mainstream media versus, conversely, a consciousness of the existentialism and mutual benefit of multilateral cooperation (on environmental protection, science) based on tolerance and discussions.

All in all, as analyzed and discussed within the Arctic Yearbook 2022-2024 editions, the impacts of the Ukraine war on the Arctic and Arctic geopolitics are being, so far, less dramatic and less structural by nature than expected. The Arctic Council is being able to revitalize its work, despite speculations by media and mainstream experts, firstly, by having new guidelines for the WGs, though not yet business as usual, and secondly, managing to transfer the chairship from Norway to the Kingdom of Denmark. Nevertheless, as the geopolitical stability of the Arctic much depends on the interrelations between Russia and the rest, as well as the region’s military balance on USA-Russian relations, the situation is dire and fragile. The geopolitical stability is still there, and should not be lost, though will not be maintained without action and confidence-building measures by the parties.

This calls for an urgent need for diplomatic efforts among the Arctic states and Indigenous peoples’ organizations, and implementation of social relevance of science, or ‘science diplomacy’, by the international academic community.

Russia as a Eurasian, European and Arctic State

Here scientific cooperation, as a field of low politics, could play a vital role by keeping the Arctic as “a region of geopolitical stability... [which] is a precondition for sustaining Arctic research” (Toyama Conference Statement 2015).

Importance of maintaining scientific cooperation and data sharing

It is already obvious that one of the victims of the Ukraine war – as all wars – is freedom of science, and freedom of expression (see, Rolland 1945, 160-198). Scientific cooperation, even data sharing, between Russian and Western scientific institutions is neither done nor allowed to be done properly, as discussed earlier. Among individual researchers and other experts’ information and data, as well as ideas, are being shared, yet on small scales, as there is no efficiency without communication lines, support and financing of established institutions. There are no other academic fields suffering more than environmental sciences, in particular research on climate change and permafrost, which are all relevant in the Arctic, including the Russian Arctic.

This inconvenient situation is not because of the pause of the Arctic Council’s and its WGs’ work, or because of the lack of a (legally-binding) agreement, as there exists the Agreement on Enhancing International Scientific Cooperation (2017), between the Arctic States. This situation is due to the new policies and restrictions of the seven NATO Arctic States, including the Nordic countries traditionally highlighting the freedom of science (e.g. Nordic Academic Trade Unions 2024), less so due to the sanctions.

As the Arctic states use to lean on science, when concerning environmental degradation and climate change, for adaptation – less so for mitigation – and when improving infrastructure and human health, a proper data and data-sharing across borders, including in the Russian Arctic, plays a crucial role. Further, as the science agreement is in force, it should be implemented (e.g. Konyshchev 2023). A minimum prerequisite for this kind of ‘focus on science’ is to implement academic freedom and allow scientific collaboration on environmental protection and climate change mitigation, without restrictions.

A lack of updated data and communication has nevertheless already begun to take on new levels of importance, as climate change proceeds rapidly. The more mass-scale utilization of hydrocarbons and (strategic) minerals will take place in the Russian Arctic, the faster melting will be, the better access into resources, and as a result more economic activities, etc.. – another example of the Arctic Paradox. These paradoxes do not only deal with the Arctic but have global impacts, the main reason, no cliché, to claim that the Arctic is globalized (Heininen and Finger 2018).

Hence, the discussion on scientific and environmental cooperation between Arctic States is neither only about Russia nor an ignorance of the 2017 Scientific Agreement, it ignores the scenario of an increasing release of tons of CO₂ and methane due to thawing permafrost. Similarly, President Trump's intention to purchase Greenland does not only violate the sovereignty of Kingdom of Denmark and ignore Greenlanders' self-governing, it also ignores scenarios and implications – locally, regionally, world-wide – of the hugely thick ice sheet over Greenland melting.

This also ignores the learned lesson of the post-Cold War Arctic that the environment matters, and that cooperation on environmental protection is mutually beneficial. In the 1990s, long-range – air, water – pollution in Arctic waters, in particular 'nuclear safety' in the Barents Sea and Russian Arctic, caused growing concern among local and Indigenous peoples, and became a trigger for institutional cooperation on environmental protection (e.g. AMAP 2002; AMEC 2003; also Heininen 2019). In the 2020s, a new environmental awakening could be expected due to the climate crisis, already reported by ACIA Report, in 2004.

In these cases, due to, on the one hand, the overall trend of Arctic development to prioritize economic activities over climate change mitigation (Heininen et al. 2020, 253), and on the other, an intention and competition of securing an access to strategic minerals / rare-earth metals by great powers (China, EU, India, Russia, USA) (e.g. The Economist 24.4.2025), indicated by the USA's securitization and intensified by the Ukraine war, there is a real risk that the environment – the material basis for human existence – is being put into a danger. The environment is taken over by geopolitics, as only military power / strength seems to matter indicated by rapidly increasing military budgets, and by greedy capitalism, as revenues and net profits of big oil companies (e.g. 3 Super-majors) and tech giants reveal.

At the same time, for the first time, in 2024, the average temperature of the Earth's surface temperature passed 1,5 degree Celsius (since the beginning of the industrial era) with catastrophic ramifications, if not an "irreversible collapse" predicted by NASA (Ahmed 2015), such as high frequency of extreme weather conditions, heavily impacting peoples' everyday security, and threatening states' national security. Unfortunately, the recent COPs (e.g. COP29 in 2024) have been disappointments, even interpreted as steps backwards (see, Baku Declaration 2024).

While the origin of the climate crisis is neither in the Ukraine war nor Israel's bombardments in Gaza, warfare and arms race, as well as patrolling, exercises and other armies' routine activities, in peace time, including the USA and Russian

nuclear weapon systems in the Arctic, accelerate the ecological catastrophe by using hydrocarbons, and consequently polluting, causing emissions, and weakening of biodiversity (e.g. Heininen 2025b). Finally, these activities also occupy intellectual and financial resources which could be used for solving the climate crisis and other ecological problems. Here, the Arctic is not among the most vulnerable victims, unlike small islands and the Himalayan nations, but it could be a part of the solution.

Yet, there are, at least, two preconditions which should be fulfilled: First, when facing wicked problems and existential crises, detailed information, updated data and data-sharing, as well as freedom of research, are needed for scientific analyses, to understand complex processes and build new knowledge for policy-shaping and decision-making; Second, that heads of States and members of security establishments are rational actors, as New Realism and New Liberalism use to argue, and as decision-makers take seriously their responsibilities and make the hard decisions.

As discussed, institutional cooperation on environmental monitoring and impact assessments, field operations, data sharing, and joint analyzes among Arctic states' and involved non-Arctic states' research institutions has mostly been kept on hold since spring 2022. This has become a new barrier for efficient mitigation of climate change, when the Arctic is warned to be warming 3-4 times faster than the rest of the Earth. If the melting of sea ice and glaciers is cumulative, the thawing of permafrost – on land and underwater – is even more so. According to the findings of the SWIPA report (AMAP 2019) the pace of the consequent permafrost thawing is so rapid “that new records are being set annually, and each additional year of data strengthens the already compelling evidence of a rapidly changing Arctic”.

The thawing of permafrost / melting of underground ice, in particular its acceleration, has multiple effects on the environment, such as loss of biodiversity, wild fires, floods, land instability, and the release of carbon, methane and mercury, as well as gas blowouts from craters in the Yamal Peninsula, in the Russian Arctic (Bogoyavlensky 2015) (e.g. AMAP 2019; also Konttinen 2019). Correspondingly, these cause risks to human health and food safety by potential release of pathogens and bacteria, as well as burning peatland accelerating the thaw. As results, there are already huge damages to all kinds of infrastructure – from buildings and factories to roads, pipelines, and airfields – in different parts of the Arctic, in particular in the Russian Arctic. All this has been known by experts for some time, as well as pictures of the ‘buildings out of line’ have been familiar in the Russian Arctic for a couple of decades.

Permafrost has been one of the target areas of AMAP, a leading Arctic Council WG, and updated by SWIPA (Snow, Water, Ice And Permafrost In The Arctic) reports. There are also international research projects and cooperation on permafrost (e.g. Meinander et al., this volume; see also Tundra Degradation in the Russian Arctic, TUNDRA Project funded by EU), and networks of research stations, such as INTERACT. Whereas surprisingly there is neither comprehensive site of data / platform for experts on permafrost, nor permafrost thaw.

As observations and assessments are based on data from (daily-based) monitoring and constant measurement – for example, to assess the key geophysical factors in order to mitigate the negative impacts of exploitation on nature (Chesnokova, et al. 2018, this volume) – and this information is essential for final analyzes and conclusions, this cannot be properly done without cooperation with the Russians. After February 2022, the European Union and the seven Arctic States, however, froze the funding for projects with Russians and within Russia, and consequently, the work of INTERACT is heavily affected.

Yet, unlike wildland fires, permafrost is not explicitly mentioned in the most recent AC Ministerial declaration (Romssa-Tromsø Statement 2025), although it states to “recognize the Arctic Council’s role in enhancing and maintaining Arctic research and long-term monitoring of the Arctic environment”. Conversely and more importantly, the seriousness of the thawing has been slowly understood by members of the international scientific community, and reported by media (e.g. Reshetnikova 2024); hopefully also by the smart ones among policy-makers.

Here, permafrost would have a lot of potential to play an important role, even to be a trigger, to differentiate the Arctic States’ foreign, security and climate policies allowing monitoring and data-sharing on, and joint assessment of, the thawing and its mitigation. Consequently, the Russian Arctic has become a ‘natural laboratory’, or workshop, of thawing permafrost, as well as climate change and the Anthropocene (e.g.. Finger 2016) having several target fields and observation stations, as well as the Russians are among the best experts on the field.

Conclusions

Today, the Arctic region today is more important than ever, geostrategically as well as in terms of development and comprehensive security, including the environment and climate change. There are many reasons for this: the importance of Indigenous languages and cultures for civilization; the unique nature of biodiversity; that of rich natural resources for industrialization and urbanization; the deployment of nuclear weapon systems by great powers; and

the impact of melting sea ice and glaciers on the world climate. All of these issues have global relevance and impact.

The Russian Arctic consists of a half of the entire region and its rimlands, as well as a big part of its resources and permafrost, as well as more than half of its population and modern infrastructure. Consequently, regardless of existing policies, Russia, as a Eurasian and European State, is geostrategically, ecologically, and economically, the most important and interesting player in the Arctic. Similarly, the Russian Arctic has served as a perfect ‘laboratory’ / ‘workshop’ for multidisciplinary research and scientific cooperation, including for Western researchers and institutions cooperating with their Russian colleagues.

Though Russian Arctic policy, in addition of including national interests, has been interpreted in different ways, from expansionism and a ‘Russian behavior’ to mutually beneficial aspects, Russia – as one of the Arctic States – is actively involved in Arctic cooperation and respected international agreements. Yet, Russia is severely testing the stability of an Arctic model – which was, ironically, built on President Gorbachev’s initiatives – when it annexed Crimea and launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Interestingly, even though this has caused impacts and related challenges to Arctic governance and geopolitics, circumpolar cross-border cooperation continues, demonstrating the resilience of the Arctic Council. However, it remains to be seen what shape Arctic affairs will take, which topics will remain on the agenda, as well as whether the West will continue to view Russia as a strategic partner, and vice versa. In any case, the littoral States and coastal areas of the Arctic Ocean, including the Russian Arctic, and their respective Indigenous and other nations, will be involved in pursuing specific courses of action in future.

Anticipating and navigating an uncertain future in a responsible manner still requires a rigorous understanding of the situation. This brings us back to our original intention with this edition: to better know the peoples, economies, politics, infrastructure, and environment of the Russian Arctic. Having read the reproduced articles and background introduction of this volume, we hope you will have a deeper and broader understanding of the region and Russia’s approach to Arctic affairs.

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Section 1:

Russian Policy: Discourse and Strategy

1

Foreign and Domestic Discourse on the Russian Arctic

Ieva Bērziņa

The strained relations between the West and Russia regarding influence in Ukraine may lead to an increase in tension in other regions. The Arctic may become a potential zone of conflict due to its rich natural resources, new transportation routes, military significance, and unsolved territorial issues. The aim of this paper is to identify the governmental discourse of Russia's top officials describing Russia's state policy on the Arctic for foreign and domestic audiences. The paper focuses on the period from 2013 till 2015, when tensions in the relationship between Russia and the West increased due to the crisis in Ukraine. The units of analysis are public statements by senior officials of the Russian Federation in speeches and reports in the media. The major finding is that the Arctic should serve in Russian-Western rapprochement rather than becoming the next geopolitical hot spot.

Introduction: The regulatory framework of Russian Arctic discourse

This article aims to identify how Russian senior officials are communicating Russia's policy on the Arctic, the main guidelines of which are defined in several documents. The basic documents that the Russian government mentions as being the key decisions on Arctic operations (Government of the Russian Federation 2015) include *Foundations of Russian Federation State Policy in the Arctic through 2020 and Beyond* (2008, September 18); *The Development Strategy of the Russian Arctic and national security for the period until 2020* (2013, February 20); *State Program of the Russian Federation 'Socio-economic development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation for the period till 2020'* (2014, April 21); *Regulations on the State Commission on the Development of the Arctic* (2015, March 14); and *The Northern Sea Route Comprehensive Development Project* (2015, June 8).

The first, *Foundations of Russian Federation State Policy in the Arctic through 2020 and Beyond*, is the seminal document that lays the grounds for the implementation of state policy in the Russian Arctic. The development strategy document and the state program of socio-economic development of the Arctic zone document logically and sequentially follow on from the first document. The establishment of the State Commission on the development of the Arctic document is a significant step in the improvement of Russian Arctic governance. The project on the Northern Sea Route is aimed at the development of navigation up to 2030, but this document is classified.

Foundations of Russian Federation State Policy in the Arctic through 2020 and Beyond defines the main objectives, tasks, strategic priorities and mechanisms of the Russian Federation's state policy on the Arctic, as well as a system of measures for the strategic planning of socio-economic development and Russia's national security in the Arctic. According to the document, Russia's national interests in the Arctic include 1) the use of the Russian Federation's Arctic zone as a strategic resource base for the Russian Federation, in this way providing a solution to the social and economic development problems of the country; 2) the preservation of the Arctic as a zone of peace and cooperation; 3) the conservation of the unique ecosystems of the Arctic; and 4) the use of the Northern Sea Route as a national integrated transport communication route for the Russian Federation in the Arctic (*Foundations of Russian Federation State Policy in the Arctic through 2020 and Beyond* 2008: 2). So, Russia's key areas of national interest in the Arctic are natural resource extraction, international cooperation, the environment and logistics.

In the seminal document, Russia's main goals in the Arctic are structured around six areas that are also defined as priorities in the development strategy: 1) socio-economic development – to expand the resource base for Russia's need for raw materials; 2) military security and the defence and protection of the state border – to ensure a favourable operational regime; 3) environmental safety – to protect the environment of the Arctic; 4) information technology and communication – to create a unified information space in the Arctic; 5) science and technology – to accumulate knowledge and to create modern scientific and geographic information bases for the management of the Arctic territories; and 6) international cooperation – to provide mutually beneficial bilateral and multilateral cooperation with the Arctic states (*Foundations of Russian Federation State Policy in the Arctic through 2020 and Beyond* 2008; *The Development Strategy*

of the Russian Arctic and national security for the period until 2020 2013: 3-4).

The foundations document also sets a time frame for the implementation of Russia's national interests in the Arctic. The three stages of development highlight the key milestones in the implementation of Russia's state policy in the Arctic. During the first phase from 2008 till 2010, Russia must prepare materials to justify the external border of its Arctic zone, broaden international cooperation, and implement various target programs and investment projects on the basis of public-private partnership. The main tasks of the second phase, from 2011 till 2015, are to ensure the international legal formalization of the external border of the Arctic zone, to restructure the economics of the Arctic zone based on the mineral resources and aquatic biological resources in the region, to establish and develop infrastructure and a management system for Northern Sea Route communications for Eurasian transit, and to complete the establishment of a unified information space in the Arctic. The third phase, from 2016 till 2020, should ensure the transformation of the Arctic zone into the leading strategic resource base of the Russian Federation.

In general, the implementation of state policy in the medium term should allow Russia to maintain its role as the leading Arctic power and is aimed at increasing comprehensive competitive advantages for the strengthening of Russia's position in the Arctic (*Foundations of Russian Federation State Policy in the Arctic through 2020 and Beyond* 2008: 9-10). The subsequent documents specify the ways for achieving this goal. *The Development Strategy of the Russian Arctic and national security for the period until 2020* (2013) defines the basic mechanisms and the ways and means to achieve the strategic goals and priorities for the sustainable development of Russia's Arctic zone and its national security. The *State Program of the Russian Federation 'Socio-economic development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation for the period till 2020'* (2014) includes the activities of the Russian Federation's sectorial national programs being implemented in the Arctic zone.

The State Commission on the Development of the Arctic is a coordinating body, providing for interaction between federal executive bodies, the executive bodies of subjects of the Russian Federation, other state agencies, local governments and organizations in addressing the socio-economic and other tasks related to the development of the Russian Federation's Arctic zone and its national security. The objectives of the

Commission are the protection of the Russian Federation's national interests in the Arctic and the achievement of the strategic objectives defined in *Foundations of Russian Federation State Policy in the Arctic through 2020 and Beyond*, as well as a radical increase in the efficiency of governance in the Russian Federation's Arctic zone (*Regulations on the State Commission on the Development of the Arctic* 2015).

Method

Discourse analysis has become a widely used research method in the study of international relations (Milliken 1999; Holzscheiter 2014). This is due to the fact that the political process, to a large extent, is constituted by acts of communication, and discourse analysis is a useful tool for understanding the relationships between concrete language use and wider social and cultural structures (Titscher, Meyer, Wodak & Vetter 2007: 149). Political text and talk have political functions and implications (Van Dijk 1997: 14); therefore discourse analysis makes it possible to clarify the strategy behind political communication. The aim of the paper is to identify and compare foreign and domestic governmental discourse on the Russian Arctic as it is used by top officials from the Russian Federation. The analytical approach in this paper is based on the three-stage discourse analysis process as defined by N. Fairclough (1996: 26). The first step is the selection of the text units being used in the analysis. The next steps are interpretation and explanation by putting the text into a wider political context.

The documents containing the text units have been selected by using Google search results with the keywords being the surname of the Russian Federation official in combination with the term "Arctic." The selection of the top officials, whose statements and speeches were used in the analysis, was based on the consideration that the strategic level of Russia's state policy on the Arctic relating to the implementation of its national interests in the region and its interaction with other countries had to be covered. Obviously, it is not possible to draw a clear line between the officials' foreign and domestic discourses, because their statements can be perceived differently by both audiences. However, the discourse addressed to foreign audiences was identified by using officials who are authorized to represent Russia's foreign policy, the context of the discourse (for example, if it has been used at an international conference), and the source of the information (for example, an interview given to foreign media). Domestic discourse was identified by using officials whose activities are primarily focused on domestic issues and

the sources of information – Russian news agencies and media, and the Russian language.

Statements by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, Senior Arctic Official Vladimir Barbin, former Senior Arctic Official Anton Vasiliev, and Russia's Envoy to NATO, Alexander Grushko, were primarily selected for understanding the foreign discourse. Statements by Russian President Vladimir Putin, Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu, and the Special Representative of the President of the Russian Federation for International Cooperation in the Arctic and Antarctic, Artur Chilingarov, were very much targeted at both audiences. Domestic discourse was identified by using the viewpoints from the Chairman of the Arctic Commission, Dmitry Rogozin, Russian Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev, and sectoral ministers.

The messages for foreign audiences were searched using the keywords in English, whereas for domestic audiences, in Russian. In total, more than 40 documents – publications and broadcasts in the media, and the speeches of officials – were selected. The selection of documents was completed when no new relevant information for the period from 2013 to 2015 was provided. The analysis was qualitative and inductive. The analytical categories were defined through text analysis, based on the interpretation and explanation of the researcher. It is especially important to mention that foreign and domestic discourse cannot be treated as separate entities – they have to be viewed in interaction, because in this way a better insight into its political use by Russia is provided.

Governmental discourse on the Russian Arctic

Five categories of analysis were defined for structuring Russian Arctic foreign and domestic discourse as used by Russian officials: 1) Russia's national interests in the Arctic; 2) international cooperation; 3) Russia's perception of other countries' strategies; 4) the militarization of the Arctic; and 5) symbolic actions. The statements by Russian officials were arranged and analyzed according to these categories. Table 1 at the end of the article contains a summary of the findings.

Russia's national interests in the Arctic

The Arctic is a region of historical importance for Russia's strategic development and its national pride (Laruelle 2014). In the last decade, it once again became one of the priority regions for Russia after a period of oblivion during the collapse of the USSR. The strategic importance of the

Arctic has been stressed by several top officials. In 2013, V. Putin noted that Russia had returned to a very promising region – the Arctic; therefore it should have all the levers for the protection of security and national interests there (Forbes 2013). Around the same time, the importance of the Arctic was also underlined by S. Shoigu (Rossiya 1 2013). A. Chilingarov stated that Russia's future was inextricably linked with the fate of the polar regions, and that their development should be a national priority. This is mainly because, in the future, the Arctic will become the main resource base for the country – it is estimated that by 2050, the Arctic shelf will provide 20 to 30% of the total Russian oil production (Rikin 2014).

During the meeting of the Security Council of the Russian Federation in 2014 on the implementation of state policy in the Arctic, V. Putin pointed out the main steps to be taken to preserve influence in the region. He defined six key tasks: 1) to improve the quality of governance by establishing the Arctic Commission; 2) to implement the *State Program of the Russian Federation 'Socio-economic development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation for the period till 2020'*; 3) to implement the international legal formalization of the outer borders of Russia's continental shelf in the Arctic Ocean; 4) to develop the Northern Sea Route; 5) to provide environmental security; and 6) to provide integrated security for the Russian Arctic zone and create a new generation, unified system of surface ships and submarines (Kremlin 2014). The tasks named by V. Putin are in accordance with Russia's national interests in the Arctic as defined in *Foundations of Russian Federation State Policy in the Arctic through 2020 and Beyond*.

As a priority region, the Arctic, for Russia, also has geopolitical significance. In A. Chilingarov's view, during the first two decades of the 21st century, Russia will primarily be associated with the development of the Arctic shelf in a similar way as the space exploration and large-scale infrastructure projects in Western and Eastern Siberia at the time of the Soviet Union (Rikin 2014). D. Rogozin has admitted that without the Arctic, Russia cannot maintain its status as a great power (Bolotin 2015). He even places the development of the Arctic into the context of the annexation of Crimea as a general strategic direction for Russia:

Russia is beginning to feel the space and express the claims to the borders and its interests. Last year was a historic event – the restoration of the territorial integrity of Russia, a reunion with Sevastopol and the Crimea. This year there is a new look, a powerful

new emphasis on the development of the Arctic. These are things of the same order. (Staalesen 2015)

Linking the Crimean annexation with Russia's activities in the Arctic may indeed lead to concerns that the Arctic might be the next hot spot in Russia's relations with the West, although the foreign discourse on the Russian Arctic is different. The statements addressed to foreign audiences also include a focus on the targeted implementation of Russia's national interests in the Arctic (Vorobyov 2013), but they stress Russia's willingness to act within the framework of international legal norms. For example, one of the main points of the agenda, as explained by S. Lavrov, is the submission of a request regarding the continental shelf of the Arctic Ocean to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (Sputnik 2014b). Thus, the foreign policy discourse is aimed primarily at demonstrating that Russia will implement its national interests in the region according to the accepted norms and principles of international cooperation. In N. Patrushev's view, with the increasing role of Arctic resources in the global economy, this region is becoming an important arena for Russia's relations with foreign partners in the field of international, military, energy and information security (Egorov 2013). So, in terms of Russia's national interests in the Arctic, an internal political ambition to be the leading power in the promising region can be detected, but at the same time there is a rational understanding of the need for international cooperation and respect for international legal norms as well.

International cooperation

According to *Foundations of Russian Federation State Policy in the Arctic through 2020 and Beyond* (2008: 3), some of the strategic priorities of Russian state policy in the Arctic are to maintain goodneighbourly relations with other Arctic states, both bilaterally and within regional organizations, including the Arctic Council and the Barents Euro-Arctic Region, and to promote economic, scientific and cultural cooperation in the Arctic, as well as cross-border cooperation, including in the field of the efficient development of natural resources and the preservation of the environment in the Arctic. This is in contrast to the somewhat arrogant domestic rhetoric from D. Rogozin that Russia "should come to the Arctic and ... make it hers" and that it does not care what other countries think about its activities in the Arctic (Vzgljad 2015). In his view, the development of the Arctic is characterized by a battle over the first-mover advantages in the region (Vzgljad 2013).

The foreign discourse on the Russian Arctic is very much focused on the importance of international cooperation, mutual understanding and peaceful solutions to the problems. A. Vasiliev gives a specific argument as to why there is no race for Arctic resources among the Arctic states. He stresses the fact that “according to Danish experts, up to 97% of proven reserves are located in the exclusive economic zone of the Arctic States”. In the view of this experienced diplomat, everything has already been divided up in the Arctic, and it is much more effective to pursue national interests in this region together (Vasiliev n.d.). In its foreign discourse, Russia emphasizes that there is a harmony of interests with other actors and indicates that there are no substantial contradictions that might lead to disagreements. For example, S. Lavrov has said:

The priorities of the starting Canadian chairmanship in the Council are close to us – development of resources of the North, the use of the Arctic maritime transport route, support of inhabitants of the Arctic region. They are largely concordant with *The Development Strategy of the Russian Arctic and national security for the period until 2020*. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation 2013)

One of the slogans often used in foreign discourse is similar to the name of the international conferences that have been organized by the Russian Geographical Society since 2011, “Arctic – the territory of dialogue.” For example, this slogan was used by V. Barbin for stressing that cooperation in the Arctic Council is resistant to such external challenges as the crisis in Ukraine over which there are disagreements between Russia and the other countries of the Council (News.rin.ru. 2015). From Russia’s perspective, the Arctic Council is the best platform for international cooperation. S. Lavrov states that the Arctic Council ensures the legitimate rights of the states that have direct access to the Arctic Ocean. This institution sets the rules of engagement in the region, as well as the safe and careful use of its enormous wealth. In S. Lavrov’s view, no one is mentioning any conflict or talking about confrontation at this forum. Everyone is interested in the Arctic being developed through cooperation and respect for international law, including decisions about the boundaries of the continental shelf (RT 2014). A. Grushko’s idea, that members of the Arctic Council proceed from the fact that the Arctic states have enough instruments to solve problems that might naturally emerge in this region by means of talks, cooperation and on the basis of international law, can be added to this (The Arctic Monitor 2015).

A. Chilingarov has expressed the view that Arctic development could actually melt the ice between Russia and the West (Rosneft 2014). His view is based on previous positive experience – for example, the Russian and Norwegian maritime delimitation agreement signed in 2010 – as well as common and interdependent interests. In A. Chilingarov's view, Russia can develop the Arctic shelf on its own, but it would be more effective and less expensive for all sides to do this together with the Western partners (Rikin 2014). Here, the term "the Western partners" can be understood to include not only countries, but also such actors as energy companies like Exxon Mobil, Total and others that are interested in cooperation with Russia, despite the sanctions. The joint US Coast Guard and Russian Border Guard's international exercises that will take place in the autumn of 2015 can also be mentioned as another example of continuing cooperation (Sputnik 2015).

Russia's perception of other countries' strategies

The tense relations between Russia and the Western countries have been transferred at a rhetorical level to the Arctic due to the conflict in Ukraine. Russia's involvement in Ukraine provides solid grounds for the West to promote the image of Russia as an aggressor and a potential threat. In 2014, former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said that Canada and the US need a united front in response to Russia's aggressive reopening of military bases in the Arctic (Peritz 2014). Likewise, the former Foreign Minister of Canada, John Baird, told a Danish newspaper that Ottawa was *determined to promote and defend the sovereignty of Canada in the Arctic* against the Russian threat that manifested in the reactivation of a Soviet-era base on its northeastern coast and fly-bys by Russian aircraft (RT 2014).

S. Lavrov reacted to such rhetoric with a strict statement: "*There are accusations flying about that we are trying to make a land-grab during a latter-day gold rush. This is nonsense. We don't want the Arctic to become an arena of conflict*" (RT 2014). It should be emphasized, however, that an exchange of sharp words between Russia and Canada in relation to the Arctic had already been present before the crisis in Ukraine. For instance, in 2011, A. Vasiliev also had to respond to Canada's complaints about Russia's provocative behaviour in the Arctic. At that time, he said that such views arise from a lack of knowledge of reality, and the inertia of the human mentality (Blanchfield 2011). S. Lavrov rejected Western efforts to present Russia as being aggressive in the Arctic by stressing that Russia has legitimate rights to pursue its interests in the Arctic, like any other country:

The countries that have northern borders must ensure their security, including in the northern region, like in any other part of their territory. This is an axiom: wherever you are and whoever surrounds you, you have to think about your security, including military security. It would be naive to imagine that because we are talking about the Arctic this principle does not apply. (Vorobyov 2013)

While some of the political leaders of Western countries attempt to strengthen the image of Russia as a potential threat in the Arctic region, Russian officials promote the idea that it is other countries that are attempting to make the Arctic a conflict zone. For describing the strategy of the Western countries as a whole, Russian officials often refer to NATO. In the view of S. Lavrov, NATO doctrines and analyses occasionally say that the military factor is likely to grow in the Arctic in the context of the intensifying battle for natural resources (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation 2014). A. Grushko says that there is no clear NATO strategy in the Arctic, but from time to time, certain forces in NATO try to push the idea that the Arctic may soon become a battleground and that the alliance must secure access to energy resources in the Arctic (The Arctic Monitor 2015). Likewise, in D. Rogozin's view, NATO countries have been thinking since 2009 about building up military activity in the Arctic (Vzgljad 2013). Thus, there are no contradictions between foreign and domestic discourse with regard to the description of NATO's increasing interest in the Arctic region.

S. Shoigu also noted that developed countries that do not have direct access to the polar regions are striving insistently for the Arctic. They are taking certain political, military and economic steps in this direction (RT 2015). N. Patrushev also stressed that Arctic resources are not only attracting the attention of the Arctic countries, but are also of interest to the EU, China, Japan, South Korea and other countries. Their interest, firstly, has been determined by natural resources and new transport routes (Ivanov 2013). But according to S. Lavrov, this will not lead to an "Arctic Race," because:

International law on Arctic waters clearly determines the rights of both coastal and other states. This includes access for developing the extraction of mineral resources, oil and gas deposits, as well as managing marine biological stocks. International law also regulates the ability of countries to expand the external border of their continental shelf. Today's complicated international situation does

not create any significant changes to the established order. (Sputnik 2014a)

The same position has been expressed by V. Putin, who has said that although many perceive Russia's activity in the Arctic with caution and are afraid of it, Russia will act in the framework of international law (TASS 2014).

The Militarization of the Arctic

The discourse around the militarization of the Arctic is the most contradictory, but it arises from the so-called "security dilemma" that arises when an effort by one side to maximize its security increases threats to the other, thus escalating tension in international relations (Herz 1950). Russia's increasing military presence in the Arctic is based on the grounds that other countries pose a threat to Russia. V. Putin recalled that there are US nuclear submarines along the coast of Norway and that the flight time of missiles launched from them to Moscow is just 16-17 minutes (Forbes 2013). According to N. Patrushev, there is regular US Navy and Royal Navy submarine activity in the Arctic, there are at least three weekly flights of patrol aircraft, and about ten major events in operational and combat training are planned to be held there every year. The US has also created a united armed forces base in Alaska, Canada is building a port in Nanisivik and a military training facility in Resolute, and Denmark has created a united command for the armed forces of the Arctic. N. Patrushev concluded that in such circumstances Russia cannot just watch war preparations by foreign countries near its borders (Ivanov 2013). Two years later, S. Shoigu announced that "a permanent military presence in the Arctic and the ability to protect the state's interests by means of armed struggle is seen as an integral part of the overall national security policy" (Shoigu 2015).

A. Vasiliev provided additional pragmatic and more neutral arguments for the increasing military factor in the Arctic. In his view, the Russian military build-up is based on Russia's concern with defending its northern regions due to climate change. Russia has a 20,000-kilometre border on the Arctic Ocean. Previously, it was a secure border of frozen ice, but it is now melting because of rising temperatures. Therefore, there is a need to strengthen Russia's military presence to protect the country from illegal border crossings, illegal immigration, organized crime and terrorism (TASS 2014). The position of a US Senior State Department Official during the Background Briefing on the Arctic Council Preview complements the peaceful discourse of A. Vasiliev, which is intended to underline that there

are no actual grounds for tension in the region because of increasing military activity by Russia:

Arctic maneuvers [*sic*], military operations, I'm not – I have not seen anything that goes much above and beyond what we've seen in the past decade or so from the Russians. What has happened is, for instance, the Norwegians and the Russians have been conducting joint military exercises up until when the sanctions were invoked. Because of the sanctions, we're not allowed to have military-to-military contact and operations, so they've done it separately. When the Norwegians did their exercises, it got no notice. When the Russians did their exercises, it was portrayed as Russian aggression. I'm not sure that they've done anything more than they've done in the past, and they have a right to take necessary steps to preserve their sovereignty of the waters that they're responsible for. (U.S. Department of State 2015)

From S. Lavrov's point of view, there are no problems in the Arctic that require NATO's involvement or any military solutions at all (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation 2014). In his view, the Arctic region is not influenced by the current difficult international situation (Sputnik 2014b). From Russia's viewpoint, the Arctic is a peaceful region, and there are no direct military risks. Therefore, the Arctic should remain a zone with a minimum of military activity (Sputnik 2014).

Symbolic actions

Geopolitical competition in the Arctic also has a symbolic dimension. One of the most significant episodes of this kind of tension occurred in 2007, when a Russian expedition to the North Pole headed by A. Chilingarov planted Russia's flag in the seabed of the North Pole. This was perceived with outrage in the West, because from their point of view it was a symbolic act by Russia in claiming the Arctic territories. However, in recent years, Russia has placed an emphasis on cooperation rather than its solo achievements in the Arctic. S. Lavrov, in a speech in the Arctic Council in 2013, stressed that there was a rather symbolic trip to the North Pole by senior officials of the Arctic Council, together with N. Patrushev and A. Chilingarov. During the trip, photos were taken with a background of the flags of eight countries and the flag of the Arctic Council that had high historical value (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation 2013). It was a diplomatic gesture that Russia respected the interests of other countries. During this speech, he also invited his international colleagues to

the third international Arctic Forum, organized by the Russian Geographical Society. The title of the conference also carries a symbolic meaning – “Territory of Dialogue,” which highlights Russia’s efforts for cooperation with other states.

Table 1-1: Foreign and domestic discourse on the Russian Arctic

Category of analysis	Foreign discourse	Domestic discourse
Russia’s national interests	The implementation of Russia’s national interests in the Arctic is based on international cooperation within the framework of international legal norms.	The Arctic is a very important region for Russia. The Arctic is an integral part of Russia as a great power. Russia is a leading power in the Arctic.
International cooperation	The Arctic Council is the best platform for international cooperation. There is no confrontation in the Arctic Council. The Arctic may promote rapprochement between Russia and the West.	There is a battle over the first-mover advantage in the Arctic. The Arctic should be Russia’s.
Russia’s perception of other countries’ strategies	The Western countries are attempting to make the Arctic a conflict zone by presenting Russia as being aggressive.	The increased interest by other countries in the Arctic creates security risks for Russia.
Militarization of the Arctic	Russia’s military build-up is a legitimate ensuring of its national security, a reaction to the military activities of other countries and the effects of climate change. There is no need for military solutions in the Arctic.	Russia is ready to protect its interests in the Arctic by military means.

Symbolic actions	The Arctic is a territory of dialogue. Photos with the Arctic partners at the North Pole.	Solo photos of Russia's explorers and officials at the North Pole.

Conclusions

The foreign and domestic discourses on the Russian Arctic balance between the need to maintain favourable relations with international partners and, at the same time, to achieve competitive advantages in the region. In the domestic governmental discourse, there is a stress on the strategic importance of the Arctic for Russia. The development of the Russian Arctic is vitally important for Russia as a great power. Russia's geographical location and historical achievements in the region give it a natural competitive advantage for being the leading power in the region. The strategic aim of Russia's state policy in the Arctic is to keep that status and to develop it further. "Making the Arctic Russia's" is the essence of the domestic discourse, which contradicts its cooperation-oriented foreign discourse, but these discourses serve different purposes. Since the domestic discourse is targeted to internal audiences, one of its functions is to maintain national pride, and at a symbolic level, Russia's achievements in the Arctic provide the foundation for that.

Whereas the aim of the foreign discourse is to maintain favourable relations with partners, there is an emphasis on cooperation. However, this contradiction can be used in arguing that Russia is hiding its true intentions and misleading other states. Some of the leaders of Western countries are indeed attempting to portray Russia as an aggressor in the Arctic. However, it would be more appropriate to say that Russia's military build-up in the Arctic is primarily a tool of strategic deterrence. That assertion is based on the consideration that all the major players in the Arctic region are developing their military presences, and that Russia is indeed placing an emphasis in its foreign policy on the interdependence of interests in the Arctic, the necessity for cooperation and respect for legal norms. Therefore, it is much more likely that the Arctic could serve instead for Russian-Western rapprochement, rather than becoming the next geopolitical hot spot. At the same time, using a peaceful and defensive foreign discourse, Russia is winning time to strengthen its position in the region, which does not exclude the possibility of an escalation of conflict in the future.

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2

The Political Economy of Russia's Reimagined Arctic

George Soroka

This article examines Russia's evolving approach to Arctic development in light of the Kremlin's "Asian pivot" and the ongoing political rift between Russia and the West over the crisis in Ukraine. Specifically, I contend that the Arctic represents a key component of Moscow's attempts to reorient geopolitically and economically after its annexation of Crimea, and that it is part of a larger, long-term plan to develop Siberia and the Russian Far East as both a resource base for the country and a transit route for goods moving between Asia and Europe. Consequently, this piece assesses the region's political economy from the perspective of two interrelated Arctic projects – the construction of the Yamal LNG facility and government-led efforts to promote utilization of the Northern Sea Route. Adopting a constructivist approach, I argue that Russia's recent efforts to develop the Arctic are motivated not only by material incentives, but also involve a significant status-seeking component that draws on Russia's view of itself as the preeminent Arctic power.

The Arctic is staggeringly rich in natural resources, with an oft-cited 2008 United States Geological Survey report estimating that it harbours "undiscovered, technically recoverable" hydrocarbons equivalent to 90 billion barrels of oil, 1,670 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, and 44 billion barrels of natural gas liquids, or approximately 22% of the globe's unexploited reserves (Stauffer, 2008). This is in addition to sizable mineral deposits, which run the gamut from prosaic metals like lead and copper to more precious commodities such as gold, diamonds, and various rare-earth elements. Its biological resources are also impressive; for example, major cod and haddock stocks exist in the Barents Sea. As a result, with ice cover on northern waters shrinking precipitously over the last several decades and technological innovations making possible commercial activities unthinkable just a few years ago, it is becoming increasingly plausible to talk

about the large-scale development of the Arctic. This holds true not only across extractive industries, but also in the shipping sector.

Russia, given its propitious geology, long history of Arctic engagement, and the sheer size of its northern territories, is particularly well positioned to benefit from this confluence of events under favourable macroeconomic conditions. Even though the Russian Arctic is home to fewer than two million people (Ahlenius, 2008), the region already accounts for approximately one-fifth of the country's GDP, and Moscow is eager to increase these numbers. Yet it has some catching up to do. For much of the 20th century, the Arctic was a focal point for Soviet military and industrial activity, but the mounting fiscal pressures and competing political priorities that emerged in the wake of the Soviet Union's dissolution caused Russia to pull back from the High North in the early 1990s. It was not until the 2000s that the Kremlin's interest in the Arctic began to noticeably rekindle, fuelled by a peculiar blend of resource nationalism and historically contingent ideas about the region's role in defining Russia's national identity and international standing.¹

Concerned with the present, this article examines Russia's economic push northward in light of its estrangement from the West and Moscow's attempts to rebalance geopolitical and trade relations toward the Pacific Rim. The argument advanced consists of two parts. First, I claim that material inducements are, by themselves, insufficient to explain the Kremlin's approach to developing the Arctic, especially as President Vladimir Putin has indicated that he wants Russia to be acknowledged as a major power by the global community and believes an active Arctic presence will help achieve this recognition. Consequently, Moscow's northern development strategy is mediated by a significant status-seeking imperative that not only complements economic incentives, but also aids in defining how these are understood and acted upon. Second, I claim that in the aftermath of the Ukraine crisis, the role the Arctic plays in Russia's efforts to reorient toward Asia has been underappreciated. True, Moscow's attention began turning northward well before its March 2014 annexation of Crimea and the outbreak of fighting in the Donbas region; already in 2008, then-president Dmitrii Medvedev, speaking before the Security Council, stated that he wanted to "convert the Arctic into Russia's resource base for the 21st century" (2008). The Kremlin's "Asian pivot" predates it as well, Putin having explicitly called for this two years prior (2012b). Nonetheless, the worsening of relations with the West that resulted from the confrontation over Ukraine has intensified the emphasis placed on both

developing the Arctic and establishing closer ties with Asia, serving to increasingly conflate these objectives while simultaneously foregrounding their status-related dimensions.

In examining how the latter interact with material incentives, a tripartite distinction between motivations, processual policy “drivers,” and “audience effects” provides a useful heuristic (see Figure 1 below). At the top-most analytic level, Russia’s plans for developing the Arctic – which represent a critical component of what may be thought of as a wider “nesting doll” economic strategy for Siberia and the Russian Far East, as well as Eurasia more generally – are spurred on by pragmatic as well as status-oriented motivations. Moscow is today striving to position itself at the head of a vast Eurasian confederation, one whose claim to occupying a distinctive geographic space is predicated on its latitudinal intermediation between Asia and Europe. At the same time, the longitudinal penetration of Russia’s understanding of Eurasia is extending ever further northward, propelled by economic pragmatism as well as resentment over how Russia has been treated in the international system.

However, while the economic allure of a warming Arctic is self-evident, the impetus for engaging in status-seeking behaviour requires explanation. Nostalgia for the great power standing that Russia ceded when the bipolar world order that had characterized the latter half of the 20th century crumbled has long been a prominent feature of its post-communist politics. Not only do surveys conducted over the last two-plus decades consistently show that a majority of the population regrets the Soviet Union’s demise, but they likewise reveal that many hold extremely negative opinions of the two men most identified with this outcome, Russia’s first democratically-elected (and pro-Western) president, Boris Yeltsin, and the hapless last leader of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev. Consequently, striving to recover international prestige resonates with a domestic audience; while seeking after status is an avowedly elite-led phenomenon, it conspicuously taps into, and reinforces, mass demand. Putin, who once described the USSR’s collapse as the “greatest geopolitical catastrophe” of the 20th century (2005), finds this an attractive appeal to make, in his speeches repeatedly invoking imagery of the West trying to “put Russia on her knees” or “chain the Russian bear.” As he emphasized in a February 2012 article penned while he was seeking re-election to a third presidential term, “Russia is accorded respect, and treated with consideration, only when she is strong and stands firmly on her feet” (2012b).

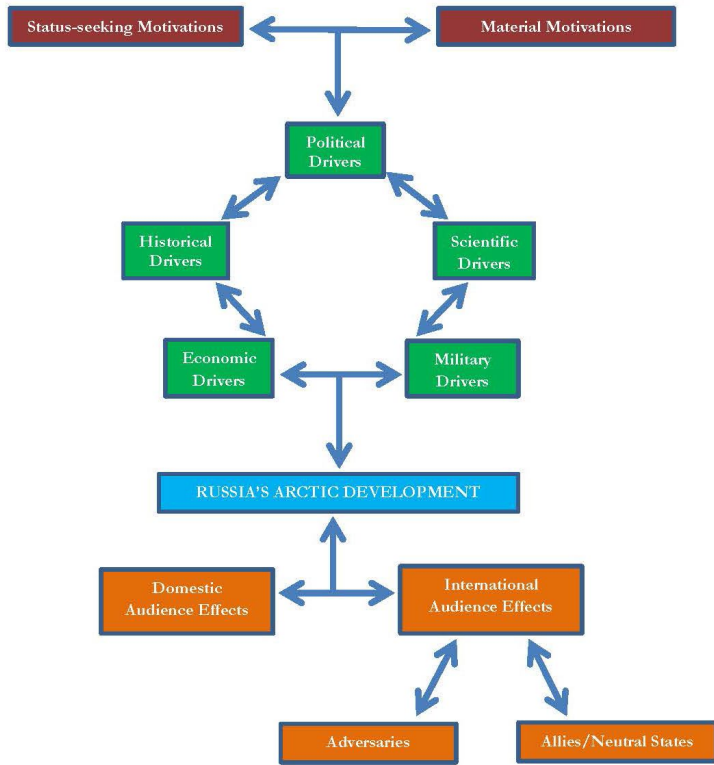


Figure 1: Conceptual representation of factors governing Russia's Arctic development strategy.

At a secondary level of analysis, there exist a number of policy drivers that serve as the mechanisms through which both material and status-related motivations are reified. They include economic, political, military, scientific, and historical factors, all of which, to varying degrees, contain within themselves objective material and subjective perceptual components. Moreover, these are not discrete, self-contained units, but rather porous categories that interact dynamically. For example, developing an offshore hydrocarbon field is an economic endeavour, but it also generates military implications, such as the need to protect shipping lanes utilized by oil tankers and reinforce territorial claims.

Finally, who the intended audience is for these narratives and their associated behaviours matters (audience effects likewise do not exist just as outputs, but provide systemic feedback in ways that may affect drivers and even motivations). Emphasizing its Arctic identity for a domestic audience is certainly part of the appeal of increasing regional involvement, but

Russia's actions also concurrently function to send messages to neighbouring states and other countries interested in the Arctic. However, not only does the content of these dual communication streams vary (as they are expected to perform differing functions), but dealing with this "lack of alignment" and the consequent "potential for counter-productive setbacks caused by inconsistencies between them" poses a significant political challenge (Gorenburg, 2014). Illustrating this, there is a tension between Moscow's hardline domestic rhetoric concerning issues such as NATO's holding of military exercises in the region and the multi-track diplomatic cooperation Russia continues to exhibit in its relations with other northern NATO-member states,² both bilaterally and through organizations such as the Arctic Council.³

This mode of argumentation is informed by the theoretical framework of social constructivism, an underlying premise of which is that intersubjectively constructed identities affect how national interests are defined (Ruggie, 2000: 14). The "social facts" that emerge from this process may "differ fundamentally from material facts, the reality that exists irrespective of collective beliefs about its existence," but they do not lack causal power (Abdelal, Blyth, & Parsons, 2005: n.p.). With regard to economics, this approach holds that the perception of material interests is not universal, but rather the product of specific contexts and actors, with *ex-ante* collective identities and beliefs "endowing the economies in which they are embedded with social purposes" (Abdelal, Blyth, & Parsons, 2010: 9). It would therefore be a mistake to interpret what is happening in the Russian Arctic only through the prism of *realpolitik* and a rationalist, material ontology that overlooks the ability of social agency to create meaning.⁴ Factors other than objectively knowable, tangible facts may serve to accentuate or attenuate the attractiveness of various economic options, allowing, for example, fiscally sub-optimal projects to be pursued if they satisfy status-seeking demands. Exactly this tendency is today being evinced in Moscow's economic vision for the Far North, where state-led development goals are not only determined by straightforward economic calculations, but also take into account more subjective geopolitical motivations intended to buttress Russia's international prestige and reinforce its self-concept of being a key global player.

Developing the Russian Arctic: Domestic and International Considerations

Domestically, the Russian government sees the High North as central to the country's development, not only in terms of exploiting its natural resources and geographic location, but also as providing a revenue engine capable of furthering regional integration into the Moscow-centred economy. The latter represents a real concern, as parts of Siberia and the Russian Far East are more closely tied economically with their Asian neighbours than Russia's European heartland.⁵

Arctic development is likewise regarded as a means of stemming demographic declines in Russia's northern regions, where decrepit Soviet-era monotowns still arise incongruously from the tundra, transportation infrastructure is woefully lacking, and the distances between population hubs are vast. Re-invigorating these sparsely inhabited hinterlands is, among other things, viewed as a way to ensure territorial integrity and bolster national security. As to why this is an issue, consider that if we include its Arctic islands, Russia's northern coastline stretches for roughly 40,000 kilometres (Antrim, 2010: 19) – a distance equivalent to the circumference of the earth at the equator – but most of it is guarded by nothing more than fierce weather patterns.

Internationally, meanwhile, the Arctic plays a growing role in Russian foreign policy. Tellingly, although the annexation of Crimea had taken place just weeks earlier, Putin emphasized the region during his April 2014 Security Council address, explaining that Russia wants to not only restore its previous role in the Arctic, but also to markedly strengthen its presence there at a time when the interests of regional states increasingly “intersect and collide” and even distant countries are eyeing the Arctic's potential (2014b).

Specifically, the Arctic is crucial to Moscow's much-vaunted pivot towards Asia. Despite the impact of Western sanctions and the Russian economy entering a recessionary phase, the European Union (EU) remains Russia's leading trading partner. In 2015, the country's total trade with the EU-28 amounted to more than 212 billion EUR, while the commensurate figure for trade between Russia and China was just slightly above 57 billion EUR (European Union, 2016: 8). Given that animosity and mistrust have come to define Russia's relationship with the West, this heavy economic reliance on the EU does not sit well with the Kremlin, which has come to

view the European marketplace as prone to manipulation by anti-Russian ideologues.

Russia is working with multiple partners to reorient its trade flows to Asia, but China is indisputably the linchpin of the strategy. Citing “colossal potential” for bilateral cooperation with Beijing and describing the turn toward the region as “a chance to catch the ‘Chinese wind’ in the ‘sails’ of our economy” (2012b), Putin has stressed that far from feeling threatened by China’s global ascendance, Moscow welcomes it. As a result, instead of trying to compete with Beijing’s Silk Road initiative, the Kremlin has decided to piggyback on it, with Putin and Chinese leader Xi Jinping announcing during a May 8, 2015, press conference that the two countries would seek to integrate China’s proposed “One Belt, One Road” trade and development framework with the Moscow-led Eurasian Economic Union.⁶ Concurrently, Putin issued an explicit invitation for China to partner with Russia on Arctic ventures (Ofitsial’nye, 2015b).

In sectoral terms, Moscow’s plan for Arctic development is focused primarily on hydrocarbons, with the expansion of regional shipping being a secondary, albeit closely related, goal. This is not surprising, as Russia possesses enormous energy reserves. According to a 2009 United States Department of Energy report, out of 61 major oil and gas fields in the Arctic, 43 are located within Russia’s borders (Kramer & Krauss, 2011), and more are continually being discovered and explored.⁷ However, this means that Moscow’s Arctic gambit is highly dependent on the vicissitudes of global energy markets. Showcasing how reliant the Russian economy is on hydrocarbons, in 2013 – the year before global prices collapsed – oil and gas accounted for 68% of export revenues (Metelitsa, 2014).

Two initiatives highlight the economic promise and peril of this region, along with its status-related appeal: Yamal LNG, a liquefied natural gas (LNG) facility being built on an icy, wind-swept peninsula in northwestern Siberia, and Russian efforts to develop the Northern Sea Route (NSR) into a major shipping lane, one which, it is hoped, will someday become a viable alternative to the Suez Canal for moving cargo between Asia and Europe.

Yamal LNG

Located on the Gulf of Ob in the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, Yamal LNG will harness the Yuzhno-Tambeyskoye field, thought to contain 926 billion cubic metres of natural gas (Novatek, 2016). Construction began in 2012 and will continue until 2021, costing 27 billion USD.

Supplied by over 200 wells, it will have an annual LNG production capacity of 16.5 million metric tons once all three planned liquefaction trains are functioning. Additional infrastructure associated with the facility includes the new port of Sabetta (developed as a public-private partnership with the Russian government), an international airport, and a planned rail extension that will run nearly 200 kilometres south to Bovanenkovo, currently the world's northernmost rail terminus. Envisioned as a part of the proposed Northern Latitudinal Railway, this extension could eventually link Sabetta to the Trans-Siberian and Baikal-Amur Mainline railways (Putin, 2015a).

Being developed by Novatek, Russia's largest independent gas producer, together with France's Total (since 2011) and the Chinese National Petroleum Corporation, or CNPC (since 2013), Yamal LNG acquired a new partner in March 2016 when Novatek sold a 9.9% stake to China's Silk Road Fund (SRF)⁸ for 1.087 billion EUR, leaving it with 50.1% ownership (Total and CNPC retained their respective 20% positions) (Novatek, 2016).

Speaking at a trade event in March 2016, Yamal LNG's head, Evgenii Kot, revealed that 96% of the plant's projected output has already been booked in the form of long-term (20-25 year) contracts, with around 86% of it destined for Asia ("Yamal LNG," 2016c). During the summer months, shipments are expected to travel directly from Sabetta to Asia, with transshipment via northern European ports occurring throughout the rest of the year (Shiryaevskaya, 2013). In preparation for the start of production, South Korean shipbuilder Daewoo is constructing up to 15 Arc7 class double-acting LNG tankers, the first having been launched in January 2016 ("DSME," 2016).

Until recently, however, Yamal LNG's future appeared uncertain. The United States imposed sanctions on Novatek in 2014, targeting both the company and its director, Gennadii Timchenko (personally close to Putin, Timchenko owns 23.49% of Novatek [Barsukov, 2016]), curtailing access to capital markets and dollar-denominated loans.⁹ Consequently, taking into account the contributions of Yamal LNG's partners, state subventions (including more than 2 billion USD from Russia's National Wealth Fund [Staalesen, 2015c]), a 730 million EUR loan from the SRF (Novatek, 2015), and 4 billion USD pledged by Russia's Sberbank and Gazprombank, the project was still short an estimated 10 billion USD in funding at the beginning of 2016. Meanwhile, Chinese banks were reportedly stalling on a

long-awaited loan package because they wanted European financial houses involved in the deal to mitigate their political risk (Barsukov, 2016). Amid this scenario, Novatek sought to assuage investors' fears in the beginning of March 2016 by reaffirming that it was committed to launching the first liquefaction train in 2017, notwithstanding the funding shortfall and speculation that operations might begin at a loss due to low gas prices ("Yamal LNG," 2016d). These unsettling developments prompted the Russian government to intervene, with Deputy Prime Minister Arkadii Dvorkovich telling reporters at the Boao Forum for Asia in late March 2016 that Chinese Premier Li Keqiang had agreed to "speed up" financing for the plant ("China," 2016). By the following month, the situation was improving. On April 11, 2016, it was announced that loan agreements with Sberbank and Gazprombank had been concluded (Yamal LNG, 2016b), and less than three weeks later a deal worth over 12 billion USD was finally signed with China Development Bank and the Export-Import Bank of China (Yamal LNG, 2016a).

Moscow's advocacy on behalf of Yamal LNG is revealing, because unlike state-controlled Gazprom, which also has a presence on the peninsula and just began year-round shipment of its Novy Port oil via the NSR in early 2016, Novatek is a privately held firm. Putin has long been a vocal supporter of the project, declaring in a December 2015 press conference that he was "amazed" at how efficiently construction was progressing and observing that Russia had an obligation to support it in light of the substantial sums already invested by foreign businesses (2015a). Economic advantages aside, the successful completion of Yamal LNG holds considerable propaganda value, as it will undoubtedly be spun to highlight Russia's technological prowess and the impotency of Western sanctions. Moscow therefore cannot afford a debacle, particularly after terminating Gazprom's monopoly on LNG exports in 2013.

The Northern Sea Route

For all the mystique that the Northwest Passage commands in the Western imagination, it is the Northeast Passage, and specifically the NSR portion of it,¹⁰ which holds the greatest promise for Arctic shipping given its potential to serve as a conduit between Europe and Asia.¹¹ With one terminus at Novaya Zemlya and the other at Cape Dezhnev on the Bering Strait, the NSR is not so much a defined route as a series of interlaced passages that primarily run along the Russian coastline, ranging from around 2,200 to 2,900 nautical miles in length (Østreng, 2010).

Soviet leaders had long sought to develop the NSR as an internal shipping lane.¹² They were fairly successful in this, with the cargo transported peaking in 1987 at 6.58 million tons (Farré et al., 2014: 302). The USSR's collapse, however, ushered in a sharp decline in utilization, even though the NSR formally opened to foreign-flagged vessels in July 1991. Consequently, although segments of it continued to be plied by the Russian Navy and domestic ships, only in the last few years has the NSR come to be regularly, if erratically from year-to-year, visited by outsiders.

Post-communist Russia's push to promote Arctic shipping is not new; the 2001 Maritime Doctrine already addressed the importance of the NSR to the country's economic and strategic interests ("Morskaiia doktrina," 2001). But the prospect was largely hypothetical until not that long ago. Two German heavy-lift vessels, the *Beluga Fraternity* and *Beluga Foresight*, brought the NSR to global prominence in 2009, when they traversed it in the course of a voyage that took them from South Korea all the way to Nigeria via various ports of call. Although they were not, as often claimed, the first foreign-flagged commercial ships to complete a transit of the NSR (Revkin, 2009), their journey received wide media coverage due to its tie-in with global warming. Utilizing the NSR cut an estimated 3,000 nautical miles off the trip and saved 200 tons of fuel per vessel (Beluga, 2010), no small matter given that bunker fuel typically accounts for more than two-thirds of a voyage's cost. Another highly publicized transit occurred in 2013, when the *Yong Sheng*, operated by China's state-owned COSCO Group, became the first ship to transport containerized cargo along the NSR. It made the trip from Dalian to Rotterdam in just 35 days, shaving 2,400 nautical miles and nearly two weeks off a transit of the Suez Canal (McMillan, 2015). As these examples suggest, for shipping between many major hubs, the NSR has the potential to save significant time and distance compared to traditional routes, while also lowering fuel consumption and avoiding piracy around the Strait of Malacca and Horn of Africa.¹³

However, the NSR also poses myriad challenges beyond the vagaries of Arctic weather (its full length has historically only been navigable for a few months per year), including higher insurance premiums; shallow near-shore passages and the limited beam-width of Russian icebreakers, both of which restrict vessel size and preclude optimizing economies-of-scale; a lack of ice-strengthening on the vast majority of the world's commercial fleet; insufficient maintenance and emergency response facilities;¹⁴ incomplete bathymetric data; and outdated or unavailable navigation and communication systems. Moreover, while under ideal conditions it is

possible to travel the NSR without icebreaker accompaniment (as 14 of 18 transiting ships did in 2015 [“NSR Transits 2015”]) or ice pilots, if required the costs for these services can run into hundreds of thousands of dollars.¹⁵

Environmental and political risks must similarly be considered. The Arctic’s remoteness and ecological fragility guarantee that a major maritime accident or oil spill would represent a public relations nightmare. Russia and other countries, most prominently the United States, also disagree as to whether portions of the NSR constitute internal waterways or international straits.¹⁶ (Jurisdictional issues became even more of a potential problem after the revised 2012 Federal Law on the NSR codified its boundaries as corresponding to Russia’s Exclusive Economic Zone [EEZ]).¹⁷

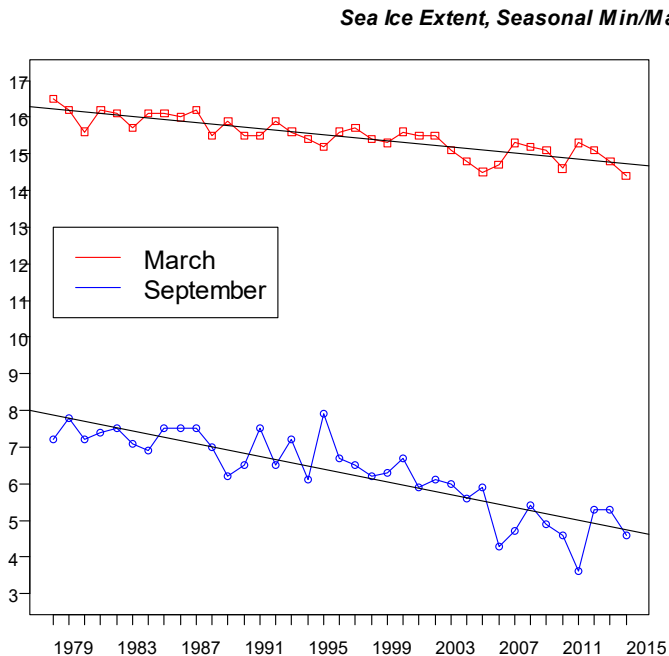
Furthermore, in 2017, additional regulations on Arctic waterways are slated to go into effect when the International Maritime Organization’s Polar Code is finally implemented.¹⁸ In short, the obstacles preventing the NSR from being an attractive option for shippers are substantial, and rectifying the most problematic of them will require huge upfront expenditures that Russia can ill afford at present. However, these capital outlays are essential if the NSR is to become a full-fledged shipping lane.



Figure 2-2: Image created to author’s specifications by Fei Carnes of Harvard University’s Center for Geographic Analysis using ArcGIS.

Still, the NSR remains tempting, particularly given the unexpectedly rapid warming of the northern cryosphere. A 2007 study examining data from 1953-2006 found that Arctic sea ice had disappeared at a rate even faster than the most pessimistic models had earlier predicted (Stroeve, Holland, Meier, Scambos, & Serreze, 2007), and the overall trend has shown no signs of abating since then. Indicative of this, although ice levels fluctuate year to year and seasonal measurements are imperfectly correlated, in 2012 Arctic sea ice registered at the lowest summer level observed since satellite monitoring began in 1979, while 2016 witnessed a new winter low, besting the previous record established in 2015 (“Daily Sea Ice,” 2016). However, it is not just the extent of the ice cover that is decreasing; as melting intensifies during now-warmer Arctic summers, the ice that reforms in the colder months is increasingly becoming thinner and easier to navigate than multi-year ice, raising the possibility that the NSR could someday remain open year-round.¹⁹ In any case, if declines continue at the present rate, Arctic waters may witness virtually ice-free summers before mid-century (Overland & Wang, 2013).

Figure 2-3: Graph based on data from the National Snow and Ice Data Center’s *Sea Ice Index*.²⁰



Moreover, the NSR does not simply run along an east-west vector. It also possesses a north-south component, with Russian officials keen to integrate it more fully into a transport corridor of railways and rivers such as the Ob, Yenisei, and Lena in order to expedite the movement of raw materials out of the country's expansive interior to Arctic ports, as well as to resupply isolated inland communities. This is not without precedent. Norilsk Nickel, the world's leading producer of nickel and palladium, already utilizes the Yenisei River port of Dudinka, located 370 kilometres from the Arctic Ocean, to ship nearly year-round via the NSR, having begun doing so in 1979 (Armstrong, 1983: 254).²¹

Concomitantly, in keeping with the observation that the emergence of new maritime trade routes is not only dependent on climate and sea conditions, but is also driven by attempts to circumvent or attenuate political problems (Blunden, 2012: 117), Russia views increasing the commercial viability of the NSR as part of its broader Far East development strategy. As Russia's Minister of Economic Development, Alexei Uliukaev, recently stated, these projects represent "links in a chain," as "transit through the Northern Sea Route requires the use and capabilities of ports in the Far East and the ability to use ports in the Arctic Ocean basin" (Ofitsial'nye, 2016).

Putin, for his part, is clear about Moscow's vision for the NSR, calling once again for it to be turned "into a competitive transport corridor of global significance" during his September 2015 address to the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok (2015c). (Three months prior, the Kremlin announced the completion of a classified 15-year development plan for the NSR.²²) To facilitate this, Russia is rebuilding its aging icebreaker fleet, with at least 14 ships in the construction or planning phases (Staalesen, 2015a).²³ However, even without these new vessels, Russia already controls more than half of the world's polar-class icebreakers, with 19 owned by the state (including the only nuclear icebreakers in existence) and 22 more operated by Russian firms. In contrast, Canada, another country with a vast Arctic coastline, possesses six total (O'Rourke, 2016: 10).

Russia is also putting into place formal institutions to aid the NSR's development. In May 2013, Prime Minister Dmitrii Medvedev signed a decree creating the Moscow-based Northern Sea Route Administration (NSRA) (Ministerstvo, 2013), which is responsible for issuing permits, ensuring navigational safety, assisting with emergency-response operations, and monitoring environmental conditions along the waterway.²⁴

Meanwhile, Russia's Arctic Commission was established in early 2015. Headed by Deputy Prime Minister Dmitrii Rogozin, its task is to centralize and coordinate policy implementation across the region, a significant portion of which concerns the NSR.²⁵

Bolstering trans-Arctic shipping will also require the participation of Asian states, and Moscow has been steadily laying the groundwork for this. During Putin's visit to China in May 2014, he and Xi issued a joint statement agreeing to foster collaboration across a number of spheres, including the NSR's utilization (Ofitsial'nye, 2014). Similarly, in December 2015, Russia's Minister for Far East Development, Aleksandr Galushka, and Xu Shaoshi, the head of China's State Committee for Development and Reform, signed a memorandum of understanding intended to strengthen regional cooperation, of which Arctic shipping is an integral component ("Minvostokrazvitiia," 2015).

Official expectations for the NSR's future tend toward optimism: Russian Deputy Prime Minister Arkadii Dvorkovich stated in June 2015 that the NSR has the potential to handle over 80 million tons of cargo annually by 2030 (Pravitel'stvo, 2015a). Likewise, China's Polar Research Institute has modeled a scenario under which between 5 and 15% of that country's international trade could pass through the NSR by 2020 (Doyle, 2013), with COSCO noting in August 2015 that it was "assessing the possibilities for more regular shipping between Europe and Asia along the NSR" and was "optimistic" about prospects for the future (cited in Staalesen, 2015b). Meanwhile, in January 2016, Kazuko Shiraishi, Japan's Ambassador of Arctic Affairs, announced that Japan was ready to redirect up to 40% of its Europe-bound cargo, which currently ships through the Indian Ocean, to the NSR (Zabelina, 2016).

Efforts to promote the NSR have yielded mixed results to date, however. Utilization grew dramatically in the early years of this decade, especially for trans-Arctic voyages. While only four transits were reported in 2010, 38 uninterrupted crossings took place in 2012, moving nearly 1.21 million tons of cargo ("NSR Transits 2012"), and the same number occurred in 2013, moving almost 1.18 million tons of cargo ("NSR Transits 2013").²⁶ Yet since peaking in 2012-2013, both the number of transits and the volume of cargo transited have declined appreciably. In 2014, only 31 such voyages took place ("NSR Transits 2014"), accounting for 274.3 thousand tons of cargo ("Ob'em perevozok," n.d.). According to the head of the NSRA, this decline resulted from local economic conditions and not wider political

problems (Litvintseva, 2014), but it is hard to accept this assertion unreservedly, especially as last year the number fell even further. In 2015, only 18 transits took place, resulting in just 39.6 thousand tons of cargo transported, most of it carried by one Chinese ship (the *Yong Sheng*) in the course of two voyages (“NSR Transits 2015”). As to what caused this dramatic dropoff, it is correlated with three broad factors: lower bunker fuel prices,²⁷ the August 2015 opening of a second shipping lane in the Suez Canal, and Russia’s ongoing political isolation.

Nonetheless, even in these challenging economic conditions, the total volume of cargo shipped along the NSR has steadily risen, in large part due to the build-out of Yamal LNG and other Arctic projects (Olshevsky, 2016). Statistics reveal that 5.43 million tons of cargo passed through at least a segment of the NSR in 2015, up from 3.98 million in 2014 (“Ob”em perevozok,” n.d.). Moreover, although applying for a permit to use the NSR does not guarantee that a voyage will be made, in 2015 the NSRA received a total of 730 requests (132 of them from foreign-flagged vessels), up from 661 in 2014.²⁸

Realistically, the prognosis for Arctic shipping needs to be tempered.²⁹ The NSR will not replace the Suez Canal, which recorded 17,483 transits in 2015,³⁰ as a major cargo thoroughfare anytime in the near to medium term. With regard to utilizing it for container shipping, according to Maersk Group CEO Nils Andersen, this “is not something that will happen within the next 10 to 20 years” (cited in Milne, 2013). Even Russia’s Deputy Transportation Minister, Viktor Olersky, has admitted that the NSR “is no alternative to the Suez Canal” (cited in Pettersen, 2013a). Instead, its prospects for the foreseeable future will remain highly dependent on hydrocarbon exports and the health of Russia’s domestic shipping industry, particularly if tensions with the West do not abate and fuel prices remain depressed. Nor will continuing regional warming necessarily work in the NSR’s favour, as this raises the possibility of still-shorter routes opening up through the so-called “donut hole” in the middle of the Arctic Ocean, which falls outside the legal jurisdiction of any state.³¹

Russia’s Arctic Imaginary

Contextualizing the emphasis that the Russian government is placing on projects such as Yamal LNG and developing the NSR requires assessing the wider relevance of the Arctic, a region that enjoys tremendous resonance in the national consciousness. Connoting “the great frontier: a place of adventure, symbol of territorial grandeur, and source of abundant resources”

(Medvedev, 2016: 1), its appeal is not hard to comprehend. Russia has been a palpable presence in the Arctic since Tsarist times,³² and for much of the 20th century it functioned as a space wherein the Soviet Union could credibly demonstrate its military, technological, and scientific capabilities to the world. Moscow's northward turn is also occurring amid political efforts to selectively rehabilitate the Soviet past, and the USSR's impressive achievements in polar exploration, navigation, and research are obvious fodder for this recourse to history. All these associations render the Arctic symbolically potent.

Exemplifying this, Putin's speeches concerning the region have consistently emphasized the interplay between material and status-seeking motivations and highlighted connections between economic and other policy drivers, as well as the physical and conceptual interconnectedness of the Arctic with other regions, both Russian and foreign. As he once declared, the Arctic is a "sphere of Russia's special interests" precisely because "practically all aspects of national security—the military-political, economic, technological, environmental, [and] resource-based" —are concentrated there (2014b).

Consider the following: in his December 2012 address to the Federal Assembly, Putin noted that the enormous potential of Siberia and the Far East presents Russia with "an opportunity to occupy a worthy place in the Asia-Pacific region, the most energetic, dynamically developing region in the world" (2012a). Speaking before the same body a year later, he accentuated that "I am sure that Russia's pivot to the Pacific Ocean, and the dynamic development of all our eastern territory, will not only open up for us new economic possibilities, new horizons, but will also provide us with additional instruments for conducting an active foreign policy" (2013). Subsequently, in his 2015 remarks, Putin stressed the importance of the Northern Sea Route and Arctic to the development of the Russian Far East, along with the need to cooperate with Asian states and regional structures such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) (2015b).

Below, meanwhile, is an excerpt from the Russian President's 2014 keynote speech to the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum:

Nations want to determine their own fates, preserve their cultural, historical and civilizational identity. Given this, the whole geo-economic map of the world changes; alternative centers of economic growth, trade and investment routes form, new associations for

integration arise and strengthen, the call is amplified for collective leadership in which to develop common, concerted decisions taken in solidarity, and not imposed by someone else. (2014a)

Official documents mirror this integrated stance, with the seminal State Policy Principles in the Arctic to 2020 defining four areas of Russian national interests: exploiting northern resources for the country's socio-economic development; maintaining the polar region as a "zone of peace and cooperation"; preserving its environment; and expanding the NSR's utilization ("Osnovy," 2008). The 2014 iteration of Moscow's Arctic development plan to 2020 likewise sets four broad regional goals: ensuring national security; bolstering Russia's international standing; promoting socio-economic development; and introducing statistical monitoring ("Ob utverzhdanii," 2014).

The connection between economic and military drivers in Arctic policy is especially acute, as in the High North they are linked more tightly than in most other parts of the world due to the formidable logistics of operating in such an extreme environment.³³ This interdependence is evident in the 2015 Maritime Doctrine, which, relative to the Arctic, emphasizes maintaining unimpeded passage between the Atlantic and Pacific, the growing significance of the NSR, the resources of the continental shelf, and protecting the polar environment (Ofitsial'nye, 2015a). Meanwhile, the 2015 National Security Strategy assigns the Arctic a role in bringing about a multipolar world and notes the need for expanding international cooperation in the region (Ofitsial'nyi, 2015).

Russia, of course, did not completely exit the Arctic after 1991. The Northern Fleet, based in the closed town of Severomorsk in Murmansk Oblast, has long been the largest of its five geographic fleets, having assumed preeminent status in the Soviet naval hierarchy during the Cold War. Yet after more than two decades of neglect, the current pace of military rebuilding can legitimately be labelled as unprecedented. Since 2013, Moscow has been actively revitalizing abandoned Soviet-era military installations and airfields, as well as constructing new facilities in such locales as Franz Josef Land and the Novosibirsk Islands. Work has progressed swiftly, with a high-ranking military source revealing in December 2015 that six bases had already been completed and equipped ("Russia Completes," 2015).

Looming behind these developments is the fear that a re-militarized Arctic stands poised to become a zone of conflict, proxy or otherwise.

Responding to these concerns, Russia's Arctic Ambassador Anton Vasiliev justified Moscow's actions by highlighting the need to protect Russian economic interests and improve polar search and rescue capabilities, adding that everything was being done "transparently and predictably" and that there was no intent to destabilize the region (cited in "Posol RF," 2014).³⁴ In a similar vein, an unnamed General Staff official explained that the new Northern Fleet-United Strategic Command (which went into operation in December 2014) would be responsible for "protecting Russia's Arctic shipping and fishing, oil and gas fields on the Arctic shelf, and the country's national borders in the north" ("Russia," 2014). Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov weighed in on the matter as well, recently stating that safeguarding Arctic shipping and the region more generally from accidents and myriad other threats represents an impossible task "without the restoration of the infrastructure, including military, which was almost entirely lost in the 90s" (cited in "Lavrov," 2016).

Clearly, real strategic interests are present in the Arctic,³⁵ and Russia is not the only state expanding its regional military footprint.³⁶ However, it must be borne in mind that Moscow's efforts to rebuild a military presence there are part of a larger initiative to modernize the entirety of the Russian armed forces. Moreover, its military facilities in the High North are increasingly being tasked with multiple-use functions, including supporting the Border Service (Lavrov, 2014). Moscow, thus far at least, appears more concerned with "the legal ramifications of the changing Arctic environment" and "establishing an irreversible precedent of control" over shipping than pursuing any grand strategic designs in the region (Flake, 2014: 112-13). Therefore, despite an increase in status-related brinksmanship after the annexation of Crimea (such as that which occurred when Putin ordered a massive snap drill in March 2015 as a response to NATO holding its largest northern exercise since 1967 in Norway),³⁷ no fundamental paradigm shift has occurred in the Kremlin's Arctic military strategy, which remains focused on three main goals: asserting Russia's sovereignty, shielding its economic interests, and demonstrating that it is still a world-class power (Sergunin & Konyshchev, 2015).³⁸

A similar dichotomy between material interests and status-related optics is inherent in Moscow's revised submission to the United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS), which holds that Russia should be allowed to extend its territorial claims in Arctic waters beyond the standard 200-nautical mile limit based on new mappings of its continental shelf morphology.³⁹ Submitted in August 2015, the pending

claim contends that the Lomonosov Ridge, Mendeleev-Alpha Rise, and Chukchi Plateau, along with the Podvodnikov and Chukchi Basins, are all underwater extensions of Russia's landmass ("Partial Revised," 2015). If the data provided are verified, Article 76.5 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) would allow Russia to extend its EEZ up to 350 nautical miles from land (or 100 nautical miles from the 2,500 metre isobar), granting it exclusive control of an additional 1.2 million square kilometres of potentially hydrocarbon- and mineral-rich seabed.⁴⁰ However, as part of this filing, the Kremlin is also touting that the North Pole belongs to Russia. As the proposal, even if it were approved, would not grant control over the water column, and the ocean floor at the Pole lies some 4,000 metres beneath its ice-locked surface, playing this up is a purely symbolic gesture.⁴¹ Still, who "owns" the Pole and the seabed around it has proven to be a contentious international topic.⁴² Indicative of this, Denmark (via Greenland) filed an overlapping submission with CLCS in December 2014 claiming an additional 895,000 square kilometres of undersea territory for itself (Tulupov, 2015), and Canada is expected to follow suit in 2018 (Sevunts, 2016).

Russia's reengagement with the Arctic also encompasses more quixotic expressions of status-seeking. For example, during the Arktika 2007 expedition, polar explorer Artur Chilingarov – a Duma deputy at the time – descended to the bottom of the Arctic Ocean in a submersible to plant a small Russian flag made of titanium beneath the North Pole, afterwards averring that "[o]ur task is to remind the world that Russia is a great Arctic and scientific power" (cited in Chivers, 2007). Other examples include the Olympic torch travelling to the Pole aboard the Russian icebreaker *50 Let Pobedy* in 2013, and Bishop Iakov of Nar'ian-Mar and Mezensk releasing a memorial capsule into the Pole's frigid waters in September 2012 containing a message from the Russian Orthodox Church's head, Patriarch Kirill, on the occasion of "the 1150th anniversary of the Russian state's existence" (Arkhangelskaia eparkhiia, 2012).

The China Factor

An ironic byproduct of Western sanctions, Russia's Arctic ambitions increasingly hinge on Chinese financing and energy market access.⁴³ But this does not mean that Moscow's and Beijing's interests fully align. For one thing, although China officially affirms the littoral states' territorial claims in the Arctic, government representatives have sent distinctly mixed signals over the years.⁴⁴ Russia, like all the littoral states, adamantly opposes any

hint of making the region an international commons along the lines of the 1959 Antarctic Treaty, a point underscored by the 2008 Ilulissat Declaration. China, meanwhile, has previously intimated its support for just such an arrangement. While this rhetorical strand disappeared in the run-up to China joining the Arctic Council as an observer in May 2013,⁴⁵ there remains a lingering wariness of Chinese motives and the reasons for it styling itself as a “near-Arctic” state. For another, Russia’s dependence on China does not fit comfortably with Moscow’s increasing promotion of autarky and an import-substitution development model, forcing an awkward discursive shift away from competing with the West to allying with Asia for normative as well as material reasons.⁴⁶ Finally, even though China does not appear to have any territorial ambitions in the Arctic (or Siberia and the Russian Far East more generally) and the region is not nearly as high a priority for Beijing as it is for Moscow, Russia is still cognizant of the need to develop its northeastern flank in order to avoid it becoming “a resource base for China and its sphere of influence” (Trenin, 2011: 190).

Moreover, the Chinese economy is facing headwinds and may be unable to digest all the fossil fuel Russia would like to feed it.⁴⁷ Trade relations are also profoundly unbalanced; on a country basis, China has been Russia’s leading trading partner since 2009, but the Russian market represents a tiny one for China, absorbing 1.53% of its exports in 2015 (“Distribution,” 2016). Beijing therefore has reason to avoid alienating its Western trading partners by cooperating too closely with Moscow. Russian businesses, meanwhile, are leery of borrowing from Chinese lenders; not only do costs tend to be considerably higher, but giving China control over the purse strings provides it with unwanted leverage in negotiating future commodity prices. Beijing has also developed a reputation for over-promising and under-delivering on large-scale foreign projects, implying that Russian-Chinese cooperation may be more aspirational than realizable.⁴⁸

As a result, despite outwardly amicable diplomatic relations and efforts to promote not only economic partnerships between the two countries, but also cooperation across military and scientific spheres,⁴⁹ there exists an undercurrent of reticence in the relationship, neither state appearing to be the partner of first choice for the other. Along these lines, it is worth noting that Russia’s largest military exercise since the Soviet period, *Vostok 2014* (“East 2014”), took place not on Europe’s doorstep, but rather in the Russian Far East. Thus, while today Russian politicians reserve their public opprobrium for NATO, Russian military leaders continue to regard China as a potentially major strategic threat.⁵⁰

In short, Beijing needs Russia for its natural resources, as China is seeking to cultivate multiple sources of energy and raw materials to insulate its economy from exogenous shocks, while Moscow needs China for its capital. This, coupled with the emphasis both states place on creating a multi-polar world and upholding hard conceptions of state sovereignty, explains their natural, if unsentimental, alliance. It also does not hurt matters that both countries assiduously avoid criticizing one another's domestic policies and human rights records. (It should be noted, however, that China is forging economic and political relationships with multiple northern nations.⁵¹) Moreover, as Russia is the only Arctic state that shares a border with China, why Moscow would prefer to have Beijing as an ally rather than an adversary is no mystery. Unlike Tsar Peter I, who wanted a "window to the West," Vladimir Putin increasingly needs a portal to Asia, but this does not mean that tensions do not lurk below the surface of Russian-Chinese relations.

Conclusion

Former Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper liked to remind audiences that "the first principle of Arctic sovereignty is use it or lose it" (cited in Austen, 2007). Russia has taken this admonition to heart, intent on asserting itself as the leading northern power. However, whether Russia will be able to achieve the full scope of its Arctic ambitions is still very much uncertain, as there exists a wide disconnect between Moscow's sanguine pronouncements and the rate at which investment capital is flowing into the region. So while likening the Kremlin's Arctic development plans to a "Potemkin village" (Medvedev, 2016: 5) is overly pessimistic, the fact remains that bold statements about the region's potential have thus far proven to be more bluster than prediction.

Indicative of this, in March 2016, Aleksandr Tsybul'skii, Russia's Deputy Minister of Economic Development, stated that implementing Russia's Arctic development goals through 2020 would cost 260.2 billion rubles ("Minekonomrazvitiia," 2016), a modest increase from the 222 billion rubles that Dmitrii Rogozin had previously cited for this same period ("Rogozin," 2015). However, after a May 2016 Arctic Commission meeting, it was announced that 145 priority projects (no date was specified for their completion) would alone require investments totalling around 4.8 trillion rubles, of which about 3.75 trillion would have to come from off-budget sources (Pravitel'stvo, 2016). Finally, on September 7, 2016, Alexei Uliukaev reported that some 150 Arctic projects would require investments

totalling 5 trillion rubles by 2030 (Ofitsial'nye, 2016). Even this latter sum, however, may prove too low to build out the comprehensive infrastructure required to achieve Moscow's aggressive development targets.⁵² Nor can foreign investment or financing be counted on in the present geopolitical climate.

Western sanctions have hurt Russia not only by restricting the availability of external capital, but also by making it more difficult to access the expertise and equipment needed to tackle demanding Arctic projects.⁵³ The need for foreign technology and services is especially acute for offshore drilling in the region, with one expert estimating that Russia will not be able to muster domestic equivalents before 2020-2025. Meanwhile, replacing the required equipment with Chinese or other third-party substitutes is risky (Panichkin, 2015). Collapsing hydrocarbon prices have only exacerbated the situation, making many long-planned ventures, like the development of the gargantuan Shtokman gas and condensate field in the Barents Sea, economically unfeasible.⁵⁴ Lower energy prices, along with heightened political risk, have also reduced the NSR's allure. China, meanwhile, has proven more reluctant to invest in Russian oil and gas ventures than homegrown proponents of the "Asian pivot" had initially anticipated, although it continues to actively explore the possibilities for Arctic shipping.

In conclusion, Russia's growing Arctic presence is being propelled by a re-imagining of its commercial and strategic possibilities, a move that is predicated not only on the rise of the Asia-Pacific region and an ensuing recalibration of trade relations, but also Moscow's estrangement from the West. This leaves the Kremlin balancing between the nationalistic appeal that the Arctic holds for its domestic constituents and the critical skepticism with which many international observers have greeted Russia's plans for regional development. While the reputational costs of failing to deliver on economic promises differ based on the audience in question, Moscow is currently unwilling to pay either price. As the Russian Minister of Natural Resources and the Environment, Sergei Donskoi, stated in May 2016, postponing regional development until macroeconomic conditions improve will not happen "under any circumstances" (cited in "Nef't' i gaz," 2016). Plainly, the Kremlin does not want to lose its hard-won share of the global hydrocarbon market, but such categorical pronouncements also implicitly concede that status-related concerns have, at least temporarily, eclipsed objective material realities. This should not surprise us, as the Arctic represents a region where operating even under optimal conditions requires considerable technical competence and resources, rendering it a geographic

canvas upon which states can project power and signal their rising international stature.

Notes

1. This was also, in part, a response to the growing interest that other states were beginning to exhibit toward the region and its resources, a trend that was on ample display by 2007. Marking the start of the Third International Polar Year (which actually ran to 2009, the prior polar “years” being 1882-1883 and 1932-1933), 2007 saw a precipitous decline in the Arctic’s summer sea ice cover. The latter caused a general upwelling of environmental and economic interest in the region, including among countries like India that were geographically far removed from it. The motivations that propelled these new players into the polar game were multifaceted. Certainly, a warming Arctic could presage rising sea levels and adverse weather effects throughout the world, making its study germane to countries with densely populated, low-lying coastal areas such as China and Japan. The economic promise associated with rapid climate change also provided an impetus, as did the desire of ascendant powers, most notably China, to showcase their increasing international importance (China has in recent years developed an active polar research program [see “China’s Polar Research,” n.d.]). Also noteworthy is that the growing international attention that started to be paid to the Arctic in the latter half of the 2000s coincided with a dramatic increase in geopolitical tensions between Russia and the West (for example, over Kosovo and South Ossetia).

2. In his address to the 1st annual International Arctic Forum held in Moscow, Putin noted that while “serious geopolitical and economic interests intersect in the Arctic,” he had “absolutely no doubt that existing Arctic issues, including questions about the continental shelf, can be resolved in the spirit of partnership, through negotiations and on the basis of existing international legal norms” (2010). Despite everything that has happened since, Russia appears to be adhering to this script.

3. Many observers believe – citing, for example, the signing of binding agreements on Arctic search and rescue (2011) and marine oil pollution preparedness and response (2013) – that the Council will remain a sufficient *modus vivendi* for dealing with the High North, despite it now being far larger than when it was founded in 1996 due to the addition of 12 states as non-voting observers and the fact that five out of its eight voting members belong to NATO, including all of the Arctic littoral states save Russia. (The Council has no mandate to deal with strategic issues under the terms of the Ottawa

Declaration.) But there have been occasional manifestations of political discord. For example, Canada took a hard line with Moscow under Stephen Harper's Conservative government, with Minister of the Environment Leona Aglukkaq (at the time also Chair of the Council) refusing to attend a three-day task force meeting held in Moscow in 2014 to protest Russia's actions in Ukraine. And when in April 2015 United States Secretary of State John Kerry assumed the two-year chairmanship of the Council in Iqaluit, Canada, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov was conspicuously absent.

4. For examples of social constructivism related to economic matters, see Abdelal, Blyth, & Parsons, 2010; Herrera, 2007; Abdelal, 2001.

5. For a relevant discussion, see Bennett, 2014.

6. The "One Belt, One Road" initiative consists of both the land-based Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB) encompassing Central Asia and more distant regions, and the Maritime Silk Road (MSR) linking Southeast Asia, Oceania, and North Africa.

7. Offshore exploration and drilling in the Russian Arctic, in particular, is still in its infancy. The first such well, located in the Pechora Sea's Prirazlomnoye field and originally developed as a collaborative venture between ExxonMobil and Gazprom, only went into production in December 2013.

8. The SRF was established by Beijing in December 2014 to foster economic ties across Eurasia by focusing on the development of industrial assets, energy resources, and regional infrastructure.

9. EU sanctions do not specifically target Novatek or Timchenko, but European banks are unlikely to risk incurring Washington's disapprobation (or angering their own governments) in order to bankroll the project.

10. The Northeast Passage is technically longer, as it extends past Novaya Zemlya into the Barents Sea, but the two designations are often used interchangeably.

11. To give an indication of the magnitude of this market, in 2014, eight of the ten top exporters of containerized cargo were Asian countries. China was the largest source, accounting for over 28% (36 million TEU [Twenty Foot Equivalent Units]) of the containerized cargo shipped by the world's top 20 exporters. Meanwhile, the top 20 EU importers of containerized cargo in 2014 accounted for more than 16 million TEU of goods (note: statistics exclude Cyprus and Malta, and treat Belgium/Luxembourg and the Baltics [Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia] as single analytical units) ("Trade Statistics," n.d.).

12. On early Soviet attempts, see Armstrong, 2011 [1952].

13. Whether it is ultimately a shorter route between Asia (or North America) and Europe depends on the point of origin and the final destination. Hong Kong is essentially equidistant from Rotterdam via the NSR or the Suez Canal, meaning that all else being equal, the NSR represents the shorter option for more northerly ports, and the longer one for more southerly ones (Blunden, 2012: 120). For example, sailing from Rotterdam to Vancouver covers 13,445 nautical miles via the NSR, compared to 16,350 via the Panama Canal and 28,400 via the Suez Canal. But sailing from Barcelona to Hong Kong via the Suez is only 14,693 nautical miles, versus 20,686 via the NSR (Christensen, 2009: 2).

14. In 2009, it was announced that ten new search and rescue/emergency response centres were to be built by 2015, but as of the first half of 2016, only those located at Dikson, Tiksi, and Pevek were functioning according to the NSRA's website ("Obespechenie," n.d.).

15. See "Tarify," n.d. for the rate schedule.

16. See Treadwell, 2015; Flake, 2014: 110; Fadeev, 2013; Solski, 2013. At issue are differing interpretations of UNCLOS' Article 234, which grants coastal states special rights intended to prevent or mitigate the pollution of ice-covered waters, and Russia's stance that the NSR falls under its legal control because it represents an "historically established integrated national transport and communications" route ("O vnutrennikh," 1998). A similar point of contention exists between Canada and other countries, most notably the United States, concerning the Northwest Passage.

17. See "Federal'nyi zakon," 2012.

18. See "What does the Polar Code," n.d. for details.

19. Already in 2015, the NSR remained navigable into late December, when the Russian nuclear-powered icebreaker *Vaygach* navigated it in a little over seven days at an average speed of more than 12 knots per hour (Rosatomflot, 2015).

20. See Fetterer, Knowles, Meier, & Savoie, 2016.

21. The Yenisei port of Igarka, established in 1929, sits even further upstream: it is located nearly 700 kilometres from the NSR.

22. For more details, see Pravitel'stvo, 2015b.

23. Among them is the largest nuclear icebreaker ever built, a 173-metre-long behemoth slated to enter service in 2017. This 33,500-ton dual-reactor vessel will be capable of breaking through ice up to 13 feet thick (Pettersen, 2013b).

24. See "Predmet," n.d. for additional information.

25. In early 2016, Rogozin proposed the creation of a new entity that would actively promote the NSR and coordinate transportation logistics along it (“Arktika v fokuse,” 2016).

26. Author’s calculations, made on the basis of “NSR Transits 2012” and “NSR Transits 2013.” Officially, 46 transits took place in 2012, moving more than 1.26 million tons of cargo, and 71 transits took place in 2013, moving nearly 1.36 million tons of cargo. However, as Humpert (2014) and Stephen (2014) have noted, statistics for 2013 include voyages that were not full transits, either because they did not span the entire NSR, made stopovers within the NSR, or both began and concluded within its confines. The same holds true for eight voyages counted as full transits in 2012. (Note, though, that as the reported data are not entirely clear in all instances, certain educated assumptions had to be made to derive these figures.) An email sent to the Northern Sea Route Information Office on May 30, 2016, requesting clarification was not answered.

27. Although at the time of writing bunker fuel prices have rebounded from lows set in early 2016, they remain significantly depressed: as of May 27, 2016, the average price for 380 CST fuel was 272.21 USD/metric ton, as compared to 398.21 USD/metric ton a year prior. Two years earlier, the average price was 626.45 USD/metric ton (“Bunker Index,” n.d.).

28. “Postupivshie zaiavleniia 2015” and “Postupivshie zaiavleniia 2014.”

29. See, for example, Ørts Hansen, Grønsedt, Lindstrøm Graversen, & Hendriksen, 2016; Humpert, 2013 and *Arctic Marine*, 2009.

30. See “Brief Yearly Statistics,” n.d.

31. See Smith & Stephenson, 2013 and Humpert & Raspotnik, 2012.

32. The brainchild of Tsar Peter I, Vitus Bering’s Great Northern Expedition took place between 1733 and 1743, under the sponsorship of Empresses Anna and Elizabeth.

33. Language about the need to protect Russian interests in the Arctic appeared in the Russian Military Doctrine for the first time in December 2014 (Klimenko, 2015).

34. Consonant with this assessment, the United States’ Special Representative for the Arctic, retired Admiral Robert Papp, observed that “Russia is doing those things we would be doing ourselves if there was an increase in traffic above our coast” (cited in Jopson & Milne, 2015).

35. Moscow, for instance, has felt vulnerable against aircraft and ballistic missiles from the time that military complexes in the Arctic deteriorated or were abandoned in the 1990s (Ponomarev, 2014). Meanwhile, warming waters have eroded what Western military strategists during the Cold War

referred to as the “fourth wall” of Soviet enclosure (see Antrim, 2010), Arctic ice cover having served to contain the USSR but also, in turn, protecting it from its enemies.

36. Canada, in particular, is also expanding its military capabilities in the Arctic.

37. It involved 38,000 service members, 41 naval vessels, 15 submarines, and 110 aircraft (Sergunin & Konyshev, 2015), dwarfing the scale of NATO’s earlier *Joint Viking* exercise, which deployed 5,000 military personnel.

38. Military status-seeking, however, has been on ample display in recent years (see, for instance, Pettersen, 2014 and Kramer, 2013). Moreover, strategic drills have increased significantly in scope and scale on both sides after NATO and Russia stopped hosting joint training exercises in 2014.

39. Russia’s first claim, submitted in December 2001, was denied for technical reasons.

40. The figure of 1.2 million square kilometres has been widely reported, though in September 2016 Sergei Donskoi, Russia’s Minister of Natural Resources and the Environment, stated that Russia stood to gain 1.3 million square kilometres (Ofitsial’nye, 2016).

41. This is about 1,550 metres deeper than the Gulf of Mexico-based *Perdido*, currently the world’s deepest offshore oil rig, operates at.

42. Deciding the matter, however, may take decades, particularly as the final disposition will need to be directly negotiated between the parties involved and, if no agreement can be reached, may be referred to the International Court of Justice (Tulupov, 2015).

43. Large-scale cooperation with Russian enterprises only dates to 2013, when CNPC partnered with Rosneft to conduct surveys in the Pechora and Barents Seas and bought into Yamal LNG (Kuersten, 2015). Yet despite having shut China out of majority ownership of oil and gas projects for years, in February 2015, Arkadii Dvorkovich announced that Moscow would consider allowing Chinese firms to own a controlling stake in strategic land-based hydrocarbon fields, defined as those holding more than 70 million metric tons of oil or 50 billion cubic metres of gas (Starinskaia, 2015).

44. Recognizing the sovereign rights and territorial claims of the Arctic littoral states was an explicit precondition for China gaining observer status in the Arctic Council in May 2013 (see “Observers,” 2015). However, in the past, Chinese officials and academics have questioned these claims, as when Rear Admiral Yin Zhou declared in 2010 that “the current scramble for the sovereignty of the Arctic among some nations has encroached on many other countries’ interests” (cited in Chang, 2010). See Jakobson & Peng, 2012: 14-

16, for how Chinese rhetoric concerning the Arctic has changed in recent years. (For a Russian perspective on China's participation in the Arctic Council, see Tulupov, 2013; for a general discussion of Chinese interests in the Arctic, see Karlusov, 2012.)

45. Formalizing the status of "outsider" countries such as China in the Council, even as non-voting observers, reinforces its centrality in handling Arctic matters (for background, see Jakobson & Peng, 2012: 11-14). At the same time, giving China a seat at the table legitimates its presence in the Arctic and provides it with the ability to influence regional policy (Feng, 2015).

46. An example of the latter was evinced at the May 2015 press conference where Putin welcomed Chinese participation in the Arctic, which took place on the eve of Russia's 70th commemoration of Victory Day. The timing prompted Putin to link Russia and China by noting that "our two countries suffered the greatest losses" in WWII, which, according to him, explains why Russia and China both oppose the rehabilitation of "Nazism and militarism" and the falsification of history. Not only was this an obvious denunciation of the post-Maidan government in Kyiv, but it also represented an attempt to historically legitimate stronger bonds with China. As Putin concluded, "Our common heroic past has become a good basis on which to build mutually beneficial, neighborly bilateral relations in the 21st century" (Ofitsial'nye, 2015b).

47. China is today the world's largest hydrocarbon importer (Dunn, 2014), and Russia has made considerable inroads into its oil and gas markets, having become China's largest monthly supplier of oil for the first time on record in May 2015, when it temporarily supplanted Saudi Arabia (Raval, 2015). That same year, China became the main importer of Russian oil (Kaczmarek, Kardaś, & Jakóbowski, 2016).

48. A Chinese media report from 2015 claimed that the SRF had already committed to nearly a thousand projects with an estimated aggregate cost of 890 billion USD (Schuman, 2015), raising questions of how it would finance them all. Specifically regarding Russia, China has been slow to commit funds for hydrocarbon projects, with most of the deals signed so far being non-binding framework agreements (Kaczmarek, Kardaś, & Jakóbowski, 2016). All this has prompted some pundits to preemptively label Moscow's "Asian pivot" a failure (see Eder & Huotari, 2016; Gabuev, 2016; Putz, 2016).

49. For instance, in September 2016, Russia and China held bilateral military exercises in the South China Sea (Gady, 2016) and kicked off a joint scientific expedition to the North Pole ("Kitai i Rossiia," 2016).

50. The "China as potential foe" rhetoric has been downplayed since 2014, but before then it was quite prevalent. See, for instance, the comments of the

Commander-in-Chief of Russia's Navy, Admiral Vladimir Vysotskii, in "Rossiia obespoenoa," 2011.

51. For a survey of other Arctic states in which China is interested, see Feng, 2015.

52. Achieving 2030 Arctic offshore production targets of 65 million tons of oil and 230 billion cubic metres of gas annually may alone demand investments totalling more than 1 trillion USD (Panichkin, 2015).

53. For a discussion, see Mordiusenko, 2015.

54. The Russian Ministry of Energy cites a break-even figure of 63 USD/barrel for Russia's Arctic oil ("Nef' i gaz," 2016).

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3

The Ongoing Formation of Russia's Arctic Policy: A New Stage?

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This paper provides an overview of Russia's Arctic policy, with a focus on recent changes in the spatial development and legislative/institutional frameworks. It briefly explains the definition of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation (AZRF) and examines its basic consolidation mechanism, as well as socio-economic challenges to its development and some legislative gaps. The paper identifies the roles of various actors and institutions in decision-making processes. In doing so, it also investigates how both Western sanctions and oil prices affected the realization of the Arctic policy's main objectives. It argues that Russia will continue to promote the benefits of using the NSR and to attract all interested parties in the exploitation of the AZRF's natural resources, but there is a need to revise some strategies in order to do it effectively, considering new circumstances.

Introduction

The changes taking place in the Arctic, the main drivers of which are the climate agenda and globalization (Stephen, 2018), contribute to broadening the spectrum of political actors and create a state of "complex interdependence" (Byers, 2017: 375) in the sphere of international relations. The role of the state as the dominant political institution is declining, as more and more non-governmental players become involved in the development of the region. Issues of the conservation of the Arctic's natural ecosystems, ensuring its sustainable development and preventing climate change are becoming increasingly important. All Arctic states are forced to adapt the goals and objectives of their policies to the changing rules of the game.

For Russia, one of the major stakeholders in the Arctic, overcoming separate and isolated action and transition to the unity of economic, legal and institutional decisions (Pilyasov et al., 2015: 19) are the main objectives

of modern Arctic policy. We argue that although the paradigm of resource extraction is still prevailing, the changes that have occurred during the last three to five years are crucial and need to be systematized and redefined. The understanding of its possible outcomes is extremely important, especially in light of Russia's future 2021-2023 Chairmanship of the Arctic Council.

Moscow has a long-term vision of the Arctic that can be summed up briefly in three words: to *extract* hydrocarbons, to *transport* them and to *protect* sovereignty over them. This is straightforward in principle, but given the exceptional importance of the region for Russia's national interests, it is not surprising that Russia's Arctic policy quite often becomes a result of various bureaucratic "corridor wars" (Sergunin & Konyshchev, 2019: 3) and clashes between influential players. It contributes to the insufficiently effective state management of the Arctic, which requires optimization based on the geopolitical and geo-economic changes of recent years, as well as a critical understanding of Russian and foreign experience in the development of the Arctic.

In our work, we reviewed and examined the transformations in the Russian Arctic policy in three areas: spatial development, legislative framework and institution-building. Investigating spatial development includes determining an object of state policy in a geographical sense, figuring out how it forms, what it consists of and what the main challenges and issues present in its development are. The overview of the legislative framework is important for identifying the main gaps and possible solutions for filling them. Finally, institution-building refers to the examination of the institutional framework, through which government policy is implemented.

Our paper utilizes a doctrinal analysis of the law and policy documents on the Russian Arctic, as well as an overview of relevant studies. We start from the definition of Arctic Russia, and considering the substantive consolidation mechanisms, then proceed to assess how domestic law regulates Arctic development. We finish by explaining how the current institutional framework of Russian Arctic policy is shaped.

Spatial development

The object of Russian Arctic policy is the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation (AZRF). It includes, either fully or partially, the territories of the Murmansk and Arkhangelsk regions, the Nenets, Chukotka and Yamal-Nenets autonomous districts, Karelia, Komi and Sakha (Yakutia) republics,

the Krasnoyarsk Krai and the islands and lands specified in the Decree, *On the Proclamation of Lands and Islands Located in The Arctic Ocean as Territory of the USSR* (Putin, 2014). However, the boundary of the AZRF is not defined once and for all. Since 2014, there have been inclusions of several territories of the Karelia and Sakha (Yakutia) republics (Arctic.ru, 2017a; Arctic.ru, 2019a).

According to our estimates, the land area of the territories of the AZRF is 4,969,391 million square kilometres, which is about 29% of the entire territory of the Russian Federation. The Russian Arctic is home to about 2.4 million people – about half the population of the entire circumpolar region (Gassiy, 2018: 1). Significant hydrocarbon deposits, rich stores of mineral ores, rare earth metals and gems are located in the Russian Arctic (Bird et al., 2008), accounting for more than 11% of the Russian GDP (Konyshchev et al., 2017: 6). Additionally, if the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf approves the sub-commission's positive decision, the Lomonosov and Mendeleev Ridges will become part of the Russian Arctic by the summer of 2020 (Financial Times, 2019) and increase Russia's exclusive economic zone by 1.2 million square kilometres.

The concept of the AZRF was established in 1989 (The Western Arctic Seas Encyclopedia, 2017). Previously referred to as the Arctic "Extreme North", the term was traditionally associated with a system of state subsidies and benefits that stimulate the economy in special conditions (Konyshchev & Sergunin, 2011: 15). However, after the collapse of the USSR, considering the cardinal socio-economic, political and financial challenges of the transition period, it became clear that the Arctic needed to be developed as a separate entity. Some external and internal reasons contributed to the gradual emergence of the Russian Arctic as a political term (Krivorotov & Finger, 2018: 46). Among the latter were the high concentration of strategic interests and the need for the elimination of infrastructural restrictions on the growth of mineral production in the Russian Arctic (Kononov, 2011: 124), as well as the need for a conceptual interconnection of implemented program activities (Ivanter, Leksin & Porfir'ev, 2014: 15).

The main tasks of the Russian Arctic spatial development policy are therefore the integration of the available production capacities and facilities and connecting the mainland and port infrastructures into a single logistics system (Orlov, 2018). Oil and gas extraction in the Arctic will help to compensate for the depletion of the country's mature fields (Kontorovich, 2015: 217). It is noteworthy that early Soviet discourse empowered ideas of

the acquisition of the North and made it indistinguishable from the rest of the country, but costly exploitation coupled with slowing economic growth led to a paradigm, inherited in the post-Soviet times, that was focused on resource exploitation (Petrov, 2018: 7).

There is an opinion that the *Northern Sea Route* (NSR), being a solely domestic route for a long time, served as a major consolidation mechanism (Pilyasov et al., 2015: 21) of the Russian Arctic. The national legislator has noted the particular importance of having access to the seas of the Arctic Ocean when specifying the composition of the AZRF (Katorin, 2018; Konovalov, 2014). Moscow defines the NSR as a historical national unified transport line of communication (State Duma, 1998). In one of his speeches, Putin called the NSR “the key to the development of [the] Russian Arctic and Far East” (The Barents Observer, 2018). It is widely known that diminishing sea ice can turn the NSR into a full-fledged international route, thus significantly reducing the distance between Asian and European markets. Traffic along the route increases almost every year, and 20 million tonnes of cargo passed through the NSR in 2018, twice as much as the year before (Pigni, 2019).

The Asian states, primarily China, Japan and South Korea, are actively interested in the possibilities of the route. Cargo ships from China have repeatedly made passes through the NSR (The Northern Sea Route Administration, 2019), and the country’s authorities recently published a white paper on the Arctic, demonstrating that commercial interest is not the only reason for that (Drewniak et al., 2018). The Russian government thus seeks to take advantage of connecting the Northern Sea Route with China’s Maritime Silk Road and opening it to international trade. The ambitious goal of reaching 80 million tons of shipping tonnage along the NSR by 2024 was set in 2018, although researchers are cautious in assessing such potential (Benedyk & Peeta, 2018; Kiiski et al., 2018; Yumashev et al., 2017).

The development of the NSR also implies the installation of military and intelligence infrastructure throughout the whole region. Today, military facilities are already located on almost all major islands and archipelagos from the Kola Peninsula to Chukotka (Galimullin, 2017). The perception of an increasing Russian military presence and large-scale exercises after the Ukrainian crisis was transformed from the interpretation of all of this as a legitimate behaviour to protect the state border and strategic resource reserves, into a fear of aggressive behaviour in a potential conflict situation (Mikkola & K  py  , 2019: 157). Meanwhile, some authors argued that the

Arctic is not remilitarized now because it was never demilitarized (Keupp, 2015: 24), and that Russia is still a long way from reestablishing the level of military capability it had in the Arctic during the Cold War (RAND, 2017: 14), undertaking just limited modernization (Konyshev & Sergunin, 2019: 192). Considering the importance of stability in the Arctic for Russia, its military activity is indeed more likely aimed at protecting an economic interest in the North and does not threaten existing cooperation.

The next consolidation mechanism is the building of large *integrated transportation networks* aimed at improving the land accessibility of the region, since today there are practically no railways or paved roads in the Arctic (Volgin et al., 2018: 37). The Strategy for the Development of Railway Transport until 2030 (2008) indicated a few grand railway initiatives, such as the “Northern Latitudinal Passage”, “Bovanenkovo-Sabetta”, “Belkomur” and others. Russia is seeking to attract a total of €143 billion of private investments to implement these projects (Staalesen, 2019b), having a successful Yamal LNG example based on public-private partnership. However, the implementation of some promising projects at the regional level is hampered by Western sanctions, which limit the possibilities for the exploration and production of natural resources in hard-to-reach regions (Shirov et al., 2015: 321). The Nenets Autonomous District has faced this problem most acutely (APEC, 2018: 14).

A new version of the state program Socioeconomic Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation (2017) introduced a new concept/consolidation mechanism called *core development zones*. The goals of its establishment are creating favourable conditions for the rapid socio-economic development of the Arctic zone and fostering interaction between resource corporations, communities, civil society institutions and regional authorities (Government, 2017). It should be remembered that Russia already has such tools, like Special Economic Zones or SEZs (existing since 2005), operating in its European part, and the Advanced Special Economic Zones or ASEZs (since 2014) in the Far East. But unlike both previous zones, the eight core Arctic zones (Kola, Arkhangelsk, Nenets, Vorkuta, Yamal-Nenets, Taymyr-Turukhanskaya, Chukotka and North-Yakutian) are interconnected projects for the complex development of not just separate areas, but the whole region (Arctic.ru, 2017b). It is expected to be based on concession agreements and agreements on public-private partnership (Lagutina, 2019: 36). Creating a strong interlinkage between different entities is crucial, since some researchers noted a lack of representation of Arctic zone interest as a single development entity (Glinskiy et al., 2017:

309), that is fueled by leadership struggles between some entities (Nazukina, 2013).

Among the main socio-economic challenges to the spatial development of the Russian Arctic are out-migration (Table 1) and the related lack of manpower (Konyshov & Sergunin, 2011). Heleniak (2009) noted that the way the USSR developed the resources of the region, based on large permanent populations, has become unsustainable in Russia's new market economy (55). It has thus led to a decrease in wage benefits (Volgin et al., 2018: 38) and the lack of jobs and opportunities for continuing education (Ivanova & Klyukina, 2017: 195). Although the government promotes the financial attractiveness of life in northern regions and supports educational institutes, forums and other initiatives, the expectations of the young population today seem incompatible with the actual economic possibilities (Nikulina et al., 2018). The outflow of the population has even led to the idea of promoting temporary, rather than permanent, residence in the High North and encouraging companies not to invest in social infrastructure (Shchitinsky & Minina, 2018: 81).

Table 1. Population changes in the Russian Arctic

Subject	Year					
	2010	2014	2016	2017	2018	Overall (2010-2018)
Arkhangelsk	664 465	656 624	652 867	650 755	646 899	-17 566 (-2,64%)
Krasnoyarsk	229 392	228 493	227 546	227 220	227 972	-1 420 (-0,62%)
Murmansk	795 409	771 058	762 173	757 621	753 557	-41 852 (-5,26)
Nenets	42 090	43 025	43 838	43 937	43 997	1 907 (4,53%)
Karelia	51 634	47 432	45 070	44 301	42 799	-8 835 (-17,11%)
Komi	95 854	84 707	81 442	80 061	77 314	-18 540 (-19,34%)
Sakha (Yakutia)	28 325	26 488	26 147	26 210	26 063	-2 262 (-7,99%)
Chukotka	50 526	50 555	50 157	49 822	49 348	-1 178 (-2,33%)
Yamal-Nenets	522 904	539 671	534 104	536 049	538 547	15 643 (2,99%)

Besides that, there is a significant disparity within the northern regions, which has only grown following the reduction of government services in the already disadvantaged regions (Duhaime, 2010: 53). Merging is one of the tips for reducing such an interregional disparity (Vityazeva & Kotyrlo, 2007: 64), undertaken by combining large regions with national autonomous districts of the North. This practice has affected the Krasnoyarsk Territory (merged in 2007 with its constituent Taimyr (Dolgano-Nenets) and Evenki Autonomous Districts). Possible projects for the merger of the oil-rich

Nenets Autonomous District with the poorer Arkhangelsk Region were also discussed for a long time (Protsyk & Harzl, 2013). In addition to it, two Arctic regions – Chukotka and Yakutia – participate in the Far Eastern Hectare program (MINVR, 2016), which aims to attract people for the commercial or personal use of empty land.

Environmental pollution, especially a number of nuclear hotspots, is also a big concern regarding Arctic spatial development. Although the Russian government takes measures for cleanup in the Arctic (TASS, 2019), melting ice could trigger the release of accumulated harmful substances and thus poses a risk to human health (Bock, 2013: 49). The greatest difficulty is presented by solid household waste, for the disposal of which the Russian authorities are planning to apply plasma gasification technology. The resulting heat will be used to get what the Arctic lacks: heat and energy (The Arctic, 2019). Additionally, there is the problem of air pollution that transcends national boundaries and that has already provoked some international cross-border incidents (Nilsen, 2019).

Legislative framework

The current legislative framework of the Russian Arctic policy is represented by three documents:

- Fundamentals of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic for the Period up to 2020 and Beyond (2008);
- Strategy for Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation and the National Security up to 2020 (2013);
- State programme Socioeconomic Development of the Russian Arctic Zone up to 2025 (2017).

The Fundamentals of the State Policy document (2008) lists the features of the Russian Arctic that distinguish the macro-region as a separate object of state policy, determining the national interests, goals, objectives and strategic priorities of Russia in the Arctic. The Strategy for Development document (2013) indicates the main mechanisms, methods and means of achieving goals and realizing national interests. The tasks of coordinating the activities of state authorities and all other stakeholders in the implementation of Arctic state policy, as well as conducting the socio-economic development of the Russian Arctic, are assigned to the State programme document (2017). Its implementation deadlines have been

extended up to 2025 in 2017 (Staalesen, 2017). In one of his speeches, Dmitry Medvedev noted the “rather analytical nature” of the previous version of the document and highlighted the lack of funding as the main problem (Medvedev, 2017). In the new version, three subprograms have been introduced, target indicators have been updated and the amount of budget allocations has been specified – 190,451,982 million rubles (Government of the Russian Federation, 2017). It is worth noting that the program’s approach to public administration in Russia has gained popularity and is used everywhere to solve the problems of socio-economic development and national security (Leksin & Porfiriev, 2016: 418).

Among other documents defining the modern Russian state policy in the Arctic, we can highlight:

- Development Strategy of the Railway Transport till 2030 (2008);
- The Concept of Sustainable Development of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation (2009);
- Energy Strategy of Russia for the period up to 2030 (2009);
- Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation (2015);
- The Russian Federation’s National Security Strategy (2015);
- The Strategy of Ecological Security of the Russian Federation for the period until 2025 (2017);
- Fundamentals of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Field of Naval Operations for the Period until 2030 (2017);
- Decree No. 296 of the President of the Russian Federation dated 2 May 2014 “On the Land Territories of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation” (last modified – May 13, 2019).

However, the Arctic legislative framework is incomplete without the *Federal law on the Russian Arctic* (Zhuravel, 2016: 6). Attempts to adopt such a document have been made since 1998 when its first version was presented, but all of them remained unsuccessful. Among the causes of the failures are a lack of detailed knowledge of the problem and abstraction from the previous experience of each new team (Zhukov & Krainov, 2008: 4), as well as the lack of ideological basis for the basic law (Pilyasov et al., 2015: 15). It is expected that this law should prescribe the status of the macro-region as a special object of state regulation (Konovalov, 2012: 22) and introduce a system of preferences and benefits for investors (Lukin, 2016).

Currently, there is no generally accepted methodology for the inclusion of territories in the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation (Bezrukov, 2015:

358). Existing legislation provides the possibility of clarifying its borders “in accordance with the regulatory legal acts of the Russian Federation and the norms of international treaties and agreements to which the Russian Federation is a party” (Government, 2008). Some experts note that the inclusion of certain territories in the Russian Arctic is determined not only by physical and geographical characteristics, but also by the priorities of state regulation and management (Konovalov, 2012: 22), as well as by the mismatch of the interests of various ministries, the Federal centre and the Arctic regions (Pilyasov, 2016: 233). In addition, the draft law on privileges for Arctic investment, which should set tax rates for development projects, was not submitted to the government before June 10 as originally planned (Arctic.ru, 2019b).

Institution-building and decision-making

The discussions on the way the Russian government should run the vast northern areas have continued since the collapse of the USSR. Several attempts to create a single body responsible for Arctic development have been taken, but none of them can be described as being successful. Having won over regional elites in the early 2000s (Pilyasov, 1998) and dissolved the State Committee for the North (GOSKOMSEVER), Moscow had started actively searching for a new institutional framework for its Arctic policy. Founded in 2004, the *Ministry of Regional Development* was responsible for implementing state policy regarding the socio-economic development of regions, including the Arctic. However, even though the Ministry has been appointed as an executor of the state program *Socioeconomic Development of the Russian Arctic Zone*, it was abolished (PortNews, 2014) in the same year in which the program was adopted. The establishment of specialized ministries for North Caucasus, Crimea and the Far East has made the Regional Development Ministry superfluous (The Barents Observer, 2014).

But there was still no separate ministry for the Arctic region. The *Ministry of Economic Development* of the Russian Federation has become responsible for it. However, considering the limited and primarily socio-economic scope of its activity, and the significantly increasing number of governmental bodies engaged in Arctic issues (Table 1), the *State Commission for Arctic Development* was founded in 2015. Its main function was coordination for the work of federal and regional authorities. Rotnem claims that the appointment of a former representative of the national patriotic movement, Dmitry Rogozin, as its head was a signal of Russia's

Table 3-2: The governmental bodies responsible for Arctic policy

Program	The executor of the program	Co-executor	Participants in the program
State program Socioeconomic Development of the Russian Arctic Zone up to 2020 (2014)	Ministry of Regional Development	-	- Ministry for the Development of the Russian Far East - Ministry of Transport - Ministry of Industry and Trade - Ministry of Foreign Affairs
The new version of state program Socioeconomic Development of the Russian Arctic Zone up to 2025 (2017)	Ministry of Economic Development	Ministry of Industry and Trade	- Ministry of Transport - Ministry of Emergency Situations - Ministry of Construction Industry, Housing and Utilities Sector - Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment - Ministry of Defence - Federal Service for Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring - Federal Service for Supervision of Natural Resources - National Guard of Russia - Federal Biomedical Agency - National Research Center «Kurchatov Institute»

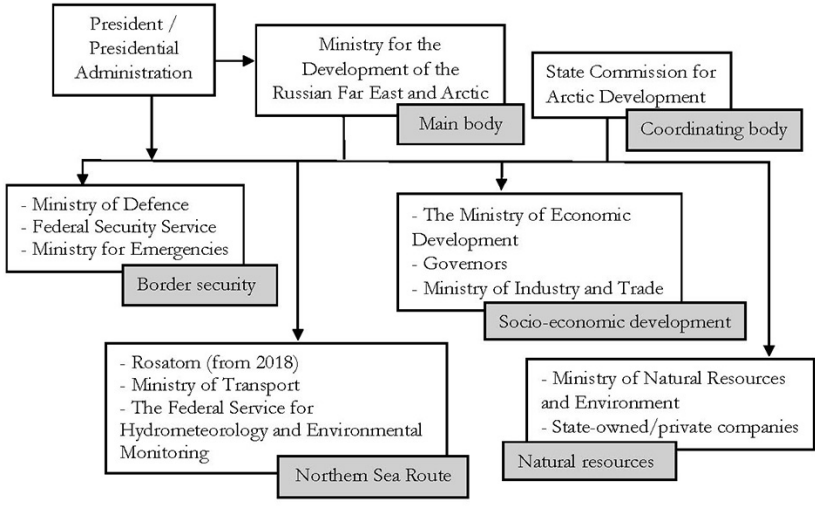
irritation with the West's unwillingness to recognize its status as an Arctic superpower (Rotnem, 2016: 10). Nonetheless, as a purely coordinating body, it did not have the authority to address the problems. And in the absence of a well-designed institutional framework, there was no coordination.

It sped up the search for a unified centre of accountability for the implementation of Arctic policy. As Putin said, it should be not a burdensome bureaucratic body, but a flexible, fast-working structure (The Moscow Times, 2014). But first, in 2018, the State Commission's lineup was renewed in order to make it more compact and "business-like" (The Arctic, 2018). The Presidential Envoy to the Far Eastern Federal District, Yury Trutnev, was appointed as a head of the revised body, and the next year the additional authorities were given to the Ministry of the Russian Federation for the Development of the Far East, which is now the *Ministry of the Russian Federation for the Development of the Far East and the Arctic*. The choice has been made not in favour of establishing a separate ministry of the Arctic because, according to Prime Minister Medvedev, it would be too costly both in terms of financial and administrative resources (Staalesen, 2019a).

The reformed Ministry is now responsible for the establishment of a proper labour division between different state agencies, which could be clustered depending on the area they managed (Table 4). The Ministry of Transport (MT), along with the Russian State Corporation on Atomic Energy (Rosatom), developed the NSR on the principle of "two keys": the MT is responsible for statutory regulation, and Rosatom is responsible for commerce and the economy (Rosatom, 2019). The Federal Service for Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring provides authorities and ships with meteorological information and forecasts. The Ministry of Defence, Federal Security Service (including the Coast Guard) and the Ministry for Emergencies are charged with building the military presence in the Arctic and with border security. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and its agencies oversee natural resource management and monitor environmental protection, while state-owned corporations and private oil and gas companies are engaged in hydrocarbon production. The Ministry of Economic Development, Ministry of Industry and Trade (MIT) and Arctic governors have responsibility for socio-economic development, with MIT's particular obligation being the implementation of large industrial projects. This framework seems balanced and there is no obvious overlap of authorities, which should provide harmonization of the decision-making process.

There are also some specific sub-national Arctic institutes, like the Polar Commission (2015) in Krasnoyarskiy Krai and the Ministry of Development of the Arctic and the peoples of the North (2018) in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia). The main challenge, however, is still the

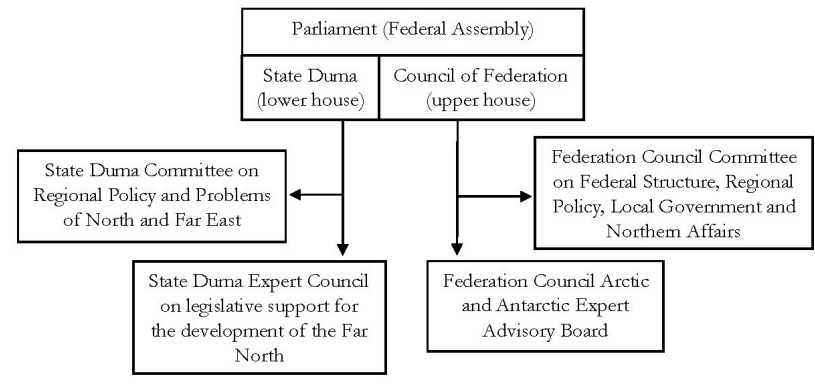
Table 3-3: Russia’s Arctic state policy main authorities: the executive branch



reduced potential of northern regions to have an independent solution for socio-economic problems. Arctic policymaking is a highly centralized process (Sergunin & Konyshchev, 2019: 4) and the Kremlin remains a key player. All Arctic governors are closely linked with the ruling party, “United Russia,” and therefore must usually wait for an order from Moscow for action. But the absence of strong opposition is not the only problem – it is mainly the changing distribution of tax payments from natural resources (Pilyasov et al., 2015: 19) that have undermined the regional initiatives. There are various proposals for increasing the financial activities of the economic entities of the AZRF, such as establishing a special “Arctic” bank (Tatarkin et al., 2017: 21) and the earlier mentioned core zones, which are intended to put into practice the mediating role of the state. But given that six out of nine Arctic governors began their current five-year terms in 2018 and 2019, the question here is whether the federal authorities will be able to get them to work effectively.

It is worth noting that the Russian Parliament, though possessing significantly less potential for participating in decision-making (not even in the Arctic, but in general), has its own institutional framework for conducting Arctic policy (Table 4). It has some voice in the budgeting process and is able to cut/increase appropriations for executive agencies (Sergunin & Konyshchev, 2019: 9).

Table 3-4: Russia's Arctic state policy main authorities: legislative branch



The presence of national security objectives a priori narrows the scope for the participation of non-governmental organizations, although they have obtained much more influence in the post-Soviet era. But instead of using the resources of these players in a creative way, Moscow tries to control them, thus making them passive, both domestically and internationally (Sergunin & Konyshov, 2018: 140). For example, RAIPON, the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, operates under tight state control (IWGIA, 2019: 44).

Overview

Russia's Arctic policy, much like the late Soviet policy in the High North, has resource extraction as its cornerstone. However, the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation is a relatively new political phenomenon, which has arisen over the past several decades and mostly implies issues of national and energy security. Not least, the growing accessibility of the Northern Sea Route, though still remaining a subject of many debates, contributed to the allocation of the AZRF as a separate object of state policy.

Although the main goals of Russia's Arctic policy have been outlined, it isn't yet clear how to achieve them. Is it necessary to prevent out-migration and attract new citizens, or focus on using predominantly temporary-basis manpower in order to exploit the Arctic's natural resources? Is it a better option to break up the monopoly of state-owned Rosneft and Gazprom and allow the private oil and gas firms to explore Russia's Arctic shelf, or is it too risky? These and other questions remain unanswered, while two of the three Arctic laws (the 2008 *Fundamentals* and 2013 *Strategy*) expire in 2020 and

therefore need to be updated as soon as possible, and the adoption of Basic Arctic law has been repeatedly postponed.

Western sanctions and low oil prices are hampering the realization of Russia's interests in mostly the resource geography dimension (Aalto & Forsberg, 2016: 223), which has resulted in delaying production for such giants as the Kruzenshternskoye and Shtokmanovskoye fields. It created further confusion among the governing elite, provoking the need to re-assess the oil and natural gas development prospects from a long-term perspective (Morgunova & Telegina, 2019: 481). Both sets of sanctions (US and EU) target, among other things, the offshore petroleum industry and have forced Russian authorities to create more favourable tax conditions to encourage the development of Arctic resources. On the other hand, economic restrictions have contributed to the emergence of additional motivation for the development and implementation of domestic innovations, which is mainly manifested in the policy of import substitution (Sergunin & Konyshov, 2018: 140). Given these two different aftermaths, it remains unchanged that the hydrocarbon-driven economy of Russia is highly dependent on the exploitation of new production fields.

Is there a new stage to Russia's Arctic development? To sum up, the establishment of the Ministry for the Development of the Russian Far East and Arctic, though finalizing its reform will still take some time, is a great step toward the coordination of various activities and allocation of the Arctic as a separate, integrated object of state policy. Along with the new role of the state company Rosatom, it definitely enhances Russian management systems in the Arctic, though tensions remain. However, there are still no specific mechanisms of public-private partnership in the Arctic on the state level, without which it will not be possible to significantly increase investments. The concept of sustainable development has also not been adapted to the Russian Arctic, maintaining an apparent imbalance in favour of economic development (Maximova, 2018: 12).

Concluding remarks

It seems that a contradiction in modern Russia's Arctic policy is the fact that the region of strategic importance cannot be effectively developed without cooperation with the international community. The modern Arctic strategy of Russia is a mixture of expansionist/revisionist and soft power/status quo policies (Heininen et al., 2014: 89). Thus, it depends on how Moscow will continue to pursue its dual-track strategy. The extremely powerful Russian military has a strong skepticism toward the West, but it is

not even economic weakness and a lack of technology that create a need for cooperation and foreign investment. There are at least four other Arctic littoral states in the same room, and considering the fragile ecosystem with its associated risks, it is crucial to take into account their interests.

What are the main outcomes? We think that Russia will continue to promote the benefits of using the NSR and attract all parties interested in the development of Arctic resources. While the estimates of the US Geological Survey may be proven incorrect, Russia has an inadequate institutional environment (Kryukov & Moe, 2018: 49) for the profitable production of unconventional oil as a fallback too. Moreover, it is more than just a rational-action approach already. It has symbolic value under sanctions, demonstrating the dignity of Russians and their adherence to the commitments that have been undertaken. Additionally, calling the idea of an inevitable competition for Arctic resources into question means risking one's reputation (Trenin & Baev, 2010: 21). Thus, considering that sanctions have strengthened the elite's consolidation and boosted patriotism in the country, all proposals like the liberalization of the continental shelf (Neftegaz, 2019) will be made cautiously. But from the other side, the main players must act quickly because hesitation could fail the "May Decrees" in 2024, which would probably be an even greater threat to political reputation.

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Section 2:

Resources, Development, and Infrastructure

4

Re-Tracing Development Paths: Exploring the Origins and Nature of the 20th Century's Northern Development Paradigms in Russia and Canada

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This paper lays the ground for re-tracing and re-examining the 20th century discourses of regional development in the Russian and Canadian Norths. Comparing the development paths of the two Norths in the 20th century, it is appropriate to ask whether the distinctions and commonalities between these paths stem from the similarities in and differences between the development discourses in these regions. The paper explores the history of the 20th century development “projects” in Canada and Russia/USSR, focusing on the relationship between the state-promoted modernization discourses, power, and development. In doing so, it also investigates the link between the social construction and material production of the North. It argues that both development trajectories bear a considerable level of similarity that is attributable to the types of discourses that empowered the development policies in the 20th century. At the same time, it identifies the differences that led to the divergence of the development paths of the Canadian vs. Russian North.

Introduction

Public policies can be seen as the institutionalized products of dominant discourses, empowered by regional development actors, e.g., the state and corporations (Duhaime, 2010). In Jessop's terms (1990), the discourses embraced by such “hegemonic blocks” are societalized through societal structures and actor strategies, in which the state plays a central role. Therefore, when studying development policies, it is necessary to analyze the predominant discursive paradigms. Discourse is a socially embedded practice of obeying certain rules (Foucault, 1970). It is in possession of

knowledge that is considered to be the “truth,” and it constructs a “topic” (or a particular paradigm) by producing the objects of knowledge shared by people. A discourse of development is thus related to power, and through formal or informal means of regulating, it governs the behaviours of societal actors.

This paper is an essay that attempts to lay the ground for re-tracing and re-examining the 20th century *discourses of regional development* in the Russian and Canadian Norths. Given both the differences and similarities in the regional development paths of the two Norths (Agranat, 1992; Barr & Bradshaw, 1983; Petrov, 2012), it is appropriate to ask whether they reflect distinctions and commonalities between the development discourses in these regions. This paper sets up an argument that both development trajectories share a considerable level of similarities that are attributable to the types of discourses that empowered the (colonial) policies of the 20th century. At the same time, the study points to systemic differences that contributed to the divergence of the development paths of the Canadian vs. Russian Norths. Although the paper limits its analysis to a number of key texts and documents that most explicitly introduce and describe predominant discourses on Northern development, the essay builds a case for the further examination of the archaeologies and genealogies of these discourses and their influence on the development processes and outcomes in the Canadian and Russian Norths.

Northern Development in the Context of Global Development “Projects”

In the 20th century, the northern frontier has been an object of discursive development policies and, in effect, has been a discursively constructed space (West, 1991). From the constructivist position, one may argue that the material being of the North and its development path are a reflection of discursive policies, empowered by social actors and societal institutions throughout the history of colonization. In order to unveil the nature of the regional development regimes in the North, it is necessary to find out how development in the North has been socially produced. Therefore, one needs to contemplate the archaeologies and genealogies of the hegemonic northern development discourses in Canada and Russia.

Any discussion of this matter, however, is impossible without placing development in the North into the global context of the development projects that have been imposed around the “underdeveloped” world throughout the 20th century. Summarizing these experiences, Peet & Watts

(1993) pointed out the existence of the dominant Western regional discursive formation of development that crosses political and geographic boundaries in shaping development doctrines. This formation (exposed and criticized in the postcolonial literature) presents an overarching framework for the modernist discourses of development, a framework “calibrated around the relative weight attributed in its normative vision to the role of the state, the market, and civil institutions” (Peet & Watts, 1993: 233), all of which share a number of principal similarities. It is based on the normative views on development imported from the West (Escobar, 1995; Watts, 1993). Resting on assumptions and ideals invented by classical and neoclassical economists, equipped by the Western strategies of economic growth and enforced by the state or international organizations, the colonial development doctrine emphasizes industrialization, external aid, and development planning. By emulating the Western economic success, development efforts were designed to fulfill a “civilizing mission” of colonialism and attempt to create “modernist utopias” (Scott, 1998), neither acknowledging economic differences nor appreciating cultural diversity around the world (Power, 2003). While the manifestation of the Western discourse of development is largely documented in the “Third World,” the “internal colonies” within more developed countries have also been deeply affected (Sidaway, 2002).

The interpretation of development as a hegemonic discursive project (Radcliffe, 2005; Sidaway, 2007) applies to the Canadian and Russian Norths. The “Western” discourse of development was intact in the northern frontier as much as it was in the “developing” countries: “[t]he systemic exploitation and Othering of ethnically or spatially distinct populations” (Sidaway, 2002: 18-19) and the marginalization of internal colonies constituted the dynamics of the “settler capitalism” in Canada. Similar to their counterparts in Asia, Latin America, and Africa, northern developers believed that “a majority of the people who live in the north want a change in present conditions which corresponds to what is generally understood as modernization” (Ørvik, 1983: 11). Applied at the national scale, this development discourse juxtaposed the “developed” mainland with the “underdeveloped” frontier; this justified the “regime of truth” under which the superiority of the “developed” was unquestionable (Pretes, 1988). The assumption of the mainland’s supremacy over the hinterland validated the state-led economic, political, and social intervention in the periphery.

The Canadian and Soviet development doctrines engaged the “othering” of the North in order to separate the North from the South (just like the

Orient from the Occident (Said, 1978)), to accentuate its dissimilarity and distinction through “nordification” (West, 1991) and then to exploit and govern the North. Much like in other parts of the “developing” world, “othering” has been utilized and promoted by the state and corporations; this estrangement of the North is therefore used as a justification for commodification and the means of governing it (see Watts, 2003 for a discussion of the links between capitalism, governance, and development). On the other hand, a “dis-othering,” i.e., the emulation of the Western (or, in the context of Russia and Canada, the “southern”) development path, was the implicit objective of the development policies. “Dis-othering” through development served the task of making the North an exploitable and governable space.

The Canadian North

The invention of the “Canadian North” as a space of economic colonization is captured by Harold Innis’s (1956) notion of a perpetual dichotomy between the North and the South (“mainland”). The “Innisian” hinterland discourse was a manifestation of the European colonial discourse, in which the alienation of the “other” (e.g., the frontier, the North, the Orient) was a prerequisite for its subsequent exploitation by the metropolis (Pretes, 1988). The “staple theory” of Harold Innis continues to be one of the most powerful conceptualizations of the nature of the Canadian resource frontier (Barnes, 1993), and is considered foundational for understanding Canadian nordicity (Barnes, 1993; Evenden, 1999; Francis, 2003; Katerberg, 2003). For Innis, “the economic history of Canada has been dominated by the discrepancy between the centre and the margin of western civilization” (Innis, 1956: 385). By this, Innis favoured the “othering” of the North from the rest of Canada, implying the alienation of the North from the South and the subsequent exploitation of the former by the latter.

The Hudson’s Bay Company that governed the Canadian North on behalf of the British government was engaged in exploiting the region, but never ventured to develop or settle it (Rich, 1958). Notably, this paradigm of colonization contrasted with the American “Turnerism” that was practiced in colonizing the Great American West and the Canadian Prairies. The latter was a colonial discourse of the acquisition and expropriation of the frontier (Francis, 2003), where the frontier has been deemed a continuation of the mainland, not its antipode (Wood, 2006). Although the immediate effect of both approaches was a subordination of colonized spaces and a “cyclonic” (using Innis’s metaphor) nature of regional development

(Barnes et al., 2001) in association with resource cycles and the extreme instability of economies and populations, the long-term differences emerged in the ability of regional systems to withstand the economic “storms” and “calms.”

However, by the early 1950s, the Canadian (or was it British?) discourse of development in the North underwent significant changes. The Canadian state found itself in a new political, economic, and geographic environment when the importance of Northern resources and of the space itself increased (Pearson, 1946). In the emerging national consciousness with its mythical representation of Canada as a nation of the “true North”, the northern frontier has increasingly become “a resource and economic hinterland, which is simultaneously incorporated in a social spatialization as a mythic heartland” (Shields, 1991: 163). In addition, the country had to respond to the increasing demands of the resource-thirsty Fordism (Jensen, 1989) and assert its political control over the northlands. It also could no longer ignore the critical social problems in the region and its socio-economic backwardness, even compared to Alaska and Siberia (Rea, 1968).

The formal inauguration of the new discursive paradigm of developing the North came in the 1950s, when Canada’s Prime Minister John Diefenbaker launched a new national policy for the North, known as the Northern Vision. Diefenbaker’s program emphasized the development of infrastructure and communication using public funds in order to facilitate access to resources and link staple regions with the South (Diefenbaker, 1958; Rea, 1976; Bone, 2003). Implicitly, this program aimed to make the North a more exploitable and governable space, a utopist land of modernization and prosperity. According to the new discursive paradigm, the federal and provincial governments assumed the responsibility for maintaining growth and welfare in the hinterland. They also implemented measures to facilitate Indigenous “social modernization” (Hamilton, 1994). Development and planning were formally institutionalized through establishing and expanding the responsible government agencies and passing regulatory legislation (e.g., “instant town” acts).

The Northern Vision was a manifestation of a new hegemonic discourse of northern development that may be termed “Diefenbakerism”. Diefenbakerism brought about a doctrine of centrally planned, publicly funded development and of shared responsibility between the state and the monopolistic capital. It became a central component of the new development regime in the Canadian North. This regime, dominant in the

1950-1970s, secured the rapid expansion of resource exploitation through the ideologies of Fordism. Not entirely dis-alienating the frontier, Diefenbakerism moved closer to “Turnerism” in its desire to make the North an integral part of the national territory and national identity. Not accidentally, Diefenbaker offered this metaphorical connection in his Northern Vision speech: “Sir John A. Macdonald ... opened the West. He saw Canada from East to West. I see a new Canada - a Canada of the North” (Diefenbaker, 1958: 1).

Diefenbakerism was almost uncontested until the early 1970s, when alternative counter-discourses, propelled by environmentalism and Aboriginalism, began to emerge (Hayter, 2003). The adequacy of the industrialism (and “high modernism,” as termed by Scott in 1998) for delivering viability to northern regions was boldly challenged. The 1972 federal government’s strategy of northern development demonstrated a shift towards mixed development, community viability, environmental issues, and Indigenous peoples. The policy studies by the Canadian Council on Rural Development (1974) and the Science Council (1977) advocated abandoning the objective of “industrial growth” by means of mega-projects, in favour of “locally based development strategies” and mixed development options (industrial and traditional sectors, non-renewable and renewable resources (Barre, 1987: 97). Most vocally, the Diefenbakerist doctrine was confronted in the Berger Inquiry (1977), which disputed the legacy of resource mega-projects and emphasized the importance of Indigenous rights and institutions in regional development. In essence, these writings outlined a counter-discourse that rejected the idea of “opening and modernizing the North,” i.e., the central premises of Diefenbakerism and the Western development discourse in general.

The Soviet North

The development regime in the Russian-Soviet North was based on different, although not completely opposite, approaches. Much like in Canada, the Soviet discourse of developing the North was based on “othering” the North from the mainland and assigning a unique role to the region in the national mythology. If the Canadian northern development discourse could be traced to Harold Innis, the genealogy of the Soviet one points to Vladimir Lenin. However, the Bolsheviks’ views largely inherited the core components of the Russian Imperial discourse on Siberia. In the public consciousness of Imperial Russia, Siberia has always been the “other”, but yet has been considered “ours” (Weiss, 2007). Much like the American

West, Siberia emerged as a mythical realm of future power and prosperity, therefore an exotic, yet integral, part of Russia.

After taking power, Lenin (1918) strongly promoted the idea of the rapid exploration and development of the North. A new discourse of development fully emerged in the 1920s, when the Bolsheviks' government proposed an ambitious plan of economic and social development for the country, known as the State Commission for the Electrification of Russia (GOELRO) plan (Bandman & Chistobaev, 1990). The leitmotif of GOELRO, derived from the Marxist economic theory, was the "rationalization of allocation of productive forces" based on the geographic division of labor. GOELRO propagated the minimization of transportation costs by moving production closer to the raw materials. In addition, GOELRO, as a spatial planning document, advocated so-called "complex" development (Granik, 1971). The regional economy was based on the development "not of one industry, not one factory, but of *a sum of all* economic relations, *sum of all* economic turnover" (Lenin, 1918 (1972), *emph. orig.*). The origins of the GOELRO strategy could be found in Marx's and, more extensively, in Engels's works, by whose writings the Bolsheviks' agenda was justified.

In "*Anti-Duhring*", Engels contended that "large scale industry has hereby to a considerable extent freed production from the restrictions of space... Society liberated from the barriers of capitalist production can go much further still" and reach "the most equal distribution possible of large scale industry over the whole country" (as cited in Hill & Gaddy, 2003). This "Engels dictum" became a major discourse of the Soviets' planning and economic geography. Laid upon Lenin's concept of complex economic and social development, the paradigm of the equalization of development across the country was seized as a goal of socialism. Not surprisingly, a great Soviet explorer and geographer, Ivan Papanin, called the development of the North "a ring in a chain of the great [socialist] transformation of the country" (Papanin, 1977: 141, translation *A.P.*).

Soviet planners fully embraced this discourse. The themes of "the conquest of the North" and "overcoming the nature" became quintessential for planning in the early Soviet period (e.g., Sergeev, 1949). Northern romanticism and the desire to drastically transform the North were going hand-in-hand with policies of socialist collectivization and industrialization (McCannon, 1998), which these planners designed. It is quite interesting that some romantic and development clichés were borrowed directly from

the North American experience, specifically from the Turnerist practices of territorial acquisition by conquering and populating the hinterland.

For example, an article with the intriguing title “Canadianization of the Murmansk Railway” (Chirkin, 1923), published in one of the northern Russian local magazines in the early 1920s, advocated using the Canadian Prairies experience to colonize the Russian North. (A Turnerist discourse was prevalent in the Canadian Prairies, but has not been “extended” to the Canadian Far North (Wood, 2006)). Canadians, in this article author’s opinion, introduced a successful system of attracting settlers and investment to areas along the newly built transcontinental railways that, he argued, should be adopted in Russia. In other literature sources of the time, the references to the “Canadian scheme” of development have also been made in relation to the settlement of peasants in Siberia (Voronov, 2006).

By accepting a more proactive modernization paradigm, the Soviet discourse and associated policy of northern development substantially diverged from the Canadian discourse of the time. In fact, it appears to be closer to Turnerism; it viewed the frontier as an extension and not an adversary of the core. The North was “true” and “purely” Soviet, just like the Great West was American (i.e., an extension of the US eastern core). The Soviet discourse empowered ideas of the *acquisition* and *expropriation* of the Northern space and its resources. This fundamental difference is the ultimate reason for the drastically more extensive development of the Soviet North.

The early Soviet discourse of the North was a discourse of romanticism and modernistic triumphalism. From heroic explorers (Papanin, 1977) to economic planners (Slavin, 1972) and the general public (see McCannon, 1998), there was a common belief in making the North a Soviet stronghold. Some geographers even argued that soon enough the North would shrink and eventually become an irrelevant concept, because it would be indistinguishable from the rest of the country (Sergeev, 1949). It is interesting to mention that the Russian/Soviet literature on the subject has always used the term “*osvoenie*” to describe the process of development in the northern frontier. *Osvoenie* literally means “making something your own”. *Osvoenie* implies not merely domestication, but expropriation and acquisition. In Russian texts, it is often conflated with modernization, settlement, and resource exploitation (Agranat, 1984; Bandman & Chistobaev, 1990; Slavin, 1972; Karpov, 1972).

The dominant discourse materialized in public policies. In 1932, the Soviet government (State Committee for Planning, or Gosplan) adopted the concept of northern development, which required including the North into the plans of the “rational [i.e., equalized or even] distribution of productive forces” (Letopis’ Severa, 1979). It was argued that single-industry development was disadvantageous and against the principles of the socialist political economy, which required balancing among the economic sectors in each region (Egorov & Lischenok, 1987). It was believed that northern regions would ultimately become self-sufficient. At this point, the Soviet discourse of hinterland development substantially diverged from the Canadian colonial discourse of the pre-Diefenbaker times. The Soviet paradigm of “conquering” the North magnified and empowered the Turnerist ideas of the acquisition and expropriation of the frontier space and its resources. Soviet regional planning was building upon the ideology of acquiring and remaking the North by expropriating its riches for the Stalinist “mobilization economy” (Gregory, 2003; McCannon, 1998). The economic ideology also served the geopolitical goal of Soviet planners to reconstruct the Soviet nation-space and make the USSR self-sufficient through the extraction of natural resources.

The orthodox paradigm of northern development was challenged by the Party’s discontent with the slowing rates of economic growth and by the strengthening counter-discourse of development that demanded a quicker and less costly exploitation of northern resources. The adoption of the Third Program of the Communist Party cemented the shift. The new doctrine now advocated a “temporary” resource-reliant variant of regional development in the North: “in order to save time, first of all to use natural resources available for quick extraction and giving the largest economic effect” (Programma KPSS, 1961: 74). Thus, the Soviet discourse since has been focused on the resource exploitation of the northern space, a paradigm inherited in the post-Soviet times. This shift is important to explain the persisting economic marginality as well as the sectoral and geographic disproportions in the regional development in the Russian North.

Discourse, Power, and Development: The State in the Norths

The role of the State in the formation and empowerment of northern development discourses and policy in Canada and USSR/Russia deserves specific focus to fully grasp. Foucault argued that discourse and knowledge are related to power; the discourse is regulatory, and it legislates the inclusions, exclusions, and criteria for acceptability. This may be expressed

in forms of governmentality that set “rituals of truth” and create a particular style of subjectivity to which one conforms or resists (Foucault, 1970). The role of the State as a conveyer of governmentality is crucial for the production of the discourse of northern development. Capitalist and communist states both propagated northern development and modernization. The State, as an institution and societal structure, empowered through implementing governmentality, facilitated the creation of “regimes of truth” about the North that were suitable for its own interests, which were discursively understood in terms of recourse expansion and development. Certainly, the Soviet northern economic development policies are an outstanding example of the state-enforced ideological dogmatism (Hill & Gaddy, 2003); however, the northern planning in Canada was also heavily influenced by the government, which determined the allocation of a large share of the research and development funding in the North (Barre, 1987).

In other words, the *State has controlled the state of the North* in both the USSR and Canada. Since in both countries the State has always been the central negotiator and actor in the “hegemonic project” of developing the frontier, the history of regional development policymaking in the North can be well illustrated by the history of government interventions. Whereas the analysis of public development policies in the Canadian and Russian North is outside the scope of this paper, the bottom line here is that the evolution of development paradigms (propagated by the State) has always been followed by the transformation of public policies (enforced by the State).

From the Social Construction to the Material Production of the North

How did the discourses of northern development in the 20th century impact the material production of the Norths? Table 1 attempts to associate the selected characteristics of northern development, shared by the two development regimes, with their outcomes (elaborated from the framework proposed by Bourne (2000)). Given the previous discussion, it is not surprising that the strategies of development in Canada and Russia produced rather similar and disappointing outcomes – for instance, in respect to relative economic prosperity (Glomsrød et al., 2015) and community well-being (Larsen & Fondahl, 2014; Larsen et al., 2015). The colonial developmentalist project in the North showed poor results, in the sense that it was unsuccessful in mitigating perpetual marginality and delivering sustainability to northern regions. Instead, it generally exacerbated the levels

Table 4-1: Selected similarities of Canadian and Soviet northern development and development outcomes

20th Century Development Policy Characteristics	Development Outcomes
Modernist imperatives Paternalism Inadequate planning Mega-projects Political dependency Neglect of Indigenous cultures State intervention	Marginalization of locals Culture of dependency Dependency on government, social marginalization, and high mobility Environmental destruction and dislocation of people and resources Powerlessness Social marginalization Bureaucratization

of marginality and worsened the dependency and vulnerability of northern economies. This approach to development in the North was unsuccessful, much like its counterparts in the Third World (Watts, 1993; Escobar, 1995; Scott, 1998).

The fundamental reason for the lack of success of 20th century development projects has been suggested by the “postdevelopment” scholarship: the modernist normative premises of development (and of “high modernism” in economic planning), upon which the western development project was constructed in the “developing” world, brought this effort to a devastating collapse (Escobar, 1995). Another fundamental problem, associated with both the development regimes in the North, is that discursive public policies were responsible for creating hegemonic inequities between the North and South and among northern regions (Petrov, 2012). This not only undermined the development of regional economic sovereignty and political power, and deepened the dependency of the North, but it also placed northern communities in the midst of the conflict between various levels of government, different ministries, and corporations.

It is also important to convey that northern development projects in Russia and Canada exhibited considerable differences. Table 4-2 summarizes some of them. Major dissimilarities stem from the origins of the discursive formations and their evolution in both countries – for example, the Innisian approach to the development of the frontier vs. the Russian version of Turnerism that dominated in the USSR.

Table 4-2: Selected differences of Canadian and Soviet northern development and development outcomes

Canada	USSR/Russia	Development outcomes
Exploitation and “othering” of the North (“Innisianism”)	Expropriation and acquisition of the North (“Turnerism”)	Greater exploitation of resources, grand scale of development, resettlement of millions to the Soviet North
Small-/medium-scale development	Very-large-scale development	Large cities, overpopulation, developed infrastructure, major extractive operations in the Soviet North
Slower tempo of development	High tempo of development	Planning lagged behind development, mismanagement of growth in the Soviet North
Relatively low level of national resource mobilization for development	Low level of national resource mobilization for development	Enormous financial, labour, social, infrastructural commitments in the Soviet North that were hard to maintain

Indeed, the development regimes in the North have not been completely unsuccessful. After all, resource extraction in the Norths has continued and expanded throughout many decades. In fact, the resource economy worked well for some places and for some periods of time. Regions involved in mega-projects received enormous investments, which drastically improved their infrastructure and populations’ well-being (Agranat, 1992; Rea, 1976; Slavin, 1972). Workers in the northern wage sector were well paid and lived in state-of-the-art industrial towns developed through urban planning and design (Stelter & Artibise, 1978). The material well-being and employment in Indigenous communities generally increased (Stabler & Howe, 1990), although the welfare gap has never been closed (Petrov et al., 2015) and negative impacts always accompany and often surpass the benefits. As powerful cyclones (Barnes et al., 2001), these development surges dissipated,

often leaving ruins with intermittent miniscule successes behind (Hayter, 2003; Gaxinger et al., 2016).

As a result of the fundamental inadequacies of the 20th century development policies, both the Canadian and Russian Norths continue to share high levels of economic, political, and social marginality. Although some radical thinkers have questioned the very possibility of “develop[ing] the North” (Pivovarov, 1997; Howard & Widdowson, 1999), it is certain that developmental projects in the North are far from being over. This optimistic view may be related to at least two considerations: the continuing (and increasing) importance of northern resources as the assets of the future and a surge of the post-developmental discourses of regional renewal (both globally and locally) aimed at bringing sustainable development to the northern peripheries. The emphasis on regional growth, as endogenous and socially embedded as it appears, perhaps may also be helpful in devising new northern policies (House, 2003; Southcott, 2015; Petrov, 2016).

Concluding Remarks

Being the products of the Western development discursive paradigm, the 20th century Soviet and Canadian northern development projects shared some principal commonalities. As in other parts of the “developing” world, they included “othering” and subordinating the North to the metropolis. The normative development paradigm attempted to dis-other the North by emulating development paths of the “South”. Whereas the ideological bases of the Canadian and Soviet development discourses were different, the idea of “taking care” of the North by “taking advantage” of its resources was the key value that both countries embodied through their actions, as was the idea of State involvement and State intervention as a primary regulation mechanism. In congruence with other authors (Bolotova, 2004; Hill & Gaddy, 2003; Watts, 1993), we can observe that the common discursive elements of the development regimes in the Norths included a teleological modernist approach to planning based on a normative and discursively constructed set of goals, the conception of nature as an object of activity and an inexhaustible storage of resources, the mythology of the frontier as an empty space that was ultimately devoid of its own value and meaning, the ideology of “othering” the North from the South, and the positioning of the state as a primary actor and the leader in the developmentalist “hegemonic block”. However, many important questions remain unanswered. Among them, how different are the current, 21st century development models of the North from their 20th century predecessors? Have the lessons been learned,

and what do they mean under the new circumstances (such as globalization, climate change, Indigenous self-governance, post-colonialism, etc.)?

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5

Scramble for the Arctic Offshore Oil & Gas Resources in Russia

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For several decades, the high prices of oil and gas have been a major driving force for Russia's economic growth and state prosperity. During this period, the state mostly relied on natural resources production in West Siberia. Today, the Russian economy is still very dependent on the energy sector; however, the traditional areas of energy production cannot satisfy the demand any longer, and the state is facing the challenge of finding a new energy supply area. Arctic offshore resources represent an alternative energy supply; however, severe climate conditions, environmental risks and high production costs make offshore exploration less attractive. This article examines the different approaches and interests of the Russian state and businesses towards the offshore exploration in the region. Convergences and divergences in the stances are discussed, providing an outline for the future development of the Russian energy sector in relation to the ongoing international energy market development.

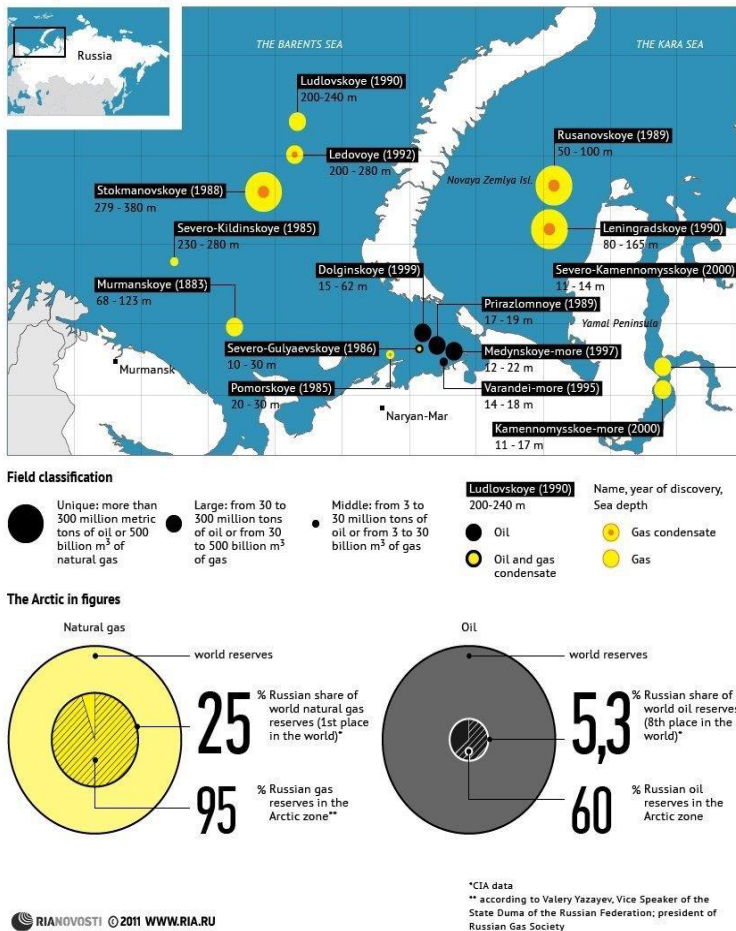
Background

For several decades, high prices of oil and gas have been a major driving force in Russia's economic growth, making the country dependent on oil and gas exports and vulnerable to fluctuations in crude oil prices on the world market. From 1996-1998, up to 14-15% of the state's GDP revenues were derived from hydrocarbons production and export. From 1999-2003, their share increased to more than 20% (Berezinskaya and Mironov, 2006), and in 2012 they represented almost half of the federal revenues (Neftegazovaya Rossiya, 2013). Starting from the 1960s, a bulk of the hydrocarbon production occurred in West Siberia. Today, Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug still accounts for 51% of the oil production in Russia (Ria Novosti, 2012). Currently, the state's policy to preserve and expand energy production and exportation faces certain challenges. West Siberian

fields are dwindling, and oil production is predicted to decrease by 19% by 2020 (Kezik and Ermakova, 2012). In addition, geological surveys have been slow-paced, and modern energy production technology has not been fully introduced. According to “Russia Oil and Gas Report”, published in 2011, in the future, an increasing share of energy production will occur outside of West Siberia (Business Monitor International, 2011).

Russian oil and gas fields in the Arctic

Oil and gas fields containing immense reserves have been found in the Russian section of the Arctic sea-shelf



Source: Russian Oil and Gas Fields in the Arctic (2011), RIA Novosti, <http://en.rian.ru/infographics/20111007/167371478.html>

Today, oil and gas resources in East Siberia and on the Arctic continental shelf are viewed by the Russian state as new potential areas for energy production. In 2008, during the Security Council meeting, President Dmitry Medvedev (2008-2012) announced a mission to convert the Arctic region into a resource base of the 21st century, to compensate the dwindling resources in West Siberia. Recoverable hydrocarbon resources on Russia's continental shelf account for up to 100 billion tons, including more than 13.5 billion tons of oil and about 73 trillion cubic metres of gas (Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology, 2006).

The bulk of the resources (about 66.5%) are located in the northern seas (the Barents and Kara Seas). Apart from the economic reasons for energy supply diversification, offshore development is linked with Russian geopolitical interests in guaranteeing its presence in the Arctic waters via a military component. In addition, offshore hydrocarbon production is associated with the socio- economic development of the Northern regions in Russia.

The "Strategy for the Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation and National Security for the Period up to 2020", published in February 2013, outlined the policy directions and the mechanisms needed for the relocation of oil and gas production into new areas. The strategy prescribes the development of a natural resource base by implementing new technologies, conducting complex studies on the continental shelf and in the coastal zone, forming reserve fund deposits and accomplishing relevant infrastructure projects (Government of Russia, 2013). One of the mechanisms for the implementation of these tasks is based on collaboration between state and business organizations, including foreign entities.

Hence, this study provides an analysis of the current state of relations between the Russian government and state-controlled (Gazprom and Rosneft) and private (LUKOIL and NOVATEK) oil and gas companies. The article begins with a brief overview of the legal set of actors and their respective rights for operating on the Arctic continental shelf. Furthermore, it provides a comparative analysis of the Russian government and state and private companies' offshore strategies and interests. Finally, the article outlines the prospective development of the Russian Arctic offshore sector in relation to the energy sector development in other Arctic states, as well as with the ongoing changes in the global energy markets.

Subsoil Legislation: Rules for Operation on the Russian Continental Shelf

The Russian legislation on subsoil use is based on Article 72 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation. This article states that any possession, use and disposal of land, subsoil, water and other natural resources is the joint jurisdiction of the federal government and the federal subjects (The Constitution, 1993).

The subsoil activity is regulated also by the federal laws, decrees and orders issued by the President and the government of the Russian Federation, ministerial resolutions and by adoption in accordance with federal laws the statutory legal acts of the federal subjects of the Russian Federation. The core federal law in the sphere of subsoil use is Federal Law No. 2395-1, “On Subsoil Resources”, dated February 21, 1992. The Federal Law regulates issues connected to geological surveying, license granting and natural resources extraction and production. The subsoil operations on the continental shelf are conducted in accordance with Federal Law No. 183-FZ, “On the Continental Shelf”, dated November 30, 1995, and Federal Law No. 191-FZ, “On the Exclusive Economic Zone”, dated December 17, 1998.

The regulation of offshore activities on the continental shelf falls under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology and under the respective governmental entities. In particular, the Federal Agency for Subsoil Use (“Rosnedra”) is responsible for geological surveying, insurance and the license assessment of subsoil use, and for auctioning licenses for subsoil use.

According to Russian legislation, the state has exclusive rights to subsoil use – no one can extract subsoil resources without the state’s consent. The right to any resources extraction can be granted in the form of a subsoil license or a state contract.

The 2008 amendments to the Federal Law “On Subsoil Resources” have specified strict criteria for subsoil users who are applying for offshore licenses. The amendments provide access to offshore activities only to a legal entity with five years of experience in the development of deposits on the Russian continental shelf, that was established in accordance with the legislation of the Russian Federation and that has a government stake of over 50% in its charter capital (Consultant, 2008). Currently, only two Russian

state-controlled companies – oil company Rosneft and gas company Gazprom – meet the criteria.

Amendments were also introduced to the legislation covering issues of foreign investment in strategic deposits. Under the new amendments, foreign companies are deprived of the rights to obtain subsoil licenses or develop strategic deposits, and are obliged to report to a government agency every time they acquire a 10% or greater share in a Russian company that works in a strategic sector (Federal Antimonopoly Service of the RF, 2008).

The amendments introduced went in line with the general policy towards strengthening the government control in the energy sector and the protection of the state's national security interests. In particular, the "National Security Concept of the Russian Federation", revised in 2000, prescribed an increase in state control over foreign investment and the introduction of well-grounded limitations on the granting of subsoil licenses to foreign companies (Security Council, 2000). Adopted in the following year, the "Marine Doctrine for the Period up to 2020" stipulated the protection and implementation of sovereign rights on geological surveys and the exploitation of offshore resources (Security Council, 2001).

Government and Private Energy Companies' Approaches towards Offshore Oil & Gas Development Policies

The Arctic continental shelf monopoly held by the two companies Gazprom and Rosneft contributed to the emergence of two different approaches towards offshore project development within a political nomenclature in Russia. According to Rustam Tankayev, a leading expert at the Russian Union of Oil and Gas Industrialists, two centres of power have been formed in the Russian energy industry, including the Presidential Commission for the Strategic Development of the Fuel and Energy Sector and Environmental Security, whose executive secretary, Igor Sechin, also holds the presidency of Rosneft (2012-present), and the Government Commission on the Fuel and Energy Complex, which is headed by Deputy Prime Minister Arkady Dvorkovich (2012- present) (Topalov, 2012). In general, the Deputy Prime Minister advocates for the liberalization of the Federal Law "On Subsoil Resources"; the approach is also supported by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology and the Ministry of Economic Development, and it stipulates expanding the number of companies that can work offshore for tax regime facilitation and for an increase in the number of geological surveys conducted on the continental shelf. According to the Minister of Natural Resources and Ecology, Jury Trutnev (2004-

2012), the development of many offshore projects will be very expensive, and it will require 150 years to examine the hydrocarbon potential of the continental shelf in the Arctic under the current legislation (Melnikov, 2011). Currently, the density of seismic surveys covering the most promising waters of the Arctic Seas, except the Barents and Pechora Seas, is not more than 0.15 per 1 square kilometre, and for the eastern seas, less than 0.1 kilometre to 1 square kilometre (Rbk Daily, 2013).

Over the past few years, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology has been constantly lobbying for an increase in the number of legal entities that could gain the right to conduct economic activities on the Arctic continental shelf. In 2010, the Ministry proposed the consideration of both national and international offshore operations' experience in making its decisions on granting subsoil use licenses for working on the continental shelf. However, the amendments introduced did not receive approval from the Ministry of Energy, which called for improvements to the proposals. In the following year, the Ministry initiated a proposal allowing legal foreign entities to acquire licenses to plots of deposits until the end of the geological survey stage in the relevant area of interest. The proposals also echoed initiatives articulated by Deputy Prime Minister Igor Sechin (1999-2008), who was making an effort with respect to the creation of a strategic alliance, together with BP, for the joint exploration of the offshore deposits in the Arctic. In 2012, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology made a further step towards bringing changes into the existing subsoil legislation. It drafted its "Program for Exploration and Development of the Continental Shelf of Russia for the Period up to 2030", stipulating that private companies could conduct geological surveys without the collaboration or participation of the state-controlled companies, and introduced changes in the tax regime that are dependent on the complexity of the deposit. However, the draft was later sent back for revision by Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev (2012-present).

A certain breakthrough has been associated with the government meeting in Novy Urengoy, which was held in the beginning of 2013. However, the results of the meeting confirmed the senior officials' stance towards the preservation of the state-controlled companies' monopolies on the continental shelf. The outcome of the meeting could be explained by the existing fierce lobbying of the state-controlled energy companies and their strong connection with state officials in the Russian government and the Russian President.

Strong supporters for subsoil law liberalization include private Russian energy companies LUKOIL, Surgutneftegaz, Bashneft and Zarubezneft. These companies have addressed the government and the President several times, requesting the opening of the continental shelf for private business. The main argument expressed by the opponents of liberalization is the private companies' inability to cover the financial costs of the Arctic projects and their lack of offshore experience. However, Zarubezneft possesses experience in working on shelf projects in Vietnam and regards this as its golden opportunity for establishing a joint venture with the company PetroVietnam in order to work on the Russian continental shelf in the Arctic. In 2012, Zarubezneft acquired shares of the energy company "Arktikmorneftegazrazvedka", which possesses significant experience in the exploration and development of oil and gas deposits on the Russian continental shelf. The procurement of the company has made Zarubezneft eligible to work offshore. However, the government's decision on allowing the company to proceed with offshore activity is still pending.

Another fierce supporter for liberalization has been the Russian private oil company LUKOIL, which began showing interest in offshore activities as early as the late 1990s. After the approval by the Russian government to grant Rosneft licenses to 12 sites, and to Gazprom licenses to 17 sites, LUKOIL started to consider other alternatives to obtain access to the Arctic continental shelf. During the official meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, the head of LUKOIL, Vagit Y. Alekperov, expressed the company's intention to launch a geological survey of the Khatanga Bay on the coast of Yakutia.

According to an analyst from Sberbank Investment Research, Valery Nesterov, LUKOIL has been forced to engage in the least prospective offshore projects in order to display its loyalty to the government, with hopes of getting access to the continental shelf in the future (Melnikov and Popov et al., 2013). However, a few months later, the vice-president of LUKOIL, Leonid Fedun, stated that "[i]t would be cheaper for the Russian oil companies to develop deposits on the mainland than on the continental shelf" (Muraviev, 2013). Such a radical change in the company's policy has been spurred by a number of factors. The first factor deals with the existing uncertainty concerning the Russian government's legal adoption of the liberalized offshore activity rules, which has forced the company to reorient its development strategy from offshore to onshore deposits. Secondly, the company is facing the problems of the gradual depletion of its deposits and the decline in oil production. In order to keep energy production at a

sufficient level and maintain the company's competitiveness in the national and international energy markets, LUKOIL is considering purchasing several enterprises in West Siberia and in the Republic of Komi that already own licenses for onshore field developments (Solodovnikova and Melnikov, 2013).

The current state of affairs around the subsoil legislation clearly manifests the Russian government's position (with certain exceptions of certain ministries) towards maintaining the Gazprom and Rosneft monopolies on the offshore activity and reducing the chances of private companies working offshore. In addition, the recently signed agreements between Gazprom and Rosneft with the foreign energy companies Total, Shell, ExxonMobil, Statoil, CNPC and Eni, respectively, for the joint development of deposits on the Arctic shelf have strengthened the state-controlled companies' positions by diminishing criticisms concerning the inability of foreign companies to participate in the Russian offshore projects. The acquisition of offshore licenses by Gazprom and Rosneft, and the prescription by the recently released Arctic Strategy on the creation of reserve fund deposits, leaves little room for manoeuvring for private companies to obtain access to offshore activities. In the long term, there are certain possibilities through which the private companies could proceed with offshore activity. For example, Gazprom's and Rosneft's inability to fulfill the geological survey requirements set by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology could force the government to review its position towards subsoil law liberalization. In turn, Gazprom and Rosneft could implement counter-action policies to encumber the actions of the Ministry and private companies in order to safeguard their monopolies on offshore activities in the Arctic.

Gazprom's and Rosneft's Approaches to Offshore Oil & Gas Development Policies

Rosneft and Gazprom have huge economic interests in the Arctic region due to their need to replace the depleting fields in West Siberia and guarantee their statuses as reliable energy suppliers.

Gazprom's involvement in Arctic offshore activities dates back to the beginning of the 1990s, when the company became the main decision-maker in the Rosshelf consortium. In 1992, the consortium was granted licences for developing the Shtokman and Prirazlomnoye fields. Several plans were initiated by Rosshelf to develop the Shtokman field, from creating a floating liquefaction plant (in 1996) to building a pipeline from

Vyborg to Murmansk and then to Peenemünde in Germany. There were two main debatable factors that the primary shareholder in the consortium, Gazprom, considered the Arctic offshore exploration to be feasible by the end of the century. From a legal point of view, sufficient Russian legislation on the regulation of offshore activities was lacking. Economically, the Russian companies were neither financially nor technologically prepared for project development on their own.

The next threshold in Gazprom's offshore policy dates back to the beginning of the 21st century and was linked with the interest of Gazprom in shipping liquefied natural gas (LNG) from the Shtokman field to the US market. In 2008, Gazprom, together with the Norwegian company Statoil and French company Total, set up "Shtokman Development" – a joint venture for the financing, construction and operation of the project's first phase. However, changes in the global gas market contributed to Gazprom's diminishing interest in the field's development. In particular, the rapid growth of shale gas production in the US during the past few years has made gas exportation from the field to the American market less likely. In addition, a launch by Qatar LNG exportation to Europe has caused an increase in the gas supply on the global market. This development, in combination with the world economic crisis of 2008/2009, has led to a decline in gas consumption, a decrease in the price of gas and the emergence of a gas surplus in the world market. As a result, the development of the project has been postponed for an uncertain period of time, and Gazprom's co-partner, the Norwegian company Statoil, left the project in 2012.

Another factor that has restrained Gazprom in its offshore exploration is that the development of Arctic offshore hydrocarbon reserves is connected to technological production challenges, high investment costs and environmental risks, and the profits from hydrocarbon extraction will not be reaped for many years to come. Since 2008, Gazprom has been negotiating with the government regarding tax privileges for the Shtokman field development, including the introduction of a tax on additional income, reduction of export duties and lowering of the taxes on mineral extraction. Currently, the government is working on legislation that will provide certain tax breaks for those projects for which production will begin after January 2016. In turn, Gazprom is lobbying tax privileges for projects whose commercial production will start in 2013. The company's position is backed by its plans to start production in the Prirazlomnaya field in 2013, and the granted tax breaks could save Gazprom \$2.4 billion in expenses (Rbk, 2012).

Following Gazprom's stance, Rosneft claims tax reductions from the government for the offshore Arctic projects that the company wants to develop together with its foreign co-partners. Rosneft has also been an ardent supporter of Gazprom's rigid stance on the denial of the subsoil legislation liberalization. As part of their shared interests, the two companies had plans for joint activities on the continental shelf. Their cooperation in Arctic offshore projects dates back to 2002, when Rosneft and Gazprom established "Sevmorneftegaz", a joint venture to develop the Shtokman and Prirazlomnoye fields. In 2005, Rosneft sold its shares to Gazprom in order to release financial room for further merging with the private oil company Yukos. The Yukos takeover by Rosneft represented one of the first steps in the oil company becoming the world's largest oil-producing company, which Rosneft fulfilled in March 2013 by completing the TNK- BP transaction.

In 2006, Rosneft and Gazprom launched the process for the development of a future offshore deposits division by signing an agreement on a strategic partnership for the period up to 2015, with the possibility for a five-year extension. The agreement, in particular, prescribed the joint exploration, production, transportation and processing of hydrocarbons on a 50-50 basis. Based on the agreement, the companies intended to jointly participate in tenders and auctions for subsoil use licenses and exchange the acquired geological information. The signed agreement was first and foremost aimed at reducing confrontation between the two companies and raising the companies' competitiveness on the internal energy market, since the two companies have been actively fighting for the same licenses, triggering the initial price increase.

A further step towards the division of powers in the energy sector was made in June 2007, when it was announced by the Ministry of Energy that the Arctic shelf and the Far East shelf would be explored by Rosneft and Gazprom. The announced measures were implemented in the amendments to the Federal Law "On Subsoil Resources" in 2008.

To safeguard their positions in lobbying for an offshore monopoly, and to reduce criticism from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology concerning the low geological survey pace, Gazprom and Rosneft signed a cooperation agreement in 2012 on the creation and sharing of infrastructure for the development of offshore deposits. The agreement prescribed the development of a business partnership between the two companies in order to increase their geological knowledge and develop a production of the

resource base of the continental shelf. In March 2013, after receiving licensing approval from the government on the development of offshore deposits, Rosneft heavily criticized the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology's state program on continental shelf development, calling its main parameters for geological survey overestimated and suggesting the establishment of a coordinated agency in order to work out a new document that would encompass the interests of the state-controlled companies. Rosneft also criticized the provision in which the company was obliged to return licenses to unallocated fund deposits in cases where the company had no intention to develop the field (Melnikov and Solodovnikova, 2013).

The delay on the decision on the adoption of subsoil legislation liberalization and the allocation of subsoil-use licenses to Rosneft and Gazprom without auctions clearly demonstrate the winning position of the state-controlled companies' alliance. However, the alliance between Gazprom and Rosneft for advocating their interests and stance on the development of continental shelf deposits has been destroyed by the emergent opportunities for Rosneft's gas policy expansion in both the internal and external energy markets.

Rosneft vs. Gazprom: Prospective Strategies for Expansion

In autumn 2012, Rosneft acquired a 51% share of the gas company ITERA, with provided reserves accounting for 372.4 billion cubic metres of gas and 15.7 million tons of condensate (Melnikov and Mordushenko, 2013). The shares' acquisition was done in the framework of cooperation between the two companies, aiming at the creation of a joint venture. The merge with ITERA meant, for Rosneft, access to the gas market and to existing contracts for gas supply, and for ITERA, energy sources. In 2013, Rosneft continued its gas policy expansion by undertaking certain steps towards reducing Gazprom's gas monopoly policy. During his speech at Investors' Day in London in April 2013, the head of Rosneft, Igor Sechin, announced the company's plans to produce 100 billion cubic metres of gas by 2020, which will correspond to 19-22% of the Russian gas market (Chodyakova, 2013).

A month before that, the company expressed its interest in obtaining certain subsoil use licenses, on which Gazprom had a previous claim. One of the major reasons for allocating the licenses to Rosneft was expressed in the letter by the company's Deputy Chairman of the Director Board, Nikolay Laverov, stating that a certain part of the granted licenses would be explored by Gazprom's subsidiary, the private company Gazprom Neft,

which represents a direct violation of the subsoil legislation. In addition, the company radically changed its position and supported the stance of the private gas company NOVATEK to diminish Gazprom's gas company monopoly on LNG export. The changes in the company's position have been backed by certain factors. Firstly, the development of the gas strategy by the company satisfied the goals of the "Russian Energy Strategy up to 2030" to create efficient conditions for independent gas producers in Russia. Secondly, 40% of Gazprom's long-standing contracts are due this year, and not all customers share an interest in the contracts' prolongation (Skorlygina and Matushenko, 2013). Thirdly, Rosneft obtained 40 licenses for the development of the offshore field, which are predominantly gas deposits. According to Igor Sechin, such an amount of gas cannot be implemented in the domestic market (Serov, 2013).

In the dispute between Rosneft and Gazprom, the government took a cautious stance. The positive remarks towards LNG export liberalization were expressed by Russian President Vladimir Putin during the Presidential Commission for the Strategic Development of the Fuel and Energy Sector and Environmental Security meeting, and by Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev during the latest World Economic Forum in Davos. However, the statements did not contain any concrete plans. Recently, the Ministry of Energy announced its plans to introduce new legal mechanisms to the united LNG export policy by September 2013. Due to Gazprom's rigid position towards its monopoly's preservation, it is doubtful that a total abolition of Gazprom's LNG monopoly will occur. The company claims that the existing monopoly on gas exports compensates for the huge financial and social burden that the company shoulders inside Russia, including through the gasification of regions and the implementation of social programs on the federal and regional levels.

In turn, Rosneft is gradually fortifying its presence on the gas market and taking steps to weaken Gazprom's position. Firstly, Vlada Rysakova, a former head of the strategic development department at Gazprom, was appointed a Vice President of Rosneft to manage the company's gas development policy. Secondly, NOVATEK has shifted its partnership priorities from Gazprom to Rosneft. In particular, NOVATEK halted the establishment of a joint venture to explore Gazprom's deposits on Yamal and NOVATEK's deposits on the Gydan Peninsula (Topalov, 2013). One of the major reasons standing behind the company's switch in interests is the development of the Yamal LNG project that the company is developing together with the French company TOTAL, which holds 20% of the

project's shares. It is planned to launch its gas production in 2016; however, the financial part of the project and the future export contracts depend on the government's decision on LNG export liberalization. Thirdly, the head of Rosneft announced the company's intentions to construct the LNG plant on Sakhalin by 2018.

At the same time, Rosneft expressed its interest in participating in the ExxonMobil project on an LNG plant construction in the Point Thomson, Alaska, oil and natural gas field, where Rosneft holds a 25% stake. According to Maria Belova, a senior analyst at the energy centre of the "Skolkovo" business school, it is possible that Rosneft can fulfill its agreement obligations by agreeing to participate in the project (Serov, Solodovnikova et al., 2013). In the event of the project's implementation, Rosneft will have to compete with Gazprom and with its own gas strategy, because the ExxonMobil project also targets Asian countries.

Rosneft has also expressed a strong interest in expanding into the Asian markets. The interest has been vividly shown during its latest business tour to China and South Korea. During the visit to China, Igor Sechin met the heads of the three leading companies – CNPC, Sinopec and CNOOC. The meeting discussed the prospective participation of Chinese companies in joint projects of exploration and production on the Russian continental shelf. Recently, Rosneft signed an agreement with CNPC to develop deposits in the Barents and Pechora Seas. The company also proposed new forms of collaboration in the field of LNG transportation. The issue of LNG transportation has been raised at the meeting with Rosneft and the South Korean companies KOGAS and STX. For Rosneft, the partnership with Korean companies will provide access to technologies and financing, and will open up new markets for LNG export. In addition, Asian countries represent attractive export markets for energy resources since prices for LNG are higher in China and Japan than in the European countries.

The private company NOVATEK has also expressed its interest in expanding its presence in Asian markets. The possibility of Chinese companies joining the Yamal LNG project emerged just after the February Asian business tour. Collaboration with Chinese companies would solve two vital problems: the issue of export markets and the project's financing.

The major rival to Rosneft and NOVATEK – Gazprom – also shares a strong interest in exporting energy resources to Asian markets. In general, Asian markets, for Gazprom, represent an option for the diversification of its gas export markets and the reduction of its dependence on European

energy consumption. Gazprom is facing certain difficulties in relation to the European countries, which are also trying to reduce their energy dependence on Gazprom. Specifically, Europe is reviewing projects that bypass its traditional gas suppliers. As a result, the Nabucco project has been replaced with a plan to construct a Trans-Anatolian gas pipeline through Azerbaijan and Turkey, and it is estimated that the first gas supply will be launched in 2017. At the same time, intensified talks have been launched on the Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline set for construction under the Caspian Sea, through which gas from Turkmenistan will be supplied directly to the European market.

In addition, the prospective LNG supply from North America, Africa or the Middle East in the nearest term could reduce Gazprom's share of the European gas export market and could force the company to reduce gas prices. Gazprom has already made certain concessions in terms of gas price reduction. In January 2013, the company reported that a gas price reduction of 10% had been achieved by the Austrian EconGas, Italian Sinergie Italiane, Slovak SPP, German Wingas and French GDF Suez (Pronedra, 2013).

At the same time, Gazprom faces certain difficulties in relation to the Asian market as well. Despite the recently signed agreement between Gazprom and the Chinese Company CNPC on gas supply from Russia for a period of 30 years, Russia and China have not reached an agreement on the price of the Russian gas deliverance yet. The issue of the gas price decrease also represents a challenge in the relations between Gazprom and Japan concerning the prospective LNG supply from the "Vladivostok LNG" plant to the Asian country.

On the other hand, there is a time constraint to the LNG development by the Russian companies due to growing competition from other countries like the US, which is hoping to start shipping LNG in 2015, as well as Canada and Australia which, like Russia, view fast-growing Asian countries as prospective energy markets. At the same time, Asian countries are also trying to reduce their dependence on oil and gas imports. Chinese and Japanese companies are planning to launch the development and extraction of shale oil deposits, and Japan has already successfully extracted gas from frozen methane hydrate in its coastal area. In addition, the prospective relocation of energy production into new areas with high extraction costs poses a serious challenge for the Russian companies, in particular Gazprom,

concerning its future gas price negotiation policy at a time of a prospective increase in the LNG supply.

At the same time, despite the official policy recently expressed by Russian President Vladimir Putin to develop energy supplies for Asian markets, the European market is still regarded as the major one. In support of this policy, Vladimir Putin must restart the work of the “Yamal - Europe 2” pipeline project, aimed at improving the reliability of deliveries to Slovakia, Hungary and Poland. In addition, Gazprom announced recently its plans to return to the LNG plant-building project in Primorsk, which Gazprom had given up in favour of the Shtokman project eight years ago, to supply gas to the European markets (Serov, Timoshinov, et al., 2013). In turn, the launch of the LNG project in Primorsk places in question the prospects of the Shtokman field’s development and the capacity of Gazprom to implement offshore energy projects in the Arctic in the near future. However, according to Maria Belova, a senior analyst at the Skolkovo business school, an LNG plant in Primorsk would allow Gazprom to circumvent the regulations of the EU’s Third Energy Package (Solodovnikova, 2013).

Simultaneously, Gazprom continues to strengthen its position on the Arctic continental shelf. One of the major outcomes of Vladimir Putin’s recent visit to the Netherlands was the signing of a memorandum of cooperation between Gazprom and Shell, setting out the principles for collaboration in the exploration and development of hydrocarbon reserves on the Russian Arctic shelf. The agreement with Shell, after the misfortune with the Shtokman project, is likely to be seen as a certain confirmation of the company’s intention to be present on the Arctic continental shelf. It is likely that the agreement between the companies will turn into a practical collaboration on offshore energy projects, including the possibility of the Shtokman field’s development, as it was planned by Gazprom after Statoil had left the project. The signed agreement could be also seen as a counterbalance to Rosneft’s partnership with foreign companies. In continuation of the agreement concluded with Shell, Gazprom has recently been granted four subsoil sites in the Barents and has won a dispute with Rosneft, where seven out of the eight disputed sites in the Kara Sea were granted to Gazprom. The two companies also agreed on splitting the disputed site in the East Siberian Sea. Gazprom will acquire licenses for East Siberian-2 block, and Rosneft will obtain licenses for East Siberian-1 block.

Conclusion

In general, the offshore energy development in Russia is characterized by rivalry within business and political structures, and between them, although there are certain issues where everyone's opinions coincide. The government, backed by the state-controlled companies Rosneft and Gazprom, follows a rather rigid stance towards the preservation of the state's monopoly on the offshore sector, through privileges granted to Rosneft and Gazprom. A certain divergence from this position could be seen in the policy of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology, which lobbied for the liberalization of the current subsoil legislation. This position is mostly backed by the strong necessity to speed up geological surveys and re-orient energy production from the gradually depleting fields in West Siberia to new areas, including the Arctic continental shelf. It is rather doubtful that the government will expand the number of actors who conduct oil and gas exploitation on the shelf. There is a small possibility that private companies will be allowed to conduct geological surveys under the joint agreement with Rosneft or Gazprom, while the state-owned companies will be responsible for extraction and production.

The political rivalry is also fuelled by the hostile relations between Rosneft and Gazprom. While providing a certain degree of support to Rosneft, for instance, by allowing the TNK-BP company purchase, the President has leaned towards the protection of Gazprom's gas export policy by stating that LNG export liberalization should not harm Gazprom's export positions. Thus, a further expansion of Rosneft in the gas market, and on the continental shelf in particular, will depend on the ability of its President, Igor Sechin, to lobby its interests and influence the decisions of the President and the government concerning the future development of Gazprom and the energy sector as a whole.

At the same time, the rivalry brings into question the ability of Russia to effectively implement its energy policy and its goal of expanding exports to Asian markets. In reference to the offshore development, the main concerns are about the time period for the start of the economic activity on the shelf and with its LNG production, and its existing risks and high costs. The uncertainties around LNG export liberalization and the tough stance taken by Gazprom to preserve its export monopoly also bring into question the possibility of the Yamal LNG project coming into realization by 2017. In addition, there are doubts concerning the feasibility of Gazprom's

Vladivostok LNG project and Rosneft's Sakhalin LNG project due to high costs and the existing uncertainty with the gas export markets.

The question also exists concerning the impact of cooperation with foreign companies on the future development of the Russian energy sector and on the ability of the state-controlled companies to independently carry out economic activities on the shelf in the future. For now, it seems that the companies are trying to stake offshore sites in the Arctic, considering offshore extraction from a long-term perspective.

Summing up, the uncertainties described above with respect to internal energy policy development and the competition for resources and political sphere of influence inside Russia could lead to a situation where the country will weaken and possibly lose its position as a main energy exporter to the European and prospective Asian markets. The critical challenge for Russia lies not in growing competition from other energy export countries; rather it is the inability of the state to effectively tackle the current problem of the gradual depletion of its West Siberian fields. Thus, the state is facing the critical necessity to clearly define its energy strategy and undertake bold steps to introduce changes into the current state of affairs in the Russian energy sector.

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6

Resource-Based Development & the Challenge of Economic Diversification in the Mining Communities of the Murmansk Region

Tuomas Suutarinen

Natural resources play a key role in the economic development of the Russian North. However, natural resource extraction cannot alone promote the long-term socio-economic sustainability of resource peripheries. My paper analyzes the challenges of economic diversification in two single-industry mining towns in the Murmansk region, Kirovsk and Revda, which have taken different historical developmental paths. Tourism has developed in Kirovsk alongside the mining industry since the 1930s, while mining has been the only significant industry in Revda. However, recently both Kirovsk and Revda have adopted tourism as the main target of their economic diversifications. My paper asks how the challenge of diversifying the economic development of these two communities can be explained by path-dependency, the resource curse and paternalism. The empirical data for the study was collected by the author on a fieldwork trip in 2012. It consists of semi-structured interviews with town, region and enterprise representatives in Kirovsk, Revda and Murmansk. Moreover, articles from regional and local newspapers concerning the diversification efforts of these two communities were used. Both interviews and articles were analyzed using qualitative methods. The paper reveals how the different development paths of these communities have shaped their ability to promote economic diversification in the present era. This paper shows that the obstacles to economic diversification are not only related to obvious issues, such as the lack of realistic alternatives, but also to deeper structural hindrances to the use of local potential and human capital to create diversified local economies in the Russian Arctic.

Introduction

The extraction and export of natural resources forms the basis of the Russian economy. This dependence on natural resources is most visible at the local level in natural resource communities. However, the long-term geo-economic sustainability of natural resource extraction has been questioned by various scholars and the Russian state (Connolly 2011; Anokhin et al. 2014). Whilst economic modernization and the diversification of the Russian economy were first mentioned during Vladimir Putin's presidency in 2007 (Connolly 2011: 431), it was the economic crisis of 2008-2009 that accelerated political aspirations to boost economic diversification in Russia from the local level right up to the state level, with a drive to economic modernization by the then president, Dmitri Medvedev (Foxall 2014: 98-99). These aspirations materialized in a centrally led programme for Russian single-industry towns by the Ministry of Regional Development (hereafter Minregion)¹, which sought to boost economic diversification in such towns. Single-industry towns in the Russian North are the product of the historical industrialization of the region (Blakkisrud 2006: 39). They face the challenge of transforming their economic profile from one based on heavy industry to one based on services, as well as modernizing old enterprises and becoming innovation centres for the surrounding areas (Pilyasov 2013: 3). Overcoming their industrial legacy and diversifying the local economy, although especially challenging, is crucial for sustainable local development in the single-industry towns of the Russian North (Pilyasov 2013: 3), where socio-economic sustainability is strongly connected with environmental sustainability (Tynkkynen 2007: 865).

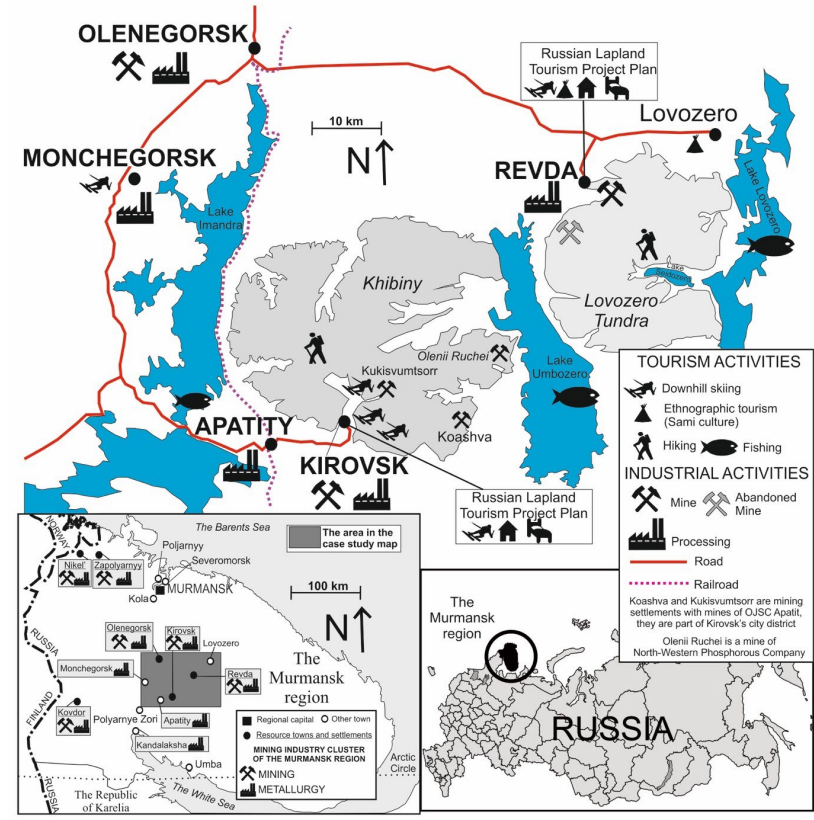
Russia's regional policies are spatially selective (Tykkyläinen 2010: 17). The federal state has awarded privileges to certain places and regions by funding large projects and implementing regional policy instruments, which resemble the Soviet-era policies. In addition, the spatial priorities are continuously changing. While the single-industry towns, dispersed across the country, were the main focus after the latest crises, currently the focus of the Russian state is on the development of the Far Eastern regions, North Caucasus and the Republic of Crimea, which all have their own ministries ("Rabochaya vstrecha s..." 2014). In these regions, the Russian state prioritizes federal investments in the development of infrastructure and socio-economic well-being ("Rabochaya vstrecha s..." 2014). In turn, the socio-economic development of the Russian Arctic regions, including the

Murmansk region, is not currently among the priority targets of the state's subsidies. For example, the Russian state published a state program called *Socio-Economic Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation until 2020* in April 2014, but it failed to receive funding from the federal budget ("Postanovlenie..." 2014). However, the Russian state is funding some single projects with federal importance in the North, such as the Murmansk transport hub (Staalesen 2014c). Nevertheless, they are also vulnerable to the volatilities of the spatial priorities of Russia. In April 2014, the financial support of the Russian state for the Murmansk transport hub was threatened by the urgent need to finance development projects in the Republic of Crimea (Staalesen 2014a). However, in September 2014, the Russian state showed its commitment to financing the development of the Murmansk transport hub, while the involvement of key private companies in the project is still questionable (Staalesen 2014c).

Mining plays a central role in the economy of the Murmansk region. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, economic diversification has been negative in the Murmansk region, which has been caused by economic restructuring problems and the fact that various unsustainable industries in the region, such as forestry and mechanical engineering, which have not been able to adapt to the market economy, have gone bankrupt (Didyk & Riabova 2012: 240). Hence, economic diversification in the Murmansk region faces difficulties as the economic diversification in the present era targets the creation of self-sufficient industries. In addition to a state-led economic diversification program, the regional government of the Murmansk region has also targeted the promotion of new industries in a bid to boost the economic diversification of the region (Klepikov 2012; "Marina Kovtun: Odn..." 2013). Tourism has been chosen as one of the main strategic targets of those new industries in the region ("Marina Kovtun: Odn..." 2013).

This chapter analyzes the challenges of economic diversification in two single-industry mining communities in the Murmansk region: Kirovsk and Revda² (Figure 6-1). Both of them evaluated their future economic sustainability as part of a program led by the Minregion. There was an external push by the Russian state and the Murmansk region's government towards Revda, which was requested to promote economic diversification in the town. Revda was identified as one of the seven most economically depressed single-industry towns in all of Russia, whose economic diversification was regarded as a priority and therefore was supported by investments from the Russian state (Dmitriev 2011). As a result, compre-

Figure 6-1: Resource communities of the Murmansk region and the location of Kirovsk and Revda



hensive investment plans (hereafter CIPs) with proposals for projects that were to receive investment were created. The diversification plans for Kirovsk and Revda in 2010 placed tourism as the main target for development in their economic restructuring. However, in the years since then, significant challenges to their planned development paths, especially to Revda's, have emerged. These challenges are the products of various factors, such as their different historical development paths, including the particular economic histories of these two communities.

This paper discusses the proposals and prospects for, and the setbacks experienced in, the economic diversification of Kirovsk and Revda. The empirical part of the paper uses a variety of qualitative methods by analyzing expert interviews conducted in these two single-industry towns as well as

local and regional press material. The interviews were conducted in the Murmansk region in 2012 by the author. The paper asks how the challenge of economic diversification for these two communities can be explained by the concept of path-dependency, where the local resource path has promoted both paternalistic expectations, as well as by the concept of the resource curse, which explains the structural and “psychological” obstacles for economic diversification as consequences of the resource-based development of the communities. The paper hypothesizes that path-dependency, which has exaggerated both the local resource curse as a consequence of resource-based local development and the paternalistic expectations of the residents of these mining communities, partly explains the different prospects for economic diversification in the Arctic mining towns of Kirovsk and Revda. Although the case concerns Arctic single-industry communities, the case in general reflects a typical problem for post-Soviet Russia, as well as peripheral localities and single-industry resource communities. As Kenneth Coates (1994) emphasizes, peripheral localities in the Far North are also characterized by universal problems of remoteness.

Theoretical Approach

The theoretical framework of the study approaches the challenge of post-industrial restructuring and the potential for the economic diversification of a local economic culture. The case discusses diversification away from mining to tourism, which represents an alternative development path for the local economy in both Kirovsk and Revda. Avoiding an uncontrolled shrinkage of population is among the main goals of sustainable development in these communities. Tourism might offer an alternative industry that could play a supportive role to the now dominant mining industry if market factors make the mining industry unprofitable in the future. However, tourism alone cannot replace the mining industry in these communities, because the number of jobs that the mining industry currently sustains could not be sustained by the tourist industry. Therefore, tourism alone cannot prevent a significant shrinkage of population in these communities. However, by offering alternative forms of employment, it has the potential to compensate for a moderate reduction in the number of jobs in the main industry.

There are several examples of failed diversification policies in the world, including in Russia (e.g., Ahrend 2005; Ahrend 2008: 6; Chernovski 2012). In the Russian North, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, ad hoc policies of the Russian state have sought to solve immediate crises instead of

promoting long-term sustainability (Blakkisrud 2006: 38; Tykkyläinen 2010: 257). However, resource communities need long-term sustainability. Being overly dependent on resource extraction makes such communities vulnerable to problems when their natural resources run out or become economically unsustainable to extract.

In northern resource communities, the potential for economic diversification is limited (Suutarinen 2013: 328-329). Usually, economic diversification has been supported by the possibilities offered by the local environment, commonly through forestry, agriculture and tourism (e.g., Jussila & Järviluoma 1998; Kuyek & Coumans 2003: 18; Johansen & Skryzhevskaya 2013). Tourism is often a desperate “last resort” (Kauppila et al. 2009: 432) in terms of economic development and diversification in peripheral areas. Hence, it often fails to redeem its promise as a saviour of the economy in peripheries, especially in areas where it too, despite receiving support, proves to be unsustainable (Schmallegger & Carson 2010: 202).

There are examples of the successful economic restructuring of mining communities in the Barents Region. For example, Kolari in Finnish Lapland (Jussila & Järviluoma 1998), where regional policies were activated to support the growth of tourism after the closure of local mines, and Kirkenes, near the Norwegian-Russian border (Viken et al. 2008), have diversified and transformed their economic bases to adapt to the restructuring of the local mining industries. Moreover, Atikokan in Northwestern Ontario shows another example of a successful adaptation to the closure of the mining industry. In Atikokan, several small enterprises in various economic fields were the main drivers of the transformation of the community’s economic base (Keyes 1992: 37-41). However, the relatively big local populations in the mining communities of the Russian North make their economic transformation more problematic than in similar cases of natural resource peripheries in Scandinavia and Canada. The development of small enterprises is unable to bring a major impact to local employment, which is usually the target of local economic diversification efforts.

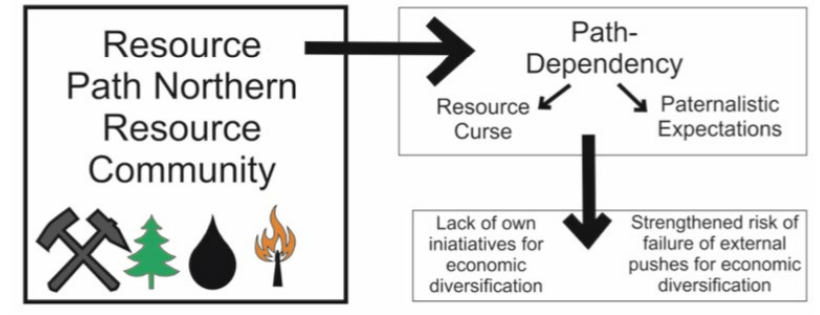
In several single-industry towns and resource regions in Russia, there are significant unused recreational resources and seemingly obvious opportunities for economic diversification, which could be well-suited to domestic and international tourism (Tynkkynen 2007; Tul’chinskiy et al. 2011: 178). In several localities of the Russian North, ecologically valuable locations are also bases for abundant natural resources (Tynkkynen 2007). These ecologically valuable places could offer opportunities for the

development of tourism. However, the extraction of natural resources, such as mineral resources and oil, often damages the ecological sites that tourists could come and see. Therefore, a potential conflict of interests often exists in these natural resource localities. The natural potential for tourism is also evident in the Murmansk region. Nature here offers similar opportunities to develop nature-based tourism as in Finnish Lapland (V. Gorbunov, Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Economic Development of the Government of the Murmansk region, personal communication in Murmansk, June 19, 2012; A. Popova, The head of the Tourism Information Centre of the administration of Kirovsk, personal communication in Kirovsk, June 9, 2012). The local cultures and values in communities without a history of tourism often present obstacles to economic diversification into tourism. Hence, despite the potential, several structural issues, such as a prevailing mono-culture and a local industrial path, hinder economic diversification and a post-industrial transition from a resource economy, or one with an industrial legacy, to the service sector (e.g., Toropova et al. 2007). Moreover, in mining communities, post-industrial problems, such as a spoiled nature or environment, hamper opportunities for economic diversification into tourism. Therefore, the emergence of a new industry, such as tourism, may give rise to conflicts between different industries' interests. Moreover, while mining offers a stable all-year-round income, tourism will struggle to do so because of its seasonality (e.g., Grenier 2007: 70). Hence, diversifying from mining to tourism is especially challenging. Consequently, for various reasons, tourism should only be considered as a secondary, supportive industry in promoting the sustainable development of these communities.

Theoretical Framework of the Resource Path

The theoretical framework behind seeing the resource path as a challenge for economic diversification in the resource communities of the Russian North is presented in Figure 5-2. In the Russian North, resource communities are mostly based on mining, forestry or oil and gas industries. The theoretical framework hypothesizes that mono-culture in a resource community leads to the formation of a resource path, which is especially represented in the ways of thinking of the local authorities (e.g., Tynkkynen 2007: 865; Schmallegger & Carson 2010). This maintains the structural and "psychological" consequences of the resource curse (Tynkkynen 2007) and is a base for the paternalistic expectations of public subsidies at the local level (Carson & Carson 2011: 379). Furthermore, this leads to a lack of

Figure 6-2: Resource path as an obstacle to economic diversification in the resource communities of the Russian North



ownership over initiatives for economic diversification and also strengthens the risk of failure of external pushes that target economic diversification.

Path-Dependency

This paper defines path-dependency as the phenomenon whereby a community or locality has been and is constrained and/or defined by its local development path, which in this case has been characterized by resource extraction from the beginning of the settlement history of the resource community (e.g., Carson & Carson 2011). Hence, local practices and a “resource culture” constitute obstacles to alternative forms of development in the community. The local economic culture of the mining communities of the Murmansk region, which was formed in the Soviet era, continues to form the basis of their development paths today.

The resource path of these resource communities can impede the evaluation of the obvious potential alternative economic activities in them. In communities with a mono-culture, local institutions were created to serve the interests of the dominant resource industry. Hence, the lack of institutions that could encourage innovation and diversification hinders a more diversified economic development. Moreover, the dominant industry has defined the skills that are required in local employment markets. Thus, the mono-industrial local economic profile leads to a lack of a diverse set of human skills, which could have been used to serve economic diversification into other industries in the community (Carson & Carson 2011: 375). Furthermore, the traditional existence of certain professions in resource communities also presents obstacles to the diversification of the economy (Carson & Carson 2011: 375). Moreover, a local culture that is based on

resources can also support the emergence of “resource fatalism”, where the area’s natural resources are viewed as the only viable source of livelihood for such resource communities (Suutarinen 2013: 339). This resembles a psychological difficulty in overcoming Soviet legacies, which is typical in post-Soviet industrial communities (Mah 2012: 117).

The Resource Curse

The resource curse has been mainly studied at the state and regional levels (e.g., Bradshaw 2006; Travin & Marganiya 2010). According to the main argument of the resource curse thesis, volatility in the price of natural resources ultimately leads to unsustainable development, a feature characteristic of resource regions and communities (Bradshaw 2006: 725; Schmallegger & Carson 2010: 204). Moreover, at a local level, the resource curse also results in the creation of a local mindset, which sees the resource development path as the only possible way forward in terms of local development (Tynkkynen 2005; Tynkkynen 2007). At the local level, the “resource curse” can be understood as an obstacle to sustainable local development and as a hindrance to the promotion of alternative paths of development. On the one hand, it is explained by the fact that the development and well-being of the community is dependent on the global volatilities of resource prices. On the other hand, resource-based development has consequences for the overall mindset of the community, where alternative development paths are underrated because the utilization of local resources is seen as the constant basis of the local development.

The Path of Paternalistic Expectations

The local development path has formed expectations of paternalism in resource communities where the town-constituting enterprises have maintained the social sphere and its residents. In the Soviet era, resource enterprises played a central role as the providers of several paternalistic social services for their communities (Kortelainen & Nystén-Haarala 2009: 151-152). At present, the incompetence of local administrations and the absence of other providers of such services force town-constituting enterprises to maintain several communal services in single-industry towns in Russia (Kortelainen & Nystén-Haarala 2009: 151-152). In the Soviet era, the state’s paternalism was implemented through state-owned enterprises, which in turn led these communities to develop expectations of paternalistic provisions by the state and the resource firms. Currently, the historical legacy of these paternalistic expectations acts as a hindrance to the residents adopting an active role in local development.

The paternalistic policies of the Russian state and regional authorities towards the resource firms of the Russian North have continued, in some cases, in the form of subsidies to the main resource enterprises (e.g., Suutarinen 2013: 334-335). The residents' expectations that the state and regional government would offer subsidies to these new alternative industries, in the same way that they have subsidized the main mining industry in the past, might continue in relation to alternative industries, such as tourism, which is seldom self-sustainable in peripheral communities (Carson & Carson 2011: 375). Path-dependency impacts the alternative industries of resource communities, which are not able to survive without permanent subsidies from the state. Hence, these expectations of paternalism hinder the appearance of new self-sufficient industries. Therefore, the paternalistic expectations of these resource communities can result in state-led investment projects that fail to take into account market forces and leave them dependent on state subsidies. Tourism, or indeed any other industry, might simply be seen as a new actor in the subsidized economy of the region and as a successor in the paternalistic tradition, which fails to give the expected results in terms of the self-sustainable development of the resource community (e.g., Schmallegger & Carson 2010: 217). Moreover, in resource communities, the government usually invests in the existing resource industries (staples³) (Schmallegger & Carson 2010: 205). Government investments often result in "showy" projects, which seek to support the staple industries and attract investors (Schmallegger & Carson 2010: 207).

Case Study

The empirical data for this study was gathered by the author during a field trip in 2012. Semi-structured expert interviews were conducted in Kirovsk, Revda and Murmansk in June 2012. Moreover, the study also draws upon articles from regional and local newspapers that discuss the diversification efforts of these two communities. Both interviews and articles are analyzed with qualitative methods with the aim of finding statements that discuss the challenges of economic diversification and the specific impact of the communities' resource paths on their economic diversification. Moreover, the study also highlights arguments that reflect the existing paternalistic expectations and the economic and "psychological" consequences of the resource curse for local economic development and the prospects for economic diversification.

Mining plays a central role in the economy of both Kirovsk and Revda (Table 7-1). However, in both communities, the ecologically and recreationally valuable places, which offer the potential for nature-based tourism, are located on the same territory as an abundance of mineral resources. Given the different historical economic paths of the communities, the basis for economic diversification naturally also differs. In Kirovsk, tourism developed alongside the mining industry since the 1930s (Kabysh 2010), whereas in Revda, mining has been the only significant industry. However, nature offers an obvious recreational potential for tourism even in the surroundings of Revda (KIPMMGP Revda 2010: 55). For example, the Lovozero Tundra and Lake Seidozero are popular places for hiking, and the former has potential for winter tourism (Figure 1). However, the tourism potential of Revda's surroundings has not been supported by the construction of tourism infrastructure.

In Kirovsk, the human capital is also more diversified in comparison with Revda because of the university and science town of Apatity located nearby, which generates a broader set of human skills in the surroundings of Kirovsk and therefore increases the prospects for economic diversification in the town. In turn, in Revda, the local mindset is more mining-oriented. Moreover, Revda, as the more remote community, also suffers from a lack of transport connections, such as an airport. Nevertheless, in the Arctic context, the locations of both Kirovsk and Revda provide them with relatively good accessibility from the viewpoint of departure areas for potential domestic (Central Russia) and foreign tourists (Europe), as there are various transport connections. Moreover, the tourism in the Murmansk region has potential to benefit from cross-border programs. The tourism information centre of Kirovsk was opened as a result of the *LapKola II* project, which promoted the cross-border tourism business in Lapland and the Southern Murmansk Region (Popova 2012, personal communication, June 9, 2012). Nevertheless, the economic diversification of Kirovsk and Revda is dependent on several external factors, such as the continuous repositioning of Russia in the global context and its consequences at the local level. On the one hand, the escalation of political tensions in 2014, with the worsening relations and sanction policies between Russia and Western countries, will have unpredictable consequences on Russian resource communities and their industries. The worsening image of Russia in 2014 and the decreasing interest of foreign investors to invest in Russia have jeopardized the modernization of a Russian economy that requires foreign investments and foreign know-how. Consequently, a lack of

investment in modernization strengthens the resource-based path of development in Russia and postpones economic diversification, as extractive industries do not need the same international openness (Humphreys et al. 2007: 4) that a more diversified economy would need. Moreover, negotiations related to a visa-free regime between Russia and the EU have been postponed and the image of Russia as a tourism destination has deteriorated, which at least postpones the possibilities for centres such as Revda and Kirovsk to develop plans to attract foreign tourists. On the other hand, there is still a long-term development tendency towards Russia's integration into world markets, which is represented by Russia's World Trade Organization (WTO) agreement. Nevertheless, the external factors of development will likely have a significant impact on the potential for economic diversification in resource communities in the border areas.

Table 7-1 shows the general characteristics of Kirovsk and Revda as mining towns, the importance of their mining industries as employers and the general characteristics and strategic goals of their CIPs, which promote investment projects to further economic diversification. The planned projects in CIPs aim to activate different stakeholders. Their target was to develop public-private partnerships for the development of investment pro-

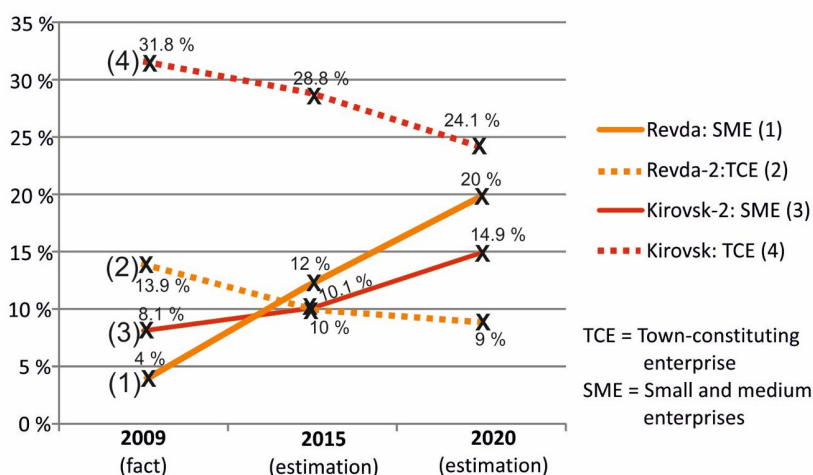
Table 6-1: Information Table of Kirovsk and Revda

	Kirovsk	Revda
Population	28,100 (2013) (Moigorod 2014)	8,100 (2013) (Moigorod 2014)
Main firm and its production	OJSC Apatit: apatite-nepheline ore 2 nd biggest enterprise in the Murmansk region in revenue (Top-100 2010: 20)	Lovozerskii GOK: rare earth metals (loparite, niobium) 86 th biggest enterprise in the Murmansk region in revenue (Top-100 2010: 22)
Number of workers in the main firm	11,682 (2009, includes workers from both Kirovsk and Apatity) (KIPMM Kirovsk 2010: 14)	923 (KIPMMGP Revda 2010: 11)
Strategic Reorientation in CIPs	Tourism (Target: 110,000 tourists in 2020, 400 new work places based on tourism) (KIPMM Kirovsk 2010: 52)	Tourism (Target: 40,000 tourists in 2020, 362 workplaces) (KIPMMGP Revda 2010: 51–52; Varenik 2012)
Main Projects and Target Projects for economic diversification in CIPs	Tourism (Russian Lapland: Winter sports, down-hill skiing), Two all-year-round tourism resorts (KIPMM Kirovsk 2010)	Tourism (Russian Lapland) (KIPMMGP Revda 2010)
Main Targets in CIPs	1. Diversification of economy in tourism 2. Improvements to the social infrastructure 3. Improvements to the transport network 4. Improvements to the environment (KIPMM Kirovsk 2010: 3)	1. Development of SMEs in tourism and in local industries 2. Diversification of the functions of LGOK 3. Development of human capital, improving the social amenities of the town (KIPMMGP Revda 2010: 3)

projects, which would have utilized federal, regional and local sources of public investment funding; moreover, they targeted the activation of the town-constituting enterprises to finance co-projects with public funding (Suutarinen 2013: 334-335).

Moreover, Kirovsk and Revda's CIPs seek to increase the sustainability of these towns and the quality of life of their residents by promoting sustainable social, economic and environmental development (KIPMM Kirovsk 2010: 42; KIPMMGP Revda 2010: 3). The CIPs of Kirovsk and Revda both had similar objectives as they sought to bring about a high level of economic diversification by promoting tourism in particular, improving the financial independence of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) (and town-constituting enterprises in Revda), improving the quality of life and reducing unemployment (KIPMM Kirovsk 2010: 3; KIPMMGP Revda 2010: 3). Figure 7-3 shows targeted estimates for the growth in the number of workers in SMEs that is needed to replace the estimated loss of workplaces in the town-constituting enterprises in the mining industry as part of the planned technological modernization process.

Figure 6-3: The estimated importance of the town-constituting enterprise and small and medium businesses as employers as a percent of the local working-age population in Kirovsk and Revda in 2009-2020, after realization of the investment projects included in the CIPs (KIPMM Kirovsk 2010: 70; KIPMMGP Revda 2010: 43)



Kirovsk as a Resource Community

OJSC Apatit, the town-constituting enterprise of Kirovsk, operates also in Apatity and is a significant employer in both towns. It is a daughter company of PhosAgro. Kirovsk is dependent on OJSC Apatit, as more than 90% of its budget incomes come from the company (V. Dyadik, The Deputy Head of the Kirovsk administration & The Head of the Financial-Economic Management of Kirovsk, personal communication in Kirovsk, June 8, 2012). The volatility of the price of natural resources was a significant blow to the Russian economy in 2008-2009, but only had a small negative impact on OJSC Apatit and Kirovsk. Hence, a strong belief in the further stable development of the local mining company prevailed among the town's representatives (O. Denisov, The head of the Kirovsk administration, personal communication in Kirovsk, June 8, 2012; A. Obrezanov, The Head of the Management of Economic Development of the Kirovsk administration, personal communication in Kirovsk, June 8, 2012). However, the volatility of natural resource prices and growing competition in world markets caused Kirovsk and OJSC Apatit significant problems in 2013 (Kabysh 2013).

Kirovsk and Economic Diversification into Tourism

Kirovsk is a special case among the single-industry towns of the Murmansk region due to its diversified economy. Tourism plays a notable role as a secondary industry in the local economy (Gorbunov, personal communication, June 19, 2012). In Kirovsk, the development path has historically been based on both tourism and the mining industry. In Russia, the town is probably as well known for its winter sports activities as it is for mining. "Proletarian tourism" in Kirovsk began in 1932 (Kabysh 2010). According to O. Denisov (personal communication, June 8, 2012), the former leader of the City Committee of the Communist Party of Kirovsk, Vasilii Ivanovich Kirov had already supported the growth of tourism in the Soviet era because the main industry was wealthy and its stability was guaranteed by state procurement orders. Hence, tourism became part of the local culture and was the second most important branch of the local economy during the Soviet era (Denisov, personal communication, June 8, 2012). Therefore, the historical path partly explains the supportive attitude towards the tourist industry in today's planned development. In 2012, when the town-constituting enterprise was viewed as stable, the mayor of Kirovsk, Denisov (personal communication, June 8, 2012), noted that the strategic development field for the future of the town was tourism. In 2009,

according to official statistics, 24,300 tourists visited Kirovsk, while the estimated number of tourists recorded by the Tourism Information Centre of Kirovsk was 38,900, including “wild tourists” who arrange their travels individually without the contribution of travel agencies (KIPMM Kirovsk 2010: 36).

In the CIP for Kirovsk, the target was to diversify the local economy with investments in the tourism industry particularly based on sport tourism (KIPMM Kirovsk 2010). In Kirovsk’s CIP, the development of tourism was based on a special economic zone, Russian Lapland (*Russkaya Laplandiya*), which expected 25 million rubles of investment from the regional budget in 2011 (KIPMM Kirovsk 2010: 51-52). The plan estimated that tourism would bring 400 new jobs. In order to promote this plan, the aim was to get private investment for the building of tourism infrastructure in 2013-2019. The plan catered for the arrival of 110,000 tourists in 2020 (KIPMM Kirovsk 2010: 52). The main problems for the development of tourism were the funds required for the building and reconstruction of tourism infrastructure as well as the reconstruction of Kirovsk’s airport (KIPMM Kirovsk 2010: 41-42). A lack of investors was the main challenge for the development of tourism in Kirovsk.

The interviews with Popova (personal communication, June 9, 2012) and Obrezanov (personal communication, June 8, 2012) revealed the positive role played by OJSC Apatit in the economic diversification of Kirovsk, as the town-constituting enterprise is the main investor in the downhill skiing centre in Kirovsk. The town administration, the town-constituting enterprise, OJSC Apatit, and the regional government of the Murmansk region all collaborated in seeking to promote several activities in the field of tourism. OJSC Apatit had a central role in the implementation of the CIP, including its plans for tourism (Obrezanov, personal communication, June 8, 2012). According to Obrezanov, the administration of Kirovsk was also committed to following the CIP and implementing its investment projects. Kirovsk was not to receive public subsidies from the federal authorities, because of its classification as a stable single-industry town (KIPMM Kirovsk 2010: 43).

In Kirovsk, the financial capabilities of the local business community and the main enterprise affect the plans to develop the tourist infrastructure of the town (KIPMM Kirovsk 2010: 43). Therefore, economic diversification into tourism is partly dependent on the well-being of the town-constituting enterprise, which in turn is dependent on the price of

natural resources on world markets, with all the uncertainty that this entails. Thus, the volatility of the price of natural resources and its effects on the town represent the resource curse and impact the opportunities for Kirovsk's economic diversification. Hence, despite the lack of "psychological" objections to diversification among the town's leadership and the town-constituting enterprise, the economic consequences of the resource curse make the sustainability of Kirovsk's economic diversification somewhat uncertain.

In Kirovsk, there were no clear expectations among the town's representatives that the Russian state would paternalistically subsidize the construction of tourism infrastructure in the town. However, according to Popova (personal communication, June 9, 2012), it would be impossible to construct large tourism infrastructure without investments by the regional government and the Russian state. Therefore, Kirovsk's Russian Lapland project also expected investment funded by the regional budget. However, there were expectations that OJSC Apatit would be a significant driver of economic diversification, which demonstrates the dependence of the community on this resource enterprise.

Revda as a Resource Community

Lovozerskii GOK (later LGOK) is the only major enterprise in Revda. LGOK mainly produces loparite concentrate and other rare earth metals, which are needed in various high technology processes and are strategically important for Russian industry and national security (KIPMMGP Revda 2010: 7, 11-12; Popov 2011). Thus, the well-being of Revda and its residents depends on the fate of LGOK's mine (Shirmer 2008; "Zamestitel' predsedatelya..." 2011). LGOK's economic and financial situation, and consequently its impact on the well-being of Revda, was the object of the most concern among the single-industry towns of the Murmansk region (Gorbunov, personal communication, June 19, 2012). The problems of LGOK began with perestroika and escalated with the ending of the state procurement orders for the company (Shirmer 2008; A. Mamedov, The Head of the municipal administration of Revda, personal communication in Revda, June 18, 2012). The collapse of the Soviet Union led to the privatization of the enterprise, and its decline was accelerated by the ruined vertical production chain as factories, which had utilized further the concentrate from Revda, were left to the former Soviet republics and were unable or reluctant to continue their cooperation with LGOK (V.

Kolokol'tsev, CEO of Lovozerskii GOK, personal communication in Revda, June 18, 2012; Mamedov, personal communication, June 18, 2012).

The strategic importance of LGOK's production (KIPMMGP Revda 2010: 7) has inspired an image within the company of its own importance. This self-image of its own strategic importance, combined with LGOK's long-lasting post-Soviet economic problems, has created strong paternalistic expectations amongst the workers of the firm and the local administration that the public authorities, the regional government and indeed the Russian state will subsidize the firm ("Pyat' mesyatsev gorniyaki..." 2006; "Zamestitel' predseatelya..." 2011). Moreover, the head of the municipal administration of Revda, Alovzat Mamedov (personal communication, June 18, 2012), also expected that LGOK would ultimately be protected by the Russian state and rescued from potential bankruptcy if a depression threatened the existence of the company, due to its strategic role in the country.

Revda and Economic Diversification into Tourism

The main target of Revda's CIP was to diversify the local economy away from mining and into tourism (KIPMMGP Revda 2010). The plan sought to reduce the dependence of the settlement on the mining industry and encourage the settlement to adapt to a post-industrial development path. Hence, it sought to create incentives for post-industrial development in the community (KIPMMGP Revda 2010: 40-41). According to Revda's CIP, the community has two alternative development scenarios: a mono-profiled urban settlement with a resource-based development, or sustainable development with economic diversification (KIPMMGP Revda 2010: 37-38). The main obstacle to economic diversification, according to Revda's CIP (KIPMMGP Revda 2010: 8), is the lack of finances for implementing development projects.

The main tourism project in Revda's plan was a Russian Lapland (*Russkaya Laplandiya*) project, which was originally created to promote tourism development in Kirovsk. However, it was extended to Revda in 2010 by the regional government because Revda desperately needed a rescue plan in 2009, as it was chosen by the state officials as one of the single-industry towns whose rescue was a top priority in Russia. Although the Russian Lapland plan was also left in the CIP of Kirovsk, the promotion of Russian Lapland in Revda was prioritized by the regional government as the rescue project of Revda and became among the priorities of the regional government. Hence, the creation of a tourism cluster, which would merge

the Russian Lapland projects in Kirovsk and Revda, became a long-term target of the regional government. The Russian Lapland project sought to bring tourism to Revda, despite the community's lack of experience of the tourist industry. It sought to compete with the tourist industry in Northern Finland with various tourist attractions within the project, from winter sports tourism and all-year-round holiday resorts to ethnographic (Sami culture) and cultural tourism (KIPMMGP Revda 2010: 53; Varenik 2012). The Russian Lapland project planned to create an estimated 362 permanent and 220 temporary jobs during the construction period. By bringing more tax incomes to Revda, it should have also reduced the level of dependency on subsidies from the regional budget in the town and increased the flow of tourists to the Murmansk region by 44,000 people annually (KIPMMGP Revda 2010: 51-52).

Despite the desperate search for economic diversification in Revda in 2010, opinions that the Russian Lapland plan is unnecessary gained traction in 2011. This was caused by an upturn in LGOK's fortunes because of the increase in prices for rare earth metals, one of LGOK's products, which in turn was caused by China's reduced exports of these metals (Popov 2011). Thus, as the CIP was ostracized, it revealed the ad hoc character of the plan from the viewpoint of the regional administration, which lost interest in promoting economic diversification in Revda as the outlook of the town's main company improved. In 2012, after LGOK's main crisis had passed, the leaders of Revda's administration and LGOK concluded that Revda's economic situation was satisfactory without the Russian Lapland project (Chernovski 2012). LGOK's CEO, V. Kolokol'tsev, denied that there was a threat that LGOK might be closed (Chernovski 2012), which had been the subject of rumours during the height of the crisis in 2009 (Pettersen 2009). Kolokol'tsev pointed out that the future of the settlement would be based on mining (Chernovski 2012). Tourism is necessary as a supportive industry, but its positive impact for the community is not significant enough to allow sustainable local development without mining (Chernovski 2012). Moreover, Kolokol'tsev argued that for the overall well-being of the community, investment should be directed to LGOK instead of tourism. Although positive, the development of tourism would be of secondary importance in comparison with any future success in the development of the main industrial field on which Revda was created (Sivonen 2012).

The Russian Lapland (*Russkaya Laplandiya*) plan turned out to be unsuccessful in 2012. In June 2012, the town's representatives still officially believed that the plan would be implemented (Mamedov, personal

communication, June 18, 2012), despite the fact that the private investment needed for any plan to succeed had disappeared at the end of 2011 (Mihailov 2011; Chernovski 2012). However, the failure of the program was a typical example of plans in Russian single-industry towns. It was one of those failed projects that led to the closure of the program designed to support single-industry towns produced by the Russian government (Chernovski 2012). Federal subsidies in the amount of 150 million rubles were assigned to the Russian Lapland project, while a private investor had been expected to invest 450 million rubles (Chernovski 2012; Varenik 2012). However, Revda could not use this federal subsidy for its tourism project because it was conditional on the private investor investing simultaneously in the proposed project (Mihailov 2011; Chernovski 2012). The case of Revda was not the only megalomaniac or unrealistic idea in the program of Russian single-industry towns. Fictional and unrealistic investment projects were also drawn up in other single-industry towns. Unsuccessful projects were common in towns that calculated that they would receive subsidies from the state (Grigor'ev 2012). These unrealistic plans, which relied on receiving federal subsidies without any realistic chances of success, represent the paternalistic expectations common in single-industry towns and resource communities.

When the failure of the Russian Lapland project was announced in August 2012, the regional governor of the Murmansk region, Marina Kovtun, who identified tourism as one of the region's priority objectives in the near future, revealed that she had been unimpressed with the project from the very beginning because of its enormous scale (Varenik 2012). Kovtun also called the project a fantasy and "a Potemkin village" (Varenik 2012).⁴ It was a Potemkin village, created by the regional government and Revda, in the sense that it tried to prove to the state authorities that their initiative for economic diversification would get a proper response in Revda. Moreover, the plan was called an investment-adventure project (Sivonen 2012) that was trying to outshine Finnish Lapland and its tourist industry. Figure 3 also shows the unrealistic character of a significant economic reorientation in Revda in 2009-2020, which resembled a "Potemkin leap" in terms of the significance of SMEs.

Revda and its diversification plan can be understood by using the concepts of path-dependency and paternalistic expectations. The failure of the tourism project of Russian Lapland can be explained by the existence of several incongruities in the plan, beginning from the extension of the plan from Kirovsk to Revda. Moreover, the ambitions of the project were too

unrealistic (Varenik 2012). Furthermore, the initiative for economic diversification in Revda was not homegrown. According to the head of the municipal administration of Revda, Alovzat Mamedov (personal communication, June 18, 2012), the initiative originated from a top-down push from federal and regional authorities, instead of developing as an initiative from the community. This reliance on the core/centre to initiate policies is typical for resource communities (Tynkkynen 2007: 865). Moreover, Mamedov thought that the Russian Lapland project lacked economic realism for its implementation. He was personally against the project because he did not believe in its success (Sivonen 2012). Mamedov (personal communication, June 18, 2012) emphasized that Revda was a resource producer and that an alternative development path would be unlikely to succeed. In turn, V. Gorbunov (personal communication, June 19, 2012) pointed out that the way of thinking of Revda's residents is an obstacle to the development of tourism because they have been used to a different development path based on the mining industry. In addition, the Minister of Economic Development of the Murmansk region, Elena Tikhonova, pointed out that the locals in Revda view the future of their community as being based on LGOK's operations instead of tourism (Sivonen 2012). To conclude, the lack of realism in Revda's tourist development plan can also be explained by the lack of local ideas and initiative, as the main impulse came from the federal and regional authorities. The role of the resource community was simply to carry out the instructions of the state. There was never any real drive or enthusiasm to promote self-generated local sustainability.

The case of the Russian Lapland plan also reveals an important feature of Russian regional policies. The Russian Lapland project was originally part of the tourist development plans of Kirovsk and was also included in the KIPMM Kirovsk (2010: 51-52) and in the regional tourist development plan of the Murmansk region (Popova, personal communication, June 9, 2012). However, the regional government targeted the development of tourism infrastructure through Russian Lapland in Revda as a priority because the rescuing of Revda had become one of the priorities of the regional government in 2009. As Revda had been selected as a federal priority, it ideally should have been a model example of successful planning to diversify a struggling single-industry community. Given that this was a "Potemkin project" that was supposedly to fulfill instructions handed down by the state, the regional administration of the Murmansk region was also ready to sacrifice the long-term sustainability of regional tourism and the

comparatively better prospects for tourism in Kirovsk, which already had a relatively prosperous local tourism industry, to serve and fulfill the needs of the federal program. Revda and the regional administration marketed Russian Lapland as a unique tourist attraction for Revda (KIPMMGP Revda 2010: 5). However, from the point of view of the total numbers of tourists visiting the Murmansk region, this would have had a sum negative result, because Revda was less likely to attract tourists than Kirovsk. However, as the Russian Lapland project in Revda has collapsed, this might be to Kirovsk's advantage, allowing it once again to try to promote the Russian Lapland brand. Insofar as the failure of the Russian Lapland project in Revda does not adversely affect the development of the Russian Lapland brand in Kirovsk, the failure of Revda's Russian Lapland plan may prove to be a positive development for a sustainable tourist industry in the Murmansk region as a whole. Moreover, Revda's Russian Lapland was the kind of "showy project" that is typical of projects in resource peripheries (Schmallegger & Carson 2010: 207). However, in this "showy project", it was the regional administration and the community that, in trying to create an alternative staple and carrying out the instructions of the federal authorities, ended up with a Potemkin village.

The failure of the Russian Lapland project shows the resource path and its influence on local attitudes in the community. Path-dependency meant that there was a risk that tourism, based on the attractiveness of nature – that is, a local natural resource like mining – might turn out to be a new mono-culture in a community in economic transition from one industry to another (Kauppila et al. 2009: 432-433; Schmallegger & Carson 2010: 202). Hence, potential alternative sources of employment were treated as big "industries", which by tradition had to be massive projects instead of the more realistic small-scale projects that would lead to economic diversification. The alternative industry, in this case tourism, was treated like the mining industry, which is dependent on public subsidies. Hence, its economic sustainability and market potential were not taken into account, which resembles the "staples trap" (Schmallegger & Carson 2010).

Since the official announcement of the failure of the Russian Lapland project in Revda, news has followed that the project is being developed with small steps by supporting the growth of SMEs ("V Zapolyar'e..." 2012). This would follow the international experience of more successful small-scale economic diversification instead of economically questionable massive projects, which often result in failure. Therefore, the program of Minregion brought at least a small initiative to the self-evaluation of the existing

prospects for economic diversification, which in the future might bring small-scale positive changes to communities such as Revda.

Conclusions and Discussion

Table 7-2 below summarizes the main impacts of path-dependency, the resource curse and paternalistic expectations on efforts at economic diversification in the case study's mining communities of the Murmansk region.

The study showed that the local development path in Revda stimulates resource fatalism in the community and forms a structural obstacle to economic diversification. In turn, the lower “psychological” impact of the resource path on Kirovsk was shown in the study. The historical local path, where tourism has developed alongside the main industry – namely, mining –, has had a positive influence in terms of economic diversification. This is seen in the way of thinking of the town administration and the main industrial company. In turn, Revda serves as an example of a place without a history of tourism. Therefore, its development struggles in large part because of a lack of human skills and the difficulties in changing the local attitudes and ways of thinking that hamper the switch away from resource fatalism to more diversification-friendly attitudes. Hence, Revda's example reveals the obstacles that local path-dependency creates for economic diver-

Table 6-2: Summary of the results

	Kirovsk	Revda
Path-Dependency: Resource Path	Diversified path from the beginning (both mining and nature tourism potential are utilized)	Currently only the mining option utilized out of all the natural resource potential of the district
Resource curse and economic diversification	Financial level (partial dependence on the resource firm and public authorities in the economic diversification projects)	Financial level (great dependence on public authorities); Mental level (resource fatalism)
Expectations of subsidies and paternalism from public authorities to local industries	Middle: Participation needed and expected from the local resource firm to support the tourism industry. The construction of tourism infrastructure is also dependent on investments from the regional administration.	High: State subsidies are expected to the main resource firm Lovozerskii GOK due to its economic problems. Public investments were expected to be the main source of money for the construction of tourism infrastructure. The expectations of subsidies on the main industry have high potential to spread also to alternative industries
General mindset in the community and prospects for future development	Open-minded attitude to economic diversification, realistic prospects for economic diversification from mining to tourism	“Resource fatalism” (mining-oriented way of thinking), likely continuation of the resource path and “resource-cursed development”

sification away from mining to tourism. Hence, the comparison of these two mining communities reveals the significance of the local historical path, which still influences local development today.

The results show that in Revda, there were both attitudinal and financial obstacles to economic diversification away from mining to tourism. In contrast, in Kirovsk, economic diversification towards tourism only faced financial obstacles. Diversification is dependent on the well-being of the main sponsor, OJSC Apatit, which in turn is dependent on the price of natural resources and is therefore vulnerable to any volatility in the markets. Hence, the sustainability and diversification of the town is partly resource-dependent, as long as OJSC Apatit has a significant role as a sponsor of the building of tourism attractions in Kirovsk. Therefore, the study shows the current impact of the volatilities of the resource prices on the economic diversification and sustainable development of both Kirovsk and Revda. Nevertheless, the challenge for promoting sustainable development with a diversified economy in Revda is fundamentally deeper than in Kirovsk, which has a limited attitudinal obstacle to economic diversification.

In Revda, there are prevailing expectations of paternalist support from the public authorities and external investors, as local actors have limited financial resources to support economic diversification. In contrast, in Kirovsk, OJSC Apatit supports economic diversification to tourism. So here, too, there are expectations that prosperous sponsors will be found in order to build the requisite infrastructure needed for the tourism industry. However, the self-sustainability of local tourism is questionable to a certain degree in both of the towns. Hence, Kirovsk is also partly “cursed” by its resource path, because it is dependent on the town-constituting enterprise for promoting local economic diversification and also needs public subsidies. However, Kirovsk has a better chance at avoiding the need for continuous subsidies for the tourism industry after an initial investment in tourist infrastructure has been provided.

This paper shows that economic diversification is not only restricted by obvious issues, such as the lack of prospects for diversified local economic development, but also by deeper structural hindrances to using the potential of local human capital in industries other than mining. The findings of the paper show how the local resource path supports resource fatalism and expectations of paternalism. In places like Revda, the human capital is used insufficiently. Therefore, the prevailing “resource fatalism” in the community fails to support alternative skills and development in the

community, which leads to the out-migration of those who cannot find themselves a place in the mining industry.

The abolishment of Minregion is unlikely to have any significant negative consequences for the economic diversification of these single-industry towns because Minregion had no finances to support their programs. The initiative for the self-evaluation of the economic diversification potential of single-industry towns was the main positive result of the program. Therefore, different stakeholders in single-industry towns need to take for themselves the main responsibility of diversifying the economies of their towns with a better understanding of their comprehensive economic potential. The task is not impossible, as the international experience shows that there are often at least small prospects for economic diversification in peripheral resource communities in the Arctic.

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Notes

1. Minregion was abolished by the proposal of Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev to President Vladimir Putin on September 8, 2014 (“Rabochaya vstrecha s...” 2014). The Ministry will cease to exist on December 1, 2014, and it will shift its functions to other ministries, such as the Ministry of Economic Development (Staalesen 2014b).
2. Revda (*munitsipal’noe obrazovanie gorodskoe poselenie Revda*) is part of the Lovozerskii district. It is officially classified as an urban-type settlement (*poselok gorodskogo tipa*).
3. Staples are basic commodities, such as raw materials, that are the backbone of the economic cultures of resource regions and communities (Innis 1933).

4. A Potemkin village refers to an official called Potemkin, who built fake villages along the route travelled by the Empress Catherine the Great in order to impress her with the degree of progress made in his development of the area under his jurisdiction – namely, the Crimea – in 1787. Any attempt to create a good impression for one’s superiors in government by using false means is now known as a Potemkin village.

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7

Regional International Cooperation in the Arctic & Subarctic Zone: A View from Karelia

Igor Shevchuk

The Republic of Karelia is a cross-border region of the Russian Federation, which has an approximately 800-kilometre-long border with a European Union country – Finland. This cross-border location has had a great impact on the development of international cooperation in the Republic of Karelia since the Soviet period, where in the mid-1960s, twin-city relations appeared. Later, in the 1980s and 1990s, twin-city relations transformed into active contacts among authorities and governmental as well as non-governmental organizations. The first interregional agreement was signed in 1989 with the State of Vermont in the USA.

Interstate economic cooperation with neighbouring Finland was already reflected in the 1980s in such projects as the construction of the Kostomuksha mining and concentrating complex and the town of Kostomuksha itself, as well as in the establishment of a wood processing complex in Pyaozerski village in the northern part of the republic. Later, at the end of the 1990s and at the turn of the 21st century, together with Finnish partners, quite a number of joint projects were implemented. The projects were aimed at the establishment of modern manufacturing in the field of in-car electronics, border inspection posts were established alongside visit-centres in the national parks of the republic, treatment plants were reconstructed, regular bus service was launched, and more. The interstate agreement on cooperation between Russia and Finland, concluded in 1992, had a significant influence on the character of regional cooperation between the two countries. Finland's accession to the European Union in 1995 gave the Republic of Karelia an opportunity to participate in such EU programs as TASIS, Interreg, European Neighbourhood Policy programs, and others. Scientific and technological cooperation as well as humanitarian ties being implemented through research, educational, non-commercial, and public

organizations have always been crucial for the international integration of the Republic of Karelia. Among the regions of the European Arctic and subarctic zone, the main partners of Karelia are the Norwegian county of Tromsø, the Swedish county of Västerbotten, and several Finnish unions of communes that concluded a range of cooperation agreements with the republic. Bilateral forms of cooperation are well balanced with multilateral ones, like, for example, under the framework of the Barents Euro-Arctic Region (BEAR), in which the republic has actively participated since its establishment in 1993. The unique nature of the Barents cooperation is justified by the cooperation between the central and regional levels. Karelia, as well as other regions of the BEAR, seeks to get a maximum benefit from combining bilateral cooperation with participation in multilateral structures of the BEAR, adjusting its actions, if necessary and useful, with national governments.

The Republic of Karelia is not an Arctic region in its pure form. However, Karelia has specific characteristics that are inherent to most of the Arctic regions: a severe climate, vulnerable environment, inaccessibility of the territory, underdeveloped transport infrastructure, low density of population, and high operating costs and expenses for infrastructure. But at the same time, there are new emerging opportunities due to the Arctic and the growth of its role in the everyday life of humanity. The high transport potential of the region is one example: the region can function as a transit corridor to different dimensions, including the Arctic. At the moment, the following projects are at the stage of preparation to implementation: a project to connect the Northern Sea Route to the inner waters of Russia through Karelia; a project on the development of land transport corridors between Ural and Europe; latitudinal transport-logistic projects; and more.

Proceeding from this, institutional support for program and project activities under the framework of such structures as the BEAR is extremely important for Karelia. A good example of this process is the harmonized combination of established structures and forms of cooperation with the tools that provide their functioning achieved within Euroregion Karelia. Euroregion Karelia was established in 2000 as an international platform aimed at the improvement of the cross-border ties and living standards of the population. These ideas are implemented by means of the cross-border cooperation program ENPI Karelia. For the BEAR, it would be useful to have its own source of financing, as the regions' positions are adjusted through their participation in the Barents Regional Council and profile working groups. That is why Russia, which will preside over in the Council

of the BEAR for the next two years, promotes the necessity of establishing financing tools for BEAR projects as one of its priorities. Precisely in this way, the designed BEAR agenda will be able to get suitable financial support and fulfill plenty of useful and mutually beneficial initiatives with specific content.

Cooperation in the North also requires the synergy of programs and projects. For example, cooperation under the framework of the BEAR can be supported by the instruments of the Northern Dimension, programs of the EU, and initiatives of the Nordic Council of Ministers and others. It is impossible to underestimate the experience of Karelia on this issue. For instance, JSC Russian Communal Systems, the Government of the Republic of Karelia, the Petrozavodsk city administration, the Finnish Ministry of the Environment, the Nordic Environment Finance Corporation (NEFCO), the Nordic Investment Bank, and the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership Support Fund have joined their efforts in the reconstruction of the water treatment plant in Petrozavodsk. This project will be launched quite soon. And one more hotspot, which was elaborated under the framework of the environmental dimension of the Barents cooperation in the 1990s, will disappear from the map of the BEAR. We witness that the stronger the institutions of cooperation are, the more topical and practically oriented the agenda of different cooperation forms is, the more effective implementation of the project is, and the more sustainable the results are.

In the North, the quality and development of human capital is a matter of high concern. That is why most of the programs and projects of cooperation between Northern regions have a humanitarian nature. The results of work under the framework of the BEAR, Northern dimension, the EU programs are self-explanatory. We can give thousands of examples of successful cooperation in the fields of ecology, culture, education, social support, and the public health service. A complex and cross-disciplinary approach for the implementation of these projects is especially important. Many programs have horizontal priorities in the form of youth support or the support of the Indigenous peoples of the North, secure continuity at different stages of their implementation, and involve a wide range of various representatives of civil society.

Evaluating the perspectives on the further development of Barents cooperation, cross-border cooperation through the EU-Russia programs, and other forms of cooperation in the Arctic and subarctic zones of Europe, it is important to mention that these models can gain momentum in other

regions, for example in Canada. It is clear that direct copying is not acceptable. However, the strong sides of gained experience on international cooperation, for instance in Karelia, are its flexibility and reliance on



different structures and forms of co-operation, effective search for instruments for their financing, combination of national and regional levels of cooperation, and the most important – openness to the world and next-door neighbours.

In the current unstable political situation in international relations, the results of longstanding work made by thousands and thousands of people are being sacrificed in favour of temporary political interests. But as history has shown, cross-border cooperation is a stabilizing factor. It brings us hope for the future. As Igor Orlov, the Governor of Arkhangelsk region who currently chairs the Barents Regional Council, said to his regional government on Tuesday, September 10, 2014, developing good interactions between people in the Barents Region is beyond big politics. “Our chairmanship of the Regional Council comes in a rather complicated geopolitical period, but that should not in any case affect our cooperation in solving common problems,” said Igor Orlov, according to a press release from the Arkhangelsk government.

Hence, we can conclude that Russian regions/members of the BEAR share the common opinion and belief that it is impossible to ignore the results of the humanitarian and economic cooperation achieved by states, their regions, and citizens over the last years in the North. It is unreasonable to deny the gained experience, and it is inadmissible to defeat the hopes of people associated with the future of the North. Today, while the importance of the Arctic for humanity is increasing, it is necessary to develop and apply the most successful models of regional international cooperation in different parts of the Arctic. This strategy will promote their prosperity and decrease their dependency on political turbulences. The Republic of Karelia is already leading the way, and will reinforce cooperation in the future with regional and circumpolar partners.

8

A Complex Efficiency Assessment of the Development of Arctic Oil and Gas Resources in Russia

Mansur H. Gazeev, Natalia A. Volynskaya and Anatoly B. Rybak

The specific nature of the conditions for the implementation of investment projects in the Arctic zone – in particular, the development of hydrocarbon resources (HCR) – requires a national economic approach in assessing economic efficiency. This is due to the high capital intensity, the use and creation of special (innovative) materials, machinery and technologies, the lack of production infrastructure in most of the territories and the increased sensitivity of the natural environment of the Arctic zone to man-caused stresses. An assessment of economic efficiency based on the indicators of commercial efficiency is insufficient and erroneous. The rationale for investment decisions should be based on comprehensive national economic assessments. In terms of content, such an assessment characterizes the expected magnitude of the full national economic effect of the project and possible environmental damage. An indicator of the combined economic effect (E_C) of the development of the hydrocarbon resources in the Arctic zone is proposed.

Introduction

The high potential of hydrocarbon resources in the Arctic zone of Russia can have a significant impact on the socio-economic development of both the Arctic territories and the country as a whole. The specific character of economic activities in the Arctic areas, as well as the natural and technological peculiarities of hydrocarbon developments, determines their multisectoral and innovative pattern, and simultaneously, their increased level of risk. Implementing Arctic zone resource development programs suggests an active involvement of the state. This requires the adequacy of the criteria used for the projections and evaluations of economic efficiency. This paper maintains that classical revenue-based methods are insufficient

for assessing hydrocarbon development project efficiency in underdeveloped territories, to which the Russian Arctic zone belongs, including with respect to the oil and gas resources of the Arctic offshore areas. A methodological approach to the formation of an integral criterion of efficiency is proposed. To implement this task in practical terms, the authors developed tools that were used in the calculation of the economic efficiency of developing mineral resources on the continental shelf of the Russian Federation's Arctic seas. The results of the calculations show that under the proposed criterion, the expected efficiency in hydrocarbon developments differs markedly from the same results obtained by traditional methods. These differences are due to the effects induced in the related sectors of the economy and potential environmental damage. The proposed criterion allows one to explicitly assess the impact of imports substitution on related industries and, consequently, on the total national efficiency of developing hydrocarbon resources in the Arctic zone of Russia.

The subsoil of the Arctic zone of Russia, along with other mineral resources, has an exceptionally high potential for hydrocarbon resources, which are in the initial stage of their development and geological study. According to various sources, for example (Shpurov, 2017), the hydrocarbon resources of the Russian Arctic sector are estimated at 316 billion barrels of oil equivalent (boe), or about 60% of the total potential Arctic hydrocarbon resources, of which 235 billion boe are situated offshore and 81 billion boe onshore. In the process of exploration, this value can increase significantly. This means that the state policy in the field of the exploration and development of the Arctic hydrocarbon system is an essential factor for Russian socio-economic and scientific-technological development. Over the last years, the state's attention to the Arctic zone as a strategically important territory of the country has increased; in particular, a new version of the state program for its development until 2025 has been adopted. In this regard, the relevancy of the investment projects' economic efficiency predictive assessments grows with a possibly more complete account of the regional-specific conditions and system macroeconomic consequences, which is necessary for determining the strategic development priorities.

Specific Aspects of Operations in the Russian Arctic Zone

Currently, a significant part of the scientific practical research and methodological developments concerning some project economical efficiency assessments entails the use of traditional investment analysis tools

that apply, as a rule, income methods based on the modelling of cash flows and take into account inflation, risk and the minimum rate of return. However, in substantiating long-term management decisions on such projects as the development of the hydrocarbon resources of the Arctic territories of Russia, it is not enough to handle only the estimates of the direct commercial effects of their implementation. The specific conditions of such investment projects, as already mentioned, require a broader national economic approach.

The authors assume that the specific aspects of hydrocarbon development in the Arctic zone that affect its efficiency and the measurement approaches include the following:

- the harsh natural and climatic environments of the Arctic zone increase the risks of any economic activity, especially hydrocarbon resource development, which is a complex, high-tech process further complicated by high geological risks;
- the specific requirements for the technologies/materials used in the Arctic zone and the operations' seasonal character lead to higher costs for investment projects;
- the low density and patchy character of the Arctic zone's economic development increase significantly the cost and time required to fulfill transport, energy, production and social infrastructure projects. For example, the population density of the Arctic territories of the Northwest (0.2 person/square kilometre) and of the Ural (0.7 person/square kilometre) administrative districts is drastically less than the average numbers for these districts (2.7 person and 9.9 person per square kilometre, respectively). The development of hydrocarbons in the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug has required the construction of the 525-kilometre-long Obskaya-Bovanenkovo railway line, with plans for the massive railway development of Yamal (see <https://regnum.ru/news/2466759.html>);
- the relatively poor degree of geological study of the Arctic zone subsoil, which reduces the reliability of the existing estimates of the resource base and increases the timing, costs and risks of project implementation (Shpurov, 2017);
- the increased sensitivity of the Arctic zone's natural environment to man-caused stresses, which leads to stronger environmental restrictions and higher cost components of projects, increases the duration of and makes it more technically difficult to carry out

emergency/salvage measures and eliminate the consequences of emergency situations;

- a large share (more than 70%) of the Arctic zone's hydrocarbon resource potential is located in the offshore areas (Shpurov, 2017). Developing such resources to a considerable degree is of innovative nature and in many cases requires designing special technologies, equipment and materials. The problem is complicated by the lack of accumulated experience in the development of hydrocarbons in the Arctic shelf;
- the high scientific content, as well as the significant infrastructural component in the future costs, determines the necessity for the direct/indirect participation of the government in Arctic projects. "Scientific content" shall mean – as the authors understand this term – a share of innovations attached or organic to various techniques and methods of hydrocarbon exploration and production, this requiring not only better related industries but also fundamental research and development;
- the uncertainty of the economic and legal conditions for the realization of investment projects in the Arctic, this precluding any discussion of the cost and revenue allocation between potential project participants.

Obviously, under these conditions, the economic efficiency estimate based on commercial efficiency does not meet the strategic goals that have been set. The justification for investment decisions and priorities should be based on the integral national economic assessments. In meaningful terms, such an assessment must characterize the expected scale of the full national economic effect of the project's implementation and cover the risks of possible environmental damage.

Comprehensive Criterion for Estimating Project Efficiency

As of now, there are no international or Russian techniques for the complex assessment of such projects that takes into account the economic, innovative and environmental parameters within a single (financial) space. The innovation aspect acquires special significance for the Russian economy. In this regard, when estimating the effectiveness of innovative projects, a macroeconomic assessment is needed that characterizes the impact of projects on the national and regional economies. The consideration of environmental consequences (damages) in the development of the Arctic seas shelf is hindered by the lack of sufficient operational

experience in such areas of the subsoil, which in particular creates problems of insurance for these risks. And, finally, the low level of geological study of the subsoil areas of the regions mentioned above raises the need for solving the problems of methodological and instrumental supply, which account for the uncertainty in the economic estimates of hydrocarbon reserves and resources.

In general, the expected complex economic effect (E_C) of the subsoil areas' development, as it was shown in Gazeev, Rybak and Volynskaya, 2015, should be formed by three components characterizing various aspects of the impact of such development on the social and economic system:

- the direct aggregated economic effect occurring in the course of the project's implementation, which is quantitatively estimated by the sum of the project's cash flow value before taxes (NPV₀), taking into account risks;
- the economic effect occurring in the related industries (E_{RI}) in the process of the project's implementation; and
- the cost estimation of the possible ecological damage (D_E).

According to Gazeev, Rybak and Volynskaya (2015), the value of the complex economic effects can be represented by the formula (1)

$$E_C = NPV_0 + E_{RI} - D_E. \quad (1)$$

Let us consider in more detail how each of the components of the proposed criterion (1) is shaped.

The Direct Aggregate Economic Effect

The first component of the complex criterion – the direct aggregate economic effect – is measured by the discounted cash flow value (NPV₀) before taxation. At the stage of predictive assessment and strategic priorities identification, there is no information on the economic-legal (including tax) regime, sources of financing or forms of state participation in the project's implementation. Consequently, the subject of evaluation at this stage is only the potential amount of the expected cash flow. The evaluation of commercial efficiency indicators is premature and is not provided with the necessary information.

As already mentioned above, the value of project cash flow before taxes (NPV₀), should be calculated while taking risks into account. The quantitative risk assessment, based on statistical methods, is hindered by the

poor geological study and degree of economic development, as a result of which there is a lack of a sufficient array of technical and economic information. In light of the exceptional variety of risks of different kinds that arise when investing, for example, in geological exploration and operation in Arctic conditions, the use of simulation methods is often simply impossible.

Therefore, the application of expert estimates based on the results of geological exploration, operational works and investment activities in the oil and gas sector seems to be justified. For this purpose, it is proposed to use the so-called “method of adjusting the discount rates”.

Despite the fact that this method does not provide any information on the degree of risk (the value of possible deviations from the design results), it makes it possible to significantly improve the accuracy when comparing the economic efficiency of objects located in different natural-climatic zones and at different stages of geological study. Such comparative assessments are an indispensable element in the formation of development strategies and ranking of hydrocarbon assets.

Table 9-1 sets out the values of the indicative risk adjustments to the basic discount rates. Two types of risks are considered: geological and natural-geographic. The premiums are provided for each type of risk.

Arctic regions are divided into three groups: those with medium, high and very high risk measure. In the Arctic conditions, regions with a low risk level are absent. The premiums for geological risk are determined depending on the degree of exploration of the deposits and the reliability of their reserves. For example, for commercial A+B+C₁ category reserves, the minimum premium value is 0%-1%; for C₂ category reserves, the premium is in the range of 2%-3%. The maximum value of the premium for geological risk is established for the predicted and prospective D category resources and makes 6%-8%. The premium for natural and geographical risk is 1%-2% for regions with medium risk, 3%-4% for regions with high risk and 5%-7% for regions with a very high development risk.

In general, the total risk premium can vary from 1% to 15%, and the final discount rate, from 11% to 25%. The given values of discount rates can be used in calculating the income received or lost.

Table 8-1: The proposed risk premiums to the base discount rate (10%), depending on the exploration degree and economic/geographic location of oil and gas fields. Data on water areas are given according to Nazarov & Kalist, 2006.

Risk measure	Region characteristics	Location		Exploration degree	Risk premium, %		Total discount rate
		Water area	Onshore		geological	natural and geographical	
Medium	New region with poorly developed infrastructure, bordering on developed regions	-	Murmansk and Arkhangelsk regions, North of Komi, Nenets AO, islands in the Arctic Ocean	Reserves A+B+C ₁	0 – 1	1-2	11-13
				Reserves C ₂	2 – 3		13-15
				Resources C ₃	4 – 5		15-17
				Resources D	6 – 8		17-20
High	New region with no infrastructure and/or complicated ice situation	Bering, Pechora, Barents, Kara Seas	North of the Republic of Sakha, Taimyr AO, Kamchatka Region, Chukotka AO, Yamalo-Nenets AO	Reserves A+B+C ₁	0 – 1	3-4	13-15
				Reserves C ₂	2 – 3		15-17
				Resources C ₃	4 – 5		17-19
				Resources D	6 – 8		19-22
Very high	Unexplored region with no shore infrastructure, with severe ice conditions, requiring special technical solutions to develop hydrocarbons	Seas of the Eastern Arctic	-	Reserves A+B+C ₁	0 – 1	5-7	15-18
				Reserves C ₂	2 – 3		17-20
				Resources C ₃	4 – 5		19-22
				Resources D	6 – 8		21-25

Economic Effect on Related Industries

The hydrocarbon resources development of the regions under consideration, along with the direct sectoral effects, is accompanied by a set of systemic effects, namely socio-economic, innovation-technological, ecological, regional and geopolitical. Note that the last of the listed effects defies the formalized cost valuation; therefore, the procedure for coordinating investment decisions on this criterion, as a rule, is carried out using expert assessment methods.

As a quantitative measuring instrument of systemic effects, it is proposed to use the predicted value of the GDP's additional growth caused by the implementation of the relevant project (multiplier effect), which occurs due to the additional development of related industries and manufacturers and the corresponding development of infrastructure and the social sphere (E_{RI}). The application of the multipliers theory is based on the results of calculating the promising inter-industry balance.

The multiplier in macroeconomics is a numerical coefficient that shows how many times the final indicators of economic development will change with the growth of investment or production in the analyzed branch of activity. Since in our case the added value is estimated, the multipliers for added value (GDP growth) are used, which arise in related sectors of the economy per unit of investment in the evaluated projects. The magnitude of the multiplier effect depends on the share of imported products, technologies and services used. A decrease in the share of imports increases the values of the multipliers. With a view to the current sanction restrictions on Russia and the maximum import substitution policy pursued by the government, below we give the multiplier values that would reflect a total abandonment of imports. In other words, the following values, and the results calculated on the basis of those values, correspond to the maximum estimate of the multiplicative effect. The multiplier values in the main sectors of the economy are given in Table 9-2 and are discussed in detail in Shirov and Yantovskii (2011).

The high capital intensity of hydrocarbon resources development in the Arctic territories, and in particular in the shelf areas of the Arctic seas, suggests that the effect in related industries should be evaluated not only at the development stage, using the production multiplier, but also at the

Table 8-2: Estimation of operational multipliers in the most important sectors of the economy, with no account of imports

Activity type	Multipliers (operational)
Crude oil production	1.35
Natural gas production	1.31
Oil refining	1.88
Ferrous metallurgy	1.65
Machinery and equipment manufacture	1.87
Sea vessels and equipment manufacture	2.20
Railway transport manufacture	2.57
Construction	2.05
Transportation and storage	1.75

investment stage, with an estimation and the use of the investment multiplier, according to Gazeev, Rybak and Volynskaya (2015) by the formula:

$$E_{RI} = (M_{IN} \times \frac{\bar{K}}{\bar{D}} + M_P) \times \Delta \bar{D}, \quad (2)$$

where:

M_{IN} – investment multiplier;

M_P – production multiplier;

$\bar{D}$ – average annual discounted gross revenue from hydrocarbon production;

$\bar{K}$ – total discounted capital investments;

$\Delta \bar{D}$ – growth in the annual discounted gross revenue, which is equal to $\bar{D}$ for new investment projects.

The value of the investment multiplier is calculated by the formula:

$$M_{IN} = \sum_1^P \alpha_i \times M_i, \quad (3)$$

where:

i – number of identified related industries or industrial complexes, $i = 1, \dots, P$;

P – number of industrial areas identified within the project's capital costs;

α_i – the share of funds spent on the products of the i -th industry in the structure of project's total capital costs, $\sum_i^P \alpha_i = 1$;

M_i – operational multiplier of the i -th industry.

Because the structure of capital costs can vary significantly from one project to another depending on geological, natural and other factors, as well as on the technology for developing the resources of a particular subsoil block, the value of the investment multiplier (M_{IN}) should be determined for each project (block) individually.

Potential Environmental Damage

Let us turn to the issue of the quantitative accounting of environmental risks. Securing a zero discharge system during hydrocarbon resource development in the Arctic territories (especially the Arctic shelf) requires the implementation of environmental protection measures through its entirety, including insurance payments. The expenses in all of these mentioned areas are included in the total project investment and costs. Nevertheless, there remains the risk of a major accident, which in its consequences could be described as an environmental disaster.

It is especially important to take into account the probability and damages of such an accident in the course of the development of the shelf resources, since there is not yet any technology that can preclude catastrophic accidents on oil and gas platforms operating in the severe natural conditions of the Arctic shelf. Of course, the probability of an accident like the one that occurred in the Gulf of Mexico is not high, but it cannot be ruled out. Depending on the degree of exploration and the economic and geographic location of the oil and gas fields of the continental shelf, it is suggested, by analogy with Table 1, to classify the objects of the hydrocarbon resources development in different water areas according to the degree of ecological risk.

On the basis of the risk assessment presented in the Declaration of Industrial Safety of the Offshore Ice-Resistant Fixed Platform “Prirazlomnaya” coordinated with the Ministry of Emergency Situations of

the Russian Federation on 24.08.2009 № F-03/03-203 and Rostekhnadzor (Federal Environmental, Industrial and Nuclear Supervision Service) on 25.09.2009 № 07-07/3146, and a number of other sources, the authors carried out an expert assessment of the probability of an environmental disaster occurring during the development period in different regions. The results of the analysis are shown in Table 9-3.

For the Arctic territories, the ecological component is a necessary consideration in the valuation of any investment project (Strategy for Development of Russian Federation's Arctic Zone and Provision of National Security up to 2020 approved by President of Russia; Federal Law 'On Environmental Protection' of 10.01.2002 № 7-FZ). The damage caused by environmental pollution is taken into account when making management decisions on any level, especially in view of the commitment by the oil companies to compensate for all the costs incurred in neutralizing the spill consequences, which could be enormous in the case of the territories under consideration. It is enough to quote the figures in connection with the explosion on the BP oil platform in the Gulf of Mexico in April 2010. The company only managed to stop the oil spill on August 4, 2010. The accident resulted in about 5 million barrels of crude oil being spilled over.

According to *Neft i Kapital* (Oil and Capital) e-edition (2013-1) and (2013-2), BP agreed to pay out compensation for the damage caused by the accident in the amount of 42 billion USD, while the total losses exceeded 90 billion USD together with the additional claims from several states.

Despite the high damage estimates from the accident described above, ecological damage would be much higher in the Arctic shelf environment. First of all, it is technically extremely difficult to ensure a sufficiently complete oil spillage recovery in ice conditions; besides, the natural mechanisms of oil residues decomposition do not work in the Arctic latitudes.

In the first approximation the value of ecological damage (D_E) can be estimated from the formula:

$$D_E = k_E \times \bar{q} \times t, \quad (4)$$

where:

k_E – damage (penalty) from a spill of 1 ton of oil,

$$k_E = k_u \times p_u$$

k_u – unit economic damage from the spill of 1 ton of oil;

p_u – probability of a major accident (oil spill);

$\bar{q}$ – daily oil spill, t/day,

t – duration of the accident, days.

Table 8-3: Ecological risks classification in relation to the economic and geographical location of oil and gas fields

Risk degree	Region characteristics	Location		Probability of major accident, %	Duration of accident, days
		Water area	Onshore		
Medium	New region with poorly developed infrastructure, bordering on developed regions	-	Murmansk and Arkhangelsk regions, North of Komi, Nenets AO, islands in the Arctic Ocean	2 - 3	20 - 60
High	New region with no infrastructure and/or a complicated ice situation	Bering, Pechora, Barents, Kara Seas	North of the Republic of Sakha, Taimyr AO, Kamchatka Region, Chukotka AO, Yamal-Nenets AO	4 - 7	60 - 150
Very high	Unexplored region with no shore infrastructure, severe ice conditions, requiring special technical solutions to develop hydrocarbon resources	Seas of the Eastern Arctic	-	8 - 10	150 - 180

The value of the specific ecological damage from the spill of 1 ton of oil (k_u), taking in to account the available actual data, is estimated by us at 60,000 USD per 1 ton of spilled oil, in case of an accident on the continental shelf, and 6,000 USD in case of an accident onshore. The remaining parameters are random values. A quantitative assessment of the probable ecological damage resulting from a major accident for each project can be obtained using simulation methods, in particular the Monte Carlo method. It should be noted that depending on the location of the subsoil area, the probability of a major accident can vary from 2-3% for regions with a medium development risk, up to 8-10% for regions with low exploration levels and severe ice conditions (very high development risk). Accordingly, the duration of the accident can vary from 20 days to six months. Note that the category of medium development risk does not include any of the Arctic water areas.

Conclusions

Based on the accumulated technical and economic information on subsoil blocks containing hydrocarbon resources and located in different water areas of the Russian Federation's Arctic shelf, the authors carried out a large amount of experimental calculations to determine the values of the traditional (income-based) and proposed (complex) efficiency criteria of their development. The results of these calculations, presented in Table 4, show an exceptionally high influence of the conjugate effects on the estimates obtained. In addition, not only do the values of the efficiency indicator change, but so do the preferences for specific subsoil areas of development. Moreover, taking into account the conjugate effects in a number of cases results in changes to the economic priority of the development of the water areas as a whole. Note that for the comparability of obtained results, average estimates are given for the hydrocarbon resources of the same groups of exploration level for each water area.

It is necessary to stress once again that the estimates presented in Table 9-4 are obtained from the hypothesis that all imports have been substituted in full in related industries, thus maximizing the value of multipliers, the effects in related industries and, consequently, the integral economic effect. More imports of technology, equipment, materials, etc. will reduce the multiplier effect. Respectively, the share of possible environmental damage will become higher in the structure of an integrated criterion.

The calculations were carried out under the following assumptions:

Table 8-4: Results of calculating the economic efficiency of developing the Arctic seas' continental shelf prospective structures

Water areas	Direct aggregate effect (NPV ₀) (traditional criterion)	Multiplicative effect in related industries	Probable ecological damage	Complex economic effect
	USD/bbl			
Pechora Sea	42.1	28.8	2.1	68.7
Laptev Sea	0.3	40.0	7.1	33.2
Bering Sea	-1.7	41.6	16.1	23.8
Kara Sea	3.1	22.6	3.5	22.2
Barents Sea (north)	10.0	6.7	4.2	12.5
Barents Sea (south-west)	10.9	5.9	6.3	10.4

- a price of crude oil of 70 USD per barrel;
- an exchange rate of 60 RUB / USD;
- the average values of the discount rate from Table 9-1 were used for the relevant water area and exploration-degree;
- ecological damage was estimated using the data contained in Table 9-3.

From the analysis of the data in Table 9-4, it follows that with regard to the criterion of direct economic efficiency (NPV₀), the development of the Arctic offshore areas in the Laptev Sea, Bering Sea and Kara Sea is least effective. Furthermore, the development of the hydrocarbon resources of the Bering Sea shelf is wholly uneconomic, since the specific economic efficiency of their development is negative. However, the development of the oil and gas resources of these territories may give a powerful impetus to the development of related sectors (science and industry), thereby increasing the potential of public economic efficiency and the priority of their development.

Therefore, the formation of an assessment criterion taking into account the strategic goals of the state (maximizing GDP and environmental security) can significantly change the outlook on the economic efficiency of Arctic hydrocarbon resources development and its predictive estimate. This

means that there is a high relevance for the use of such approaches in creating programs for economic development in the Arctic zone of the Russian territories. Along with that, the use of domestic technologies and equipment has a great impact on the efficiency. In light of this, the priority of the development of the resources should be determined in accordance with the level of readiness of the related industries.

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9

Constructing the Russian Arctic as a Special Economic Zone

Alexandra Middleton

The Russian Federation has the biggest land area in the Arctic and has been gradually expanding its definition by joining new regions and territories that previously were not considered Arctic to its Arctic Zone of Russian Federation (AZRF). In recent years, two incentivizing programmes, the Arctic Hectare and the Resident of the AZRF, were introduced to stimulate the social and economic development of the AZRF. The resident status in the AZRF provides an investor with a set of privileges for investment activity, including tax incentives. From 2020 to November 2022, 510 companies received the status of resident and are collectively all support programmes are expected to contribute to over 33,400 new jobs. This study is aimed at comprehensively reviewing the construction of the AZRF concept as a Special Economic Zone. In the analysis, I focus on the business incentivizing programmes through the lenses of sustainability, hence identifying how economic, social and environmental concerns are incorporated into the Resident of the AZRF programme. Results demonstrate that the economic pillar of sustainability outweighs social and environmental concerns in the construction of the Russian Arctic as a Special Economic Zone.

Introduction

The Russian Arctic has been the focus of development by the Russian state. The last 15 years saw growing attention to the Arctic in Russia, which has been reflected in legislative and strategic efforts. Strategic documents for the future of Arctic development in Russia position Arctic territories as a strategic resource base to accelerate the country's economic growth, improve socioeconomic conditions of local populations, and protect the environment and Indigenous peoples' original habitat and traditional way of life in this territory.

Economic growth in the Russian Arctic is fuelled by extractive industries. Rapid industrialization and urbanization of the Russian Arctic affects local communities and Indigenous Peoples that continue to face difficult socioeconomic conditions, including the loss of their traditional homes and methods of natural resource management due to land allocations for industrial development or pollution of land, water, and other natural resources.

The recent addition to the management of Russian Arctic territories was the introduction of the Federal Law “On State Support for Investment Activities in the Russian Federation’s Arctic Zone” in July 2022, which creates a set of preferences and benefits for large, medium, and small businesses willing to invest in developing the Russian Arctic (Federal Law 2020, N-193-FZ). The law makes the whole territory of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation (AZRF) equivalent to a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) with a defined set of benefits and appointed a managing company in the name of Far East Development Corporation. This approach is novel for modern Russia because it involves support mechanisms not for specific sectors, but the whole AZRF when the state puts efforts and resources to enable the region’s growth. Some initial studies investigate quantitative and qualitative indicators of the current state of AZRF, including the number of residents, their business activities, and their relationship to future investment projects (Anciferova & Vasil’eva, 2021). However, the empirical base is rather small due to the novelty of the support mechanisms.

The purpose of this study is to conduct an in-depth analysis of the AZRF idea as it relates to the creation of a Special Economic Zone. In the analysis, I trace the creation of AZRF from a historical perspective and later highlight incentive programs from the lenses of sustainability, thereby highlighting how economic, social, and environmental issues are incorporated into these initiatives. In addition, I assess how international sustainability frameworks, such as the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals, are reflected in these programs.

The article proceeds as follows. Section 1 discusses methodology and data. Section 2 reviews the literature on Special Economic Zone (SEZ) research. Section 3 provides evidence of the development of the AZRF concept and its composition. Section 4 focuses on the business incentivizing programmes in AZRF and Section 5 provides results and

discusses challenges regarding these programmes from a sustainability angle. Section 6 concludes.

Methodology and data

The study builds on reviewing the development stages of the AZRF in line with regulatory changes and by looking at the expansion of the AZRF composition. A review of SEZ literature is evoked to see how the current regime in the AZRF corresponds to international practices, especially on the sustainability dimension.

The data is gathered from the regulatory legal acts of the Russian Federation, the Federal State Statistics Service, and publications of domestic and foreign scientists. Since the incentivizing programmes for the development of AZRF are relatively new starting from 2020, there is still a very limited number of scientific publications. Comprehensive statistical data is lacking. Hence findings from this study are of an exploratory nature.

Literature review on Special Economic Zones

Special economic zones (SEZs) are areas with particular economic advantages, for example lower taxes than the rest of the country to encourage investment. SEZs are generally defined as geographically delimited areas that are administered by a single body. These zones offer certain incentives to businesses that are physically located within the zone, such as generally duty-free importing and streamlined customs procedures (FIAS, 2008).

Most developing and many developed economies use SEZs. Within these delimited areas, governments provide fiscal and regulatory incentives and infrastructure support. In 2019 there were 5,400 zones in 147 economies, up from 4,000 five years ago, and 500 more were in the works. The SEZ surge is part of a new wave of industrial policies and a response to competition for international investment (UNCTAD, 2019). Developed countries have basic free zones for trade logistics. Developing economies use multi-industry, specialized, or innovation-focused integrated zones for industrial development. New SEZs and development programs are emerging. Some SEZs focus on high-tech, financial services, or tourism instead of trade- and labor-intensive manufacturing. Others emphasize environmental

performance, science commercialization, regional development, or urban regeneration.

The premise under which SEZs are created is that they attract investment, create jobs, and boost exports directly and indirectly by building economic links. Zones support Global Value Chain (GVC) participation, industrial upgrading, and diversification. However, these effects are not automatic. In fact, many zones underperform. SEZs aren't a prerequisite or guarantee for higher Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) or GVC participation. Most zones grow at the same rate as the national economy after the build-up period and many zones become enclaves with limited impact (UNCTAD, 2019).

Special Economic Zones in developing countries

In the Chinese context, Liu et al. (2007) investigated the interaction of economic growth and environmental quality in Shenzhen, the first SEZ in China established in 1980. The massive growth of infrastructure, industrial sites, and urban communities has drastically altered the local environment. Authors apply the Environmental Kuznets Curve (EKC) which is built on a hypothesis that the relationship between economic growth and environmental degradation is inversely U-shaped, meaning that environmental pollution increases in the early phases of economic growth and environmental quality improves as income levels rise. The results by Liu et al. (2007) demonstrate that production-induced pollutants support EKC while consumption-induced pollutants do not support it. When it comes to Shenzhen's economic development, foreign investment and joint ventures were essential in creating economic growth (Liang, 1999). A study by Zhao et al. (2022) investigating a link between special zones in China and their environmental impacts finds that lower investment standards and concentrated pollution from industry agglomeration harm the environment.

Zheng et al. (2016) studied the effects of development zones on the economic development of host regions in China. Macro-level data analysis revealed that development zones, while beneficial in developed regions, do not contribute to economic growth in proportion to their land share in host cities. The authors propose that the central government of China should not expand development zones without limits, but rather should give careful consideration to the location and size of proposed development zones in relation to the regions that will host them before approving any of them.

In India, the introduction of SEZ in 2006 was aimed at improvement in terms of exports, employment, and infrastructure. At the same time, the states that introduced SEZ were accused of land grabbing. According to the findings by Akon (2018), these SEZs have not been successful in bringing about the socioeconomic development of the local community because Indian state politicians use state-owned development corporations for rent capture, which undermines the potential efficacy of SEZs. One reason for the failure of SEZs is the lack of the right incentives for local politicians.

Concentrating only on creating an investor-friendly industrial zone in the state of Jharkhand in India led to violation of the rules and ignoring the needs of other stakeholders. As a result, Jharkhand granted project approval to businesses even though no public hearings were held and little or no input from the affected communities was obtained. Jharkhand acquired privately owned land for industrial estates on behalf of private companies and established district-wide land banks (Sundar, 2011). Chaudhuri & Yabuuchi (2010) found that without government spending on irrigation projects and other infrastructural development, SEZ formation hurts agriculture in India. If agriculture receives more than a critical level of government aid, agricultural wages and economic employment may improve. To fully benefit from the SEZ policy, agriculture and industry must be balanced. The creation of SEZ relied heavily on the acquisition of vast acreage of land for new industries and mines as well as for large-scale farming and infrastructure projects. Tension over land deals in the Indian state of Goa was intensified by the introduction of Special Economic Zones (Bedi, 2015).

In the Russian context, the region of Kaliningrad represents an SEZ case study in which the development of the region over 20 years reformed from customs tariffs to profit taxation preferences in the environment of institutional instability. In the framework of the SEZ, a study by Garaev (2013) concluded that the trade-off must be made between economic stimulation programs and economic efficiency in the Kaliningrad region.

Overall, the development of SEZs while beneficial economically can have potentially negative environmental and societal impacts. Also, since the beginning of special economic zones advancement in developing countries, people have been concerned about how zones affect employment (in terms of gender, wage levels and benefits, worker

rights and working conditions, and worker rights in general), the environment, and other social factors that are related to employment (FIAS, 2008). To alleviate such imbalances design of SEZs requires holistic thinking, for example, by applying the UN Sustainable Development Goals and by incorporating ESG principles in reporting and accountability. Potential land conflicts, stakeholders' concerns, and the role of public opinion and acceptance are crucial for the functioning of SEZs. The primary goal needs to be that special economic zones (SEZs) work toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), transforming them from privileged enclaves into sources of widespread benefits (UNCTAD, 2019).

Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation

The Russian Federation has the largest area of the Arctic contributing to 50% of the total Arctic area, 60% of the total Arctic population, and 75% of the Gross Regional Product (ECONOR, 2020). The location outside the Arctic Circle and access to the Arctic Ocean are the two most important aspects of belonging to the Arctic. Each Arctic state has its distinct characteristics, and in exceptional cases, the boundaries of their land Arctic territories have been expanded to increase the scale of state support for the development of the Arctic zone (Gal'tseva et al., 2022)

There are many criteria for identifying what means to be Arctic and different schools of thought on what to consider the Arctic. In his monograph "Many-faced Arctic in the stream of time and meanings", Yuriy Lukin lists the following criteria: geographical, socio-economic, and political- legal criteria. The Arctic Circle (66°33'44"); geographical differentiation of Arctic landscapes and zoning of territories; natural and climatic criteria; internal administrative-territorial boundaries of subjects and external boundaries of territorial waters, exclusive economic zones of Arctic states; cultural and ethnic landscapes; Arctic communities; economies; and geopolitics (Lukin, 2019).

More specifically, in the Russian context, Zhukov et al. (2017) and Zhukov et al. (2018) propose the following set of criteria for a territory to be considered the Arctic:

1. Latitude-based UV deficiency subzone assignment: Inclusion in the Russian Arctic requires, in the north, subzones of moderate UV deficiency (if other criteria are met).

2. Arctic and subarctic climates assessed by bioclimatic discomfort in life of populations.
3. Arctic/subarctic landscapes: Except for Kamchatka and the Sea of Okhotsk coast, tundra and forest-tundra territories are included in the Russian Arctic. Adding northern taiga territories to the Russian Arctic is possible (if it is justified by other criteria)
4. CAFF-border as a criterion for inclusion in the Russian Arctic (if it is justified by other criteria).
5. Arctic specifics of economic systems: Transport and economic gravitation to the Northern Sea Route and being in the zone of its influence; adjacency to the Arctic Ocean; peripherality, isolation, and remoteness of Arctic economic systems from large industrial centres; focal nature of the territory's development; pronounced uneven settlements, the concentration of people in settlements; mono- and oligoprofile of the towns.

Analysing the southern border of the Arctic as a biogeographic boundary, Doctor of Geographical Sciences Arkadiy Tishkov states that the decision on the composition of the Russian Arctic is “not the result of a physical-geographical, medical-biological or environmental scientific study, but a political act that takes into account natural, social, demographic and political realities, as well as the convenience of the state management” (Tishkov, 2012: 31).

From a legal perspective, the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation was defined by the Presidential Decree of May 2, 2014 No. 296 as “On the land territories of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation” (Presidential Decree of May 2, 2014 No. 296). The AZRF stretches across four Federal Districts in Russia (see Figure 1). Internal sea waters and territorial seas, areas of the Russian Federation's continental shelf, and land and islands that do not belong to foreign nations and could in the future be opened in the Arctic Ocean from Russia's coast to the North Pole are all included in the AZRF's territory.

Changes in AZRF composition

The composition of the AZRF changed three times since 2014 (see Figure 2) when the territories included in the AZRF were stipulated by the Presidential Decree of May 2, 2014 No. 296 (Presidential Decree of May 2, 2014 No. 296). Initially, the AZRF comprised territories of

four northernmost Arctic regions and all their municipalities: Murmansk Oblast, Nenets Autonomous Okrug, Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug and Chukotka Autonomous Okrug. One municipality from the Komi Republic (Vorkuta), five municipalities from the Sakha Republic, three municipalities from Krasnoyarsiy Krai and six municipalities from Arkhangelsk Oblast were included in AZFR in 2014.

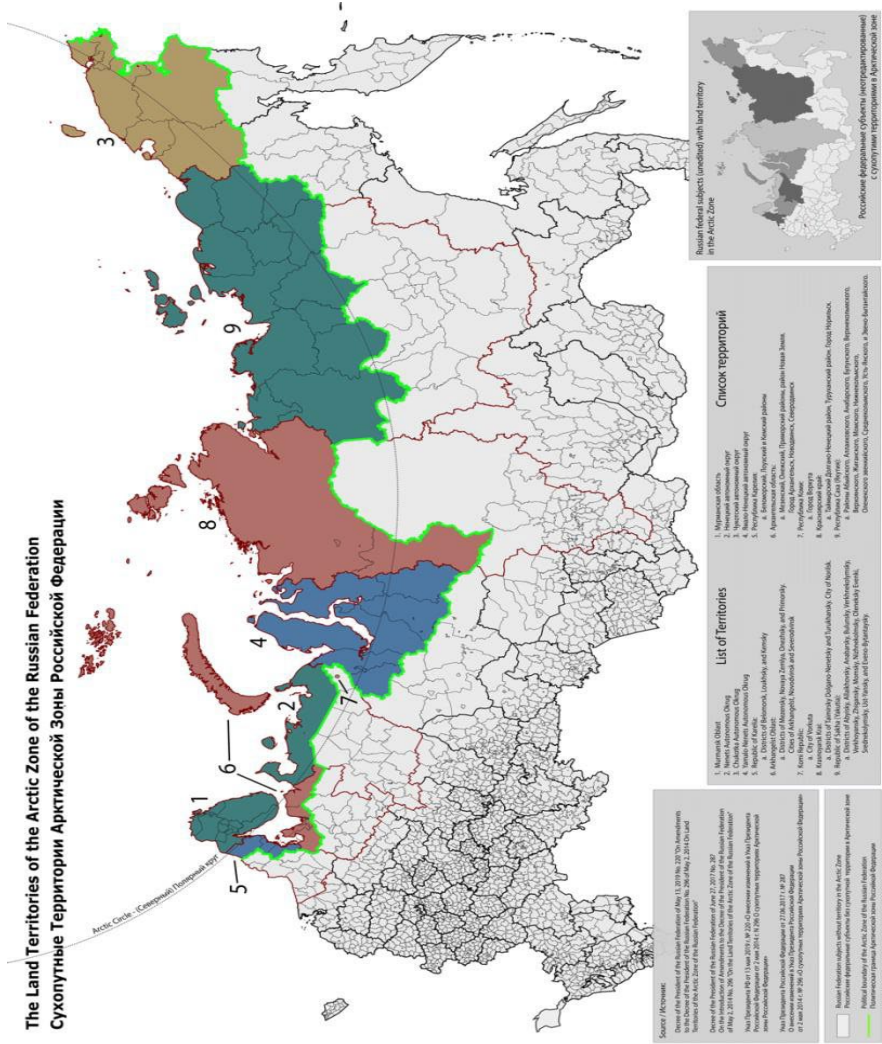


Figure 9-1. Land territories of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation (Source: Troy J. Bouffard, 2020).

Consequently, in 2017, the Presidential Decree of the Russian Federation of June 27, 2017 No. 287 introduced amendments to the composition of AZRF by adding three municipalities from the Republic of Karelia (Presidential Decree of June 27, 2017 No. 287). The leadership of the Republic of Karelia had repeatedly advocated for the inclusion of Kemsy, Loutsky, and Belomorsky of the Republic bordering the White Sea, into the Arctic zone. This would make them eligible for federal budget subsidies in the millions of dollars for the development of coastal municipalities experiencing significant economic and infrastructure issues (Batov, 2017).

In his interview with the newspaper *Izvestia*, Professor Alexander Pilyasov stated that “in an attempt to change the status of the regions of Karelia, there is a certain artificiality, but it reflects the objective trend of raising the status of the Arctic territories against the northern ones, which is happening in our country” (*Izvestia*, 2017). The addition of three municipalities from the Republic of Karelia to AZRF was driven by the interest to raise the status of these regions, making them eligible for budgetary funds aimed at social, industrial, and transport infrastructure development to assist in business development.

Further, in 2019 the AZRF expanded by the inclusion of an additional eight municipalities from the Sakha republic. According to the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of 13.05.2019 No.220, the territories of the Abyisky ulus (district), Verkhnekolymsky ulus (district), Verkhoyansk district, Zhigansky national Evenki district, Momsky district, Srednekolymsky ulus (district), and Eveno-Bytantsky national ulus (district) are included in the land Arctic zone (Republic of Sakha - Yakutia). All eight districts are fully or partially located beyond the Arctic Circle. Previously, the Arctic zone included five regions located along the coast of the Arctic Ocean.

The latest expansion is documented in the Federal Law “On State Support for Investment Activities in the Russian Federation’s Arctic Zone” (Federal Law of 13.07.2020-N-193-FZ). While the law was still in development it prompted some Russian Federation regions to justify the incorporation of new territories (municipalities) in the Russian Arctic. Eventually, three municipalities in Komi Republic, ten municipalities in Krasnoyarskiy Krai, and three municipalities in each Arkhangelsk and Karelia Republic were added to the list in 2020. The motivation to be admitted to AZRF territory is the result of a large-scale

Figure 9-2. Changes in AZRF composition (Compiled by the author).



list of tax and customs preferences, as well as preferential normative regulation of labour relations for Russian Arctic residents (Khodachek, 2021).

It appears that the latest Federal Law on the AZRF takes a managerial approach and solves ambiguities in defining what territories are considered as Arctic in Russia. The list of all territories that are included in the AZRF presents what the Arctic is in the eyes of the legislator. The Federal Law determines the composition and status of the Russian Arctic that is used for supportive measures (*e.g.*, entrepreneurial and infrastructure development support).

Socio-economic characteristics of AZRF

The population in the AZRF has been declining since 1990. Figure 3 demonstrates population change in the AZRF from 2014 when the concept was first introduced. Growth in population in 2020-2021 is stipulated by the inclusion of new municipalities, not by the natural growth of net migration. Preliminary results of the Population Census

(2021) paint a not so favourable picture for the AZRF. In the AZRF areas that are fully included (Murmansk Oblast, Nenets Autonomous

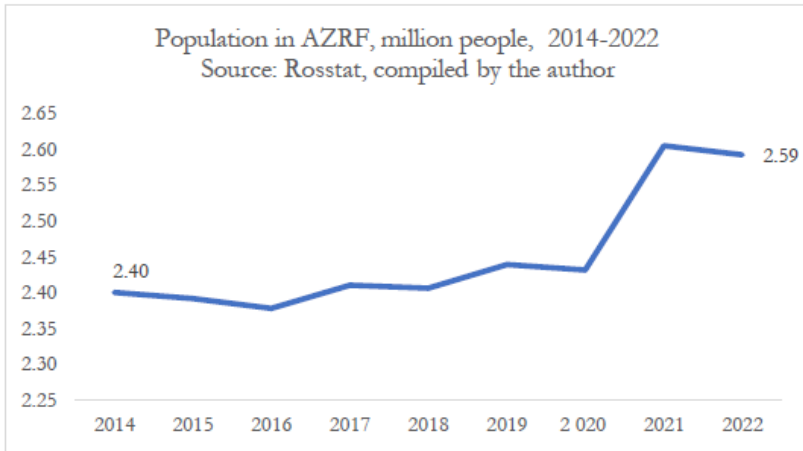
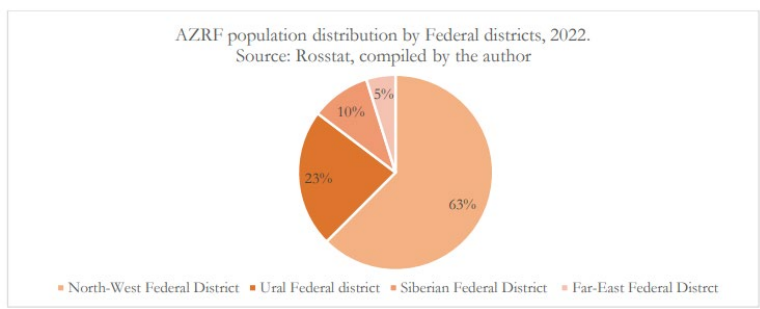


Figure 9-3. Population in AZRF, million people, 2014-2020. Source: Rosstat, compiled by the author.

Okrug, Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug and Chukotka), the population has collectively reduced by 145,000 from 2010 to 2021 with the biggest decrease in Murmansk Oblast where it decreased by 16% or by 127,238 people.

The population is not evenly distributed within the AZRF with the most densely populated regions being Murmansk, Karelia and Arkhangelsk situated in the North-West Federal District contributing to 63% of the AZRF population (see Figure 4). The population in AZRF is highly urbanized with 87% of the population living in urban settlements in 2021.

Figure 9-4. AZRF population distribution by Federal districts, 2022. Rosstat, compiled by the author.



In terms of economic development, the AZRF has been ahead of the average turnover of organizations across Russia. Turnover is the sum of sales and other operating income. Figure 5 demonstrates the turnover of organizations in RUB expressed as an index for the period 2016- 2021. The AZRF economy has performed stronger than the rest of Russia with turnover growth of 133% over 2016-2021 while in Russia the growth was 85% over 2016-2021. Note that the index is calculated using current prices.

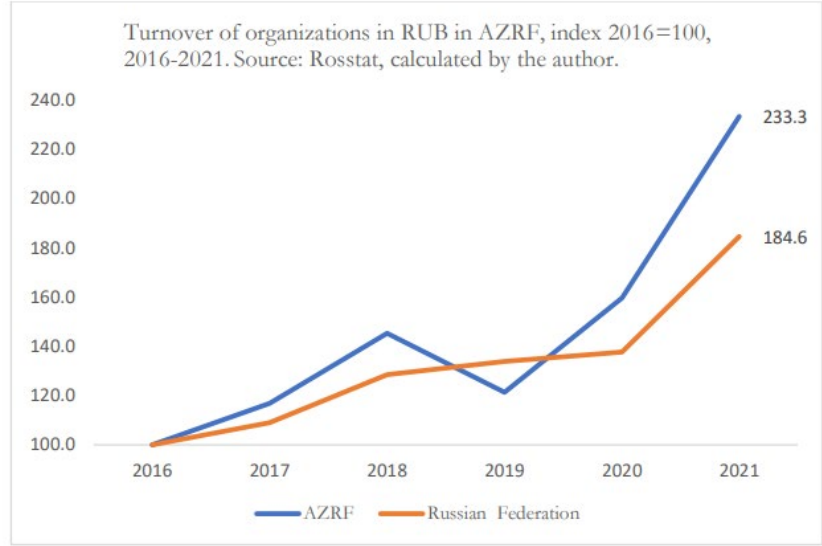


Figure 9-5. Turnover of organizations in RUB in AZRF, index 2016=100, 2016-2021. Source: Rosstat, calculated by the author.

Review of the business support programmes in AZRF

Business development in the Russian Arctic is affected by poor transportation accessibility, high energy costs, remoteness from administrative centres, and significant costs for compensation due to Far North employees' benefits, which comprise travel compensation every two years, regional coefficients and allowances (Emelyanova, 2019).

In this article, the focus is on the new Federal Law on state support for entrepreneurial activity in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation (Federal Law 2020, N-193-FZ). The Federal Law defines the legal status of economic entities of the North as future AZRF residents, mechanisms for regulating AZRF residents' activities, conditions for signing an investment agreement, amendments, and termination. The term "resident" in this context refers to the company or individual entrepreneur acting as an investor, hence, not to be confused with people who live in the Arctic. The state becomes a legal advocate for entrepreneurship in the Arctic, and the Far East Development Corporation is empowered to represent and defend residents' interests in court in disputes with government authorities (Slepcev, 2020). According to some Russian experts, the law largely duplicates the provisions of current federal legislation, which allows for the establishment of various legal regimes: Federal Law 'On Advanced Social and Economic Development Territories in the Russian Federation' and Federal Law 'On Special Economic Zones in the Russian Federation' (Koshkin, 2020).

The Russian Far East and Arctic Development Corporation (FEDC) is the management company of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation, the Free Port Vladivostok, and the advanced special economic zones in the Far Eastern and Arctic constituent entities of Russia. During a meeting with investors from AZRF the Prime Minister of the Russian Federation Mikhail Mishustin said:

The Arctic is now becoming a favourable region for investment. Today, the largest special free zone in the world has been created in our northern regions. It should become an attractive place for businesses from completely different industries and different scales, and attract, among other things - why not - foreign investors. It's definitely a very large number of industries that

could be attractive, whether it's a fish processing plant, or a small hotel, or medical care companies. Everyone should get an equal opportunity here. Moreover, this is enshrined in a package of laws on state support for entrepreneurial activity in the Arctic (Government of Russian Federation, 2020).

The reference of the AZRF to the special economic zone concept is not a coincidence because incentivizing measures are targeted at economic development and support for entrepreneurs. Unlike the system of "northern" benefits (northern coefficients of wages depending on the severity of natural living conditions, allowances for the length of service in the regions of the Far North, additional vacation days, payment for the road to the place of vacation once every two years, and some others), benefits that are defined in the new Federal Law are not guaranteed by default (Zamyatina, 2021). Rather these benefits need to be actively sought after and require capital investments from the applicants, with a minimum of 1 million RUB (equivalent to EUR 17,800) of declared investments.

In sum, the benefits include income tax breaks (except for mining projects); compensation of insurance premiums in respect of new jobs (except for mining projects); severance tax benefits for projects in the field of mining and processing of solid minerals; benefits for land and property taxes; obtaining land plots without bidding; the possibility of creating a free customs zone on the site; protection from excessive unscheduled inspections by supervisory authorities; qualified defence in court in case of disputes with authorities; the possibility of obtaining concessional financing of investments from credit institutions; and targeted support and assistance in solving any problems from the federal ministry (Zamyatina, 2020).

Support measures can be classified into three categories (see Figure 9-6). These comprise a Programme of the resident of the AZRF, subsidies for infrastructure development and territory of advanced development "Capital of the Arctic".

Resident of the AZRF

The programme resident of the AZRF was made possible as a result of Federal Law "On State Support of Business in the Russian Arctic Zone" (Federal Law 2020, N-193-FZ). The Federal Law defines a resident of the AZRF as "an individual entrepreneur or a legal entity that

Figure 9-6. Components of support measures available in AZRF in 2022.

Resident of the AZRF	Subsidies for infrastructure development	Territory of advanced development “Capital of the Arctic”
• Aimed at large and small and medium enterprises	• Aimed at big infrastructural projects	• Aimed at separate areas of the city Murmansk, Kola district and closed administrative-territorial entity Vidyaevo

is a commercial organization, the state registration of which is carried out in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation in accordance with the legislation of the Russian Federation (with the exception of state and municipal unitary enterprises), which have concluded an agreement on the implementation of investment activities in accordance with this Federal Law Arctic zone of the Russian Federation (hereinafter referred to as the investment activity agreement) and included in the register of residents of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation” (clause 2 of article 2 Federal Law 2020, N- 193-FZ). The focus of the programme is to assist business development in the AZRF by providing business support and taxpayer incentives. Beneficiaries of the programme are project developers in the Arctic Region of the Russian Federation who are planning to invest more than 1 million rubles in their ventures. The Russian Federation strictly regulates and simplifies the registration process for Arctic residents. The deadline for registration of residents from the date of submission application is 37 days. A resident of the Arctic zone is an individual entrepreneur or a commercial legal entity, registered on the territory of the Arctic zone.

State support for SMEs in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation is necessary since it contributes to the creation of new jobs, reduces unemployment and develops a regional market for goods and services (Kirillova, 2021). Any interested person who fulfils the criteria from the Federal Law to become a resident and has prepared a set of documents, including the investment project’s business plan, can receive Arctic resident status. After business plan approval, the company management company Far East Development Corporation seals the contract.

The tax preferences are summarized in Table 9-1. They include tax benefits, subsidies and insurance premium rates.

Apart from tax breaks, the residents receive administrative benefits. Administrative preferences include the ability to apply the free customs zone (FCZ) procedure to built-up and equipped plots used by Arctic Zone residents, as well as the provision of state- or municipal-owned land plots to Arctic Zone residents without a bidding process, the possibility of conducting inspections concerning Arctic Zone residents only with the approval of the Ministry for Development of the Russian Far East and the Arctic, and the simultaneous conduct of environmental expert assessments and state expert assessments of design

Table 9-1. Types of taxes and benefits for residents of AZRF (Source: Russian Far East and Arctic Development Corporation).

<i>Type of tax / benefit</i>	<i>Description of privileges</i>
Income tax	0% for ten tax periods after the resident receives the first profits
Mineral extraction tax (MET) rate	1) 0.5 of the current rate (for solid minerals; only for new deposits. The amount of the benefit may not exceed the amount of private investment in infrastructure, enrichment or processing) 2) Zero MET rate on the production of combustible gas used exclusively for the production of liquefied natural gas and/or as a raw material for the production of goods that are petrochemical products produced at new production facilities put into operation after January 1, 2022
VAT	Zero VAT rate for works (services) involving the carriage of goods outside the Russian Federation by sea transport, and the provision of icebreaker assistance services for sea vessels engaged in the carriage of goods outside the Russian Federation

Subsidy	75% of the amount of insurance premiums (for new jobs only; does not apply to projects in the field of mining)
Insurance premium rate	7.5% for big businesses residents in the AZRF 3.75% insurance premium rate applies for SMEs resident in the AZRF

and estimate documentation in a shorter time frame. In court, residents' interests are protected (the Management Company has the right to defend and represent the interests of the AZRF residents who have applied to it in court). Special regulations for the operation of checkpoints on the Russian Federation's border in the Russian Arctic are applied.

Any investment project over 1 million rubles can become a resident of the Arctic zone and receive tax benefits. Arctic residents have lower tax rates than the rest of Russia and, in some cases, the Far East. In October 2021 the Cabinet of Ministers made it simpler for small businesses to obtain Arctic zone resident status. Previously, organizations seeking resident status were required to invest in the renovation or construction of the real estate. The Government of the Russian Federation approved a list of 58 types of activities for which companies can become residents of the Arctic zone without the requirement for construction or reconstruction of capital facilities. Among these activities are forestry, animal husbandry, furniture production, metal processing, clothing, publishing, paper and leather goods, the provision of educational services, waste collection and disposal, and healthcare. It is hoped that this order will become an incentive for the socio-economic development of the Russian Arctic (TASS, 2021).

Subsidies for infrastructure development

This element of support mechanism includes provision of government budgetary aid in the form of tax breaks and subsidies for capital investments made in infrastructure facilities. Beneficiaries are initiators of new investment projects in Russia's Arctic Zone, with investments totaling more than 300 million rubles. The project's goals should align with strategic planning documents that guide socioeconomic growth in the Russian Arctic. The project requires new or updated infrastructure and capital construction facilities. The anticipated state support should

not exceed 20% of the project's private investments and the project shall create jobs.

Capital of the AZRF

This support measure applies to separate areas of the city Murmansk, Kola district and closed administrative-territorial entity Vidyaevo. Its first resident was NOVATEK-Murmansk, which had a project involving the construction of large offshore structures. A special legal regime in the "Capital of the Arctic" is extended to 38 types of economic activity. Port activities, construction, and logistics continue to be the ASEZ's primary specializations. So far, eight residents of the "Capital of the Arctic" have been granted the status of resident.

Sustainability in business support programmes in AZRF

The Federal Law has Article 28 that mentions the standard of responsibility of residents of the Arctic zone in relations with the Indigenous peoples of the Russian Federation living and (or) carrying out traditional economic activities in the Arctic zone (hereinafter referred to as the responsibility standard). The responsibility standard, a list of principles recommended for use by Arctic residents when interacting with Indigenous peoples in their traditional residences and economic activities, was approved by the Order of the Ministry for the Development of the Russian Far East No. 181.

This Responsibility standard includes the following principles:

- promoting the sustainable development of Indigenous peoples, improving their quality of life and preserving their original habitat;
- participation of representatives of Indigenous peoples in decision-making on issues affecting the rights and interests of Indigenous peoples in the development of natural resources in places of traditional residence and traditional economic activity;
- cooperation in improving the socio-economic situation in the places of traditional residence and in the territories of traditional nature management of Indigenous peoples when a resident of the Arctic zone carries out his activities;
- openness of the activities of a resident of the Arctic zone for Indigenous peoples and their organizations, state authorities and

local self-government in all environmental and socio- economic issues affecting the interests of Indigenous small peoples;

- minimizing the negative impact of the economic activities of a resident of the Arctic zone, taking into account the social, environmental, and natural vulnerability of Indigenous peoples and the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation as a whole;

It should be noted that the responsibility standard is advisory. It includes a resident of the AZRF conducting an environmental impact assessment, taking into account the Arctic's vulnerability and Indigenous peoples' traditional use of natural resources; compensation for damage caused by the resident's economic and other activities that affect Indigenous peoples' habitat; etc. Another principle is the participation of Indigenous peoples in decision-making on issues affecting their rights and interest in natural resource development in traditional residences and economic activities. This principle requires preliminary coordination of the resident's project with Indigenous peoples and consultations before starting industrial development projects in places of traditional residence and economic activity.

Results and Discussion

The historical analysis of constructing the AZRF concept in the Russian Federation demonstrates that the AZRF definition has been changing over the time with the addition of some territories whose Arctic status could be contested. The expansion of AZRF follows a managerial logic with a strong emphasis on providing support for socio-economic development of these territories.

According to the official state narrative, the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation (AZRF) is the largest special economic zone in the world where investors enjoy special tax and administrative regulation regimes. The measures to support entrepreneurial activities in the AZRF are comprehensive and, in many instances, correspond to practices adopted in SEZs worldwide. However, the focus of the support mechanism is on the business registered in the AZRF, not on the attraction of foreign investment per se like it has been the case in the developing countries adopting SEZ programmes. The support measures are driven by economic considerations so far resulting in EUR 13.4 billion of expected investments in Resident of the AZRF alone and their social impact is most visible in job creation. In fact, statistics from the

Resident of AZRF website indicate that since 2020 till November 2022, there have been 23,048 new jobs announced to be created as part of the resident of AZRF programme, 5,806 jobs as part of subsidies for infrastructure development and 4,579 as part of the territory of advanced developemnet “Capital of the Arctic”(see Figure 7). This adds up to a total of 33,433 new jobs announced and EUR 19.6 billion of investments announced.

The magnitude of economic and social impact in terms of announced job creation is big, at the same time, the Federal Law text itself and also the website for applying to become a resident do not have references to global sustainability frameworks like the UN SDGs.

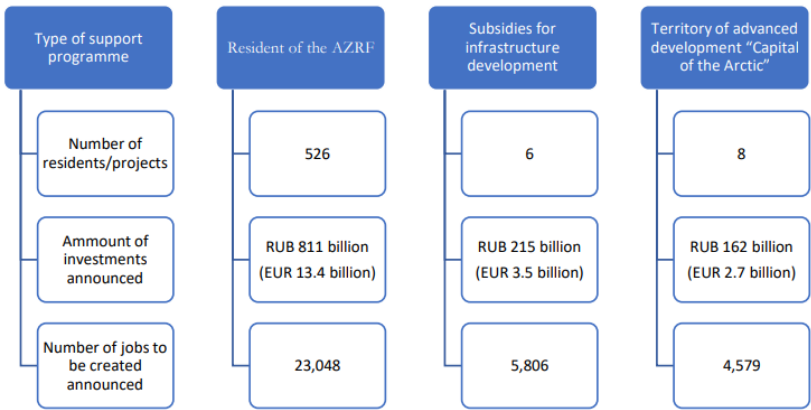


Figure 9-7. Results of business support programmes in AZRF as of November 2022. (Source: Investarctic.com, compiled by the author).

Sustainability concerns

The responsibility standard as part of the Federal Law is of an advisory nature. It has been criticized because some of the provisions of the draft order that meet the interests of the Indigenous peoples of the North, were excluded when the document was adopted in its final form. The draft document included the principle of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) of the Indigenous peoples of the North of the Russian Federation to make decisions affecting their rights and legitimate interests. Part 2.2 of the current standard includes instead the principle of participation representatives of Indigenous peoples in decision-making on issues affecting the rights and interests of Indigenous peoples regarding the

development of natural resources in places of traditional residence and traditional economic activity, such as the FPIC principle that has been replaced by the principle of participation (Ivanova & Litvinov, 2022). Moreover, the draft document was unique as it introduced signing an agreement on compliance with the standard between a company (resident) and the federal authority in the field of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and approved methods for monitoring compliance with it (Murashko, 2021). The final standard did not include these items either. Some researchers, however, note that the responsibility standard, although advisory, can have a positive impact on balancing business interests in developing Arctic natural resources and Indigenous peoples interested in preserving their original habitat and improving their quality of life (Samonchik, 2022).

Concerns have been raised in the sphere of land allocation to the residents of AZRF according to Federal Law. This concerns Article 15 “Features of the provision of land plots and real estate objects located on them”. A delegation of the management company’s administrative powers carries certain risks since the company is directly interested in expanding business activities in the Arctic zone, which may affect the objectivity of considering the region’s social and environmental characteristics when allocating land plots. Land plots are leased to residents on a preferential basis without bidding for the duration of the investment agreement unless the resident declares a shorter period (clause 39, clause 2, article 39.6). Decree of the Russian Federation dated February 1, 2021 No. 91 approved rules for the provision by the Arctic zone management company of state or municipal land plots (Samonchik, 2021).

The simplified procedure for providing land plots established by the Federal Law is not sufficiently justified. According to Samonchik (2021) the law pays little attention to the region’s vulnerable land. No criteria are established for refusing applicants to provide the requested land, which can harm the interests of Arctic Indigenous peoples (Samonchik, 2021). Concerns over land management and relations with the Indigenous peoples in the AZRF mirror challenges in the SEZs in India (Akon, 2018; Sundar 2011; Chaudhuri & Yabuuchi 2010). Lessons learnt from the development of SEZ elsewhere shall be taken into account for the future of AZRF business incentivizing programmes.

Federal Law does not include separate provisions on environmental responsibility. The capital construction projects that require environmental assessments are listed in the Federal Law of November 23, 1995, N 174-FZ “On Environmental Assessment” and the “Town Planning Code” of the Russian Federation. Article 16 of Federal Law states that capital construction projects that are not subject to “On Environmental Assessment” and the “Town Planning Code” of the Russian Federation and do not cause significant harm to the environment and its components, can be carried out from the date of submission of project documentation prepared for capital construction projects.

The universalization and unification of state support measures for conducting business in the harsh Arctic conditions and other Russian SEZs located in other regions of Russia do not take into account the particulars of conducting business in the Arctic (Koshkin, 2020). Various federal and regional legislative acts govern a variety of Arctic Indigenous peoples and land management issues. However, the nature of such regulation is neither consistent nor adequate. Although all territories of the Russian Arctic inhabited by Indigenous peoples are designated as specially protected natural areas, those territories continue to engage in commercial activities (Lipski & Storozhenko, 2019).

The state program of the Russian Federation “Socio-economic development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation” (State Program of March 30, 2021, № 484) prescribes indicators regarding the AZRF resident programme and by 2024 it is expected that there will be 320 residents. In November 2022, there were already 526 residents. Depending on their type of activity this will mean a higher impact on the environment. Evidence from China implementing SEZs calls for more considerate action in case of rapid expansion of economic activities (Zheng et al., 2016).

By analyzing the business support measures on the AZRF, it becomes evident that the economic pillar of sustainability prevails. The measures indeed provide residents with strong economic benefits and administrative support. At the same, less attention is paid to social and environmental responsibilities that come with the resident status. Several solutions are possible to raise sustainability on the agenda of support mechanisms. First, responsibility standards can become compulsory. Second, residents of AZRF could be required to provide reporting on

their Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) commitments. Depending on the size of the business requirements for ESG, reporting can be adjusted. The inclusion of the UN SDGs in the planning and execution of the projects and reporting on achieved indicators can be parts of individual projects. Reporting on the progress of the UN SDGs indicators on the municipal level of the AZRF can be potentially included in the Rosstat reporting.

Conclusions

The article investigated how the AZRF developed into a Special Economic Zone concept with a certain set of economic benefits. In the analysis, I focused on incentivizing programmes for business development and support from the standpoint of sustainability. In doing so, I highlight how economic, social, and environmental concerns are integrated into these projects. In addition, I evaluate the degree to which international sustainability frameworks, such as the Sustainable Development Goals established by the United Nations, are included in these programmes.

The scope and scale of measures introduced in the AZRF are unprecedented. More time will be needed to see the efficiency and effectiveness of the programmes introduced. A managerial approach to the AZRF weighs on economic efficiency. For creating SEZ in the Russian Arctic all aspects of sustainability should be of equal significance. On the other hand, the social and environmental responsibilities that come along with resident status receive less attention. There are a few different approaches that might be taken to accomplish the goal of putting sustainability higher on the list of priorities for support mechanisms. These, for instance, may be raising the status of responsibility standard, requiring ESG commitments as part of granting the resident status and incorporating the UN SDGs principles in the support mechanisms. Lessons learned from SEZ programmes in developing countries can be used to develop more socially, environmentally and economically responsible business support mechanisms in the Arctic context.

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Section 3:

Sustainable Development and the Environment

10

Social License to Operate for Mining Companies in the Russian Arctic: Two Cases in the Murmansk Region

Larissa Riabova and Vladimir Didyk

Introduction

This paper presents research notes discussing the theme of the social licensing of the mining companies in one of the mining regions in the Russian Arctic. The paper is the outcome of the authors' participation in the research project "Sustainable Mining, local communities and environmental regulation in Kolarctic area" (SUMILCERE).¹

This project was funded by the Kolarctic European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument of Cross-Border Cooperation (ENPI CBC) Programme and was carried out by researchers from several institutions in Finland, Norway, Russia and Sweden, including the University of Lapland, Northern Research Institute (NORUT, Tromsø), Institute of North Industrial Ecology Problems and the Luzin Institute for Economic Studies of the Kola Science Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Luleå University of Technology. The lead partner of the project was the University of Lapland; the project period was 2013-2014. The research within the project was carried out through three thematic research sub-projects. The authors of the paper were involved in the Working Package 1 (WP 1), lead by Dr. A. Buanes from NORUT. The thematic task of the WP 1 was "Current practices on the participation and relationships between mining projects and local mining communities in order to develop the suggestions for the social licensing".

Within the SUMILCERE project, the authors have conducted case study research aimed at understanding whether and how the social license concept is used in Russia. This research note briefly presents the theoretical background for the study and discusses the results of the case study of the two mining and processing companies operating on the territories of the

Kirovsk and Apatity municipalities in the Murmansk region. Data for the study have been obtained from scientific literature, statistics, media sources and through the semi-structured interviews conducted by the authors during their fieldwork in the spring of 2014 with officials from the Kirovsk and Apatity municipalities, the deputies of their municipal councils, representatives of both mining companies and ordinary people living in both municipalities.

Social License to Operate: Theoretical Aspects

The emergence of the “social license to operate” (SLO) concept is connected with growing public concern in many countries during the 1990s in the results of mining activities. These concerns arose due to a series of environmental damages caused by some mining projects, which produced sharp conflicts between the companies and local communities. The term “social license to operate” was suggested by Canadian mining expert James Cooney in early 1997 at the meeting with World Bank personnel. He suggested this metaphor to explain the quality of the relationship between a mining project and its host community (Thomson, Boutilier, & Black, 2012). The concept and terminology surfaced in May 1997 in discussions at the conference on mining and the community in Quito, Ecuador, sponsored by the World Bank (Thomson & Boutilier, 2011: 1779).

According to the definition given in one of the documents of the World Bank, “a social license to operate is the acquiring of free, prior and informed consent of local communities and stakeholders” (Pike, 2012). R. Pike, who cited the definition in his article, stressed that “this is part, but not the whole, of the social license. The whole consists of both the acquisition and on-going maintenance of the consent of the local stakeholders” (ibid.).

The SLO concept has several conceptual roots. Among them there are the sustainable development and multilevel governance concepts, as well as the concept of corporate social responsibility (Buanes, 2014). A very important pillar of a social license to operate is corporate social responsibility (CSR), widely understood as “the continuing commitment by business to contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as of the community and society at large” (World Business Council for Sustainable Development). According to an article on the web resource for Canadian Mining Information, “the concept of “Social License to Operate” comes from the continuous study of the broader, older, and better established notion of “Corporate Social

Responsibility”” (Miningfacts, 2012). Hence, the SLO could be regarded as one of the derivatives of CSR.

In the literature, a social license is often regarded as having three normative components –legitimacy, credibility and trust – and four levels of social license – withdrawal, acceptance, approval and identification with the project psychologically, or co-ownership level (Prno & Slocombe, 2012; Thomson & Boutilier, 2011). The meanings of the components and levels are described by Thomson & Boutilier (2011).

Defining the terms legitimacy, credibility and trust, Thomson and Boutilier (2011) suggested the following approach. First, they define legitimacy drawing on Knoke’s approach, which put legitimacy in the context of stakeholders and politics as “the acceptance by the general public and by relevant elite organizations of an association’s right to exist and to pursue its affairs in its chosen manner” (Knoke, 1985). As for credibility, Thomson and Boutilier (2011) see it as the foundation of trust. “When a company is regarded as credible, it is seen as following through on promises and dealing honestly with everyone” (ibid.: 1785). Trust is fundamental to moving through the levels, and can take two basic forms: interactional trust and institutional trust. Interactional trust is observed when there is the perception that the company and its management listens, responds, keeps promises, engages in mutual dialogue and demonstrates reciprocity in its interactions. Institutionalized trust exists when there is the perception that relations between the stakeholders’ institutions (e.g., the community’s representative organizations) and the project/company are based on an enduring regard for each other’s interests (Williams & Walton, 2013: 9, based on Thomson & Boutilier, 2011).

According to Thomson and Boutilier, the levels of SLOs represent “how the community treats the company” (Thomson & Boutilier, 2011: 1784). The normative components (legitimacy, credibility and trust) serve as the boundary criteria dividing the levels. The levels represent how the community views the company in connection with the company’s behaviour.

The levels and normative components (the boundary criteria) are arranged in a hierarchy, which could be interpreted as phases of earning a social license. The withdrawal level constitutes the lowest level of the hierarchy. It is the worst-case scenario, meaning the rejection of the SLO for a company. In this case, the realization of a project could even be stopped.

Acceptance level is the minimal objective for any company interested in its relations with the local community. It gives a company a social license for the project to proceed. This level could be achieved when the criterion of the legitimacy boundary is met – not only legal legitimacy, but also pragmatic (based on audience self-interest), moral (based on normative approval) and cognitive (based on comprehensibility and taken-for-grantedness) legitimacy (Thomson & Boutilier, 2011: 1784).

Approval is the level where a community regards the project as favourable. Approval could be granted to a company for the project's realization when the company has established both legitimacy and credibility (a foundation of trust). This level of the SLO represents the absence of sociopolitical risk.

Identification with the project psychologically (Prno & Slocombe, 2012), or co-ownership, as Thomson and Boutilier (2011) suggest, is the highest level of social license, when the community sees the company as having full trust in it. In this case, the community shares responsibility for the project's success. Psychologically, both parties come to view it as a co-ownership arrangement. This level could be achieved when the full-trust boundary criterion is met – communities that have full trust in a company believe that the company will always act in the community's best interests (Thomson & Boutilier, 2011: 1784-1786).

A recent evolution of this framework models the SLO as three levels comprising economic legitimacy at the base, socio-political legitimacy and interactional trust as the mid-tier, and institutionalized trust as the highest level (Thomson & Boutilier, 2011; Williams & Walton, 2013). These four factors represent a continuum and are displayed in Table 10-1. The authors distinguish between perceptions of the company's behaviour at the regional (socio-political) scale and perceptions of its interactions with individuals.

The concept of an informal social license is “comfortably compatible with legal norms in the countries that operate under the principles of common law” (Thomson & Boutilier, 2011: 1780). However, in the countries with legislatures operating under the principles of civil law (i.e., Finland, Russia, Norway and Sweden), “the concept runs into difficulties” (ibid.). The difficulties are related to the legal norms in these countries, which constitute that only the official authorities can grant a license and, thus, many companies equate the license with formal permission to operate.

Table 10-1: Four factors constituting three levels of the SLO (after Thomson & Boutilier, 2011) (Williams & Walton, 2013: 9)

Level and Label	Description	Role in Determining SLO Levels as Described in Thomson & Boutilier Pyramid Model
1. Economic legitimacy	The perception that the project/company offers a benefit to the perceiver	If lacking, most stakeholders will withhold or withdraw the SLO. If present, many will grant an acceptance level of SLO
2a. Socio-political legitimacy	The perception that the project/company contributes to the wellbeing of the region, respects the local way of life, meets expectations about its role in society, and acts according to stakeholders' views of fairness	If lacking, approval level of SLO is less likely. If both this and interactional trust (2a & 2b) are lacking, approval level is rarely granted by any stakeholder
2b. Interactional trust	The perception that the company and its management listens, responds, keeps promises, engages in mutual dialogue, and exhibits reciprocity in its interactions	If lacking, approval level of SLO is less likely. If both this and socio-political legitimacy (2a & 2b) are lacking, approval level is rarely granted
3. Institutionalized trust	The perception that relations between the stakeholders' institutions (e.g., the community's representative organizations) and the project/ company are based on an enduring regard for each other's interests	If lacking, psychological identification is unlikely. If lacking but both socio-political legitimacy and interactional trust are present (2a & 2b), most stakeholders will grant approval level of SLO

The SLO concept, as well as different aspects of its practical use, attracted high interest among scholars in many countries during the last years, especially in Australia, Canada and Finland. Beside the authors we have already referred to, see, for example, Kokko et al., 2014; Lacey et al., 2012; Nelsen & Scoble, 2006; Thomson & Joyce, 2008; Tognato, 2011. For the Russian scientific discourse, the concept of social licensing is quite new, and there are very few publications related to this theme.

The Social License for the Mining Companies in the Russian Arctic: The Relationships of Two Companies with the Local Communities

For the case study research on whether and how the social license concept is used in Russia, we have chosen two mining and processing

companies and two municipalities. Both companies have mines located in the central part of the Kola Peninsula in the Khibiny Mountains, on the territory of the Kirovsk municipality, and also have processing plants in the Kirovsk and Apatity municipalities of the Murmansk region – one of the oldest mining regions of Russia, located in the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation. The first one is “Apatit” Joint Stock Company, which for over 80 years has been extracting and processing apatite-nepheline ore (the raw material for phosphorus fertilizers). The second one is the young “North-Western Phosphorous Company” Ltd. (NWPC) that in 2007 started the development of two deposits of apatite-nepheline ore, “Oleni ruchi” and “Partamchorr”, in the eastern part of the Khibiny Mountains (Bay-Larsen et al., 2014).

The total population of the Kirovsk municipality by the beginning of 2012 was 30,600 people. The administrative centre of the municipality is the town of Kirovsk, founded in the beginning of the 1930s upon the decision of the Soviet government on the development of the rich deposits of apatite-nepheline ore discovered in the 1920s. The population of the town of Kirovsk is 28,400 people, and 2,200 people live in two rural settlements of the municipality, Titan and Koashva; the latter is tightly connected to mining activity, too (“Municipalities of the Murmansk region”, 2012).

“Apatit” company belongs to the group of companies “PhosAgro”, one of the biggest fertilizer manufacturers in Russia and around the world. It has four open and underground mines and two processing plants, and the total number of its employees reached 11,600 in 2012. The company is the town-forming enterprise for Kirovsk, which is officially recognized as a single-industry town, being included in the special Register of the Russian Federation’s Ministry of Regional Development. The company produces more than 90% of the total volume of the town’s industrial production and employs 30% of the town’s workforce (6,400 out of 21,000 of the working age population). One of the company’s processing plants is located in Apatity, a neighbouring city with a population of almost 60,000 people. About 5,000 people living here are employed by the company.

Being the owner of a big part of the social infrastructure in the Soviet period and playing an essential role in social policy at the local level, “Apatit” used to be a socially responsible company not only towards its employees, but for several above-mentioned local communities. Even though strategic decisions have been taken in Moscow, the company’s operational decision-

making, including its social policies, was greatly locally-based and the top managerial staff used to have strong personal attachments to the local community.

The inherited Soviet-era socially responsible behaviour continued in the post-Soviet period. It was stated in the interview with a top manager of the company that the main motives for the company's social activities are

... the desire to establish good reputation on the domestic and international business arenas, the wish to support the town which is home for the company's employees, the wish to demonstrate [a] good image of the company to the authorities at all levels and to the local community, and the long-lasting –since the Soviet times – tradition of the company's social responsibility.

Additionally, the company is motivated by requests from different levels of governmental or political bodies and by the international requirements for corporate codes of conduct. The company has been doing a lot for the towns' improvement, repairing roads and reconstructing social infrastructure – for example, it financed the full reconstruction of the lakeside promenade and swimming pool in Kirovsk in 2008-2012 and granted 20 million RUB for the renovation of the Department of Intensive Therapy at the city hospital in Apatity in 2013. It also used to buy equipment for the hospitals in Kirovsk and Apatity and regularly organized the contests for socially important projects "Problems of our town we resolve together" and funded the realization of these projects. Due to its long-time role as the main employer enterprise in Kirovsk and regular social activities in several local communities, "Apatit" used to enjoy strong trust among the inhabitants of these communities, and in Kirovsk even a psychological identification with the company for a major proportion of the community. For instance, a deputy of the Kirovsk Municipal Council stated that

In the meetings with people in Kirovsk, especially with the older generation, I've many times heard that they considered their lives and destinies inseparably linked with "Apatit" company.

In accordance with the SLO concept, such attitudes pointed to the high level of the social license that for decades had been given to the company. However, lately, the level of the social license for "Apatit" company has decreased. Since April 2013, "Apatit" company, due to the decision of its main owner (based in the Moscow managing company "Phosagro AG"), started a deep restructuring program aimed at the reduction of operational

costs and growth of labour productivity. The restructuring anticipates the dismissal of 2,420 employees and the phasing out of the company's internal servicing subdivisions towards outsourced companies (Information, 2014). As a result, the total number of the company's employees dropped from 11,600 to 7,600 people by the beginning of 2014. This has led to the decision of the special governmental commission of the Russian Federation to include Kirovsk in the list of single-industry towns with the most difficult socio-economic situations. In addition, during the last decade, the company has been transferring all of its social objects (sport complex, palace of culture, etc.) to the Kirovsk municipality. As a result, the burden for the municipal budget has notably increased.

It is worth mentioning that over the last decade, first, the decision-making processes in regard to the company's activities, including its social policies, have been concentrated outside of the Kirovsk municipality, in the company's headquarters in Moscow and other towns of central Russia. Second, gradually the top managerial staff of the company has been replaced by newcomers from outside the community. In interviews, the gradual loss of the top managers' local attachment is seen as one of the reasons for the weakening of the company's social responsibility. In one interview, a top manager of "Apatit" company stated:

Trust is the main thing. If there is no trust between the company and people living in the towns, nothing good will come out. It is not possible for the company to possess trust if we (the company) don't speak about social problems and don't solve them. It is absolutely important to have locally attached leadership of the company, the leaders who was [sic] brought up here, who love, respect and understand the place.

These events strongly influenced public attitudes towards the company and have lowered the SLO level. During the last years it has decreased, and as of today, we estimate it as "approval", or even as the lower "acceptance" level.

The second case is the new "North-Western Phosphorous Company" Ltd. It was founded in 2005 as a subsidiary company of JSC "Acron", a large fertilizer manufacturer and consumer of apatite concentrate in Russia. "Acron" previously consumed the concentrate from "Apatit" and, due to the monopolistic position of the latter on the Russian market, had contradictions with "Apatit" concerning the prices for the concentrate. "Acron" has created NWPC to ensure its own source of raw material. In October 2006, NWPC won a contest for acquiring the state mining permit

to develop two new deposits of apatite-nepheline ore, “Olenyi ruchei” and “Partamchorr”. In 2007, the construction of the mine and processing plant for the production of apatite concentrate began at the “Olenyi ruchei” deposit. In 2012, their exploitation was started (Bay-Larsen et al., 2014). Today, NWPC employs about 2,000 people, of which more than half live in the city of Apatity.

The implementation of the new project caused serious conflicts between several interest groups. First was the conflict between “Apatit” company and the new NWPC, since they became direct competitors in the production and supply of apatite concentrate in Russia. Moreover, the new competitor has started to use the ore deposits that “Apatit” considered its own prospective reserves. Secondly, the initiation of the construction of the mine and the new ore processing factory caused a conflict with environmental NGOs, since the deposits and processing plant were located in close proximity to Khibiny National Park, which is planned to open in 2015.

In spite of the conflicts, the implementation of the new mining project was actively supported by the government of the Murmansk region. The support was provided mainly due to the large investments (around 1 billion USD) in the territory of the region and expectations for additional tax revenues for the regional budget. It was also supposed that the implementation of the project would provide benefits to the Kirovsk municipality, including additional working places for the locals (along with the weakening of the almost monopolistic position of the “Apatit” company as an employer in the local labour market) and good prospects for the revival of the formerly depressed rural settlement of Koashva, situated in the vicinity of the newly developed deposits (Bay-Larsen et al., 2014).

There are many examples of the social activities of NWPC, such as investing in the reconstruction of several municipal social objects, in particular in the territory of the Koashva settlement – the renovation of the house of culture and the first-aid station, and the establishment of the youth centre, a children’s playground, and others. However, dissatisfaction with the social and environmental aspects of the new company’s behaviour was one of the main themes in the interviews. As the interviews with employees of the company revealed, they are not satisfied with the social policy of the company, first of all, towards its own employees. As an example they mentioned the recent cancelling of the quarterly monetary premiums that notably decreased the level of wages, weak concern for the creation of favourable working environments and the absence of adequate

compensations for unhealthy job conditions. Such irresponsible behaviour was largely explained by the extremely weak attachment of the new company's leadership to the community, since the company's decision-making is taking place outside the territory where the company operates (from the headquarters of its ultimate parent, JSC "Acron") and the top-level managers are almost entirely from outside the municipality. A reason for the negative attitudes was also the company's conflict with environmental NGOs on Khibiny National Park. The conflict reached its peak in 2012 due to the intention of the new company to build the technological road for ore transportation from the "Partamchorr" mine to the processing plant near the "Oleniy ruchej" mine. The road (about 30 kilometres long) had to cross the area of the planned national park. Local ecological NGOs were strongly against the road construction. To resolve the conflict, the regional government initiated the creation of a commission with participation from various interested parties, including representatives of NWPC, ecological NGOs and research organizations. The conflict was actively discussed in the local media and among the members of internet communities, but public hearings, which were conducted in the planning stages of the new project in 2006, were not used this time for its resolution. After long and hard negotiations involving the Russian Federation's Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology, a compromise was found. It was decided that the company would cancel the initial plan of ore transportation through the nature reserve and organize processing directly on the "Partamchorr" mine site. The decision negated the necessity to construct the road and satisfied the demands of local environmentalists.

An example of the prevailing attitudes of the representatives of the Kirovsk local community about NWPC could be found in the opinion of this municipal official:

Almost everything what [sic] NWPC does for the Kirovsk municipality is done mainly for their selfish interests. Most of their social doings are done because it is required by the state mining permit – it prescribes to transfer annually during several years the sum equal to \$1.5 million USD to the municipality for social goals.

The latest conflict, caused by the lack of social activities on the part of the new company, occurred in April 2014 when the local government of the city of Apatity filed a claim in court in the amount of \$5.6 million USD to NWPC, requiring it to pay the debt from the execution of the company's social obligations towards the Apatity municipality. The obligations were

obtained from the 2006 state mining permit to develop the “Partamchorr” deposit (NWPC, 2014). Municipal authorities accused the company of avoiding fulfilling the agreement on socio-economic partnership that was stipulated in the state mining permit, and failing to transfer the funds for the development of the city. Such agreements, which have been concluded by NWPC with the Kirovsk local government in the past, have been usually fulfilled.

The study revealed that the new company NWPC has not acquired the full trust of and support from the majority of the local population in the municipalities of Kirovsk and Apatity. We estimate the level of the SLO given to NWPC in both municipalities as “acceptance”, however, getting closer to “withdrawal”.

Discussion and Conclusions

This case study has shown that neither the officials and politicians of the Kirovsk and Apatity municipalities, nor the representatives of the two mining companies described here, are familiar with the concept of social licensing. On the corporate side, obtaining and maintaining a high level of social license from the local communities has not been explicitly declared to be one of the companies’ goals. This is typical for companies in Russia, however, where the SLO concept is quite new even in the scientific discourse.

By contrast, the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) – one of the pillars of the social licensing concept – is widely used. The main motives for the mining companies’ social activities include the wish to demonstrate a good image of the company to the authorities at all levels (federal, regional and local) and to the local community; the desire to establish a good reputation in the domestic and international business arenas; the wish to support the town, which is home to the company’s employees (as the case of “Apatit” company demonstrates); and the long-lasting tradition, going back to the Soviet era, of CSR. Furthermore, demands for CSR can also be laid down within the state mining permit (as it was in the case of the new company NWCP in our study). Additionally, the companies can be motivated by requests from different levels of governmental or political bodies and by international requirements for corporate codes of conduct. Also, an important motive, as our study has shown, is basing the company’s decision-making locally and, especially, a strong personal attachment of the top managerial staff to the towns where the companies operate.

Building relations with communities on the concept of corporate social responsibility, and being motivated by internal (corporate, such as considerations of image, tradition or, in the case of a strong attachment of top management to the place, a desire to support the local community) and external (institutional requirements, e.g., the state mining permit) factors, the companies do not prioritize the attitudes of the local populations, which, we believe, is the essence of the SLO concept. At the same time, drawing on the CSR concept, the companies possess certain levels of social license, and themes that are central to the SLO concept, such as trust, acceptance and compensation, are present in the local mining discourse, though sometimes implicitly.

Institutionally in Russia, relations between the municipalities and large resource-based companies are often framed by bilateral, trilateral or multilateral agreements on socio-economic partnerships between the company, municipality and/or regional government. However, so far, as a rule, the local population plays a minor role in determining their content. The study has shown that on the community side, instruments such as public hearings – a quite typical solution – were not used for decisions on the content of the agreements in any of the cases studied. Moreover, changes in federal legislation related to environmental impact assessments, introduced in 2006, cancelled the norm of conducting public hearings for most of the mining projects, with the exception of projects occurring on the territories of protected areas.

Such factors as the generally weak development of institutions of public participation and the organizational weakness of civil society, typical for many of the post-communist societies, as well as the often low levels of cross-community social capital, do not allow strong local community participation to influence mining companies' activities. However, even under such conditions, there are instruments that make it possible to voice out and meet the local demands for the socially responsible behaviour of the companies. As the case of the conflict between NWPC and local plans for establishing the nature reserve revealed, it can be local information campaigns on the acute problems in the "company-community" relations, establishing multilateral commissions for solving conflicts of interest or lawsuits from the local government against the company demanding the compensations stipulated in the state mining license.

To sum up, today the social license concept is a "white spot" in the Russian Arctic mining discourse, both theoretically and practically.

However, the SLO concept can be an important and highly relevant instrument for the adoption of sustainable mining practices in the Russian Arctic. Thus, there is a need for more research in this field in the Russian Arctic context and for the popularization of their results to promote the practical use of social licensing in corporate and public policies.

Notes

1. Information on the project can be found at: <http://www.ulapland.fi/In-English/Units/Faculty-of-Law/Research/Research-Projects/SUMILCERE>.

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11

Briefing Note

Main Expected Changes in the Legislative Regulation of Environmental Protection for Environmentally Hazardous Facilities in the Russian Arctic

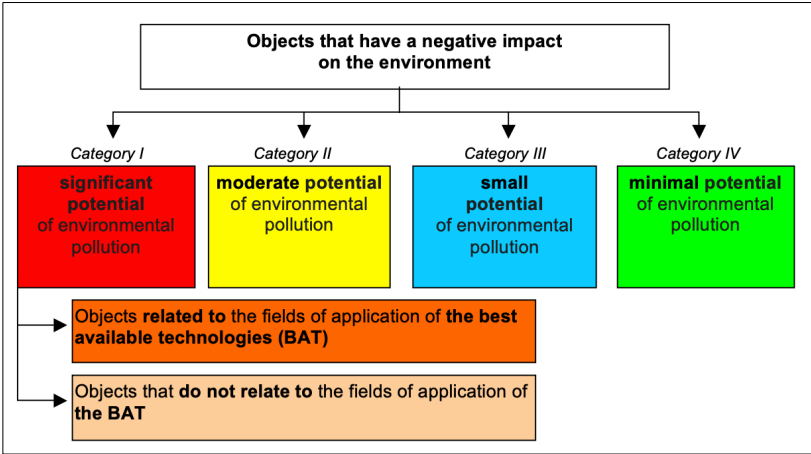
Tatiana Alieva

According to the main documents on Russian Arctic development, the Arctic is considered the strategic resource base of Russia. Under the conditions of the increasing economic activities and global climate changes, the preservation and protection of the Arctic environment, as well as the elimination of the ecological consequences of economic activities, are the main goals of Russian state policy in the field of ensuring the environmental safety of the Arctic. To minimize the negative impact on the Arctic environment, an increase in enterprises' responsibility for environmental pollution is required. At the same time, in order to implement the state policy in the field of the socio-economic development of the Russian Arctic, state support is provided to economic agents that are carrying out their activities in the Arctic Zone, primarily in the field of the development of hydrocarbon resources, other minerals and water biological resources.

The Main Expected Changes in Environmental Regulation

Currently, Russia is in the process of reforming its environmental and use-of-nature governance. One of the objectives of the reform is to differentiate between economic agents at the level(s) of potential environmental pollution and/or the impact on human health and to apply to them proportionate measures of state regulation. The differentiated approach is provided for the separation of objects that have a negative impact on the environment in four categories (Figure 11-1).

Figure 11-1: Differentiation of economic agents at the level of potential environmental pollution.



For objects in Category IV, measures of state regulation in the field of environmental protection will not be applied. The main measures of state regulation for the other objects are shown in Table 11-1.

Table 11-1: Government regulation of economic agents based on their category in the field of environmental protection

Categories of economic agents	Quantity of economic agents (objects)	Measures of state regulation
1. Agents with significant potential of environmental pollution (Environmentally hazardous facilities - 99 % of negative impact on the Russian environment), including:	11445	- The establishment of standards for permissible emissions, discharges (the technological standards) by integrated permitting; - The implementation of the state environmental control at the federal level; - Carrying out the state ecological expertise.
- a negative impact <i>on air</i> ;	4772	
- a negative impact <i>on water bodies</i> .	6073	
2. Agents with moderate potential of environmental pollution	~290000	- Submission of a declaration of the planned emissions, discharges volume
3. Agents with small potential of environmental pollution	~700000	- Submission of a report about the volumes of actually made emissions, discharges in the notification procedure

Under the technological standards, there are the norms (standards) of the permissible emissions, discharges, wastes, water and electricity consumptions, and the levels of physical impacts, which are set for the main technological processes and the equipment of the best available technologies (BAT) using their technological indicators. Setting these technological indicators is assumed by normative documents after the development of information and technical reference books based on European BREF catalogs, adapted to the economic and geographic conditions of Russia. It should be noted that for the process of equipment reconstruction, impact on the environment which does not exceed the technological indicators of BAT, is also recognized as the implementation of BAT. Thus, achieving technological standards will allow environmentally hazardous enterprises to have the minimal pressure on the environment at the present stage of development.

For the realization of economic activities, objects with a significant potential for pollution (category I) will be required to contact a territorial agency of the federal executive authority with an application for an integrated environmental permit. The federal executive authority will approve the list of category I objects that require an integrated environmental permit between 01/01/2019 and 31/12/2022. This list will include up to 300 objects that have a negative impact on the environment, whose contribution to the total emissions and discharges of pollutants in the Russian Federation is not less than 60%. The remaining category I objects must get an integrated environmental permit before 01/01/2025.

For agents with a significant potential for environmental pollution (so-called environmentally hazardous facilities) related to the fields of application of the best available technology (BAT), there is a transition phase provided for technological standardization that creates economic incentives for modernization, including environmental ones. This will have a direct impact on the financial and economic activities of the environmentally hazardous enterprises.

The main legal act, on the basis of which there will be carried out changes in environmental regulation and management in Russia, is the Federal Law of 21 July 2014 N 219-FZ, "On Amending the Federal Law 'On environment protection' and some legislative acts of the Russian Federation", which comes into force on January 1, 2015, except for certain provisions (hereinafter – Federal Law N 219-FZ). This act proposes to intensify the economic sanctions on businesses exceeding the limits of

Table 11-2: The change of the coefficients to the rates of payment for negative impact on the environment

Coefficient from 01.01.2016		Types of negative impacts
before 31.12.2019	after 31.12.2019	
-	0	For emissions/discharges within technological standards after the implementation of BAT
1	1	For emissions/discharges within the acceptable standards and for waste of production and consumption within the limits
0	0	For wastes to be temporarily accumulated and actually used (recycled) in own production in accordance with the technological regulations, or transferred for use within the prescribed period
5	25	For emissions/discharges of pollutants within the temporarily permissible emissions/discharges for the period of realization of the environment protection plan or the program to improve the eco-efficiency
5	25	For wastes placed above the established limits
25	100	For emissions/discharges of pollutants exceeding the temporarily permissible emissions/discharges

permissible impact due to increasing coefficients on the rates of payment for the negative impact on the environment (Table 11-2).

Within the framework of the reform, it is expected to reduce the list of regulated pollutants, define a list of substances banned for emissions or discharges by March 31, 2016, and at the same time increase the base rates for negative impacts on the environment. It is supposed to keep the system of temporary permissible emissions/discharges for a seven-year period, provided that the reduction plans of negative impacts on the environment or the BAT implementation programs (eco-efficiency programs) will be carried out. In the case of failure to comply with the reduction of emissions or discharges within six months after the due date specified in the plan or program, the calculated payment shall be recalculated applying the coefficient 100.

So the fees for emissions/discharges of pollutants could increase up to five times compared with the present period.¹

The Forms and Conditions of State Support for BAT Implementation

State support for BAT implementation in the form of tax incentives, benefits in respect of payments for negative impacts on the environment, and state capital investments is provided for in the reforms. These incentives will be given to enterprises if they realize such measures as:

- 1) The implementation of BAT;
- 2) The design, construction or reconstruction of:
 - recycling and wastewater-free water supply systems;
 - centralized water disposal systems, sewer systems, local structures and equipment for wastewater treatment, including drainage water, for the treatment of liquid waste and sewage sludge;
 - constructions and installations for the capture and utilization of emitted pollutants, the heat treatment and cleaning of gases before their emission into the atmosphere, or for the beneficial use of associated petroleum gas;
- 3) The installation of:
 - equipment to improve fuel combustion modes;
 - equipment for the use, transportation and neutralization of the production and consumption waste;
 - automated systems and laboratories for the control of the composition, the volume or the weight of waste water;
 - automated systems and laboratories (stationary and mobile) to control the composition of the pollutants and the volume or weight of their air emissions;
 - automated systems and laboratories (stationary and mobile) to monitor the state of the environment, including natural environment components.

At the same time, federal and regional laws may establish other measures of state support, at the expense of federal and regional budgets.

Reducing the sum of payments for negative impacts on the environment and the sum of costs for financing the above measures can be regarded as a benefit for the enterprises. It is necessary to consider that these payments

affect the enterprise profit indicators, as they are included in production costs if the economic agent's impact on the environment is within the permissible standards, and when the economic agent exceeds the permitted standards, the fees are levied from the profit.

As a result of reforming the environmental standardization system and introducing incentive coefficients, fees for negative impacts on the environment will be around 2% of the cost structure of environmentally hazardous enterprises.

Some Strategic Documents and the Main Tasks in the Field of Environmental Development

Several strategic documents in the field of the environmental development of our country were accepted in 2012 and 2014.

First, the Russian President approved "Basics of state policy in the field of environmental development of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2030" (hereinafter – "Basics..."). According to "Basics...", the strategic goal of the state's policy in the field of environmental development is to solve social and economic tasks, providing for an environmentally-oriented economic growth, the preservation of a favourable environment, biodiversity and the natural resources to meet the needs of present and future generations, the human right to a favourable environment and the strengthening of law enforcement in the field of environmental protection and environmental safety. On December 18, 2012, the Action Plan for the implementation of "Basics..." was endorsed by the Order of the Government of the Russian Federation № 2423-p. Among the main tasks of the state environmental policy are providing environmentally-oriented economic growth and the introduction of eco-efficient innovative technologies, as well as preventing and reducing the negative current impact on the environment. The mechanisms of these tasks' realization are:

- The registration of absolute and specific indicators of the efficiency of natural resources and energy use and the negative impact on the environment;
- Environmental regulation based on the technological standards, under the condition of acceptable risk to the environment and human health;
- The step-by-step elimination of the practice of setting the temporary above permitted standard emissions and discharges.

Second, on April 15, 2014, the State Program of the Russian Federation “Environment 2012 to 2020” was approved by the Russian Federation’s Government Decree № 326. Taking into account the priorities of the state’s policy in the field of environmental protection, the objective of the Program is to improve environmental safety and the preservation of natural systems. It includes financing for a subprogram named “Regulation of Environmental Quality”, which consists of over 70 billion rubles from the federal budget.

The transition to the new state regulation system in the field of environmental protection will take about ten years. The main tasks of the transition to this system are presented in Table 11-3.

In accordance with the “Plan of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology of the Russian Federation for 2013 to 2018”, by the fourth quarter of 2017, the normative legal acts necessary for the implementation of the Federal Law N 219-FZ must be approved, Russian sectoral BREFs publish-

Table 11-3: Main tasks of the transition to the new system of state regulation in the field of environmental protection

Period	Main tasks
2013-2017	- Put all objects of economic activity on the state records; - Differentiation of enterprises according to the degree of impact; - Adaptation of sectoral BREFs to the Russian conditions; - Enterprises must prepare the action plans to reduce the negative impact on the environment.
From 2019	- A ban on putting into operation new facilities whose emissions/discharges do not correspond to the BAT, except for those companies that received a building permit before 01.01.2019; - Implementation of the transition to integrated environmental permits and declaring of the negative impact on the environment.
From 2020	- Increase in the coefficients to the rates of payments for emissions/discharges of harmful substances (pollutants) within the temporarily permissible emissions/discharges carried out with their excess.
From 2025	- Administrative restrictions will address the existing businesses.

ed and organizational measures for the functioning of a new system of integrated environmental permits implemented.

It is expected that not less than 30 major companies will have integrated environmental permits by the fourth quarter of 2018 and will have begun to realize ecological modernization programs.

In order to provide reliable information about the level of the impact on the environment, objects category I, stationary sources, the list of which is established by the Government of the Russian Federation, will have to equip their stationary sources with automated tools measuring and accounting for emissions and discharges as well as technical communication to the state fund of the state environmental monitoring data.

The Important Environmental Protection Measures at the Current Stage

Thus, in the context of the transition to technological standardization for environmentally hazardous facilities in the Russian Arctic, environmental protection measures such as the following become important:

- The creation and implementation of automatic control systems for the composition and volume of wastewater discharges;
- The creation of automatic control systems for air pollution, equipping emission stationary sources of control devices, construction, purchase and equipment of laboratories for air pollution control;
- The construction of facilities and manufactories for the production of raw materials or finished products from production wastes;
- Research and project works aimed at the environmental safety of production.

Now, companies can finance the implementation of these measures within the accrued sum of payments for negative impacts on the environment, by reducing this sum on incurred expenses.

Conclusions

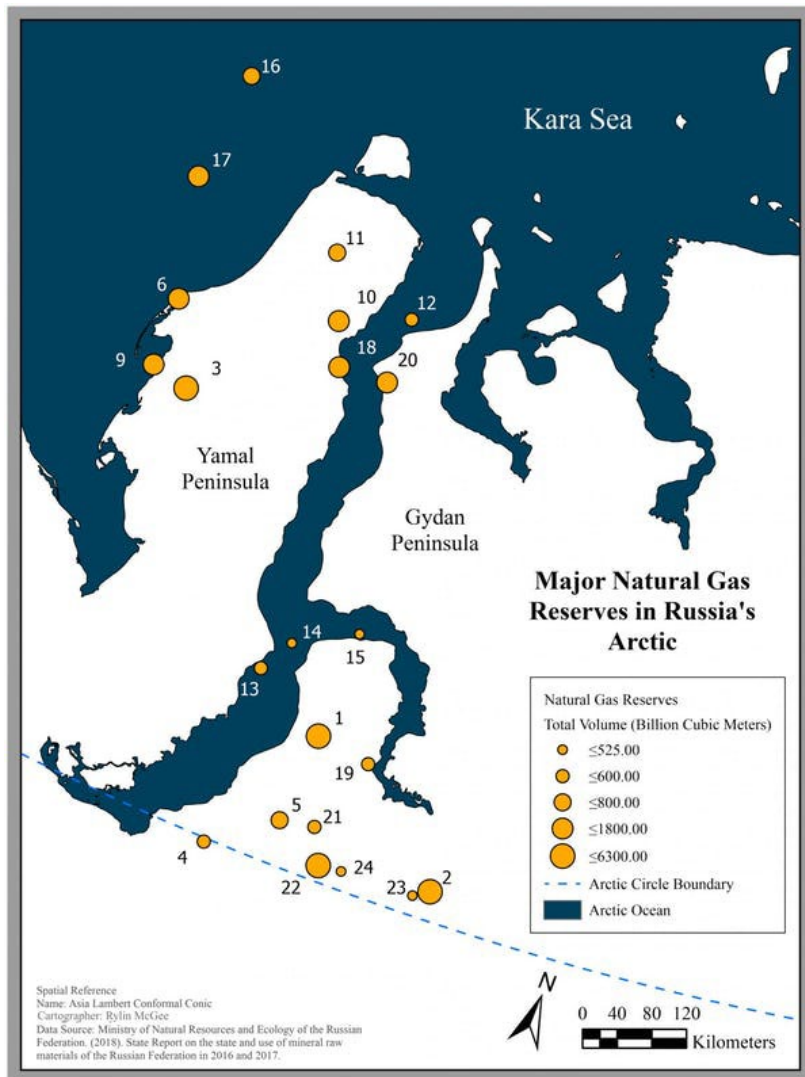
Stricter requirements in the field of environmental protection will have a major impact on the enterprises that could potentially become significant polluters. Such companies need to use methods of strategic environmental

planning to receive economic benefits from the state. Not only will the environmental quality of products be critical in the competitive struggle in the long term, but also the mode of production with use of the BAT, which combines minimal negative impact on the environment and the rational use of nature and economic efficiency. There is the economic possibility and practicability of using regulatory mechanisms to reduce the fees for negative impacts on the environment as the instrument to stimulate the transition of enterprises to the best available technologies.

Notes

1. The History of the development and use of environmental policy instruments in the Russian Federation, including the system of payments for negative impacts on the environment, is considered in detail in the publication *Environmental Policy and Regulation in Russia: The Implementation Challenge*. OECD. (2006). Available at <http://www.oecd.org/environment/outreach/38118149.pdf>.

This study was funded by the Russian Foundation for the Humanities as part of research project № 14-12-51003, "Optimization of the executive authorities of the Murmansk region in the field of environmental protection and nature management at the present stage of the reform of public administration".



Source: Rylin McGee, "Mapping Russia's Arctic Hydrocarbon Development Scheme," The Arctic Institute, 2020, <https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Oil-reserves-Russia-Arctic.jpg>.

12

Managing the Barents Sea: Comparing Norwegian & Russian Offshore Oil Spill Prevention Policies

Troy J. Bouffard

The Barents Sea has long been a testing ground for cooperation between Russia and Norway. Driven by mutual economic interests, the two states have worked together in previous decades to oversee a shared commercial fishery. More recently, off-shore oil production has become a Russo-Norwegian focus. Emerging petroleum production provides an opportunity to assess environmental stewardship in the region. In particular, this study explores the differences between and influences on Norwegian and Russian offshore oil spill prevention policy in the Barents Sea. The study focuses on how each state's national and economic strategic objectives translate into domestic policy, and how such influences are reflected in operational mandates and behaviour. Principal-agent (a.k.a. agency) theory and case studies provide the framework for this study through a defined view of the contractual relationships between the governments (principals) and industry (agents). Findings indicate that 1) there is no mutual policy for the shared environment, 2) there should be, and 3) divergent issues can be identified and potentially overcome. Additionally, the approach to prevention policy by Russia's governmental authorities yields concerns regarding operational intent, while Norway's public sector principles likely instill more confidence in outcomes. As the Barents Region continues to foster a convergence of bilateral (and multilateral) interests, this study helps identify relevant prevention policy decision-making factors while contributing to the further understanding of and expectations for activities in the Barents Sea.

Introduction

For decades, Russia and Norway successfully worked together, despite occasional conflicts, to manage a world-class fishery. One area presenting a significant challenge has been the disputed maritime territory known as the “Gray Zone,” which accounted for 12% of the Barents Sea’s total area. As

Russian and Norwegian interests shifted from fish to offshore oil and gas production due to expanding exploration activity, Russia and Norway addressed their Gray Zone dispute with the Barents Delimitation Agreement in 2010. The distinct motivation for this agreement, supported by numerous sources, including the national strategies of both states, strongly indicates ambitions to protect fisheries, often with an implicit acknowledgement of energy exploration and production as an underlying factor, possibly only minor (Filipek & Hruzdou, 2011: 231; Henriksen & Ulfstein, 2011: 8-9; Jensen, 2011: 158; Moe, Fjærtoft, & Øverland, 2011: 150-152; Neumann, 2010).

Interest and investment in Barents Sea offshore production clearly increased in the last decade. However, the international community lacks a clear understanding of how both nations intend to approach production risks. Given recent Barents Sea oil production and exploration increases and the likelihood of expansion in the future, it is an apt time to explore Norwegian and Russian offshore oil spill prevention policy. To what extent do Norway and Russia coalesce in their oil spill prevention policies in the Barents Sea? What explains any congruence or variation in their approaches? As joint stewards of the Barents Sea, with statutory requirements regarding any cross-boundary reserves in place, it is appropriate to analyze and compare their regulatory regimes to identify factors that shape oil spill prevention policy development and implementation.

Currently, both Russian and Norwegian oil project leads in the Barents Sea are state-owned. Accordingly, a principal-agent framework offers a useful lens to examine potential outcomes for this study where the *principal* is the state and the *agents* are the oil companies. Under this framing, national interests informing oil production strategies likely play a significant role in oil spill prevention policies. In particular, Russia's and Norway's differing geopolitical goals offer significant insight into the respective motivations behind each nation's oil spill prevention policies, and may even inform expectations. This argument emphasizes three key points explored in detail throughout the article: 1) no shared prevention policies exist for the shared Barents maritime regions, 2) shared policies should be established as a result, and 3) divergent aspects can be identified and overcome in order to achieve mutually beneficial (shared) policies. The findings reveal the potentially leading cause of discrepancy, indicating that, as principals, Norway largely enforces high standards on production operations to maintain a stable domestic economy, while Russia employs its energy production capabilities to expand its global influence.

This study reviews the relevant context concerning petroleum projections, oil spills in the Arctic, prevention policy fundamentals, and the history of the Norwegian and Russian energy policies. Additionally, a case study of each nation will serve as the basis of this inferential study.

Background

As a long-time legal and academic authority on oil spill prevention policy, Dr. Mark Cohen (1986: 176) loosely defines oil spill prevention as a general responsibility of government. According to Cohen, it is government's responsibility to monitor and enforce adopted policies, absorbing deterrence as a social cost. Government, being reasonably unable to directly monitor all oil-producing activities, must make decisions with imperfect information about the level of pollution or its source, and must instead create incentives for oil companies to internalize prevention measures, thus reducing risks. This study specifically emphasizes aspects of prevention as opposed to response, mitigation, recovery, and other phases of an oil spill incident.

Oil Estimates and Commitments in the Barents Sea

A 2008 watershed report estimated that the offshore Barents Sea holds a total of 9.5 billion barrels of technically-recoverable oil (Bird et al., 2008), with slightly higher figures reported more recently (Krisel, 2015). In 2016, officials reported Norwegian Continental Shelf (NCS) reserves of discovered oil at about 1.8 billion barrels (Erlingsen, 2016), while undiscovered estimates climbed to over 3.6 billion (Norwegian Petroleum Directorate, 2016: 26). In 2017, Director General of the Norwegian Petroleum Directorate Nyland announced increases to about 5.25 million barrels in the northern part of the Barents, effectively doubling previous estimates while elevating the share of the Barents' undiscovered resources within the entire NCS from 50% to 65% (Figure 1) (Norwegian Petroleum Directorate, 2017). In the southeastern part of the Barents Sea of Russia, the Prirazlomnaya platform has produced over 30 million barrels of oil since its initial production in 2014, with 19 billion more expected in 2017 ("Four Million Tons of Oil from Prirazlomnoye," 2017).

More recently, Norway announced plans to propose a record number of oil exploration blocks (Adomaitis & Doyle, 2017). Russian plans in the Barents mainly involve a contract with oil giants Rosneft and Eni to pursue undiscovered reserves in the Fedynsky (Figure 2) and Central Barents blocks in 2018, which jointly represent estimated reserves of 14 billion barrels of

oil (Owen, 2012). This intention was reaffirmed by Putin during a visit to the Arctic (“Meeting on Arctic region’s comprehensive development,” 2017). Although early-phase exploration estimates are inherently uncertain, the Barents has historically supported expanded estimates as well as proven reserves in later phases.

Oil Spill Concerns in the Arctic and Barents Sea

The Barents Sea (Figure 12-1) is one of the most productive ecosystems in the world. Oil spills represent the greatest risk to regional marine ecosystems while requiring the mostly costly response efforts (Emmerson & Lahn, 2012).

Marine ecosystems in the Barents are generally simple, meaning a disruption of one link in the food chain can severely affect the remaining system (Kommedal, Bagi, & Hemmingsen, 2015: 234-235; Stokke, 2000).

Figure 12-1: The Barents Sea, defined by the International Hydrographic Organization

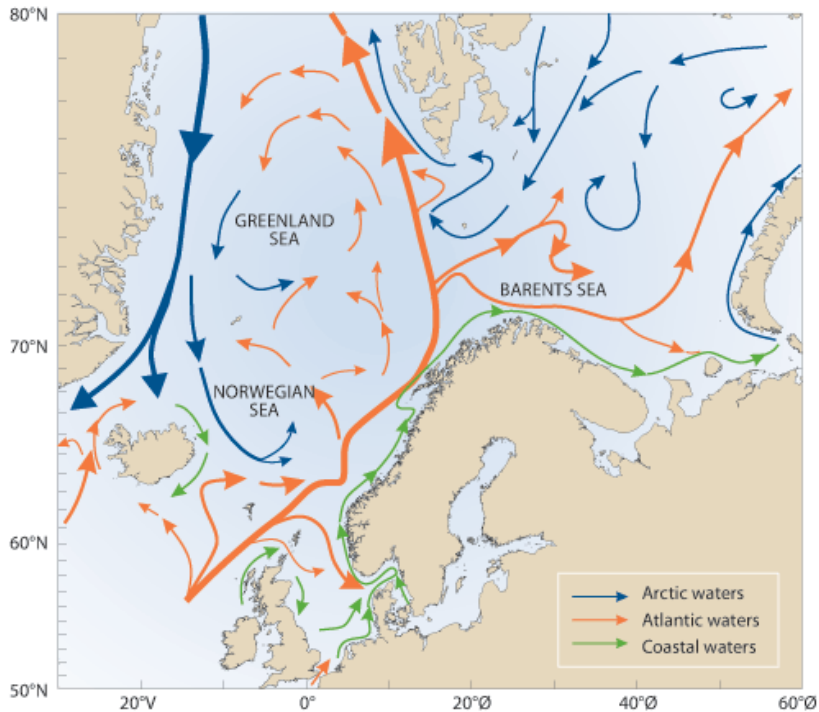


Source: Boundary information provided by Marineregions.org. Map adapted from CIA World Factbook Regional Maps https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook//graphics/ref_maps/political/jpg/arctic_region.jpg.

An oil spill has the potential to additionally disrupt the gestation and development of new fish, harm and kill vulnerable marine life, and jeopardize fish stock habitats (Dean & Barry, 2005: 221), presenting some degree of adverse sub-lethal effects at a minimum.

Oil pollution effects in a polar marine environment vary depending on location, but, broadly speaking, can create longer-lasting impacts than in other climate zones. The bacteriological breakdown of petroleum pollutants, for example, occurs more slowly in polar areas than in more temperate regions (Stokke, 2000: 130). Certain low-energy Arctic shorelines can remain polluted from one year up to several decades, whereas oil pollution on non-Arctic, high-energy coasts usually only remains for up to a year (Brubaker, 1993: 14). Sea ice constantly moves if it is not locked to a coast (land-fast) or seabed (bottom-fast), allowing oil to be transported great distances and introduced into other ecosystems (Figure 12-2).

Figure 12-2: Currents and water masses associated with the Barents Sea



Source: Havsforskningsinstituttet (Institute of Marine Research, Norway).

Oil can saturate ice leads, coat the undersurface of ice, and accumulate against ice edges (Isaksen, Bakken, & Wiig, 1998: 14); these very ice edges and leads support important migration, habitat, and subnival processes (Engelhardt, 1983: 200), with the Ice Marginal Zone being one of the densest environments for biological production within a sea (Winther & Vongraven, 2014). Additionally, the coastal zone of the Kola Peninsula (the Barents, Pechora, and White Seas) is notable for its high levels of biodiversity (Matishov et al., 2004: 62). As a microcosm representative of the entire Arctic, the Barents is vulnerable to all of these threats.

Prevention Policy

Preventing oil spills requires governmental mandates and industrial compliance. Discerning and implementing principal actor policy intent between operations and outcomes increases the challenge. At the highest-level policymaking authority, crafting regulations often involves architectural frameworks that are “necessarily vague.” This deliberate ambiguity allows subordinate agencies to adapt regulations to meet intent through discretionary application. Such latitude allows pragmatic flexibility, but also invites abuse. Of note, pollution *prevention* policy is rarely as explicit as pollution *response* policy, which is normally presented in clear terms as a “policy.” Instead, prevention-related policies normally take form through regulations, where preventive intent can be little more than implied directives. For example, the U.S. Clean Water Act of 1977 (and subsequent amendments) specifies no discrete pollution prevention measures, but implies an expectation of the development of preventative regulations (Office of Pollution Prevention and Toxics, 2008: 104).

The Historical Context of Norwegian Offshore Oil Spill Prevention and Regulation

Norway developed its principles and values concerning oil policies in three distinct phases: 1) the transition from foreign to domestic petroleum project control in the early 1970s, 2) the establishment of Norway’s oil industry in the late 1970s, and 3) the adoption of performance-based regulations in 1980.

During the first phase, as operations for the inaugural oil production developed, Norway’s government created plans to transition out of what was largely a foreign-controlled enterprise. As Norway promoted “absorptive capacity” within domestic enterprises and national institutions (Engen, 2009: 2), an internal petroleum regulatory regime ensued. However, the

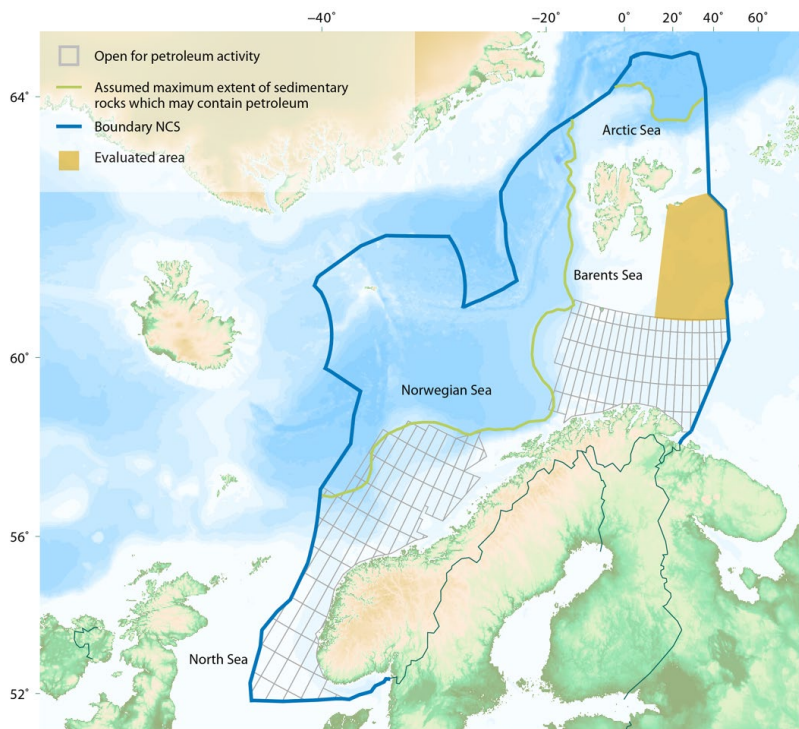
government's dependency on oil company support meant that industry gained significant influence over regulatory development and adoption as well as a diminishing government's role in oversight.

In the second phase, during the early 1970s, Norway sought to formally create industrial and governmental infrastructure to support its nascent oil industry. Norway established the Norwegian Petroleum Directorate (NPD), the Ministry of Oil and Energy, and a state-owned oil company, Statoil (Engen, 2009: 10). Concession laws clarified the relationship between the government and the petroleum industry while simultaneously guaranteeing the rights of firms and reinforcing state sovereignty over the Norwegian continental shelf (Figure 3). In 1973, the NPD was formed with little petroleum experience, levying strict regulations to offset the agency's weaknesses. Within a few years, the Norwegian public administration developed sufficient institutional competence within the petroleum industry to increase oversight of the regulatory regime.

The third phase started after Norway experienced devastating offshore accidents. The first disaster happened on April 22, 1977. Known as the "Bravo Blowout," oil well B-17 under Phillips' *Bravo* rig suffered an oil and gas pressure incident due to an improperly placed upside-down blowout preventer ("Ekofisk Bravo Oil Field"). The second disaster, named after the platform *Alexander L. Kielland*, occurred on March 27, 1980 in the Ekofisk area ("Norway's Petroleum History," 2010). One of the rig's five support columns broke off, causing the rig to capsize (Figure 4). After intense search and rescue efforts, only 89 of the 212 individuals working on the platform were saved. Following *Kielland*, public outrage prompted the Norwegian energy ministry and NPD to enact significant policy reforms (Lindøe, Baram, & Paterson, 2012: 5).

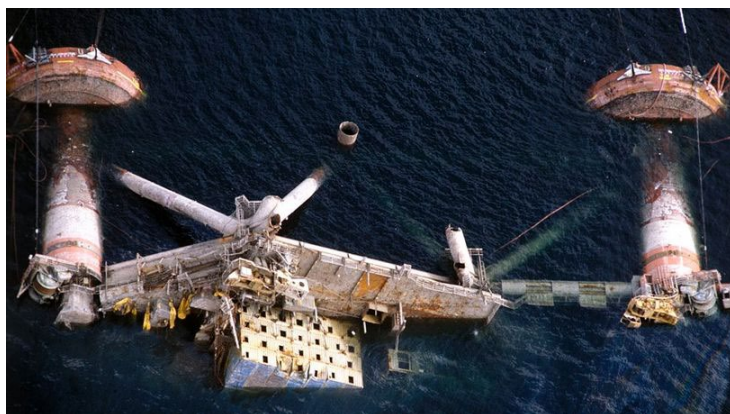
Norway's policy agenda changed to include a major regulatory paradigm shift from a reactive regime based on prescriptive and technical requirements toward a risk-based, proactive regime with working legal requirements (Engen & Lindøe, 2014: 1). Norway's policy reform process resulted in a system based on egalitarian principles, involving a tripartite arrangement between the government, employers, and employees, with an emphasis on risk reduction and safety though performance.

Figure 12-3: Map of the Norwegian Continental Shelf, showing the new area



Source: Norwegian Petroleum Directorate.

Figure 12-4: The *Alexander L. Kielland* platform capsizing



Source: NTB Photo Archive

Contemporary Russian Offshore Environmental Protection Policies and Regulations

The political attributes within Russia's current oil industry is related to post-Soviet privatization and re-nationalization episodes. Within a few years after the fall of the Soviet Union, most of Russia's oil industry became privatized. As the liberal-oligarchic model took hold over energy policy, Lukoil and Surgut reformed to private companies by insiders while Yukos and Sibneft shortly thereafter privatized through a loans-for-shares program (Åslund, 2006: 323). The many effects included the government's significantly decreased capacity to conduct oversight of the companies. The then-incoming President Putin saw a need to reverse the plummeting oil production shares enabled by Yeltsin's state asset-selling program. Putin's strategy, legitimized partly by his (alleged) dissertation, focused on economic recovery through re-nationalizing the dominant oil (and gas) companies in order to allow state-controlled entities to compete in the world market more effectively (Bradshaw, 2009: 5). As part of a broader reconsolidation effort toward state power, Putin eventually attained effective resource nationalism in support of his continuing global-influence vision.

As part of its recentralization priorities, post-Soviet Russia's history of oil production and regulation has largely been driven by Russia's foreign interests. To this end, Russia established national oil companies without pursuing stringent or effective government oversight, especially in cases where the regulatory burden might conflict with Russian economic or geopolitical interests.

Under Putin's lead during the lucrative post-Soviet petroleum era, Russia sought to align oil projects with national interests and goals. However, there have been substantial barriers to actually pursuing these interests while creating useful alignments. Russian oil companies highlighted several faults with the existing regulatory regime, deriving from 1) the unplanned and cumbersome way that the system originated and evolved; 2) the side effects of the recentralization of power; and 3) confusion and conflict over goals (Gustafson, 2012: 384). Bureaucratically, the transition period to post-Soviet Russia could have been an opportunity to implement a new approach to oversight. Instead, the complex Soviet bureaucracy endured into the new era, with new systems added alongside the legacy systems. During the transition period, the pressure to produce oil eclipsed the national interest in regulating the oil industry. The laws and regulations in place remained largely ineffectual, owing to a lack of

enforcement and to opposing priorities. Licensing pressures help explain part of the problem, as the government focused on assigning resources to oil companies as quickly as possible, giving little attention to regulatory enforcement. During Putin's early efforts to restore strong central powers, the regulatory system became unpredictable, arbitrary, and largely ineffective (Gustafson, 2012: 387).

Although the Russian constitution has the foundational capacity to address ecological safety, two notable problems persist: 1) legislation and normative legal acts endure inconsistently as a system of laws regarding environmental protection and management, and 2) responsibility for violations of laws needs to be strengthened to support the punishment of environmental crimes and related offenses (A. Ivanova, 2013: 644-645). However, the problem does not seem related to a lack of federal laws, decrees, resolutions, and orders. By 2008, the Russian Federation maintained an extensive base of more than 50 legal documents that governed oil spill prevention alone, resulting in regulations that are not coherent or based on a unified state policy or approach to oil spill prevention (M. Ivanova, 2011: 4). Russia's fragmented regulatory regime has not gone unnoticed. Senior government officials throughout the polar region express views that Russia continues to possibly represent the most expansive actor in offshore oil (and gas) production with the least amount of regulatory clarity (Ebinger, Banks, & Schackmann, 2014: 25).

Alternatively, Putin's forceful restructuring of agency oversight and control may improve regulatory expectations even though the federal approach to bureaucratic governance over the oil industry continues to dictate requirements through prescriptive-based regulation. Additionally, Russia actively participates in the Barents 2020 program with Norway, which indicates tangible efforts to improve offshore operations, leveraging opportunities to cooperate as well as find ways to improve Russia's policies and operations. Altogether, this may represent the current extent of the viable means to eventually develop effectiveness for Russia's offshore oil spill prevention.

Framework and Cases

Framework – Theory and Methodology

This article relies on agency theory, also known as principal-agent theory, to guide a particular scope of a relationship. The theory invokes the metaphor of a contract, specifically a behaviour-oriented or outcome-

oriented contract, in which one party (the principal) delegates work to another (the agent) for the purposes of analyzing the dynamics between the two (Eisenhardt, 1989). Additionally, agency theory provides a “unique realistic, and empirically testable perspective on problems of cooperative effort” (Eisenhardt, 1989: 72).

Case study as a methodology is a form of qualitative research that can advise evidence-informed decision-making in the policy realm (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Case study is the detailed examination of an aspect of a historical episode to develop or test explanations that may be generalized to other events (George & Bennett, 2005: 5). The cases in this article show diverse assortments of perspectives regarding policies and behaviours, conceivably shaped by the respective underlying oil revenue interests of Russia and Norway. Data within each case represents aspects of the relationships between the relevant state and industry actors with regards to potential rent-seeking and influence over prevention policies. This approach seems optimal for selection criteria, since Norway and Russia represent the state sovereignties that are the legal and *de facto* stewards of the Barents Sea. Furthermore, the Russian and Norwegian energy sectors are dominated by their state-owned petroleum companies. For this purpose, Russia and Norway are not only the principals as states, but also as corporate owners of the lead agents.

Case 1 – Aspects of Policy Influence for the Russian Federation

Portions of the publications cited below emphasize global political economic influence, while others emphasize the safety and environmental aspects of resource management. However, researchers consistently, if implicitly, acknowledge Russian ambitions to access offshore oil reserves in order to offset the terrestrial reductions in production that are currently underway.

Andreyeva and Kryukov (2008: 246) provide insight on the energy sector’s significance to Russia and the global market by describing the “Russian Model.” They find that Russia’s guiding principles and offshore oil and gas development strategies are distinct from those of other oil producers. Russian authorities regard the oil and gas sector as the basis of the Russian state’s power within the world economy. Owing to a weak judicial system, the corporate and government/bureaucratic systems play an outsized role in prescribing requirements for the sector.

A 2011 *New York Times* (Kramer & Krauss, 2011) article provides further context to the decisions made for Arctic offshore exploration. In 2008, the Russian parliament easily passed amendments to subsoil legislation that allowed the Ministry of Natural Resources to transfer offshore blocks to state-owned companies. The move anticipated and supported Russia maintaining its status as one of the world's top oil producers and as a significant factor in the global energy balance.

In a paper analyzing the scope and limits of Russia's capacity to use oil and gas as strategic resources to revive Russia's fortunes as a credible global power, Hashim (2010: 265) explains that the relative weakness of Russia's economy and military compared to the Atlantic Alliance has forced the current leadership to focus on leveraging energy as a weapon. Russia has a tendency to use the energy sector as "commanding heights" or "national champions" to leverage Russia's geopolitical stature, which has become an impediment to relations with the EU part of the West (Hashim, 2010: 272).

Orttung and Overland (2011: 75) express similar observations in an article that argues that the Russian leadership has pursued a rational set of political economic goals in its foreign energy policy. Their basic premise is that Russia's political leaders use energy to pursue advantages in expanding Russia's influence abroad. Several authors draw analogous conclusions (Newnham, 2011; Rutland, 2015; Smith, 2008; Stegen, 2011; Woehrel, 2010).

Feklyunina (2012), too, interprets Russia's energy policies (the Energy Strategy of 2003) in terms of their capacity to further its strategic interests, while pointing out that Russian elites are very sensitive to perspectives on the image of its state-owned companies. Russia's move to shut down the natural gas pipe to Ukraine in 2006 and the ensuing crisis vividly illustrated the Federation's willingness to use its energy resources as a political weapon. Feklyunina emphasizes Russia's rapid and almost violent response to the situation as indicative of its traditional method of handling such issues.

With Arctic hydrocarbons defined as a strategic natural resource asset, Harsem et al. (2011) conclude that the Russian government would not likely put constraining measures on the petroleum industry. Similarly, Ariel Cohen (2007) argues that Russia hopes to influence geopolitical conditions, such as NATO's expansion, by using energy as leverage while it seeks recognition of its predominant role in the former Soviet Union.

Russian academics have also weighed in on Russia's Arctic offshore production operations. Pavlenko et al. (2014: 661) provide significant detail about the increased risks involved with Arctic petroleum activities and admit that the Russian technology and industrial culture cannot readily prioritize ecological safety. They conclude that more effort should go into prevention mechanisms.

Among other policies, Moe and Rowe (2008: 112-113) consider a 2003 Ministry of Natural Resources strategy concerning the continental shelf. Given that Russia's continental shelf in the Arctic accounts for 30% of the world's total, it is no surprise that the nation developed a specific strategy for it. The authors note several obstacles to Russia's efforts to meet its oil production goals, including the following two that speak to the risk: 1) a poorly developed infrastructure supporting production, and 2) an insufficiently developed legal framework that is not adapted to offshore strategies.

Keil (2015) relies on recent scientific modelling that shows how an oil spill will spread in open waters and addresses the insufficient regulations to prevent or respond to such an incident, including ineffective liability caps that protect companies. Although Russia often supports unlimited liability, companies can exploit gaps by claiming unforeseen or unstoppable circumstances (*force majeure*). Russia also has a pattern of politicizing liability enforcement and environmental regulations. Keil also notes that resource-endowed but dependent countries like Russia often favour less strict environmental regulation in order to facilitate cost-effective access and production.

Wilson (2006/2007) analyzes the relationship between industry representatives and local peoples at Sakhalin-2, involving "frontier" circumstances concerning issues with safety and the environment, among other things. Wilson finds that company representatives determined that domestic laws and compensation mechanisms would have to suffice, suggesting that safety violations were not only deemed acceptable, but that both authorities and corporate leadership preferred to ignore safety regulations aimed at prevention.

Stevens et al. (2013: 73) note an absence of strategic focus owing to natural resource management having become embroiled in political competition and conflict among elites. A lack of consensus among the elites about the best form of subsoil (including shelf) management will likely cause regulatory regimes to remain in flux (Stevens et al., 2013: 73). Incompetence

and corruption within key regulatory and enforcement institutions further detract from effective, responsible natural resource management (Stevens et al., 2013: 80).

Spiridonov (2006) provides an analysis of the number and effectiveness of impact studies concerning offshore production in the Circumpolar North and concludes that a strategic environmental assessment, as well as environmental impact statements, could benefit and strengthen the regulatory regime of the Russian petroleum industry.

Greenpeace presents a dismal record of terrestrial oil spill violations to construct an argument that Russia should not be trusted to conduct safe operations in the far more complex environment of the Arctic offshore region. The Executive Summary of a 2012 Greenpeace report states:

If Russian oil and gas industry for an extended period of time could not bring regulations to the existing fields, there is no reason to hope that it will show any more responsible attitude to environmental issues when developing the Arctic Shelf. (*Russian Arctic - Offshore Hydrocarbon Exploration: Investment Risks*, 2012)

Furthermore, the non-governmental organization (NGO) argues that the higher operation costs in the Arctic will encourage expedited time periods between licensing and production by circumventing environmental impact and safety measures (*Russian Arctic - Offshore Hydrocarbon Exploration: Investment Risks*, 2012: 21).

Moe (2010) finds Russian attitudes about environmental management to be essentially *laissez-faire*, wherein the phrase “let us wait and see what happens” is not an uncommon Russian response to hypothetical dilemmas.

Case 2 – Aspects of Policy Influence for Norway

As Norway’s oil industry expanded in the 1970s, its leaders strove to avoid the “Dutch Disease” by maintaining a balanced economy. Gelb et al. (2002: 8) observe that “Mainland Norway” worked to maintain competitiveness in other economic sectors as the excitement surrounding oil and gas prospects built. Currently, a statutory amount of the petroleum revenue goes into sovereign wealth savings, in part to prevent deindustrialization (“The Rich Cousin,” 2013). Such strategic choices enhance Norway’s ability to maintain macro-economic stability and reasonable growth even under unfavourable oil market conditions (Barnett & Ossowski, 2002: 18).

Mjøset and Cappelen (2011: 12) studied the integration of the Norwegian oil economy into the world economy over a four-decade span. They found that Norway could have been susceptible to the Dutch Disease and Resource Curse. The excessive exploitation of oil too quickly would have strangled the non-petroleum sectors without a disciplined fiscal policy to control the reliance on oil income.

In the previous case study, Rutland (2015: 69) also concluded that Norway effectively adapted to the arrival of oil riches. He found that Norway avoided Dutch Disease through technological achievements in the industry as well as confidence in the democratic processes that focus on channeling back oil wealth to the nation's collective benefit.

According to Listhaug (2005: 835-836), Norway clearly avoided larger problems associated with resource curses, suffering only a mild form of the economic ailment. However, throughout the initial years, much of the public pushed for new oil wealth to finance a higher proportion of current government expenditures than the government deemed prudent. The Norwegian government stood relatively firm with an eye toward long-term stability, regardless of the short-term political risks.

Bjerkholt and Niculescu (2004: 164, 177-178) outline Norway's political commitments in their study of fiscal policy and non-renewable natural resources. They found that Norway focused primarily on net worth risk by saving oil revenue in their unique fund and creating simple, transparent rules to deal with market-related fluctuations. An eventual consensus allowed Norway to install and maintain a rules-based framework even during economic recessions.

Mehlum et al. (2012) also reference the resource abundance of a nation as a common cause of poor economic performance. Norway's strong rule of law, property rights, and well-functioning state bureaucracy further supported oil income as an asset rather than a liability. With a well-established labour movement at the time, other industries remained stable, and resource wealth from oil benefited society broadly.

Holden (2013) and Larson (2005) state that the literature suggests that countries with abundant natural resources generally experience lower economic growth than other countries. The lessons from the 1970s showed that Norway began to experience the Dutch Disease when petroleum wealth led to increased public consumption. The Norwegian government formed a commission that recommended a measured oil production pace to ensure

future resource wealth. Fiscal discipline in the broader economy as well as a monetary policy focused on stable and diverse economic strategies led to reduced pressure on the oil industry to overemphasize maximum production (Holden, 2013).

Strømsnes et al. (2009) studied the presence and effectiveness of Greenpeace in Norway and found that their presence and following were largely non-existent, given strong local support for existing policies and a lack of egregious incidents.

The Petroleum Safety Authority (PSA) of Norway, an independent government regulator, issued risk reduction principles as part of Norway's Health, Safety, and Environment (HSE) regulatory frameworks in February 2010. The framework mandates compliance with HSE legislation accountable to internal requirements and acceptance criteria, meaning that the agency sets the conditions, and the oil companies are allowed and expected to implement requirements in a self-regulatory manner ("Regulations Relating to Health, Safety, and the Environment in the Petroleum Activities and at Certain Onshore Facilities: Risk Reduction Principles," 2013). Furthermore, in cases of uncertainty, producers must choose solutions that reduce risk, illustrating that Norway's regulations for petroleum operations are risk-based with the aim of minimizing the threat of accidents and environmental damage ("Regulatory Principles," 2016).

During her first full term in the late 1980s, Prime Minister Brundtland published an article concerning the politics of oil. As noted in a speech at Harvard in 1987, she stated the following:

To be able to play a positive and stable role in the global energy picture, and to avoid becoming too dependent on the petroleum sector, we have decided to deplete our petroleum resources at a moderate and long-term basis. Orderly conditions and operations are significant for global economic development, and important if oil is to be exploited in an environmentally sound manner. (Brundtland, 1988: 104, 106)

In both cases presented in this section, a plethora of sources provide consistent perspectives from a variety of scholars and authorities. The following section discusses the case study in aggregate to support a qualitative analysis and application as viewed through the established lens of agency theory.

Findings

Russia

The Russian case study relies on perspectives gained from decades of petroleum-related activity prior to operations in the Barents Sea. The lack of current operations or disasters in this region provides the rationale for deduction based on historical perspectives. The data for the Russian case study illustrate four consistent conditions: 1) the energy sector is the most important component of Russia's economy; 2) the Russian state deliberately positioned itself as the majority owner and controlling entity in the energy sector; 3) Russia prefers a prescriptive regulatory approach for increased operational control; and 4) Russia's energy strategy relies on coercive, political influence over both upstream and downstream oil production and related activities.

Russia's questionable record concerning oil pollution suggests a degree of acceptance of what the international community might deem as irresponsible behaviour in pursuit of optimal production levels. This dynamic is essential to understanding the connection between Russia's priority interests and how it translates into operational risks. Russia largely controls every aspect of upstream activity short of the operations themselves. The evidence suggests that Russia fosters conditions for its oil companies to assume relatively high risks. With regard to regulating oil production, Russia presents itself as sufficiently responsible. However, the evidence further suggests that Russia, as principal, may allow oil companies, as agents, enough latitude to exploit gaps in the regulatory regime in order to ultimately enable long-term progress toward national goals (Table 1).

The Arctic has become a predominant Russian priority in domestic and foreign policies, acknowledged as strategically important to future socio-economic development and hence to Russia's position in international affairs (Zysk, 2015: 437). Advanced petroleum industries and state actors attempt to maintain a balance between current production (hydrocarbons being extracted) and future reserves (hydrocarbons to be extracted). As terrestrial production in Western Siberia is waning, Russia is keenly interested in exploiting its continental shelf resources, including the Fedynsky High area (Figure 5).

Table 12-1: Comparison of prevention policy indications between Norway and Russia

Petroleum Regulatory Regime Comparisons		
Indicator of Prevention Expectations	Norway: Performance-Based (Results/Outcome Oriented)	Russia: Prescriptive-Based (Mandated Actions)
Accountability		
• Legal	Decreased ability to establish metrics and measurable goals	Rules favour private interests over public interests
• Bureaucratic	Inability to assess or predict outcomes	Inconsistent enforcement
• Professional	Behaviours reliant on adherence to performance goals	Susceptible to corruption and less qualified/untrained personnel
R&D (Operator Innovation)	Increased opportunity with higher costs	Little opportunity but less costly
Environmental Focus	Higher	Lower
Production Focus	Lower	Higher
Oversight of Operations	Facilitates self-reporting	Requires engagement of principal
Regulatory Administration	Legal autonomy - decisions delegated to agency lead	Structural autonomy - susceptible to political intervention

Sources: (Christensen & Yesilkagit, 2006; May, 2007)

Over the last several years, Russia has directed its formidable energy revenues elsewhere, rather than reinvesting in desperately needed offshore operational capacities. In particular, the research and development of exploratory-phase technologies and sector manufacturing capabilities notably suffer (Hasle, Kjellén, & Haugerud, 2009). Relevant components include platforms, rigs, and ships (retooling legacy naval yards), which suggests an inability or unwillingness to prioritize effectively (Gaddy & Ickes, 2013: 98-99). Russia's national defence budget increased from \$15.6 billion in 2006 to \$51.8 billion in 2015 (Klein, 2016: 25) and held steady into 2016 (Galeotti, 2017; Tian et al., 2017). Budget allocations for the North are far more focused on developing Arctic military capabilities

(offshore included) as opposed to offshore production capabilities. Although much of Russia's recent defence spending in the Arctic involves the recapitalization of legacy infrastructure for dual-use, search-and-rescue stations along the Northern Sea Route (NSR), this can be considered secondary, or even tertiary to natural resource protection, and to the national priority of propelling military modernization. Such emphasis on defence-related capital expenditures, rather than petroleum operating expenditures, suggests that investment in pursuing risk reduction and related prevention efforts will not be a priority.

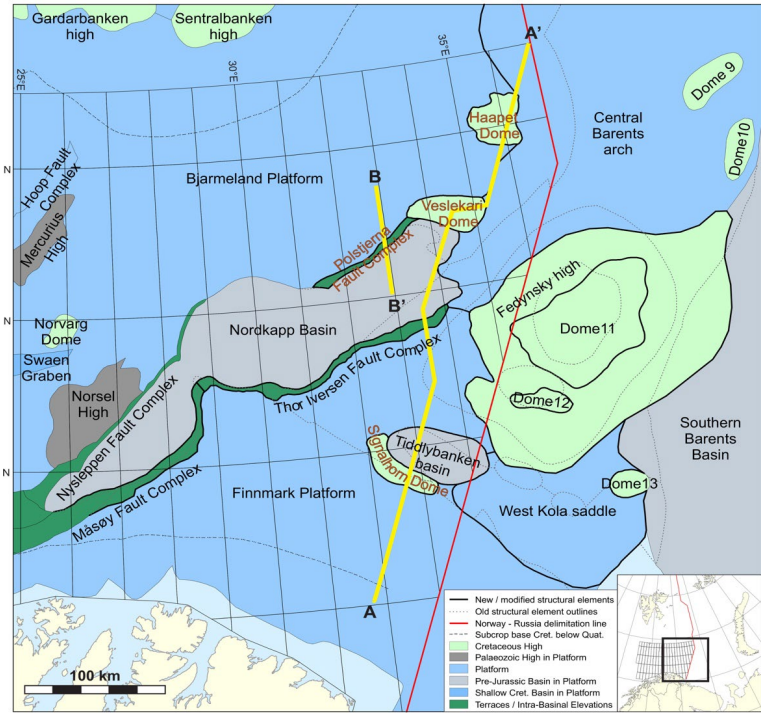
Norway

The following characteristics helped form Norway's energy identity: 1) the early transition from foreign reliance while bolstering an inclusive domestic workforce culture; 2) the reliance on a performance-based regulatory regime that emphasizes agency competence and integrity toward optimal safety and environmental outcomes; 3) recognition as a relatively small state in the international community, but a large player in the global energy spectrum; and 4) domestic economic goals, gaining influence in a competitive balance with political objectives, that guide engagement in the global economy.

The integration of substantial oil revenues into the Norwegian economy in the 1970s tested the capacities of institutions and society to manage the new revenues prudently. Early in the country's energy wealth, Norwegian policymakers understood that market forces, left to themselves, would produce a crowding-out effect, with petroleum revenue gradually supplanting other industrial income. Committing to a diversified economy and sound fiscal policies helped Norway weather such difficult times. Nonetheless, segments of the Norwegian society and government justifiably believe that the nation continues to focus too much investment on the oil and gas industry over others, thereby suppressing additional diversification. Other efforts to bring oil revenue online safely seemed largely nominal under the circumstances.

Norway effectively managed inflation, employment, wage control, trade, and the value of the krone through monetary policy aimed in part at macroeconomic stabilization (Svensson et al., 2002: 29). Norway wisely maintained fiscal diversity over rapid wealth surpluses despite the oil boom.

Figure 12-5: Map of Fedynsky High and main elements of geological structure



Source: Norwegian Petroleum Directorate

Norway's managed approach through the Petroleum Safety Authority (PSA) indicates that this representative of the principal (as a regulatory authority for the Norwegian Continental Shelf [NCS]) does not rely on vertical, superordinate authority, but rather horizontal cooperation with other actors for regulatory development and implementation success. In this sense, the PSA acts just as much as a mediator as it does an administrative authority. Public sector commitments and industry acceptance manifest as mutual respect regarding prevention goals. While Norway, as principal, retains the authority to administer punishment concerning violations, there is likely to be a greater understanding and acceptance of such actions, due to the cooperative nature of the regime structure, as recently demonstrated with the PSA's inspection of Eni operations at the *Goliat* platform (Figure 6) in the Norwegian Barents (Nilsen, 2017).

Figure 12-6: Eni-operated *Goliat* FPSO (Floating, Production, Storage, and Off-loading) platform



Source: Eni Norge

However, Norway has not been without its problems since the catastrophes over 35 years ago, as indicated by minor complacency issues recently (Kent, 2017). Before problems could magnify, in keeping with proactive principles, the Norwegian government mandated an offshore study (“Minister Hauglie announces new white paper on petroleum safety,” 2016) while the PSA conducts a comprehensive response program (Petroleum Safety Authority Norway, 2017; “Reversing the Trend,” 2016).

Conclusion

Although a performance-based versus prescriptive-based approach to prevention goals could theoretically produce the same desirable results, that is not likely the situation for the Barents Sea. The principal-agent theory used in this study provided a focused method for considering how state and industry decision-makers may determine and focus offshore production

policy strategies. The framework and aggregate-level case study methodology helped establish individual policy circumstances for Norway and Russia, which allows for further, more reliable consideration of overlapping issues and expectations.

The research question posed in this article considers the extent of as well as the reasons explaining the divergent policy approaches of Norway and Russia. Both face significant bilateral deliberations ahead for elements of their shared maritime region. The article provides compelling evidence that no shared policy exists for offshore oil spill prevention, yet there is a clear need for one. The goal of this study was to offer a focused insight into strategic influences that might contribute to understanding and expectations. Furthermore, the article helps to identify where issues diverge and ways to develop recommendations for overcoming difficulties in establishing joint solutions through shared policy.

Individually, Norway's system, by design, facilitates petroleum activity by promoting a methodology of "governing within" (Nordtveit, 2015: 155), whereas Russia prefers a top-down style of governance. Moe (2010: 245) describes very different constraining forces between Russia and Norway with regard to offshore development in the Arctic. In Norway's case, self-imposed constraints, driven by discernable national interest, translate into environmental precautions that determine the pace of development and otherwise control oil production activities in favour of safety. Alternatively, Russia has lofty global objectives and requires energy revenues to realize them. The oil industry supports these goals through less prudent, or restrictive, and more permissive practices to maximize production levels.

Overlapping concerns reveal that separate systems and processes may need to be addressed through policy partnership efforts to reduce incompatible factors that transcend state antecedence. While accounting for relevant facts and assumptions, filtering primary actors through principal-agent theory facilitates efforts to identify policy limitations as well as areas to strengthen policy cooperation. Regional perspectives make matters even more complicated. For example, European Union officials, on no less than three separate notable occasions, negotiated to impose a variety of significant restrictions on Arctic offshore activities, including an Antarctic-like treaty as well as total drilling bans (Council of the European Union & European Parliament, 2013; European Parliament, 2008; Stępień & Raspotnik, 2017). Such efforts have failed thus far. Especially notable was the demise of the concept of the Antarctic-like treaty, soundly marginalized after the

“Arctic Five” (Canada, Denmark, Finland, Russia, and the United States) signed and reaffirmed the Ilulissat Declaration in 2010 and 2012 respectively, announcing clearly to the world that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) remains the instrument of choice to manage Arctic maritime sovereignty issues.

Canadian scholar Michael Byers (2013) presented an enduring and compelling assessment of existing environmental agreements and efforts, stating that “more cooperation is needed, and quickly, on regional standards for oil spill prevention.” Such a sentiment essentially represents the current circumstances of the Barents Sea. As industrial activity in the Barents Sea predictably grows, continued research can provide much-needed and value-added perspectives for any number of complex political and economic dynamics. Finally, in the relatively early stages of energy production in the Barents maritime environment, the further exploration of national interests and resulting behaviours emphasizes the need to contribute additional knowledge that helps foster cooperation and policy development.

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13

Authoritarian Administration: An Environmental Paradox in the Russian Arctic

Troy J. Bouffard

Throughout the Cold War, the international community often feared the worst concerning environmental behaviour in Russia. However, post-Soviet Russia continues to make significant progress in environmental stewardship in one specific region – its Arctic coastline and maritime region. The contrast between on- and offshore priorities remains notably disparate, especially in policies and behaviours. While previous examination remains lacking in this context, it is important to ask – how, and especially why, does Russia maintain a significantly different Arctic offshore emphasis concerning the environment? The argument supported in this article suggests that, while Russia maintains a discernible difference between Arctic land territory versus maritime behaviours, initial intuition behind “why” indicates that Russia might possibly be setting conditions in order to eventually leverage soft powers and, ultimately, jurisdiction of an expanded amount of maritime surface territory in the Arctic. In support of the examination, the use of authoritarian environmentalism provides the framework in which to view the evidence and perspectives. Two case studies provide methodology, including aspects 1) involving notable environmental problems within the Russian Arctic land territory located around Norilsk’s mining operations, as well as the Usinsk oil pipeline, and 2) focusing on Russian efforts toward offshore environmental remediation, prevention, and protection efforts. The actual differences in policies and behaviour seem clear as a result, and perhaps help establish the start of a discussion concerning the “why” in order to start investigating the potential greater reasoning behind such environmental behaviours, and maybe even what to anticipate.

Introduction

Throughout the Cold War, the international community often feared the worst concerning environmental behaviour in Russia. Several factors

contributed to the decline in environmental quality under the Communist system, including disincentives toward conservationism as well as the sense of complacency supported by the nation's enormous size and natural resource wealth (Henry & Douhovnikoff, 2008: 438-439). The global community's suspicions of the USSR's transgressions ranged from onshore oil and mining issues to severe air pollution through nuclear-related contamination (Bronder et al., 2010: 56). However, since the fall of the Soviet Union, and especially during the last decade, Russia has made significant progress in the environmental stewardship of its Arctic coastline and maritime region. The northern coast and waters continue to benefit from strong Russian governmental support, investments, and promotion of environmental issue remediation, prevention, and protection. Conversely, the same focus on and magnitude of concern for land territories does not exist. On- and offshore priorities remain notably disparate, especially with regard to policies and behaviours. Comparative literature remains lacking on this topic and offers an opportunity to explore the differences in the terrestrial and Arctic maritime environmental stewardship policy characteristics of the Russian Federation.

What explains how, and especially why, Russia has such a notable and stewardly emphasis concerning the Arctic offshore environment? The argument supported in this article suggests that Russia not only enables deliberately different behaviours, but could also be setting conditions through its Arctic maritime environmental priorities in order to eventually leverage soft power for the purposes of contesting established international rules. The Russian regime continues to suppress the transparency of issues to its civil society, supported largely by the state-controlled mass media, which helps to dictate/influence how state actors critically shape and narrate legitimate concerns (Poberezhskaya, 2015: 106; Smyth & Oates, 2015; Sundstrom & Henry, 2016). Therefore, to support the hypothesis, authoritarian environmentalism helps provide the theoretical framework from which to view the perspectives and evidence – an application not yet applied to Russia based on the available literature. The methodology follows themes based on two post-Soviet case studies. The first involves significant environmental issues within the Russian Arctic land territory (Figure 1). In particular, this case examines the notable environmental problems associated with Norilsk mining operations in the central Siberian region (Shiklomanov & Laruelle, 2017: 254) as well as the Usinsk oil field problems in the west (Wilson, 2016: 77-79). The second case focuses on Russian Arctic coastal and offshore environmental remediation, prevention, and protection efforts.

Of note, the secondary part of the argument concerning “why” – although necessary to provide a fuller contribution – should be considered and understood only as an initial plausibility probe. This means that the findings hopefully provide an emerging opportunity to begin the consideration, however speculative at first, of one of any vast number of possible consequences, perhaps even drawing further interest and perspectives.

Background

Authoritarianism

Progress throughout the 1990s to improve Russia’s public- and private-sector environmental aspects, as well as expanded actor access and influence, suffered repressive marginalization. It is important to remember that Putin’s presidential election victory donned the guise of emerging democratic values, such as greater public access to and influence on environmental issues, only to begin reversing democratic progress and Western envy after securing the win (Tysiachniouk et al., 2018). This means, in part, that countering Russian desires of the West became necessary to undo not only jealousy of Euro-Atlantic progress, but also citizen expectations of government and governance – both wildly different from Putin’s vision of establishing a superior Eurasian civilization. During the transition, Putin tried to soften the shift by offering an authoritarianism model with personal freedoms, possibly as a way to facilitate incrementalism domestically and appease the range of generations (Lukin, 2009: 71). This shift ultimately signalled that Russia would not continue to pursue and support the environmental reforms of the 1990s, but rather would develop into a “vanguard of right-wing authoritarianism” (Feifer, 2018).

Authoritarianism refers to the relationship and dynamics involving both authoritarian *leaders* and authoritarian *followers* (Altemeyer, 1996). The “right-wing” component represents authoritarian *followers* that willingly submit to authoritarian *leaders* who are perceived as legitimate powers, and who adopt social norms while acting hostile toward those who do not (Altemeyer, 1981). In the context offered by this article, if environmental health needs to be risked or sacrificed for natural resource development in accordance with Kremlin directives, then a supportive constituency would not only be expected to accept such conditions, but also to aggressively counter non-supportive perspectives and activities, such as protests and grassroots initiatives.

Prevention

Preventing environmental disasters and issues usually requires governmental mandates and industrial compliance. Policy is not just the written word or implemented documents; it is also the speech and conduct of the public sector elites. Profit-maximizing firms tend to disregard the full economic and social costs of their activities, such as the increased risk of accident from petroleum extraction, on other stakeholders and on the ecosystem in general (Cole, Izmalkov, & Sjöberg, 2014: 10). Negative externalities remain one of the primary justifications for government intervention through policies and regulations developed to resolve issues. Such externalities, or un/intended consequences of economic enterprise, generally require governmental regulation to mitigate harms to society and the environment. To that end, policy helps to bind and constrain what is known as discretionary authority.

Prevention-related policies normally take form through regulations, embedded throughout various mandates and requirements where preventive intent can be little more than implied directives. With regard to Russia, the later section involving the case studies illustrates the differences in how onshore and offshore regulatory behaviours remain significantly unbalanced in reality. Russian legislation provides expectations for both on- and offshore environmental management, yet only the maritime Arctic continues to benefit from meaningful implementation and enforcement.

Remediation

Understanding remediation is not without its difficulties. Contrary to popular belief, remediation involves far more than just the simple cleanup of a contaminated site. Numerous aspects illustrate some of the legal ambiguities that add to the complexity of remediation, including – but not limited to – 1) defining contaminated land, 2) scopes of efficacy in remediation, 3) defining the utility of the scientific foundation supporting remediation, 4) specifying differences between short- and long-term risk reduction, 5) determining contamination worthy of remediation, 6) establishing the degree of cleanup that will be judged as satisfactory, 7) developing the role of technology, and 8) overcoming effective methods of remediation management (involving interdisciplinary communication problems, dealing with uncertainty, and policy issues) (Hrudey & Pollard, 1993: 56, 64, 66). In addition to the categories of remediation (isolation, mobilization, destruction), efforts can be considered in categories including

Table 13-1: Traditional remediation categories and techniques

Category	Techniques
Containment/Isolation	Mechanical separation
	Capping
	Low permeability cutoff walls
	Solidification/stabilization
	Vitrification
Mobilization	Pump and treat
	Permeable treatment wall
	Soil vapour extraction
	Soil heating
	Soil washing
	Pyro Separation
	Electrokinetics
	Phyto remediation
Destruction	Incineration
	Bioremediation

Sources: Content for this table partially developed from Hrudey and Pollard (Hrudey & Pollard, 1993: 64-65; Mulligan et al., 2001: 197-204).

containment – namely *in situ* and *ex situ* (Table 13-1) (Mulligan, Yong, & Gibbs, 2001: 205). As expected, onshore remediation often differs from offshore. For example, oil spill cleanup techniques fall under three categories depending on location, including 1) mechanical, 2) chemical, and 3) in situ burning (Modeling of potential oil spill behavior when operating Prirazlomnaya OIFP (offshore ice-resistant fixed platform). Assessment of Possible Oil-spill Emergency Response, 2012: 81). Lastly, costs can range from tens to hundreds of dollars per ton of remediated land (Mulligan et al., 2001: 205).

Administration and Regulations

The scope of onshore oil and mining activity remains overseen primarily by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian

Federation. Key federal executive bodies include the Federal Supervisory Natural Resource Management Service and the Federal Service for Environmental, Technological, and Nuclear Oversight. Federal Law No. 2395-1 of February 21, 1992, represents the lead legislation regulating terrestrial oil and mining activity. The early post-Soviet law increasingly fell short of effective, though. By the turn of the century, significant shortcomings with the law surfaced and the Putin administration accepted responsibility in pursuit of major reform, which underwent delays and ultimately failed (Adachi, 2009). Instead, the Subsoil Law of 1992 was amended to include provisions to strengthen environmental protection. However, federal environmental law, as a potential backstop to natural resource legislation shortcomings, has eroded for over a decade now, with its decreased jurisdiction limited to projects associated with the continental shelf or conservation areas (Pettersson et al., 2015: 250). Although pronounced, Russian environmental law lacks the resulting substantive rules and enforcement commitment in support of environmental management, as maximizing resource exploitation maintains dominance over systems (*ibid.*: 252). Far more administration and regulation pertain to oil and mining activities than can be covered in this study. However, this brief introduction should provide the basic context for what will later be discussed concerning institutional path dependency.

Theoretical Framework

Theory

The origins of the concept of authoritarian environmentalism, the antithesis of democratic environmentalism, can be traced to the 1970s and Heilbroner (1974), who proposed a wide consideration of governance and global stresses caused by population growth and resource scarcity. Under such conditions, the emerging theoretical development became defined as “a non-participatory approach to public policy making and implementation in the face of severe environmental challenges” (Gilley, 2012: 287). Furthermore, a dimension of authoritarian environmentalism states that it is “a policy process dominated by a relatively autonomous central state, affording little or no role for social actors and their representatives” (*ibid.*: 288). Reasons that states invoke authoritarian environmentalism processes include non-state actor difficulties with issue complexity, value conflicts, expert information deficits, and policy legitimacy disagreements as well as state-actor interests involving dominating traditions and structure, leadership choices, and agency (*ibid.*: 292-293). Gilley further explains that

authoritarian environmentalism often emerges in discussion as either a prescriptive or descriptive model with regard to environmental issue response. The prescriptive model helps to clarify authoritarian aspects of environmental policy, given the highly directive nature of the government toward policy, versus a performance-based approach, which allows for roles involving non-state actors, especially with regard to prevention policies and industry innovation.

Authoritarian environmentalism should not necessarily be only thought of as anti-democratically ineffective. Much like the idea of the “benevolent dictator,” this non-democratic form of environmental governance earned positive perspectives touting its effectiveness. Possibly the most noteworthy example is the effectiveness of China’s application (as the leading proponent) of authoritarian environmentalism via the 1970s one-child policy, which is credited with alleviating global population growth and the impacts on the environment (Beeson, 2010: 289). A significant amount of the literature demonstrates the success of authoritarian environmentalism, especially when it comes to resolving substantial environmental problems that democratic environmentalism struggles to address. This association coincides with the conventionally defined understanding of authoritarian environmentalism, which is stated as a public policy model that concentrates authority in a few executive agencies manned by capable and uncorrupt elites seeking to improve environmental outcomes (Gilley, 2012: 288). The application of the theory in this article focuses not only on how the Russian Federation handles environmental issues through prevention and remediation efforts, but also why the state may leverage authoritarian environmentalism in order to facilitate economic goals (required to support higher-level strategic objectives). In this sense, perhaps a new version of this theory could be established that accounts for the less appealing aspects of authoritarian rule, possibly “counter-benevolent authoritarian environmentalism” or “anti-democratic environmentalism.” All models of environmental public policy involve a degree of both authoritarian and democratic environmentalism, but on a continuum, models will tend to lean toward the dominating governing principles and values of the state.

Additionally, the role and sphere of the general public’s access to and influence within an authoritarian regime should be acknowledged. Authoritarian solutions to environmental issues often come across as ineffective when understood by the narrow instrumentalism of rationalistic management and approaches based on anarchist prescriptions (Torgerson, 1999: xi). Public participation is limited to a confined cadre of scientific and

technocratic elites, while others are expected to participate in state-led mobilization for the purposes of implementation (Ahlers & Shen, 2018: 300). However, authoritarianism does not automatically mean “no public access or influence,” aside from the previously mentioned expectations. Clearly, authoritarian aspects of environmentalism likely restrict unscripted public participation. For example, on the extreme side, in both Burma and Iran, no public space exists where opposition can be legitimately or openly pursued without, in Burma, “inviting severe retribution from the military regime,” or, in Iran, inviting a visit by the state’s guardians of Islamic law (Doyle & Simpson, 2006: 752). Less harsh circumstances may exist in China, where citizens now experience a relative decrease in the risk of protesting as sociopolitical activism and popular contention become more widespread and tolerated (Steinhardt & Wu, 2016). At the same time, liberal democracy is not simply the opposite of authoritarianism. Time and again, the conventional liberal democratic model practices little more than voting in elections, largely devoid of enhanced deliberations and meaningful discourse in the public sphere (Torgerson, 1999). Nonetheless, defining and comparing the effectiveness of environmental governance is beyond the scope of this article.

Although authoritarian environmentalism has successfully resolved significant issues in the past, often by deliberately bypassing civil inclusion, this study hopes that a novel application of the theoretical framework normally reserved for China has applied meaning when developing explanatory power concerning the Russian Federation. Authoritarian environmentalism continues to gain expanded application, including approaches that consider 1) how Korea leveraged it as a democratic state (Han, 2015), and 2) how Singapore used it as a developing state (Han, 2017). Again, both circumstances view perspectives through a relatively uncorrupt governance lens.

This study offers yet another application of the theory related to an ethically questionable governance lens of a developed, semi-democratic (managed democracy) authoritarian state. Nevertheless, the use of authoritarian environmentalism for this study presents limitations. Its thorough application toward Russian Federation environmentalism has yet to be established. Although this article considers the premise of the relationship between economic growth and environmental stress, the developed linkages differ from those that follow ecological modernization frameworks (Mol, Spaargaren, & Sonnenfeld, 2014; Tokunaga, 2010). The process-tracing quality of ecological modernization can present a cleaner

description of *how*, but the *why* question for this study might ultimately fall short of being convincingly effective when discussing the data. Ecological modernization helps to explain meaningful environmental reform, but for this study, it cannot answer how the reverse occurs.

Methodology and Selection Criteria

A case study is a form of qualitative research that can advise evidence-informed decision-making in the policy realm. It is one of the basic methods – the others being experimental, statistical, and comparative – of establishing a general empirical proposition (Lijphart, 1971: 682). A case study is the detailed examination of an aspect of a historical episode to develop or test explanations that may be generalized to other events (George & Bennett, 2005: 5). It is important to note that the emphasis is on the well-defined aspect of the incident, event, or crisis, rather than the historical event itself. A case study is an empirical inquiry that focuses on contemporary phenomena within a real-life context in which the boundaries between the phenomena and the context are not evident (Yin, 2013). Whereas other research methodologies often use strategies meant to reduce data for empirical clarity, case studies can focus on one case while accounting for context, encompassing many variables (Johansson, 2003: 4-5).

Moscow and St. Petersburg are not representative of the whole of Russia, as they are subject to greater forces of economic and social transformation than other areas of Russia, especially with regards to comparative environmental issues (Crotty & Hall, 2013: 7), and as such are deliberately excluded from the case studies. Moreover, this study focuses on Northern Russia – those areas designated within the “Arctic Zone” (Figure 1) (Glinskiy, Serga, & Zaykov, 2017: 312), especially onshore (currently), that experience a significantly higher level of industrial activity and economic circumstances (Poland, Riddle, & Zeeb, 2003: 380). For this article, the onshore case study emphasizes two globally notable environmental tragedies as examples of the state’s overall attitude and behaviour toward enduring legacy issues, while the offshore case study, including the Northern Sea Route (Figure 2), presents a far different picture concerning the state’s focus on offshore areas of emerging opportunity.

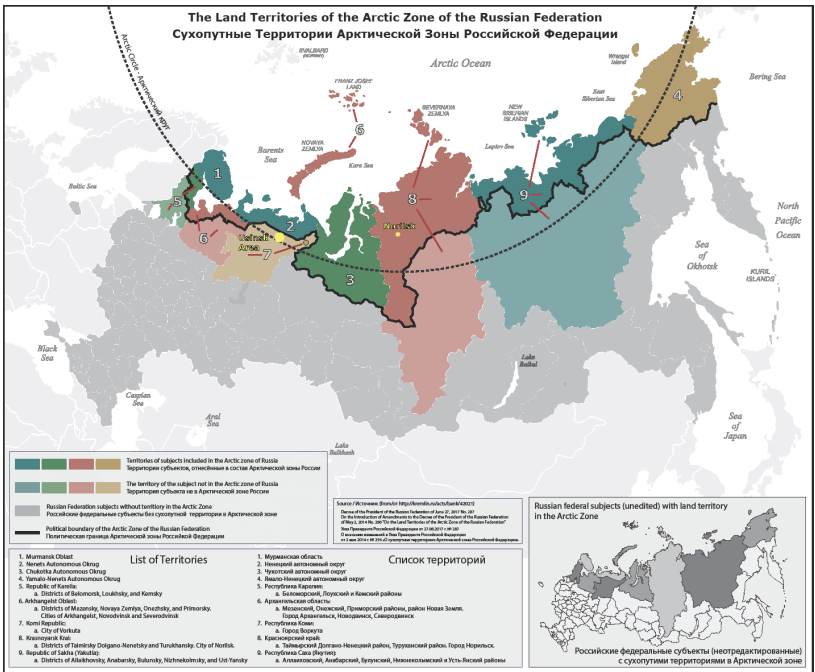
Case Studies

Onshore - Usinsk

A prime example of an onshore disaster involves an oil spill that occurred just outside of Usinsk, Russia. A pipeline just south of the Arctic Circle had

been leaking since February 1994, with the oil contained in a dike constructed for that purpose. However, diurnal temperature differences, snow, and rain caused the dike to collapse in October of that year, and millions of gallons of oil flowed onto the Siberian tundra. With frozen conditions, the pollution did not soak into the ground at first, so initial efforts focused on containment with hasty snow and earth berms. However, heavy rains in the spring caused these structures to fail and the oil flowed west, reaching the Pechora River and eventually into the Barents Sea (“The Russian Arctic Oil Spill,” 1997). The volume of the spill is unknown, but authoritative estimates put the amount at between 18 and 90 million gallons (the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill was 11 million gallons by comparison) (Goldberg, 1994). Another estimate puts the amount spilled between ~600,000 and 2 million barrel, (nearly half of Deepwater Horizon in the Gulf of Mexico), while the oil that did not first end up in the Arctic Ocean-bound Kolva, Usa, and Pechora Rivers spread over 186 square kilometres of marshland and tundra (Bachman, 2010).

Figure 13-1: Land Territory of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation

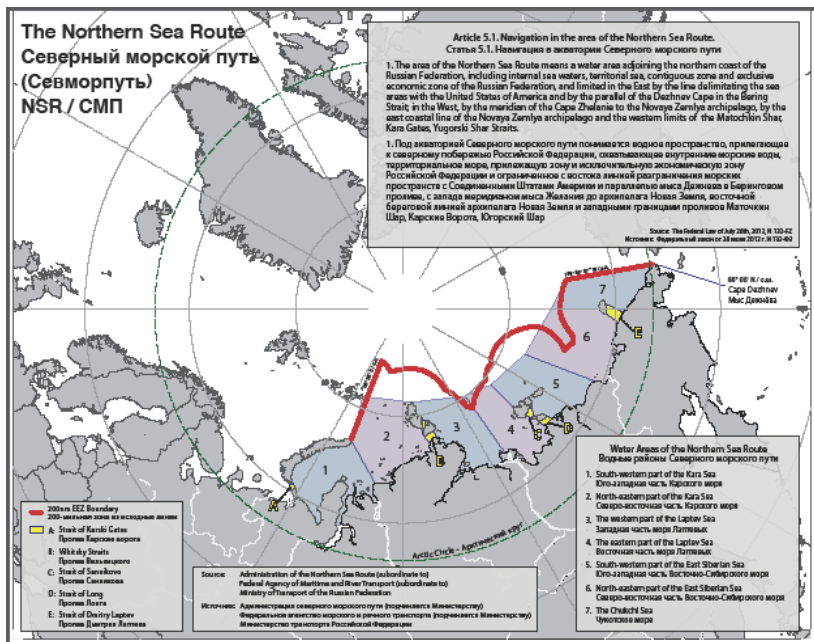


Note: .pdf embedded image, zoom enabled for higher resolution and readability

Greenpeace helped provide global awareness of the incident once oil reached the Arctic Ocean. As a result, the Russian government requested and received a \$99 million loan from the World Bank to pay for additional cleanup (Jernelöv, 2010: 359). Efforts toward further remediation fell far short of effective. When the snow that covered over a couple hundred square kilometres of oil-soaked soils melted, the now-darkened ground surface layer was able to rapidly thaw the active layer of soil above the permafrost to depths much deeper than normal. Previous observations illustrate the same effect in interior Alaska, where crude oil changed thaw depths to 70 centimetres from the previous average of 57 centimetres in non-impacted areas (Collins, Racine, & Walsh, 1994: 164). The overall effect resulted in the oil creating its own carrier waters, which repeated until it reached the Pechora River, flowing north into the Barents Sea. The incident is considered among the top five worst oil spills in history (Jernelöv, 2010).

The Russian company *Komineft* was responsible for this spill, as well as several other incidents in the Komi region. The company blamed the West for exposing the incident and went on to deliberately constrain standard

Figure 13-2: The (actual) Northern Sea Route



Note: .pdf embedded image, zoom enabled for higher resolution and readability

procedures used in cleanup, as was being overseen by Alaskan companies that had recent experience with the *Exxon Valdez* incident (Shapiro, 1995). Initial estimates and other figures underwent significant (increased) revisions within weeks once an international team observed the reality (*Russian Federation Oil Spill Oct 1994 UN DHA Information Reports 1-6*, 1994).

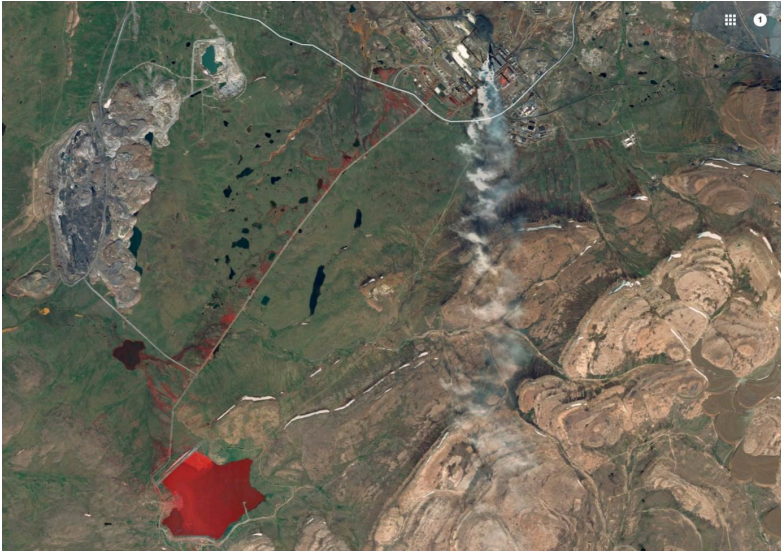
Beyond the single catastrophic event, it is believed that the majority of the Usinsk oil pipeline infrastructure is deteriorating, resulting in thousands of pollution-causing incidents *each year* that add up to more oil spilled than during the Deepwater Horizon disaster (Luhn, 2016). Although Western Siberian oil reserves are steadily depleting through continued production (and spills), operations continue at full capacity with relatively unknown changes to policies.

Onshore – Norilsk

Norilsk is home to the world's largest nickel-producing mine as well as significant reserves of platinum, cobalt, and palladium. The highly industrialized Arctic city provides an example of the order of magnitude effects on the environment that are associated with large-scale operations. For decades, Norilsk has often been the worst air polluter in Russia (Figure 3), the Boreal biome, and the world, in the form of emissions involving large quantities of sulfur dioxide – a main component of acid rain (Karnachuk et al., 2005; Kotov & Nikitina, 1996). Urban development on permafrost has suffered different kinds of failures as well. Pollution from factories helps produce acidic precipitation, which in turn affects the active layer of permafrost as a result of the increase in the thermal conductivity of the soils (Grebenets, Streletskiy, & Shiklomanov, 2012: 112).

Changes in building bearing capacity worsened with changes in permafrost, as measured by safety coefficients often associated with event-driven structural incidents. However, comparisons acknowledge that civil engineering standards of the past could not have anticipated or factored in the current understanding of climate change impacts on the environment (Grebenets et al., 2012: 114). Road and railways in and around Norilsk continuously suffer significant failures as a result of changing permafrost. In a temporal analysis of the environmental information disclosure of the ten largest mining projects, CVRD and MMC Norilsk placed last in offering stand-alone reports and assessments regarding company policies (Jenkins & Yakovleva, 2006). The study indicates that Norilsk consistently failed to voluntarily provide environmental information regarding ethics, Indigenous

Figure 13-3: Satellite image of the MMC Norilsk factory area.



Source: Google Maps screenshot (satellite view), captured on 1 April 2018
<https://www.google.com/maps/@69.2841327,87.8964149,15593m/data=!3m1!1e3>

peoples, sustainability, and corporate social responsibility in accordance with international guidelines, which includes the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) (Jenkins & Yakovleva, 2006: 280-281).

Ecologically, the circumpolar treeline represents an important area in which to study the relationship between climate change and ecosystem response, where vegetation responds steeply to factors such as temperature and precipitation (Timoney et al., 1992). Laing et al. (1999) studied the effects of the anthropogenic activity of Norilsk in waters along the associated treeline and found that air pollution from the factories impacted microalgae significantly differently from similar industrial activity in Canada and Scandinavia. Today, Norilsk continues to operate under the same policies and continues to draw attention as the world's most depressing city – a place where even the local river recurrently runs deep red from pollution (Gigova, 2016).

Offshore – The Russian Northern Coast and Maritime Environment

Building on the progress of groups such as the Arctic Military Environmental Cooperation (AMEC), Northern Dimension

Environmental Partnership (NDEP), and the Global Partnership Program (GPP), Russia welcomed a significant contribution of over \$130 million in June 2003 from the international community to assist with nuclear cleanup in the Kola Region (Digges, 2003). At the time of the funding support announcement at the G-8 summit in France, there were 115 decommissioned nuclear subs and 258 nuclear reactors associated with the Arctic region (Digges, 2003).

Under a government program in 2010, the Russian Geographical Society (RGS) accepted obligations for a full-scale cleaning of the Arctic (“Arctic Cleanup Program,” 2013). In 2011, the organization developed environmental pollution estimates, and over the next couple of years remediated several affected areas of pollutants, including 1) 52,000 barrels, 2) 2,500 tons of combustible and lubricating material, 3) 5,000 tons of scrap metal, 4) 1,800 tons of solid waste, and 5) 50 hectares of reclaimed land (“Arctic Cleanup Program,” 2013).

In 2010, then Prime Minister Putin ordered that a million abandoned barrels be removed from the Franz Joseph Land archipelago because they were polluting the environment (Bryanski, 2010). As with other Arctic locations, the outlying islands served as Cold War support, where Putin stated caused “a pollution level that is six times higher than normal ... with a need to organize a sweeping cleanup of the Arctic” (Bryanski, 2010).

On World Environment Day in June 2014, President Putin reiterated the 2010 Arctic coastal and offshore cleanup program as a “massive spring cleaning effort on our Arctic territories” and as “necessary for clearing the consequences of our past attitudes to the Arctic” (President of Russia, 2014). In the same speech, Putin continued to state that “we should not only fix the damage done to the [Arctic] environment ... [but] we should also make sure we never repeat these mistakes in the future.”

In March 2017, Russia’s Federal Medical-Biological Agency, together with the Norwegian Radiation Protection Authority, began planning a joint project to withdraw all nuclear waste from Andreeva Bay, located on Kola Peninsula near the Russian-Norwegian northern border (“Russia and Norway team up to clean Arctic of nuclear waste”, 2017). The facility has a long history of radioactive pollution issues, including a significant accident in 1982 when a serious leak in the spent fuel storage pool in building 5 released highly radioactive water as a result of steel walls that had cracked because of ice – increasing until the situation was resolved many months later (“Storage of spent nuclear fuel in Andreeva Bay — history”, 2003).

Over the last two decades, Norway has contributed millions in aid toward cleanup. Current estimates project that approximately 3,100 container shipments will be required to empty the three storage tanks of spent fuel assemblies (Nilsen, 2017).

In September 2017, the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation declared that it was adding a special Arctic department and increasing legislation and oversight of violations involving activities that contribute to pollution, in addition to imposing remediation requirements for violators (Staalesen, 2017). Justification for the development comes from various issues, including numerous violations of environmental laws in the Arctic, neglected industrial waste management, economic activities being conducted without the required approvals, and the use of illegal components and substances (Staalesen, 2017).

Also in September 2017, the Russian Federation's Northern Fleet, the largest and most powerful of its four (including the Pacific, Black Sea, and Baltic Fleets), continued a new season of a cleanup project on Kotelny Island to remove 600 tons of scrap metal ("Northern Fleet begins evacuating scrap metal from Arctic island", 2017). The project compliments previous efforts for the last two years, when the Russian Navy removed 15,000 empty oil barrels as well as 200,000 tons of scrap metal. The island is part of the Novosibirsk archipelago and previously served as a major port supporting Navy operations. As part of these remediation efforts, the Russian government announced that over 90% of the project met the 2017 environmental cleanup plan ("Northern Fleet's Platoon Continues Cleaning on Arctic Island", 2018; "Russian Defense Ministry completes over 90 percent of its 2017 environmental cleanup plan", 2017).

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation announced in October 2017 that it would spend over \$3 billion rubles on an environmental protection fleet largely focused in the North ("Russia plans to build an environmental protection fleet worth 3.1 billion rubles after 2021", 2017). Minister Donskoi stated that starting in 2021, the fleet would provide environmental inspections in the sea, and that the program will upgrade the safety level of sea activities and substantially minimize any possible environmental risk to the sea ecosystems ("Russia plans to build an environmental protection fleet worth 3.1 billion rubles after 2021", 2017).

Results and Discussion

Throughout the case studies, a pattern of Russian Arctic environmental behaviour is not difficult to discern. Emphasis on the offshore Arctic maritime environment, including the coastlines and peninsulas, remains convincingly distinct from the lack of the same focus on Arctic terrestrial environmental issues. Onshore, the desire to address environmental issues through prevention and remediation efforts seems stagnantly ineffective and ostensibly deliberate. Efforts to affect industrial activity through policy – the primary means with which to constrain and bind the discretion and behaviour of actors – remain lacking, and often unknown. Some may reasonably perceive onshore environmental issues as entrenched legacy behaviours from Soviet policies and too overwhelming to overturn.

Russian News Agency TASS interviewed the deputy chief of the Ministry of Natural Resources in March 2017 (the Year of Ecology in Russia), citing 40,000 tons of waste cleaned in the Arctic Zone (Керимов, 2017). As discussed, during that same year, Russia launched “Чистая Страна” (Clean Country), with remediation goals set for 2025. Throughout the interview, the deputy acknowledged the sensitivity of the Arctic ecosystems and the overall need to protect the environment of the Arctic Zone of Russia. Deputy Kerimov also stated that the majority of pollution occurred from the 1930s to the 1980s, during a period of “intensive industrialization and natural resource extraction” (Керимов, 2017). Such a statement implies that the problems and responsibilities originated from previous generations during the Soviet era and should not reflect the efforts of this century so far.

The Usinsk area residents and environment seem relegated to living with constant oil pollution as a result of accidents and rapidly worsening infrastructure. A simple search on Google maps (satellite view) of the Usinsk region and north of the main city reveals an extensive pipeline network and what appears to be numerous large spots of barren earth, spur lines, and access roads as well as significant surface oil and scarring. When trying to understand the seemingly blatant disregard for the environment, one thought may be that the government does not want to provide funding for legacy pollution and deferred maintenance issues when there is far more interest in getting new projects online, especially in the offshore Arctic, knowing that the onshore reserves will eventually be depleted.

The Norilsk region provides a strong illustration of the way environmental air quality issues are directly associated problems caused by

industrial activity. Air quality studies provide scientific explanations of both short- and long-term impacts on the regional ecosystems. On the ground, readily visible evidence shows gross reminders of the unmitigated effects on local hydrology (Figure 1). The sulfur content in the precipitation of the Polar Division of Norilsk (MMC) remains the highest not only in Siberia, but all of Russia, while less than 10% of the wastewater from all sources goes through purification (Bronder et al., 2010: 19-21).

Path Dependency

Partly enabled by Russian censorship, the Komi Republic's oil pollution (Usinsk) represents what can happen when resource extraction projects lack proper oversight and suitable technology (Rosen & Thuringer, 2017: 60). Path dependency can further help to explain the onshore problems with regard to the insufficient incentives established with the operating firms in Norilsk and Usinsk. Greener (2005) explains that path dependency involves future policy experiencing constraints because institutions and policies tend to succumb to inertia. Considerable evidence exists linking the significant availability of commodity resources to the marginalization of institutional integrity and vitality, to include the ability to increase profits under weaker institutes (*Diversifying Russia: Harnessing Regional Diversity*, 2012: 14). Revenues generated from the projects in Usinsk and Norilsk, especially during the post-Soviet recession years, clearly and increasingly became more important than reinjecting monies into maintenance and measures to protect the environment, to include the flora, fauna, and populace. Another indicator of dependence involves local jurisdiction. Although municipalities cannot own projects, local authorities can ensure compliance with laws and regulations as well as suspend operations as a result of violations (Gjertsen et al., 2018: 44). How and why Usinsk and Norilsk seem to avoid exercising such authorities would likely be valuable studies. To make matters worse, further institutional weakness exists in the form of inherent conflict between the separate federal agencies that manage permits and licenses versus environmental protection (ibid: 45).

The urgency and resolve to address offshore environmental matters significantly differ from the terrestrial policies and behaviours. Russia's concern for remediating Cold War and post-Soviet pollution issues and preventing future violations remains increasingly disparate in comparison to its existing and ongoing onshore environmental issues. Investment in and public sector advocacy for coastal- and offshore-focused efforts continue to

indicate that inconsistent environmental priorities remain acceptable under the authoritarian regimes that best support state interests.

As previously mentioned, part of the purpose for this article requires an examination of what may explain why a difference in environmental behaviour exists. Of course, it is possible that Russia chose to ignore terrestrial issues as a result of a cost-benefit analysis and path dependency while leveraging the opportunity to establish a highly managed Arctic maritime environment. Yet, as Russia's geo-economic goals for the Arctic offshore seem clear, the geo-strategic and geo-political objectives remain a mystery for the long term. As a result, asking *why* Russia behaves in certain ways becomes necessary in order to carefully explore potential resolve. Specifically, within the context of contemporary Russian neo/realist-defined conduct, what should the international community eventually expect as the end state for the Russian Arctic's maritime domain? Intuition tells us that something is going on ... that Russia has a plan that goes beyond just a clean and well-managed northern maritime environment.

Discussion is possible, but without significantly more evidence, it is not possible to demonstrate a clear correlation, nor is one being suggested. Instead, this article hopes to provide the beginning of an appropriately engaging idea – that a possible Russian objective toward long-term strategy could rely upon an expanded jurisdiction over maritime territory in the Arctic. In particular, the soft-power approach would seem to support a future opportunity for Russia to depart from international norms, and even hard law, by leveraging environmental efforts as justification for an expanded control of surface and water columns, beyond current international norms. According to legal experts, international law, including and especially Article 234 of UNCLOS, would seem to have room in which to argue for increased control (Williams, 2017). Whatever the assertion, it's time to start the discussion.

Conclusion

On October 1, 1987, President Gorbachev conducted a speech in Murmansk during an awards ceremony, stating that the Arctic needs to be a "Zone of Peace" and going on to describe his vision for the Northern Sea Route and economic opportunity, as well as security throughout Russia's maritime Arctic – with almost prophetic vision ("General Secretary Gorbachev's Speech in Murmansk, October 1987", 2014). Little did the West know that Putin's regime would aggressively pursue these objectives even beyond Gorbachev's imagination. Under Putin, the exploitation of

natural resources expanded. Production often means some degree of environmental sacrifice though. One astute question posed in Stephen Brain's (2016) contribution to the Oxford Research Encyclopedia asks to what extent has the Russian historical tendency toward authoritarianism facilitated predatory policies that have degraded the environment?

The research question for this study required an examination of the differences in on- and offshore environmental issue prevention and remediation in the Arctic Zone of Russia, and why. The theoretical use for this article focuses on how public sector governance of the environment can be exploited for industrial and national security purposes. The case studies illustrate the significant differences and suggest that Russia's behaviour concerning the Arctic offshore might be facilitating conditions that it can leverage as soft power in order to deviate from international norms in the future. One way to view potential outcomes might be to think of Russia's current policies and behaviours in its maritime Arctic as necessary *and* with sufficient conditions (for the Russian Federation) to eventually claim customary law in order to supersede instruments such as UNCLOS. Such an assertion could greatly expand the amount of maritime surface (and water columns) territory under "Russian Federation jurisdiction" – a term heavily used in Russia's two primary national Arctic strategies (Presidential Decree, 2008, 2013). Assuming this study provides legitimate perspectives, further research could address the limitations of this article and expand on similar topics. Principles such as "Common but Differentiated Responsibilities" (CBDR) and "Sustainability" both characterize defining methods for environmental management. Yet, even though both principles could be invoked to satisfy international commitments, how they will be achieved at the domestic level depends greatly upon the environmentalism approach – either democratic or authoritarian.¹

Notes

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14

Stable Development of the Natural Environment in the Arctic Region of the Russian Federation

Irina Chesnokova, Emma Likhacheva & Aleksandra Morozova

In this work, the attention is focused on the necessity of mitigating risks and dangers in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation, which are associated with the extreme climate conditions, focal character of economic development, remoteness from major industrial centres, and low stability of ecological systems that are susceptible even to minor climatic and anthropogenic impacts. In warming conditions, two of the main ecological risks are the changing climatic conditions affecting permafrost rocks and the potential growth of negative anthropogenic loads associated with the mineral resources mining and infrastructure development. This article deals with modern conditions and potential risks related to the possible further climatic warming in the Arctic zone and the economic development of new regions. The main attention is paid to changing geocryological and geomorphological conditions, which lead to the activation of exogenous processes in the continental part of the Arctic zone. Possible changes in the ecology-geomorphological situations in the Arctic zone regions were analyzed. Three groups of subjects with identical tendencies in climate changes were identified: I) regions in which less than 30% of the area was affected by dangerous processes; II) regions in which 30-50% of the area was affected by dangerous processes; and III) regions in which over 50% of the area was affected by dangerous processes.

Introduction

The Russian overland Arctic zone extends from the western boundary in the Kola Peninsula up to Cape Dezhnev in the Chukotka Peninsula in the east of the country and is represented by diverse natural conditions. The

balanced economic development in the Arctic zone of Russia is impossible without due regard to the risks of global changes in the natural environment and natural disasters, which cause considerable damage to the economy and mortality in the population (Figure 1).

This zone is characterized by extreme natural conditions: low annual average air temperatures, widespread permafrost rocks that occur at a depth of 0.3 to 2-3 metres, and low biological activity. Permafrost rocks usually contain underground ice of different geneses (Geocryological, 2000). The ice content in rocks depends on their composition and genesis, and ranges from several to 50% and even to 80-90%. Since rocks are waterproof and the seasonal thawing layer is highly humid, flat land areas are covered by bogs and lakes, whereas many solifluction and thermo-erosion processes are observed on slopes. In this connection, even minor changes in the air temperature and precipitation cause negative influences on the natural environment.

The economic development of new areas and technogenic transformations of the relief are accompanied by the destruction of soil vegetation cover and the arrival of warmth to the soil. Consequently, the

Figure 14-1: Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation (Morozova & Chesnokova, 2017)



1 – Murmansk region, 2 – Republic of Karelia, 3 – Arkhangelsk region, 4 – Nenets Autonomous District, 5 – Yamalo-Nenets autonomous district, 6 – Krasnoyarsk Krai, 7 – Sakha republic (Yakutia), 8 – Chukotka autonomous district, 9 – Komi Republic (Vorkuta city)

depth of seasonal thawing increases by 2-3 times, and runoff conditions change, which often additionally moistens the soil and even leads to the appearance of water reservoirs. Changing geocryological and geomorphological conditions entail the activation of exogenous processes of relief formation, among them frost cracking, soil heaving, thermokarst, solifluction, erosion and thermoerosion, abrasion and thermoabrasion, and aeolian processes (Gerasimov, 1996; Relief, 2002; Sukhodrovskii, 1979).

The purpose of our research was to analyze the changes in the eco-geomorphological situation and the development of hazardous natural processes in the territory of the Arctic zone of Russia to justify sustainable development and develop approaches to the introduction of measures aimed at reducing the possible economic and environmental damages from hazardous natural processes.

Techniques and Materials

It is considered that anthropogenically-conditioned processes in the area of widespread permafrost rocks might be irreversible. But this judgment is not always confirmed by factual data. Once active, the processes become weaker over time, and the relief stabilizes even in conditions of continuing anthropogenic influence. Irreversibility may be expressed in the appearance of new relief forms, though their development is limited by self-regulation processes. Among anthropogenically-conditioned exogenous processes, which are rapidly evolving in developing northern territories, there are the frost cracking of soil, heaving, thermokarst, solifluction, erosion and thermoerosion, abrasion and thermoabrasion, and aeolian processes. These processes, acting in different directions, produce significant deformations in oil and gas pipes and related technical facilities. The existing research has shown that the greater the thickness of permafrost rocks, the more heat load they can absorb during economic development activities (Geocryological, 2000; Chigir, 1988).

The data of ROSGIDROMET (the Russian Federal Service for Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring) monitoring suggest that during the last 30 years (1986-2015), the temperature in all regions of the Arctic zone rose (Figure 2). On the whole, in all regions of the Eurasian sector, the linear growth of the average annual temperature was about 2.0°C for 39 years (or 0.68°C/10 years). An acceleration of warming was observed

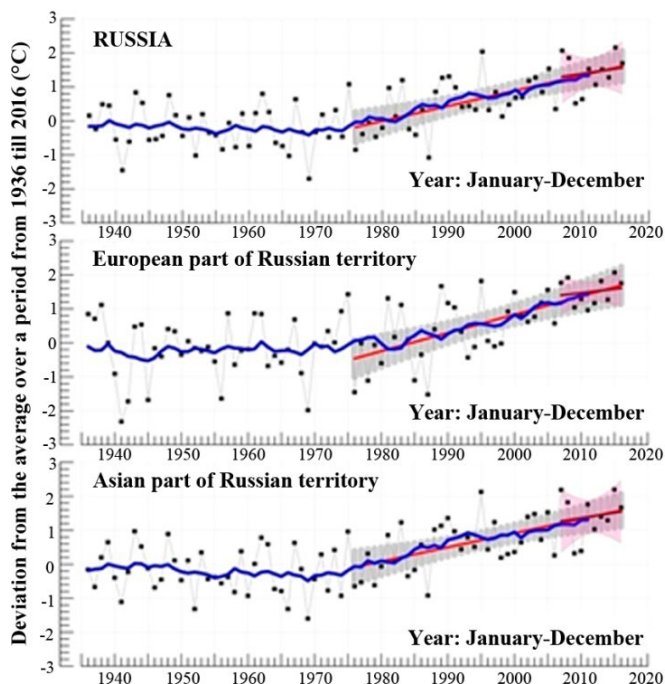
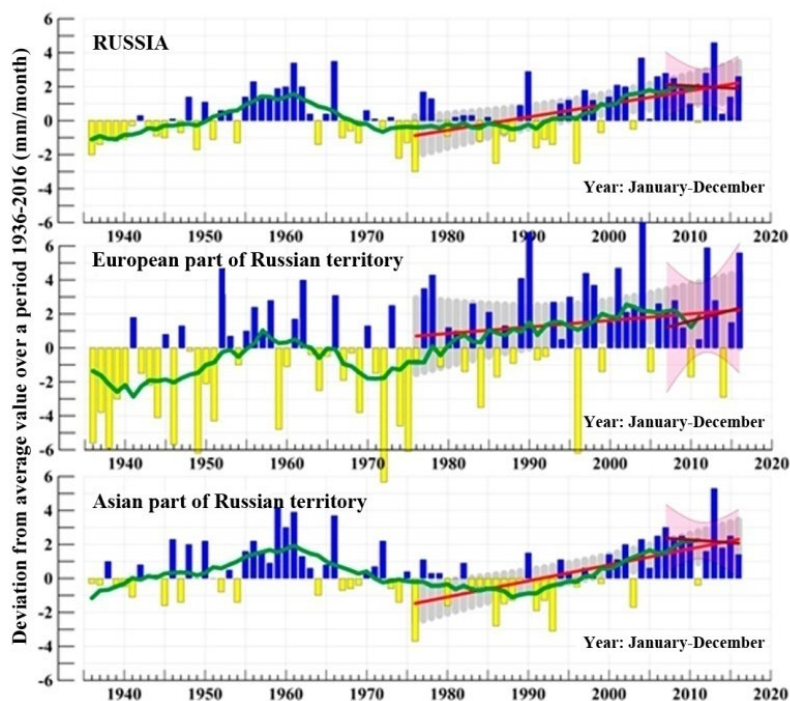


Figure 14-2: Average annual anomaly of the near-surface air temperature in the Russian territory and its European and Asian parts for 1936-2016. The anomalies were calculated as fluctuations from the average one for the base period of 1961-1990. Shown are also the 11-year, average sliding, and linear trends for 1976-2016 and 2007-2016 with 95% confidence bands.

in the West and East Siberian regions from the end of the 1990s (Review, 2016; Report, 2017).

Multi-year investigations on annual precipitation amounts for the period from 1936 to 2015 have demonstrated a statistically significant upward tendency with an average speed of about 3 millimetres/10 years. Precipitation increase is predominantly noted in the cold season. The precipitation increase is mostly demonstrated in the southern part of the northern European region (15.3 millimetres/10 years for precipitation for the cold period and 18.0 millimetres/10 years for the annual precipitation). A minor downward tendency in precipitation is observed in the Chukotka region throughout the year. But on the whole, this tendency does not affect the natural environment of the region (Figure 14-3).

Figure 14-3: Annual precipitation anomaly in Russian regions for 1936-2016. Anomalies were calculated as fluctuations from the average for the base period from 1961 to 1990. The 11-year sliding average and linear trends for 1976-2016 and for 2007-2016 were also shown with 95% confidence bands.

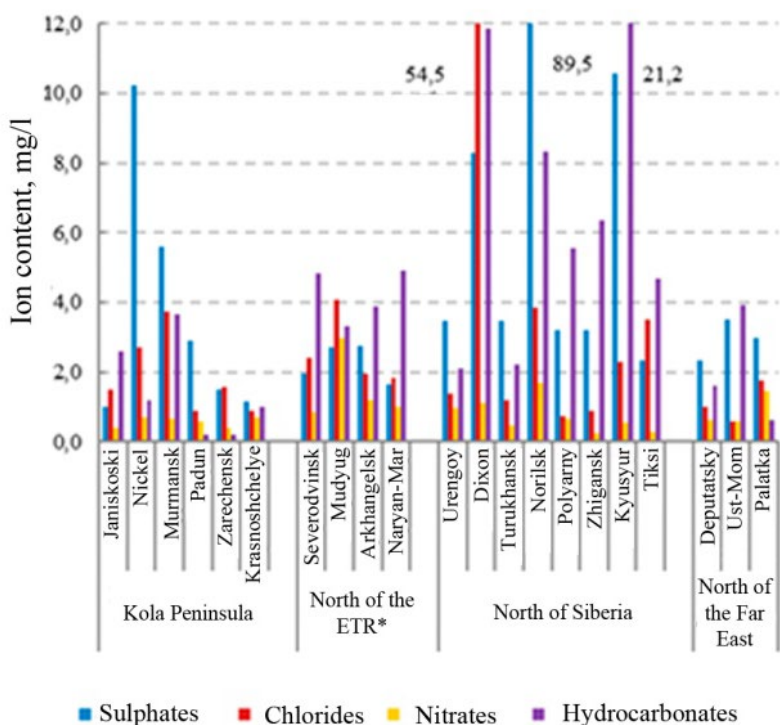


The population of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation (RF) is over 2.5 million people. However, that makes up below 2% of the population of the country. The social-economic area of the Arctic zone of the RF concentrates in urban settlements: more than 80% of the population lives in cities and towns with a population of over 5,000 people. The main atmosphere pollution sources in populated localities are oil, gas, and mining enterprises, ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy, the fuel and energy complex, chemical industry, woodworking, the pulp and paper industry, and railway and sea transport. The results of the monitoring, carried out in 2015, suggest that ten cities of the Arctic zone of the RF are characterized by low pollution, two by elevated levels (Arkhangelsk and Nikel cities), and one, Norilsk, which is annually included in the list of Russian cities with the

highest pollution levels, at very high (Review, 2016; Chernogaeva, 2017) (Figure 14-4, Table 1).

The relative content of sulfate ions from mineralization value amounts from 12 to 50% in sediments of the Kola Peninsula, from 11 to 68% in sediments of North Siberia, and from 15% and 30% on average in the North of the European part of Russia and in the Far East North sediments relatively. A minimal content of bicarbonate ions was observed in the sediments of the Zarechensk locality (0.2 milligrams/litre), in Padun (0.2 milligrams/litre), Palatka (0.6 milligrams/litre), and Deputatskii (1.6 milligrams/litre). Bicarbonate ions prevail in the sediments of most stations of the European part of Russia, and North of Siberia, where the concentration of bicarbonate ions in 2016 amounted to 30% from the sum of ions.

Figure 14-4: The content of sulfates, chlorides, nitrates, and bicarbonates in atmospheric precipitation in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation, 2016 (Review, 2016).



* European territory of Russia

Table 14-1: Categories of the air quality in populated areas of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation in 2012-2016 (Review, 2016)

Locality	Category of air quality				
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Anadyr, Chukotka Autonomous Region	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
Apatity, Murmansk Region	L	L	L	L	L
Arkhangelsk, Arkhangelsk Region	H	H	E	E	E
Vorkuta, Komi Republic	H	H	L	L	L
Zapolyarny, Murmansk Region	L	L	L	L	L
Kandalaksha, Murmansk Region	L	L	L	L	L
Kirovsk, Murmansk Region	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
Kola, Murmansk Region	L	L	ND	ND	ND
Monchegorsk, Murmansk Region	E	E	E	L	L
Murmansk, Murmansk Region	L	L	L	L	L
Nikel, Murmansk Region	E	E	E	E	E
Novodvinsk, Arkhangelsk Region	H	H	L	L	L
Norilsk, Krasnoyarsk Krai	VH	VH	VH	VH	VH
Olenegorsk, Murmansk Region	L	L	L	L	L
Pevek, Chukotka Autonomous Region	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
Salekhard, Yamalo-Nenets A. Region	VH	VH	L	L	L

Locality	Category of air quality				
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Severodvinsk, Arkhangelsk Region	E	E	L	L	L
Tiksi, Sakha Republic (Yakutia)	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND

Pollution level of the atmospheric air: L – low, E – elevated, H – high, VH – very high, ND – not defined due to insufficient observation data or insufficient amount of measured substances.

Results and Discussion

The preservation of sustainable structures of human settlements, and maintenance of the efficiency of geotechnical systems (especially in the conditions of global climate changes), is an important state objective (Baburin, 2015; Tulupov, 2009).

Based on the data obtained, possible changes in the ecological-geomorphological situations in regions of the Arctic zone of Russia were considered. Three groups of regions with analogous tendencies in climate changes were identified (Table 14-2):

I. Regions 6-8 (Krasnoyarsk Krai, Sakha Republic (Yakutia), Chukotka autonomous region). Here an increase in the temperature of frozen soil by at least 1° leads to a decline in its bearing capacity, an increase in the depth of seasonal thawing, and their irreversible warming and subsidence. All these processes are the cause of the deformation of soils and foundations, piles dipping, etc. Most dangerous are the consequences of the transformation of frozen soils into thawed ones. The natural results of such dangerous phenomena include both minor and large accidents in engineering structures.

II. Regions 4, 5, 9 (Nenets autonomous region, Yamalo-Nenets autonomous region, Komi Republic (Vorkuta city)). Among the negative consequences of climate changes, most frequently mentioned are the worsening of the engineering-geological conditions in the period of the sharpest change of geocryological situations. That may lead to the destruction of industrial and residential buildings and various constructions.

III. Regions 1-3 (Murmansk region, Karelia Republic, Arkhangelsk region). These are the most developed areas of the Arctic zone, and here, with the existing tendencies of climate changes, the ecologic-geomorphological situation might deteriorate.

Table 14-2: Assessment of eco-geomorphological situations on the territory of the Arctic zone of Russia

Subject numbers of the Arctic zone of the RF		Basic exodynamic processes and degree of economic damage (e.d.-economic damage) in points (on a five-point scale)	Possible changes in eco-geomorphological situations
1	Murmansk region	On large area, there is a complex of natural-anthropogenic processes (planar runoff, erosion, bogging); activation of technogenic processes along mines and pipelines: e.d.=2-3 - “ -	<i>In permafrost zone</i> , less than 30% of the area is affected by dangerous processes; there is minor and medium possibility of activation during warming up. There may be negative processes associated with permafrost degradation, an increase in bogging areas, and the stabilization of engineering-geological and ecological geomorphological conditions on the localities where permafrost is absent. <i>Outside of the permafrost zone</i> , climate conditions and the structure of the earth fund can be improved (favourable ecology-geomorphological situations).
2	Republic of Karelia	- “ -	
3	Arkhangelsk region	- “ -	
4	Nenets autonomous region	Complex of natural processes (bogging, gravitation), on urbanized areas, activation of exogenous processes: e.d.=2-4.	30-50% of the area is affected by dangerous and potentially dangerous permafrost processes; there is the possibility of extreme situations, medium and high (predominantly activation of thermokarst, thermoerosion, heaving on the urbanized area).

Subject numbers of the Arctic zone of the RF		Basic exodynamic processes and degree of economic damage (e.d.-economic damage) in points (on a five-point scale)	Possible changes in eco-geomorphological situations
5	Yamalo-Nenets autonomous region	Complex of natural (exogenous and seismic) and anthropogenic processes in developed areas: e.d.=2-4.	Over 50% of the area is affected by dangerous and potentially dangerous permafrost processes, high possibility of their activation during warming up: considerable degradation of permafrost rocks, their subsidence over large areas.
6	Krasnoyarsk region	- " -	
7	Sakha Republic (Yakutia)	Complex of natural (exogenous and seismic) processes with elevated danger: e.d.=1-4.	In <i>mountain</i> areas, a high possibility of the activation of ice formation, solifluction, and other dynamic processes, related both to permafrost degradation, elevated relief instability and seismicity.
8	Chukotka autonomous region	- " -	
9	Komi Republic (Vorkuta city)	Technogenically-activated cryogenic processes: degradation-aggradation of permafrost rocks, thermokarst sinking, cryogenic heaving of deposits.	Activation of thermokarst, thermoerosion, and heaving in urbanized territories.

* 1 – minor damage, 2 – negligible, 3 – medium, 4 – elevated, 5 – high

The given characteristics provide the general idea about the change of ecological-geomorphological situations (Chesnokova, 2016). The full picture is much more complicated.

It is difficult to properly evaluate the social-ecologic damage. Such damage is expressed in the decreasing qualitative and quantitative indicators, first of all of human health; the state of natural systems; biota habitats; the state of the lithogenous basis of agricultural, forest, and water resources; and the state of monuments associated with nature, history, and culture. In the

absence of damage cost evaluations, rank and semi-quantitative estimates may be applied.

In order to assess the damage from hazardous processes, it is possible to use the approaches that were proposed by us for estimating drills on the roads of the Leningrad Region. Thus, we provide an expert evaluation of the damage-forming effects of frost heave processes (Koff & Chesnokova, 1998) in the territory of the Leningrad Region (Table 14-3).

Table 14-3: Permafrost heaving process and its consequences on the territory of the Leningrad Region

Source of influence	Demonstration areas	Damage consequences
Permanent structures Lightly loaded shallow (rural houses, barracks, transformer substations, purifying plants)	Boxitogorsk, Tikhvin, Volkhov areas, Pikalevo town, and others	Basement skewing, bulging, inclination of the floor The break in facing of buildings etc.
Temporary structures Lightly loaded, shallow (construction cabins, canteens, etc.)	Volkhov, Boksitogorsk regions Smolenka r. embankment, Rzhevka-Porokhovye village	
Bridges	Volkhov town	Skew and sagging of supports
Power Line (6 kwatt)	Tosno town Vyborg-Medyanki region	Skew and sagging of supports
Telecommunication lines	Shugozero region Villages: Dymi, Lisichki, Pul'nitsa, Plekhanovo, Volkhov, and others	Skew of supports

Metro	Leningrad city and suburbs	Deformation and sometimes crashes the capital buildings
Roads	Almost over all areas of the region	Destruction of a roadway, the formation of abysses
Landscape-park and other recreation territories	Oranienbaum (Lomonosov) Petrodvorets	Rupture of the canvas, the formation of cracks, holes, etc.

Long-term forecasts for the acceleration of warming are not encouraging either. According to some estimations, by 2050, the temperature of permafrost rocks may rise by 3-6°C, causing the considerable warming of permafrost rocks, their subsidence over large areas, and their submergence below sea level (Map, 2005; Kruzhalin, 2001). In the Sakha Republic and Chukotka, the activation of geodynamic processes is determined not so much by climate changes as by the seismicity of the territory.

In the third group of regions, ecological-geomorphological situations are most pronounced, including in the Yamal Peninsula as a prospective hydrocarbon production area. Hydrocarbon resources in the Yamal Peninsula at present are as follows: 44.5 trillion cubic metres of gas, 5 million tons of oil, and 2 billion tons of condensate.

The Yamal Peninsula is characterized by extreme natural conditions including low annual average air temperatures, widespread permafrost rocks, and low levels of biological activity. Precipitation is up to 300 millimetres, increasing southwards to reach up to 400 millimetres and eastwards, towards the Polar Urals, up to 450 millimetres of precipitation, which mostly occurs in the warm season of the year (from April to October) in the form of rain. In January, the average air temperature drops to -48°C in the North of the Peninsula and to -44°C in the South. The absolute temperature minimum is observed on the western coast of Yamal, in Mappe-Sale village, at -50°C. In July, the average air temperature increases from North to South and ranges from +4.5°C to 6.0°C. In the northern forest-tundra, it ranges from +10°C to 13°C. Stable frosts persist from 200 days in the South to 220 days in the North. Snow cover stays from 220 to 240 days respectively.

Recent exogenous relief-forming processes are widespread in the peninsula – river and gully erosion, the complex of cryogenic processes (thermokarst, heaving, thermoerosion, thermoabrasion, solifluction, frost cracking), and aeolian processes.

The development of deposits is accompanied by large drilling activities, road construction for various purposes, engineering constructions, and living settlements. A 40-year development of the territory was accompanied by active relief-forming processes and, first of all, cryogenic ones. This determined the ecological safety of various constructions. The growing degradation of natural landscapes creates serious problems for the protection of nature in this region.

Permafrost rocks of various ages and thickness react differently to anthropogenic affects. It was established that permafrost rocks of the Holocene Age are more resistant to anthropogenic influence, as they are less icy and devoid of stratified and reveined ice.

Anthropogenic influence on permafrost rocks brings about the activation of processes of heaving, thermokarst, solifluction, thermoerosion, and thermoabrasion. Heaving and thermokarst are typical of subhorizontal water-dividing areas; solifluction, thermoerosion, and thermoabrasion characterize the slopes and steep coasts of rivers and water reservoirs.

Heaving presents the risk of accidents in linear constructions that determine both material and ecological damage – irreparable consequences for the environment (Essays, 2009; The Map, 2005). Cryogenic heaving is the main cause of deformations in underground pipelines, which cross bogging super-humid localities. The parts of the pipelines extending on the floor of non-freezing thermokarst lakes are subjected to heaving due to the seasonal freezing of underwater thawed grounds. Heaving is also dangerous for roads, buildings, and communication and power lines, where cracks and deformations may appear. Seasonal thawing leads to subsidence accompanied by still stronger deformations.

The systematization of exogenous relief-forming processes in the cryolitezone is a complex problem due to a diversity of conditions and an ambiguity of the role of certain factors in their development (Voskresenskii, 2001; Report, 2017). Many permafrost phenomena appear under the influence of some processes, and as a rule, two processes (Table 4).

Table 14-4: Potential damage-producing activity of permafrost and erosion processes

Processes	Activity in points*
Thermoerosion (complex impact)	1
River erosion	2
Frost cracking	3
Sliding (drifting)	3
Planar runoff	3
Solifluction	3
Thermokarst	3
Erosion by temporary water courses	4
Deflation	4
Gully erosion	5

*maximum 5 points

The Yamal Peninsula is already involved in the urbanization process. However, it should be remembered that Yamal is unique as a natural object and as a specific social ecosystem. It has no analogues either in Russia or in the world. Therefore, we should not apply to it even the methods of economic development that have been successfully used in other regions. Its uniqueness and all possible negative consequences should be remembered.

Conclusions

Regarding regions of the Arctic zone as territorial resources, it is necessary during their development to carry out complex geocryological, geomorphological, and ecological investigations based on:

- The monitoring of the temperature regime in the strata of permafrost rocks in different zonal-regional conditions;
- The prognosis of the dynamics of permafrost rocks and geocryological processes under different scenarios of global and regional climate changes;
- The assessment of changes in the complicated engineering-geological conditions and the cost of investigations associated with the consequences of the global climate changes;
- The assessment of changes in the stability of the foundations of existing and projected constructions, conditions of mineral deposits mining; and

- The quantitative assessment of possible economic damage in case of the realization of different scenarios of global climate changes (Geocryological, 2000; Report, 2017).

In conclusion, we should mention that regions of the Arctic zone, more than other regions of the Russian Federation, need the protection and insurance (in preparation of protection measures) of the population from the negative impacts of natural and natural-anthropogenic processes.

Acknowledgments

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15

Indexing Arctic Urban Sustainable Development Planning Strategies: The Case of Russia

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Russian Arctic cities acknowledge the need to build sustainable development strategies (SDSs) to ensure their long-term socio-economic and ecological viability. They try to create proper conceptual, legal and institutional settings for the development and implementation of such strategies. First and foremost, the Arctic cities aim to create and develop an efficient strategy planning system, which is seen as a necessary precondition for successful urban SDSs. This paper aims to discuss possible indicators to evaluate the SDS planning process in the major industrial cities of the Russian Arctic. The following indicators will be discussed:

- *The ability to acknowledge the need for SDS planning.*
- *The integrated/comprehensive nature of planning.*
- *The existence/non-existence of a planning office in the city.*
- *Clearly defined goals, outcomes/expectations and implementation strategies, including indicators and benchmarks.*
- *The quality and accuracy of assessments (whether they are based on science or wishful thinking).*
- *Coordination with the regional and federal SDSs.*
- *The transparency of the planning process.*
- *Public input/community engagement (opinion polls, public discussions in the media, hearings in the public chambers, NGOs' role).*
- *The ability to take into account private and public interests.*
- *Centralized or indicative planning.*

Introduction

The Russian Arctic municipalities view the need to build sustainable development strategies (SDS) as an important policy priority for themselves. They try to create proper conceptual, legal and institutional settings for the

development and implementation of such strategies. First and foremost, the Arctic cities aim to create and develop an efficient strategy planning system, which is seen as a necessary precondition for successful urban SDSs.

Planning is an integral part of any urban development strategy, including for Russian Arctic cities and towns. City administrators understand that planning gives more power over the future. Planning is deciding in advance what to do, how to do it, when to do it and who should do it. This bridges the gap from where the city is, to where it wants to be. The planning function involves establishing goals and arranging them in logical order. A well-planned city achieves goals faster than ones that don't plan before implementation.

Planning is especially important for designing a proper urban sustainable development (SD) strategy because the latter requires an integrated approach to developmental policies where all aspects of such strategy – economic, social and environmental – should be harmonized and coordinated. Planning for urban sustainability is also important because all potential stakeholders – municipal, regional and federal authorities, companies, universities and civil society institutions/NGOs – should be involved in the SD strategy formulation and implementation.

This paper aims to discuss possible indicators to evaluate the SDS planning process in the major industrial cities of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation (AZRF), including Arkhangelsk, Murmansk, Nickel, Norilsk, Salekhard, Severodvinsk and Vorkuta.

Data and Method

The data for this study are drawn from the following sources:

- Regional and municipal development and action plans;
- Regional/local government reports;
- Position/background papers;
- Analytical reports produced by research centres and NGOs; and
- Media reports.

As with any study of sensitive political issues, it is difficult to compile a set of reliable data. Information is often contradictory, misleading or not fully reported. Research is also complicated by differences of opinion between scholars as regards methods of assessment and the interpretation of sources. Moreover, research techniques and terminology vary. Therefore,

the exercise of judgment and comparing of sources are important elements in compiling the database.

Since the study does not just entail data collection but also data assessment, three main principles are implemented with regard to selecting and interpreting sources:

- *Validity.* Data should represent the most important and typical trends, rather than occasional or irregular developments in the AZRF cities' SD policies.
- *Informativeness.* Sources that provide valuable and timely information are given priority.
- *Innovativeness.* Sources that offer original data, fresh ideas and non-traditional approaches are preferable.

These research techniques help to overcome the limitations of the sources and to compile substantial and sufficient data for this study.

Russian Urban Development Planning: Conceptual and Legal Aspects

Given the highly centralized nature of the Russian political and administrative systems, the AZRF municipal SD strategies are dependent on and interlinked with federal policies in this area. Municipal strategies are based on numerous conceptual and normative documents issued by Moscow, although the federal centre encourages subnational units to take into account local peculiarities and suggest solutions to the specific problems of the AZRF. That's why it is important to understand what kind of conceptual/doctrinal and legal basis for SD strategies exists on the federal level.

It should be noted that, conceptually, the Russian (then Soviet) SD national strategies (in their environmental form) date back to Mikhail Gorbachev's 1987 Murmansk speech, which included a section on the ecological problems of the Arctic. That speech was well received by the Nordic countries and led to various environmental initiatives, such as Finland's 1989 initiative on Arctic environmental protection cooperation, which resulted in a number of technical and scientific reports between 1989 and 1991. This ultimately led to the development of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) in 1991 and the establishment of the Arctic Council in 1996 (Heininen, 2004: 208-209).

In the social sphere, Moscow's policies aim to foster favourable conditions for the sustainable development of Indigenous peoples. For example, in 2009, the Russian government approved the concept of sustainable development for the small-numbered Indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia, and the Far East (Putin, 2009). Among other things, the concept set forth the general task of raising the quality of life in these regions to the Russian average and the specific task of halving the infant mortality rate (as of 2007) by 2025. However, these policies have still not come close to their targets and are harshly criticized by Russia's Indigenous peoples and national and international human rights organizations (Rohr, 2014).

Moscow actively partook in developing the UN Sustainable Development Goals (2015) and accepted them as a conceptual basis for its national strategy.

As far as the legal aspects of Russia's SD strategies are concerned, Moscow signed and ratified the most important international agreements on environment protection and SD: the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (1982); Convention on Biological Diversity (1992); International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (1946); Fish Stocks Agreement (1995); UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972); Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (1979); Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (1973); Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Waste and Other Matter (1972); International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Cooperation (1990); Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic (2013); the International Maritime Organization's Polar Code (November 2014 and May 2015); and the 2015 Paris Agreement under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

To date, Russia has a reputation as a responsible regional player that duly implemented the above international agreements.

Moscow made great strides to internalize these international documents and make them an integral part of its national legislation. The Russian national legislation on environmental protection includes the following legal acts: the Federal Law on Environmental Protection (2002), Water Code of the Russian Federation (2006), Federal Law on Internal Marine Waters and Territorial Sea (1998), Federal Law on the Continental Shelf (1995), Federal Law on Fauna (1995), Russian Federal Law on the Ratification of

the Convention on Biodiversity (1995), and Federal Law on the Northern Sea Route (2012). This legislation constitutes an integral part of the international governance system in the Arctic region.

In addition to the SD/environmental legislation, the Kremlin managed to develop the normative basis for strategic planning. In June 2014, President Putin (2014) signed a federal law on strategic planning that prescribed for all levels of government – national, regional and municipal – having three types of strategic documents: a strategy for socio-economic development, a forecast of socio-economic development and specific programs to implement the two former documents. According to this law, the municipalities should define strategic objectives for socio-economic development and organize monitoring and control over strategic plans implementation. The law also established major principles of strategic planning, such as coherence and integrity, the delimitation of powers between various levels of government, sustainability and continuity, the balanced nature of the planning system, a result-oriented approach and efficiency, clear responsibilities of managers, the transparency of the planning process, feasibility and a realistic approach, a resource-based approach, measurability, the relevance of indicators to objectives and program-targeted principles.

The law on strategic planning has become a legal basis for the development of various normative documents regulating the planning process at the regional and municipal levels. For example, in 2012, the Russian Agency for Strategic Initiatives (ASI) has launched an Investment Standard (Standard 1.0) to improve the business climate in the Russian regions and increase their investment attractiveness (see <http://asi.ru/investclimate/standard/>). Having started as a pilot project in 11 Russian regions, the Standard 1.0 became a mandatory instrument for the assessment of a region's efficiency in the investment sphere since 2013.

A similar investment standard (Standard 2.0) was developed for municipalities as well. The focus was on the creation of planning and managerial structures in the city/town administrations, including the so-called investment boards; the identification of proper objects for investment; building infrastructure for investment projects; training municipal officials, etc.

Initially, it was planned to launch the Standard 2.0 implementation in 2014. However, only a limited number of Russian cities and towns were able to do it. Currently, this standard is being introduced only on a

voluntary basis and mainly in the regions that successfully implemented the Standard 1.0 (Emelyanova, 2014).

Although both standards were heavily criticized for their technocratic character and ignorance of local realities (especially in Russia's remote regions), it was a rather useful exercise in strategic planning that can bring some fruit in the foreseeable future.

Measuring Sustainable Development Planning in Russia's Arctic Industrial Centres

When indexing the progress in planning the AZRF SD strategies, the following indicators should be taken into account.

First and foremost, it is important to find out whether the Russian Arctic cities aim to create and develop an efficient strategy planning system. To make judgments on the administrative/management mechanism's efficiency, it is necessary to examine whether the city leadership is able to acknowledge *the need for SD strategy planning* or not. As municipal documents show, the AZRF local governments understand the importance of having a sort of SD strategy. None of the AZRF industrial cities have a special SD strategy, but there are sections in the city development plans/strategies that are relevant to this problematique. These sections can be titled differently, such as, for example, "Human/social capital development", "Sustainable socio-economic development", "Sustainable ecological development", etc.

It is also important to know whether city planning is of an *integrated/comprehensive nature* or addresses specific SD-related challenges. It should be noted that only large (by Arctic standards) cities have development strategies of their own. Relatively small urban settlements usually have the so-called "target programs" related to the SD problematique. For example, Nickel (the Murmansk region) has a municipal program on the provision of urban amenities and urban development, but lacks an integrated development plan (see <http://admnickel.ru/celeveye-programmy.html>). Interestingly, Severodvinsk, which is a rather large city with a population of some 185,000, stopped adopting complex and long-term plans of socio-economic development and replaced them with some three-year forecasts/indicative plans and targeted programs (see <http://severodvinsk.info/?idmenu=48> <http://severodvinsk.info/?idmenu=48>).

It is also important to know whether a *special strategy planning office* exists in an Arctic city or not. Most AZRF municipalities prefer to charge their economic departments with planning functions rather than involving units responsible for environmental or social policies. This brings a certain “economic bias” to their development programs at the expense of social/humanitarian and environmental dimensions of their SD strategies. This also may challenge the integrated/comprehensive nature of planning and give the local development plans a sectoral/single-issue character. For example, the Murmansk (Murmansk City Government, 2013) and Severodvinsk (Severodvinsk City Government, 2010) development plans include almost all aspects of the SD strategy except food security. However, the Arkhangelsk development strategy (Arkhangelsk City Government, 2008) prioritizes only sectors such as transport infrastructure, health care, education and cultural heritage preservation and almost completely ignores food, environmental, community, personal and political security.

Planning units are very small and normally consist of several managers even in the largest AZRF cities, such as Arkhangelsk, Murmansk and Norilsk. For this reason, these units are often unable to fully comply with all of the classical requirements of the planning management algorithm, including strategy formulation and implementation. It is also very difficult for them to properly coordinate their activities with other city administration units that are also involved in the planning and implementation process. For the same reason, it is difficult to “mainstream” urban sustainability plans in the sense that all parts of the government have some stake in achieving the goals.

One more indicator of successful SD city planning policy is whether the policy has *clearly defined goals, outcomes, expectations and implementation strategies*. It appears that most city development programs have clearly defined objectives, outcomes and implementation strategies, including indicators and benchmarks. However, they may differ by specific details. For example, while the Murmansk (2013), Norilsk (2012), Severodvinsk (2010) and Vorkuta (2014) strategies have a detailed description of the implementation mechanisms and indicator systems, the Arkhangelsk (2008) and Salekhard (2007) ones limit themselves to depicting specific project management procedures and setting some general indicators.

It is also useful to know what *quality and accuracy of assessments* are inherent to the policy planning process. In other words, is planning based on science or wishful thinking? It should be noted that the strategy planning

documents of the AZRF municipalities are based on empirical data and research produced either by analytical units of the city administrations or research/educational organizations – local or from other Russian regions. Among the latter, the Moscow-based ASI, Institute for Urban Economics, Council for the Study of Productive Forces (Russian Foreign Trade Academy), as well as the St. Petersburg-based Leontief Center, Russian State Research Institute for Urban Studies, etc. should be mentioned.

To shape efficient SD strategies, the AZRF municipalities should *effectively coordinate their policies with regional and federal authorities*. The AZRF municipalities aim to develop a proper legal basis for SD strategies, including power sharing with the federal and regional governments. As mentioned above, by federal law, the Russian municipalities must coordinate their development plans/programs with the regional and federal SD strategies. However, this is done by the AZRF cities in different ways. For example, in the Murmansk development plan, each strategic priority is linked to the specific regional and federal programs (Murmansk City Government, 2013: 108-169). On the contrary, the Arkhangelsk, Norilsk, Salekhard and Vorkuta development strategies mention the need to coordinate it with the higher levels of governments *in passim* (Arkhangelsk City Government, 2008: 51-52; Norilsk City Government, 2012: 105-107, 170; Salekhard City Government, 2007: 32-33; Vorkuta City Government, 2014: 84).

The AZRF municipalities are rather cautious about any federal initiatives in the field of strategic planning. For example, Moscow's efforts to introduce the Standard 2.0 got a cold shoulder in the northern cities. In 2014, about 80 municipalities across the country were selected to implement the project. However, in the AZRF, only the Murmansk region, where the Standard 1.0 was fully implemented, participates in the experiment with the Standard 2.0. Four municipalities are considered pilot ones (the Pechenga and Kola Districts, Monchegorsk and Murmansk); other municipalities (Polyarnye Zori, Apatity, Kirovsk, Olenegorsk, and the Kovdorsky, Lovozersky, Tersky and Kandalaksha Districts) implement only certain elements of the Standard 2.0. The only municipality that has fully implemented all elements of the Standard 2.0 is Murmansk itself. This can be explained by the fact that it is a capital of the region that has larger financial and human resources than other municipalities (Emelyanova, 2014).

To provide SD strategies with a proper societal setting/support, the *transparency of the planning process* as well as *public input/community*

engagement should be ensured. These indicators are also important for a proper assessment of the planning process' quality. Theoretically, the Russian Arctic municipalities have several instruments to organize the planning and implementation process in an open/democratic way: regular opinion polls, public discussions in the media, regular hearings in the so-called public chambers, dialogue with NGOs, etc. However, only Severodvinsk has a special municipal program to facilitate the local NGOs' development (Severodvinsk City Government, 2016). The Murmansk and Vorkuta development plans hardly mention the need for a dialogue with civil society institutions; other AZRF cities simply ignore this issue, resting the SD strategy planning process entirely within governmental structures.

The *ability to take into account private and public interests* is one more indicator of a strategy planning's efficiency. In principle, all AZRF city development plans acknowledge the need to build a proper public-private partnership. However, in reality, few Arctic municipalities (e.g., Salekhard) are able to harmonize the public's interests with those of business communities, which often behave in a rather self-willing and selfish way.

One more important question is about the nature of planning. In the Soviet era, the centralized planning and control system prevailed both in Russia's Arctic and in the country at large. In the post-Soviet period, new modes of decentralized planning and control that are more sensitive to the dynamic AZRF realities have emerged. For example, "indicative planning" loosens up the planning process: instead of setting taut and unchanging targets, it merely points in certain desired directions and recalibrates future targets in light of what past practice has shown to be realistic aspirations. More generally, the present-day Russian policymakers can rely more heavily on "loose"/"soft" laws and regulations. Instead of tightly specifying exact performance requirements, the laws and regulations can be written in more general and vaguely aspirational terms (Goodin, 2006: 18). It should be noted that most of the AZRF urban development strategies are written in the spirit of indicative planning rather than in a centralized, Soviet-type way.

As far as the environmental aspect of the SD strategies is concerned, the AZRF municipalities have the following priorities:

- Now the Arctic cities focus on the prevention and reduction of pollution rather than on cleaning up the environmental mess, as was the case before.

- The rehabilitation of damaged natural environmental systems (damage assessment, targeting the priority areas, clean-up programs, monitoring).
- Solid and liquid waste treatment.
- Targeted programs to protect endangered species.
- The development of public-private partnerships in the environmental protection sphere.
- Encouraging environmental research (support for the local universities and research centres).
- Developing environmental education and culture.
- Cooperation with the local environmental NGOs and mass media to promote “green” projects and culture.
- The development of monitoring systems in various areas (the prevention of natural and manmade disasters; air and water pollution; endangered species, etc.).

It should be noted that the AZRF cities differ by their views on the significance of environmental problems in the SD strategies. While for some municipalities, such as Arkhangelsk, Murmansk and Salekhard, environmental issues are one of several policy priorities, for Monchegorsk, Nickel, Norilsk, and Severodvinsk, where the ecological situation is rather grave, the need to solve the environmental problems is really critical.

These cities are traditional centres of metallurgical production as well as machine- and ship-building industries, and for this reason are heavily polluted and pose serious health hazards. Russian scientists identified 27 so-called impact zones where pollution has led to environmental degradation and increased morbidity among the local population (see Map 1). The main impact zones include the Murmansk region (10% of the total pollutants in the 27 impact zones), Norilsk urban agglomeration (more than 30%), West Siberian oil and gas fields (more than 30%) and the Arkhangelsk Region (around 5%) (Dushkova & Evseev, 2011; *Ekologicheskoe Sostoyanie Impactnykh Raionov*, 2012). In sum, about 15% of the AZRF territory is polluted or contaminated (Kochemasov et al., 2009).

As mentioned above, the AZRF cities pay little attention to the purely human security problematique, preferring to focus on the economic and environmental issues. The “human dimension” of the SD strategies is mostly represented by the municipal programs on civil defence (Murmansk City

Map 15-1. Impact zones in the Russian Arctic. Source: Redesigned from Dushkova & Evseev, 2011: 2.



Government, 2013; Severodvinsk City Government, 2010; Vorkuta City Government, 2014) to protect the local population from natural and man-made catastrophes. Some development plans (Murmansk City Government, 2013; Severodvinsk City Government, 2010) also have sections on personal security, including the need to fight street violence.

Almost all city development plans mention the need for international cooperation, including venues such as the Arctic Council, Barents Euro-Arctic Council, International Polar Year, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNESCO programs, country-to-country, region-to-region, and town-to-town collaboration, etc.

Conclusions

To sum up, the Russian Arctic municipalities have familiarized themselves with the concept of sustainable development. To some extent, this concept was embedded in municipal development plans/strategies, although the AZRF cities lack special SD strategic documents and, quite often, the economic, ecological and social dimensions are not properly

harmonized with one another. The Arctic municipalities view the development of sound urban planning strategies as an important policy priority for themselves. They have tried to create proper legal and institutional settings for the development and implementation of such strategies. They also tried to cooperate with regional and federal authorities in the field of strategic planning and solving concrete socio-economic and ecological problems

They have made great strides in implementing some SD-related (mostly economic and environmental) projects over the last 10 to 15 years. There was a clear shift from survival/reactive to capacity-building/proactive SD strategies. These efforts resulted in some success stories, albeit rather modest ones.

However, there is still a long way to go, in terms of both the development of adequate policies and their effective implementation. The main problem is how to solve the “words and deeds” problem because many of the SD projects still remain on paper and have never been implemented. In other words, the gap between strategy formulation and implementation still exists.

The weak points of the AZRF urban development strategies include a lack of transparency in the policy planning process and a lack of cooperation with and involvement of civil society institutions. To a large extent, the policy planning and implementation process is still of a top-down rather than bottom-up nature. Moreover, not all issue areas of the SD problematique are addressed, and different strategic approaches are not properly harmonized/synchronized with one another. Finally, quite often, municipal SD programs and projects are understaffed, underfunded and not supported by regional and federal authorities. Hence, larger staff and funding, as well as the better coordination of SD strategies between different levels of government, are badly needed.

To conclude, despite the above problems and shortcomings, the total “balance sheet” of the Arctic cities’ SD strategies and general dynamics is rather positive. The AZRF municipalities are serious about solving numerous socio-economic and environmental problems and making these urban areas better and more comfortable places to live in.

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16

The Sustainable Development of the Russian Arctic Zone: Challenges & Opportunities

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This paper attempts to consider a fundamental problem of ensuring the sustainable development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation in the context of expanding economic activity. In August 2017, the new edition of the Russian state program on the Arctic's socio-economic development was released. At present, this is the main document regarding the development of the Arctic territories of Russia. The main idea of this document and the future law "On the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation" is to create support zones, which will be complex projects of the social and economic development of the Arctic territories where the Northern Sea Route will become the main navigable artery and the central project. According to the state program, one of the main tasks of the support zones is the use of best practices for creating favourable living conditions for the residents. This paper will examine the Russian Arctic's challenges and opportunities regarding sustainable development, and include an analysis of the recent Russian plans in relation to the territorial development.

Introduction

The 1992 Summit in Rio de Janeiro, following the Brundtland Commission, recognized the so-called sustainable development "that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED, 1987). Since then, the concept of sustainable development has acquired global significance. It is a fundamental problem of our time. This concept is indeed applicable to such an essential region as the Arctic. Since its foundation in 1996, the Arctic Council has aimed to integrate sustainable development into the main areas of its activities. The forum unites the efforts of the eight member states to solve the challenges of the Arctic region to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the ecosystems and peoples living in the area.

Therefore, the sustainable development of the Arctic is a global objective and requires the establishment of international cooperation.

Finland's Chairmanship platform in the Arctic Council states that "the human dimension of the Arctic Council's work covers such areas as health, water, energy, infrastructure, and Indigenous cultures and languages, and thus contributes to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations 2030 Agenda. Finland proposes to explore how the SDGs can be further used in strengthening the economic and social progress and cultural self-expression of Arctic communities" (Andreassen, 2017). Meanwhile, the current global warming has economic consequences that could be beneficial for the Arctic states. A recent launch of industrial development in the Arctic shows the growing interest toward transport and energy opportunities in the region. Economic indicators are increasing; however, the growth of industry could lead to a high degree of negative impacts on the environment and residents.

The concept of the Russian Federation's transition to sustainable development was released in 1996. Since the 2000s, there has not been a single document approved by Russia in the title of which there was a reference to "sustainable development." It is especially interesting because Russia has declared a new stage of Arctic development. The new edition of the state program of 2014, "Socio-economic development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation for the period until 2025"¹ (State Program), was published in August 2017. The updated State Program outlines the country's major plans for the Arctic territories, and sets out complex projects for the social and economic development of the region.

Economic Development of the Russian Arctic

The Arctic has always been a reserve of natural resources for Russia. Since the 1930s, during the Second World War and then the Cold War, in connection with the international situation, the country's economy began to need natural resources badly. So in the 1920's and 1930's in the USSR, a program of government events was organized to study and develop the so-called Far North. The Soviet Union was eager to discover the resources of the rich Arctic quickly. There were issued orders for the construction of mines, power plants and factories near the Arctic deposits. The Soviet development of the Arctic was intensive, large-scaled and based on free labour. In 1931, the first oil field in the Russian Arctic, Chibiyiskoye, was discovered in the Komi Republic. In 1932, the Main Directorate of the Northern Sea Route (Glavsevmorput) was created by the Council of

People's Commissars of the USSR. The new directorate was entrusted with the economic development of the Arctic and navigation of the Northern Sea Route (NSR), as well as the organization of geological work and the exploration of minerals in the Arctic. The first head of the Glavsevmorput, Otto Schmidt, was appointed a polar explorer, who in the same year made passage on the NSR on the icebreaker *A. Sibiryakov* for the first time in one navigation, over 65 days. In 1937, the first flight over the North Pole was made, and the first drifting scientific station "North Pole" was settled. In total, 31 drifting stations were organized in the USSR, and they functioned until 1991. The program relaunched in 2003. In the 1930s, Arctic seaports (Igarka (1931), Tiksi (1933), Dixon (1934), Dudinka (1935)), cities and new settlements were constructed. The USSR used prisoners of the Gulag for free labour. Thus, the prisoners built such Arctic cities as Dudinka, Vorkuta, Inta, Pechora as well as such industrial enterprises as the Norilsk Mining and Metallurgical Combine in 1935 and the Kapitalnaya mine in Vorkuta in 1937 and so on. In the second half of the 20th century, the most abundant hydrocarbon deposits were found. In the 1960s and 1970s, they were discovered on the coastal territory – Urengoy (1966), Yamburg (1969), Bovanenkovo (1971), etc.; in the 1980s, hydrocarbons were found on the Arctic shelf – Shtokmanovskoe (1988), Prirazlomnoye (1989), etc. As a result, during the period from the 1920s to the 1980s, the Soviet Arctic has become a circumpolar region with the most significant number of cities in the world.

Today, the Arctic region is one of the priority directions of Russia's internal policy, including with respect to social and economic development as well as international cooperation. However, the legal status of the Russian Arctic zone and its borders are not yet defined precisely. The framework law on the Arctic zone in the USSR and then in the Russian Federation was not released despite attempts to accept it. Today, legal relations in the Russian Arctic are regulated by more than 500 documents (Ministry for the Development of the Russian Far East, 2017, October 10). A draft law "On the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation" has been in progress for five years, and its consideration is continuously postponed. However, it may be submitted to the government in 2018.

Today, Russia's Arctic strategy is determined by three documents: Fundamentals of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic for the Period up to 2020 and Beyond (2008); The Strategy of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation development and national security system for the period till 2020 (2013); and the new edition in 2017 of the state program

of “Socio-economic Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation for the period till 2025” (2014).

In Russia, the concept of “sustainable development” is interpreted differently. There is no comprehensive understanding of all aspects of sustainable development. For example, in the State Program on the Arctic, the word “sustainable” is used 16 times on 140 pages of text. Five times the phrase “sustainable development” is used in different contexts: “sustainable development of the nuclear weapons complex,” “sustainable development of indigenous peoples,” “sustainable development of related industries,” “sustainable development goals and human well-being,” and “sustainable development of regional ecosystems.” Thus, the State Program on the Arctic does not define what is meant by the term “sustainable development.” The authors of the State Program either did not set the task of articulating the principles of “sustainable development,” or there is no clear understanding of what “sustainable development” is. At the same time, the authors consider this term to be applicable in completely different contexts. However, in the Russian terminology, the closest term to “sustainable development” is usually the term “socio-economic development.”

The main idea of the State Program is the creation of so-called support zones – comprehensive social and economic development projects aimed at achieving strategic interests and ensuring national security. There are eight support zones identified based on the existing administrative-territorial division of the Russian Arctic zone (Government of the Russian Federation, 2017, August 31). It is interesting that Russian regions work out these support zones, not federal authorities. Articles from the State Program about the support zones will be included in the future law “On the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation.” As of now, the State Program can be considered the primary document reflecting Russian plans in the Arctic zone.

Here are the different zones and their possible economic development as planned by the State Program:

Kola support zone: the mining industry (more than 60 large deposits of various types of mineral raw materials, including apatite, nepheline, kyanite ore, nickel, copper), fishing, tourism, the central logistics hub to supply the entire western part of the Russian Arctic (ports Murmansk, Kandalaksha, Vitino, railway), the Northern Fleet;

Arkhangelsk support zone: timber industry, shipbuilding, fishing, diamond mining complex, natural resources (lead, zinc, silver), railway, it is planned to create a port complex in Bezmyannaya Bay;

Nenets support zone: hydrocarbon production (Timan-Pechora oil and gas province), construction of the Northern Latitudinal Railway, the Naryan-Mar-Usinsk road, railway transport corridors (Belkomur, Barentskomur, Sosnogorsk-Indiga), development of ports in Amderma and Indiga, reconstruction of Naryan-Mar airport;

Vorkuta support zone (Komi Republic): coal mining industry, construction of the Vorkuta-Ust-Kara railway, the Pechora-Vorkuta road which will connect the Komi Republic with the Nenets Autonomous District, construction of the Northern Latitudinal Railway, tourism;

Yamal-Nenetsky support zone: formation of the oil and gas chemical cluster will provide more than one third of the country's gas production (the Yamal and Gydan Peninsulas, the shelf areas of the Kara Sea, the Ob and Taz Bays), construction of the Obskaya-Bovanenkovo railway, the Yamal-Ukhta-Europe gas main, a plant for the production of liquefied gas at the South-Tambeyskoye gas field;

Taymyr-Turukhanskaya support zone (Krasnoyarsk region): Norilsk industrial region (nickel, copper, platinum, cobalt), Dudinka Port, in 10-20 years will be coal and hydrocarbons, a coal terminal in the port of Dixon, road construction, modernization of the port of Dixon, construction of the Tanalau offshore oil terminal;

Chukotka support zone: mining industry (gold, tin, tungsten, coal, copper, mercury, hydrocarbons), construction of the federal road Kolyma-Anadyr which will provide year-round communication with other regions of the Russian Far East;

North-Yakutian support zone: It must be emphasized that the North-Yakutian support zone is chosen as a pilot project according to the State Program. So far, there is no information on the launch of the project, possibly due to the lack of a law "On the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation." The first project of the North-Yakutian support zone is the reconstruction of the seaport infrastructure of the NSR in the village of Tiksi, which will ensure the safe entry into the port of sea-going ships with a draft of up to 10 metres (now only 5 metres), to bring the volume of cargo processing to 300,000 tons per year (Ministry for the Development of the Russian Far East, 2017, December 7). Yakutia can be a "bridge" between

Asia and the Arctic. One of the main tasks will be the development of the eastern sector of the NSR, including within the framework of the China-Yakutsk-Tiksi-Europe Transport Corridor Project. It will cut the way from Asia to Europe, reducing the risk of falling into a complicated ice situation, which often exists at the exit from the Bering Strait to the Arctic Ocean. Logistics, according to this transport corridor, are as follows: the goods are delivered by rail from Harbin to Yakutsk, then they stow the cargo to river vessels and go to the port of Tiksi, then they stow the cargo to sea vessels and deliver them to European ports. The second project is the construction of a high-tech Zhataisk Shipyard, which is estimated at 5.75 billion rubles, while 4.1 billion rubles will come from the federal budget as part of the State Program. There will be the modernization of the fleet and construction of ships in Yakutia, which will provide cargo transportation by inland waterways. It will create about 1,300 new jobs (*ibid.*). Also, the following projects are planned: infrastructure development projects – reconstruction of airports, construction of roads, modernization of diesel power stations; projects of the industrial development of the deposits of gold, diamonds, tin, coal, antimony, tungsten, indium, etc. It is said about investment projects for the development of the Upper-Munsky ore field, the placer deposit of the river Tirekhtyakh, about the geological study and development of the Western Anabar section, and the Tomtor deposit of rare earth metals. Besides, in Yakutia, there are 80% of the world's stock of mammoth tusks and the Popigaysky deposit of impact diamonds. The North-Yakutian support zone's strategy is not completed yet. It will still change. At least, the Yakutian government is planning such.

Thus, industrial development is the cornerstone of Russia's Arctic strategy. The primary task of creating the support zones is the exploitation of mineral resources. According to the State Program, "almost two thirds of all projects are directly related to the development of the mineral resource base" (Government of the Russian Federation, 2017, August 31). Raw mineral centres with their infrastructure will be developed within the support zones. The most significant project is the seaport of Sabetta on the Kara Sea in the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District, which already began operating in December 2017 and is expected to become the most significant logistics hub of the NSR. One of the essential parts of this hub must be the Northern Latitudinal Railway (707 kilometres), which will connect for the first time the Trans-Siberian Railway with the Northern Sea Route. It should be noted that this is a project of Soviet designers of Stalin's time. The completion of the railway's construction, launched in May 2018, is planned

by 2022. The project also has social significance: about 300,000 new jobs can be created in the Arctic and the Urals. Another important project in Sabetta is the Yamal liquefied natural gas (Yamal-LNG) plant, which opened in December 2017.

The Northern Sea Route will become the most significant project. It should unite all the subjects of the Russian Federation that participate in the development of the Arctic because “the formation and functioning of the support zones are planned to be carried out in close connection with the Northern Sea Route” (ibid.). By 2021, Russia plans to build three new nuclear icebreakers of Project 22220. The main icebreaker, the *Arctic*, will float out in 2019, the *Siberia* in 2020, and the *Ural* in 2021. Russia does not limit the passage of foreign ships on the NSR, but starting in 2017, the right to transport hydrocarbons remains exclusively for Russian vessels (Government of the Russian Federation, 2017, December 26). As Vladimir Putin said in the message from the President to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, by 2025 the cargo traffic on the Northern Sea Route should grow by ten times – up to 80 million tons per year (Ministry for the Development of the Russian Far East, 2018, March 1). In March 2017, the government was instructed to work out the issues of creating a separate institution that will be responsible for the integrated development of the Northern Sea Route and Arctic territories, including the development of infrastructure and all the services required. At the moment, there is no special ministry responsible for the development of the North and the Arctic in Russia. The leadership over Arctic issues at different times has been exercised by the Ministry of Economic Development and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment. However, the creation of a new ministry would require much effort and money; therefore, it is uncertain when this will happen. Last year, it was announced that a decision had been made to entrust the Arctic to the Rosatom Corporation, whose structure includes Atomflot with its icebreakers. Rosatom might soon gain control over the development of the NSR and the coastal areas of the Arctic. Moreover, a separate section of the State Program on the Arctic prescribes plans for the development of the Russian Far East, which includes two Arctic regions – Yakutia and Chukotka. This combination is not accidental. After the presidential elections in 2018, Yuri Trutnev was appointed as Deputy Prime Minister of Russia, responsible for both regions development – the Russian Far East and the Arctic. He was previously responsible for the development only of the Far East. In September 2018, Trutnev also headed the State Commission for Arctic Development. In connection with his

appointment, we can assume that not only the Far East but also the Arctic will become a megaproject of Russia.

The State Program emphasized that public-private partnership must be a relevant tool for implementing the social and economic development of the Russian Arctic zone. The mechanism of public-private partnership was used in such megaprojects as the 2012 APEC meeting in Vladivostok, the 2014 Olympic Games in Sochi, and the FIFA World Cup Russia 2018; now the same development tool is being introduced for the development of the Russian Far East with the Arctic. The Far East is a priority, and the Arctic has an applied significance. The Ministry of Economy of the Russian Federation does not single out the Arctic as a separate macroregion in the draft of the Strategy of Spatial Development of the Russian Federation for the period until 2025. In this strategy, the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation is distributed among four macroregions – the North, Northwest, West Siberia and Far East. However, in the development of the Far East, the situation is unusual, because Russia is oriented towards foreign investors, primarily Asian ones. Russia's "Turn to the East"² (from 2013), as well as Western sanctions³ (since 2014), predetermined the development of Russia's international cooperation with the countries of Northeast Asia – China, Japan and South Korea. In turn, the interest of Asian countries in the NSR is enormous. Their main attention is paid to the development of the transit possibilities of the Arctic. In this case, the Far East can become an outpost of Russia's Arctic strategy in relations with Northeast Asia. To develop the Far East, Russia should take into consideration the wishes of these countries. Western sanctions on Russia have become an obstacle to possible investment projects, including in the Arctic. At the same time, the possibility of cooperation with Russia remains, in the case of interest from the Western partners. Strong examples of this can be the participation of the French Total in the Yamal-LNG project or gold mining in Chukotka by the Canadian company Kinross Gold. Russia is open to collaborating with any potential partner, but the problem lies in excessive bureaucracy and the lack of a unified mechanism. The idea for a "one-window" mechanism is proposed to solve these issues.

Environmental Damage

Of course, there is constant alarm about the environment in connection with the socio-economic development of the Arctic. The State Program occasionally mentions environmental problems. The list of tasks of the State Program declares that it is necessary to strengthen the coordination of the

activities of state authorities to “preserve and protect the Arctic environment, eliminate the environmental consequences of economic activity; [and] improve environmental monitoring of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation” (Government of the Russian Federation, 2014: 34). The basic principles and mechanisms for the implementation of the State Program are based on “maximum environmental conservation (application of the environmental standards and technologies)” (ibid.: 35). In 2021–2023, in the list of main activities of the State Program, the construction of an environmental fleet is planned to ensure federal-state environmental supervision in the seas and on the continental shelf in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation (ibid.: 104). However, in the State Program, there are no precise methods for combating environmental risks. At the same time, references to the other state program of “Environmental Protection for 2012–2020” were made. This document includes two subprograms convenient to the Arctic zone: “Hydrometeorology and Environmental monitoring” and the project “Clean Country,” which provides measures to eliminate the accumulated environmental damage. Russia has recognized accumulated environmental damage (industrial waste, nuclear waste, etc.) as a main environmental problem of the Arctic.

In the 20th century, the priorities of the Soviet policy on the Arctic were industrialization and the development of the military-industrial complex. The consequences of industrialization and the active use of the NSR have become detrimental to the environment. In the 1990s, after the collapse of the USSR, the Arctic was hit by an economic crisis: the polar explorers began to leave the Arctic, leaving the infrastructure and waste behind (buildings, cars, unused fuel, spare parts and building materials). Substantial multi-kilometre dumps originated around scientific stations, military units, settlements and ports. According to some estimates, in the coastal zone of the Arctic Ocean, there are up to four million tons of industrial and construction debris, as well as from four to 12 million steel barrels (Sokolov, 2013: 18). Also, the nuclear tests conducted at that time on the Novaya Zemlya archipelago and flooded nuclear submarines have had a negative impact on the ecology.

The problem of assessing and eliminating the accumulated environmental damage is present in the Arctic Strategy of Russia. Since 2010, as a result of the ex-Prime Minister’s indication, a cleaning of the Russian Arctic territories was launched. That year, Vladimir Putin became aware of a massive amount of debris from rusted steel barrels with fuel during his visit to the Franz Josef Land archipelago, and he said that it was

necessary to organize a “general cleaning” of the Arctic (Rossiyskaya Gazeta, 2010). The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Russia, together with the Council for the Study of Productive Forces, has developed a draft program for eliminating sources of negative impacts on the contaminated areas of the islands for 2012-2020. According to the survey prepared by the Council for the Study of Productive Forces in 2011-2012, the total cleanup of Franz Josef Land alone will require about 8.5 billion rubles. Practical work on garbage disposal began in 2012 and went on in the summertime each year on the polar islands of the Barents Sea and the Arctic territories.

Franz Josef Land is a pilot region of the “general cleaning” in the Russian Arctic – 44% of the accumulated damage has already been cleaned up (Lenta.ru, 2017). The Russian Geographical Society joined the cleaning of the Arctic in 2010. They have launched the “Arctic clean-up program” on the islands of the Franz Josef Land, Spitsbergen, Wrangel and the Novosibirsk Islands. There is a national project, “Clean Country,” which is reflected in the State Program on the Arctic. According to this project, the accumulated environmental damage in the Franz Josef Land archipelago, oil pollution in the Kuznetsov water protection zone (Arkhangelsk region), and the tailing dumps of the Kular gold-extracting factory of the Ust-Yansky municipal district in Yakutia will all be eliminated. In 2014, the military joined in cleaning up the Arctic. It exported collected garbage from the islands using the Northern and Pacific fleets, as well as other vessels that usually carry out deliveries of goods to the northern territories. Also, in Russia, there is a general federal target program in 2014-2025, “Elimination of accumulated environmental damage”; of 218.7 billion rubles in funding, 22 billion rubles are allocated to the Arctic (Government of the Russian Federation, 2014).

However, this is not enough. It is impossible to cope with this large-scale task without the help of the international community. Russia is attracting volunteers and military personnel for cleaning up the Arctic because of a lack of funds for hiring workers. In addition to the financing problem, there are two more challenges related to the methods of cleaning. Many issues on the elimination of garbage are not legally regulated. In particular, the procedure for determining environmental damage has not been established. Moreover, the vulnerable Arctic ecosystem is disturbed during the collecting of debris. Therefore, there is a need to act more gently in particularly sensitive places.

Russia most fully addresses issues of environmental protection in the Arctic in its strategic documents (Fundamentals of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic for the Period up to 2020 and Beyond; The Strategy of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation development and national security system for the period till 2020). Unfortunately, the Russian environmental legislation does not explicitly mention the Arctic zone. On one hand, mechanisms stipulated by the environmental legislation – the federal laws “On Environmental Protection” (2002), “On Ecological Expertise” (1995), and “On Specially Protected Natural Territories” (1995) – are potentially applicable to the protection of Arctic ecosystems. On the other hand, none of these documents take into account the specifics of the natural and climatic conditions of the area or establish specific environmental requirements for economic activities in the Arctic zone. The federal laws “On the Continental Shelf of the Russian Federation” (1995) and “On Subsoil” (1992) are the same, as there is not a single norm devoted explicitly to the Arctic zone.

Gaps in the legal regulation on the protection of the Arctic environment in Russian legislation are one of the main topics of discussion. There are two points of view. Some believe that fundamental federal law is needed, of which the subject of legal regulation would be the protection of the environment of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation (Gladun, 2015: 135). Others believe that the environmental protection mechanisms for the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation do not require the adoption of a particular law; it is mostly necessary to amend the already existing legislation to ensure their implementation (TASS, 2018).

One additional challenge is the lack of the eco-friendly technologies or green technologies that are needed in the Arctic. Article 12 (6) in the Executive Order on the Russian Federation Economic Security Strategy until 2030 was released in 2017, and was almost unnoticed. This article states that the development of “green technologies” is one of the main challenges for and poses threats to the economic security of the country (Government of the Russian Federation, 2017, May 13). So, Russia is not yet ready to use green technologies in the development of the territories. However, it contradicts Russia’s new guidelines, which were defined in the “May Decrees” of Vladimir Putin in 2018. On May 7, 2018, a second “May Decree” was published, defining a work plan for Putin’s fourth presidential term. The full title of the document is “On national goals and strategic development objectives of the Russian Federation for the period until 2024.” “May Decrees” is the name of a series of decrees signed by Vladimir

Putin. The first “May Decrees” were signed on May 7, 2012, on the day when the President of the Russian Federation assumed office, and contained 218 instructions in 11 decrees to the Government of the Russian Federation for implementation during 2012-2020. “May Decrees” mostly repeat the theses of Putin’s election promises. And ecology is identified as one of the national projects in the “May Decrees” for a six-year period until 2024. Among the goals of this project are the efficient handling and disposal of waste, reducing the level of atmospheric air pollution in industrial centres, improving the quality of drinking water for residents, and the conservation of biological diversity. It is also planned to create 24 protected areas with an area of five million hectares (Government of the Russian Federation, 2018, May 7). But it will be in the future. To this day, the Code of Administrative Offenses of the Russian Federation and the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation do not include special rules on liability for environmental pollution by economic and other activities in the Arctic zone, despite the fact that the Russian Arctic Strategy stresses the need to increase the responsibility of enterprises that use natural resources in the Arctic.

Residents of the Russian Arctic

In connection with the plans for the development of the Arctic region, there is a need for specialized personnel to implement large-scale investment projects in the Russian Far North. Today, one of the most pressing challenges is the outflow of the Arctic population. The share of Russia’s population living in the Arctic zone is small – 1.6% (Fauzer, Lytkina & Smirnov, 2017: 22). The structure of the population of the Russian Arctic territories includes groups of the small-numbered Indigenous peoples of the North, medium-sized peoples such as the Yakut and Komi, settlers from the period of Soviet industrial development (the 20-80s of the 20th century), the descendants of the discoverers and old Russian settlers. Also, rotation workers, scientists on expeditions and military personnel live there on a temporary basis. The population of the Russian Arctic is continually decreasing. In 1989, there were 3.3 million people; in 2016 – 2.3 million people (ibid.). Cities with a population of more than 100,000 inhabitants in different years include Arkhangelsk, Murmansk, Severodvinsk, Norilsk, Novy Urengoy, Noyabrsk and Vorkuta. The most urbanized regions of the Russian Arctic are the Murmansk region and the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District.

Small-numbered Indigenous peoples are native residents of the Russian Arctic. The peoples who have fewer than 50,000 individuals are named

small-numbered Indigenous people in Russia. There are 40 such Indigenous peoples in Russia; according to the last census of 2010, they comprise only 257,900 people (Census, 2010). In the Russian Arctic, there are 19 small-numbered Indigenous peoples (Nenets, Chukchi, Khanty, Eveny, Evenki, Selkup, Sami, Eskimos, Dolgans, Chuvans, Chum, Nganasans, Yukagirs, Ents, Mansi, Veps, Koryaks, Itelmen and Kereks). The number of them is 82,500 people (Tishkov, 2016: 9-10).

In Russia, there are many Indigenous peoples' issues, which challenge their traditional ways of life. The main issues that can be noted include a low quality of life, alcoholism, high mortality, unemployment, poverty and a large number of Indigenous people who migrate to cities and are assimilated. There are imperfections in the legal and organizational mechanisms that would need to be addressed to ensure the development of self-government for Indigenous peoples. Some Indigenous communities are not legal entities. Therefore, they cannot count on financial and social support from the state. Since the 1990s, a new problem has been noticed: the reduction in the number of reindeer in personal and collective ownership. Reindeer herding is considered to be the main branch of the traditional economy of the Indigenous peoples of Russia's Northern regions. The Northeast of Russia was the largest region of domestic reindeer breeding in the world. The most telling example is Chukotka, because this region formed the basis of reindeer herding. For decades in the 20th century in the Chukotka Autonomous Region, the number of reindeer stably remained at the level of half a million heads, which could be considered "normal" for this region. Since 1991, the reduction of reindeer husbandry, caused by socio-economic reforms, began. The number of domestic reindeers in Chukotka decreased by five times so that in 2002, the total number of reindeer was 94,600 heads. In many farms, reindeer herding was lost entirely. In 2015, the total number of reindeer was 185,000 heads. However, it continued to decrease again. In 2017, their number has decreased to 155,000 heads (EastRussia, 2017). There is a need to create conditions for the restoration of reindeer husbandry, livestock and fisheries as the basis for the social and economic security of the population and the development of a traditional way of life.

Moreover, relations between reindeer-herding communities and extractive companies have become urgent. Sometimes the Indigenous communities have no place for their reindeer because of the lack of pasture, which is occupied by the extraction of minerals in the traditional territories of nature used by the small-numbered Indigenous peoples. In this case, the

procedure of ethnological expertise can be especially interesting. In 2010, the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) released a law “On Ethnological Expertise in Traditional Living and Traditional Economic Activities of the Indigenous Peoples of the North of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia).” There is no such law in any of the subjects of the Russian Federation, but such practice exists in the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug and the Sakhalin region. Ethnological expertise in Yakutia must be carried out without fail. However, despite this condition, extractive companies continue to ignore the law of the Sakha Republic, citing the absence of federal law. At present, the process of discussing a federal draft law on ethnological expertise is underway; in March 2018, the first readings were held. Indigenous peoples have the right to enjoy benefits throughout the whole territory of Russia, not only on their own territories where they live. The number of inhabitants in the settlements of the Indigenous peoples is small. Such settlements in Russia are called “compact places of residence,” and their maintenance is costly for the state budget. The discussion on keeping such settlements in the North is growing. There is even an offer to move people from one “compact place of residence” to another bigger regional centre, to reduce the number of such small settlements and to consolidate them into bigger groups of population in the enlarged settlements of the Russian Arctic.

Among the challenges, the lack of human resources (rotation workers or residents) and a low level of living conditions in the Russian Arctic can be noted. The advantage of rotation workers is the possibility to assemble a professional team in a short time. Also, rotation workers are cheaper than settling new residents in the Arctic who would require a broad infrastructure for living. However, in the Russian Arctic, it would be optimal to involve residents and develop their human potential, taking advantage of the infrastructure that has remained since the time of the Soviet development. Russia has some unique residents, having the experience of living in the Far North. Also, it needs to be emphasized that the survival experience of middle-numbered Indigenous peoples, such as the Yakut and Komi, is of particular value for the sustainable development of the Arctic region. For hundreds of years, they have been living in harsh northern conditions, and their numbers are increasing. So, in Yakutia in 1917, the Yakut had 224,960 people, growing to 365,236 people according to the 1989 census (Dyakov, 1993), and up to 466,492 people in 2010 (Census, 2010).

Therefore, to involve the residents of the Arctic zone in the new socio-economic development, there need to be tools to prepare them for such

development and lead them to get the qualifications for the professions that are in demand. Along with the labour resources for the development of natural resources (oil, gas, mineral resources), there is a need for professionals who can build buildings and roads in the Far North and work in energy, transport, health, education and commerce. In 2017, the ex-Chairman of the State Commission for Arctic Development, Dmitry Rogozin, said that it was planned to develop a federal target program for training personnel to work in the Arctic. Besides, the conditions for attracting labour resources to the Arctic will be proposed in the future law “On the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation.”

However, the reality is that the residents often cannot find a job, and unemployment is growing. One of the most urgent problems is the poverty in the northern settlements. For example, in Yakutia, where there will be implemented a pilot project of the North-Yakutian support zone, the unemployment rate in the Arctic regions exceeds the average republican figure, and in some areas, it reaches 37% (Kondratyeva and Semenova, 2014: 24). It so happens that northern residents are mainly engaged in the public sphere: health care, education, social services and state and municipal management. The sphere of business, where northerners could find a job, is not developed. Therefore, in the absence of a sufficient number of vacancies in many northern settlements, a significant proportion of people of working age are unemployed. Also, there is a problem within the framework of the “centre-periphery” model, which leads to an increase in hidden unemployment and the emergence of a class of “newly unemployed” in the cities (Gavrilyeva, 2016: 26). In modern Russia, the concepts of the “centre” and “periphery” have become truly common. There are differences between the levels of the economic and social life of the populations of the large cities and the citizens living in the rest of the country (more than 80% of all Russians), who often feel themselves to be on the outskirts of the “centres” of political, financial, cultural and other activities. Firstly, there is a difference of interests and political decisions between the “centre” and the pressing problems of the “periphery”; secondly, there is the belief of the “periphery” that it is impossible to influence “central” interests and decisions. These phenomena are also manifested in the sphere of state administration, where the “centre” means the federal bodies of legislative, executive and judicial power, and the “periphery” is the corresponding bodies of the subjects of the Russian Federation (Leksin, 2013: 60). An additional point to emphasize is that such a vertical executive power

structure makes it difficult to attract foreign investment in the Russian Federation.

Attracting new residents to the Arctic is one of the challenges of the State Program. Since Soviet times, there have been special programs, for example, northern surcharges (incomes) in the salaries of residents, which are considered the primary tool for attracting the population. However, under the current legislation, the northern surcharges for newcomers are accumulated in full only after five years of professional experience in the Far North. There is an opinion that it is necessary to revise this rule and give the entire northern surcharges immediately after the person has moved to the Arctic.

Besides, since the 1990s, the northern surcharges are now not so high as they were under the USSR. Therefore, if in Soviet times the salary of a northerner was ten times higher than the national average, now it is impossible. Today the air tickets are more expensive. It was suggested that the Russian government revise the northern surcharges exclusively in the direction of increasing them. So, in 2018 it was announced that salaries would rise in the Arctic regions of the country. In addition, the attractiveness of work and living in the Arctic zone needs to increase. For example, the development of the Northern Sea Route is essential not only for industry, but for residents too. During the Soviet period, the regular supplies of so-called northern deliveries made through the Northern Sea Route are impossible to fill today. The old port system of the NSR does not allow the use of infrastructure for these purposes. Almost annually the deadlines for the importation of essential goods, fuel and food are broken. However, in light of the future social and economic development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation, there is hope for restoring the northern infrastructure and creating an attractive image of the region.

Conclusion

The primary challenge for both the social and economic development of Russia's Arctic zone is the outflow of residents since the 1990s. Russia has set the task of keeping and attracting residents to the Arctic. There are discussions on this topic. Scientific research on human capital and human potential are in progress. It is necessary to increase the attractiveness of the region despite its harsh climatic conditions. Tools of attraction are improvements to the living standards of the residents (an increase of salaries, benefits, compensations, and so on), and the creation of a comfortable infrastructure for housing and communications, which is impossible

without socio-economic development. Therefore, in the State Program, the first object is the improvement of the quality of human life. It appears that Russia figures that the development of social infrastructure is closely linked to the creation of industrial facilities. Russia needs to pay attention to the social dimension of the sustainable development of its Arctic zone because those northern residents are the guarantors of its national security. Their presence in the Arctic zone provides Russia with its ability to exercise control over these vast territories. Also, more than 2 million residents of the Russian Arctic have a unique experience of survival in a severe climate.

At the same time, environmental security is a pressing issue. Russia recognizes the accumulated environmental damage as a critical problem. Since 2012, the “general cleaning” of the Arctic territories from the debris of the Soviet legacy has been taking place. The fact that Russia’s economy sank into a deep depression in the 1990s is one more reason behind the pollution, besides Soviet industrial development. The accumulated environmental damage in the Russian Arctic is not only a result of industrial activity, but also of human activity that was abandoned by residents after their massive outflow from the Arctic in the 1990s. In recent years, the President and the government are monitoring that project. Russia continues to clean up the Arctic, but it is not enough. There is a lack of funds to do it rapidly. We can assume that Russia could associate with the international environmental community to find some solutions to this problem.

Russia has an apparent imbalance preferring economic development, rather than sustainable development as yet. It is very unfortunate that the environmental dimension of sustainable development remains in the shadow of statements about socio-economic development. There are concerns about environmental security arising from a new stage in the socio-economic development of Russia’s Arctic zone. Fears arise in particular from the pre-existing experience of the large-scale Soviet development of the Arctic. So, it is necessary to establish a special regime for nature management, environmental protection and pollution monitoring in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation. However, Russia has an opportunity to engage in the process of developing a concept of sustainable development for the Arctic through the Arctic Council. The Sustainable Development Working Group proposes to consider the Arctic zone as an indicator of environmental conditions that gives a signal to the rest of the world about the impact of global processes (Kharlamyeva & Lagutina, 2010: 214). Environmental aspects should be central to the sustainable development of the Arctic. Current environmental issues exist in all circumpolar countries.

Therefore, it is necessary to establish deeper international environmental cooperation. Indeed, creating an effective system of sustainable development is possible only with the participation of all eight Arctic states (Young, 1998; Dodin, 2005).

Meanwhile, the Northern Sea Route is the primary goal of the socio-economic development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation. First, the NSR will develop as a transport and logistics sector between Asia and Europe. Second, it will act as a service sector in the framework of major energy projects. Russia undertakes to restore its infrastructure on the NSR because it has the longest coastline in the Arctic Ocean. The melting of the Arctic ice cap opens opportunities for Russia regarding the development of the Northern Sea Route. Opening access to the Arctic sea routes may allow Russia to develop as a maritime power. Merchant ships can begin to navigate, accompanied by icebreakers, through the Arctic, including across the North Pole. However, it is necessary to develop international cooperation to build all the logistics, as well as provide opportunities for rapid emergency response and support commercial activity. In particular, Russia cannot implement its policies in the Arctic region without cooperation with other member states of the Arctic Council. The Arctic challenges are the shared responsibility of the circumpolar states. On the one hand, Russia's State Program notes the importance of international cooperation within the organizations that are mandated to address Arctic issues. On the other, it is already clear that a special place in Russia's international cooperation in the Arctic region will be occupied by the countries of Northeast Asia. In particular, there are great hopes associated with China. But it's clear that the Arctic is a region of international cooperation for Russia.

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Notes

1. In the new edition of 2017, the term of implementation has changed from 2020 to 2025.
2. Since 2013, the current state of Russia's economic and foreign policy development has been characterized by a strategy called "Turn to the East." The APEC summit held in Vladivostok in 2012 laid the basis of this strategy. Its goal is to expand Russia's political and economic influence in the Asian-Pacific region. In 2013, Vladimir Putin, in a message to the Federal Assembly, announced the rise of Siberia and the Far East as "a national priority for the XXI century." From then, Russia has begun to strengthen its diplomatic cooperation with Northeast Asian countries.
3. Western sanctions (anti-Russian sanctions) are restrictive measures taken by the EU, the United States and their satellite countries against Russia due to the Ukrainian crisis of 2014. The main types of sanctions are bans on entry for individuals and on the conduct of economic activities for companies.

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Section 4:

Indigenous Peoples

17

At the Margins: Political Change and Indigenous Self-Determination in Post-Soviet Chukotka

Gary N. Wilson & Jeffrey J. Kormos

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Russian North has undergone a profound process of political, economic and social change. Nowhere is this change more evident than in the Chukotskii Autonomous Okrug (Chukotka), one of the most remote regions in the Russian Federation. During the Soviet period, Chukotka was the recipient of considerable state support, which, in turn, led to the economic development of the region and an influx of settlers from other parts of the Soviet Union. These developments, however, quickly overwhelmed the Indigenous peoples of Chukotka, who became marginalized economically, politically and demographically.

The post-Soviet period has brought new and unprecedented changes to Chukotka and its inhabitants. In the 1990s, the decline in state support triggered an economic collapse and an out-migration of non-Indigenous settlers. Although the economic situation stabilized in the 2000s under the governorship of Roman Abramovich, a powerful oligarch with links to the upper echelons of the Russian state authority, the region still struggles to cope with the challenges facing northern regions in Russia and throughout the circumpolar world: remoteness, harsh environments, underdevelopment, size and a dependency on government support. The fate of Chukotka's Indigenous peoples in this changing context has been mixed. Developments during the earlier stages of the transition rebalanced the demographic profile of the region, increasing the proportion of Indigenous inhabitants in relation to the settler population, and provided some avenues for greater political autonomy, cultural regeneration and international collaboration. However, more recent changes, both at the federal and regional levels, have curtailed the activities of Indigenous organizations, bringing them under the increasing control of the state.

Introduction

The governance of northern regions and communities is complicated by a number of factors, including remoteness, harsh environments, underdevelopment, size and a dependency on other levels of government for basic services and economic support. The challenges facing northern regions and communities in contemporary Russia have been exacerbated by the transition away from the Soviet communist system. Despite the authoritarian and controlling nature of this system, it did provide substantial support in the form of infrastructure and economic subsidies. By contrast, the instability of the post-Soviet transition has caused a number of hardships and problems for people living in the North.

One of the most remote regions in the Russian Federation is the Chukotskii Autonomous *Okrug* (Chukotka). Located in the far eastern part of the country, across the narrow Bering Strait from Alaska, Chukotka is nine time zones and over 6,000 kilometres away from the Russian capital of Moscow. Throughout most of the Soviet period, the region was supported by the central government. This support prompted an influx of migrants from other parts of the Soviet Union in search of good wages, housing and other state benefits. Following the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991, however, central largesse evaporated and Chukotka, like many other northern regions in the newly constituted Russian Federation, underwent a dramatic demographic and economic collapse. Although this collapse was stemmed by the intervention of Roman Abramovich, one of Russia's most powerful oligarchs and governor of Chukotka from 2000-2008, the region and its inhabitants are still struggling to overcome the challenges of governance and development in a northern and remote setting.

This chapter will examine the political and economic development of Chukotka with a particular focus on the fate of the region's Indigenous peoples during the post-Soviet period. Controlled politically and economically by the communist state and overwhelmed demographically by the influx of migrants during the Soviet period, Chukotka's Indigenous peoples have experienced both positive and negative changes as a result of the post-Soviet transition. While the wholesale collapse of state support in the 1990s caused severe economic hardships, the out-migration of non-Indigenous settlers has rebalanced the demographic composition of the region, a change that could signal a resurgence of the region's Indigenous identity, both culturally and politically. Despite the legacies of authoritarianism, the political transition away from the communist system

encouraged the region's Indigenous peoples to become active in a number of domestic and international organizations and initiatives. More recently, however, the return of centralization and state control, especially under Russian President Vladimir Putin, has limited the activities of Indigenous organizations across Russia, thereby curtailing the political aspirations of Indigenous peoples in Chukotka.

This chapter draws mainly on English-language research and secondary sources on the region. It uses some Russian-language sources, mainly from the local media, but it does not include interviews with regional or local officials because of the political and logistical challenges associated with conducting fieldwork in such a remote and politically sensitive region. Part one situates Chukotka within the broader context of the Russian federal system and reviews its political transition in the post-Soviet period. Part two discusses the demographic and economic challenges that the region has faced since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Part three explores the impacts of development on Chukotka's Indigenous peoples during the Soviet period. Part four examines the efforts by Indigenous peoples in Chukotka to self-determine and outlines some of the key political challenges that they face at the start of the 21st century.

The political evolution of Chukotka in the post-Soviet period

Observers of Russian federalism and regional politics have noted a series of important trends in the relationship between the federal and regional governments since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Under Russia's first post-Soviet President, Boris Yeltsin, the political system underwent a process of decentralization. In some respects, decentralization was planned and managed; it was part of a broader strategy to preserve the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation during the initial transition period towards liberal democracy. The bilateral treaties negotiated between the federal and regional governments in the mid-to-late 1990s were evidence of efforts to hold Russia together in the face of political disintegration and prevent the country from following the same fate as its Soviet predecessor. In other respects, however, decentralization was unplanned; it was a reflection of the collapse of the centralized Soviet state, the weakness of the federal government and the rise of powerful regions. Indeed, many regional leaders took Yeltsin at his word when he said to "take all the autonomy you can swallow," and the result was an epic intergovernmental struggle over political authority and economic resources (Remington 2012).

Since Vladimir Putin came to power in 2000, the power relationship between the federal and regional governments has shifted dramatically. During the first decade of the new century, Putin introduced a series of reforms that were designed to strengthen the position of the federal government *vis-à-vis* the regions. These reforms, coupled with other developments such as the emergence of the national political party United Russia and the taming of the oligarchs, recentralized the Russian Federation by (re)creating the *vertikal*, the centralized hierarchy of political authority under the firm control of the executive branch of the government (Remington 2012).

It is within this shifting context that Chukotka has undergone significant political, economic and demographic change. In 1991, the region declared autonomy from Magadan *Oblast*, a region to which it had been administratively subordinated since 1977. This move was consistent with the autonomy declarations of many other regions in the Russian Federation. That being said, Chukotka was the only autonomous *okrug* to formally separate from its “host” region.¹

Politically, the 1990s were dominated by the iron rule of Aleksandr Nazarov, Chukotka’s first post-Soviet governor. Although the Nazarov administration faced an extremely difficult and, arguably, unprecedented economic and demographic collapse, as outlined in more detail below, it has been noted by one observer that political criticism of the government or its activities was not tolerated during his term in office (Diatchkova 2010).² Despite the demise of Soviet communism, democracy had not yet taken root. Indeed, such authoritarian tendencies were common throughout Russia as regions and regional leaders attempted to fill the vacuum left by the collapse of the centralized Soviet state.

Nazarov was followed as governor in 2000 by Roman Abramovich, a powerful oligarch with close connections to both Boris Yeltsin and Vladimir Putin. Abramovich served two terms as governor, during which time he transformed the economy and infrastructure of the region. It was rumoured that he invested \$2.5 billion of his own money in the region and, as a result, was very popular (Jensen 2013). After 2008, Abramovich continued to play a political role in Chukotka as the speaker of the regional legislature. The current governor of Chukotka is Roman Kopin, a former advisor to both Nazarov and Abramovich, who had served as municipal leader in the region before being appointed governor in July of 2008. Kopin was reelected as governor in September 2013 with almost 80% of the vote (Noskov 2013).

Economic and demographic change in the post-Soviet period

In the decade following the collapse of communism, Chukotka, like the rest of the former Soviet Union, underwent a series of profound economic, social and political transitions. Such changes were felt across Russia, as the country struggled to create a new political system. The effects of the transition in Chukotka (and in many other northern regions), however, were accentuated by the particular circumstances facing the region, namely its remoteness from other parts of Russia, its lack of development and the high degree of dependency that it had on the central government during the Soviet period.

Until the 1990s, Chukotka had been heavily supported by the central state. According to one source:

A high regional wage coefficient and the northern wage increment made the wage level considerably higher in Chukotka [than] those in the country in general and in the Magadan Oblast' in particular. It attracted [a] qualified workforce to the region and the population was increasing due to the influx. (Chukotka 2014)

As a result, over the course of the post-war period, the population of the region grew exponentially from 20,787 in 1939 to 164,783 in 1989, largely through in-migration from other parts of the Soviet Union. This massive influx of outsiders made Indigenous peoples a minority in their homelands. In 1939, Indigenous peoples comprised 75.4% of the total population of Chukotka. By 1989, the region's Indigenous population had shrunk to only 30.8% (Abryutina 2007a).³

The break-up of the Soviet Union brought about another demographic shift that was unparalleled, except in times of war and extreme civil strife. Within a decade of the Soviet collapse, the population of Chukotka had shrunk to 53,824, a decline of over 100,000 people (Heleniak 2001). While the sheer numbers and percentages alone are dramatic, what are even more significant are the imbalances that such shifts create in the demographic profile of the remaining population. For example, the people who left the region tended to be younger, educated professionals who were more mobile (Hill & Gaddy 2003). This only exacerbated the political and economic challenges facing remote and northern regions such as Chukotka.

The outmigration also had a distinctly ethnic dimension in that the majority of residents who left Chukotka were Russians and Ukrainians, many of whom had come to the region in Soviet times in search of career

advancement, higher wages and housing (Thompson 2008). As noted above, over the course of the post-war period, the settler population gradually overwhelmed the Indigenous populations of the region. As Thompson (2008: 113) noted in his study of settler-state relations in Chukotka:

The collapse of the Soviet Union stripped the settler of practically all those features of privilege that previously defined this population, and it did so with remarkable speed and thoroughness. Northern *osvoenie* [mastery] had been one of the Soviet regime's most cherished projects, but the suddenness of its end showed, finally, how little rationale it possessed beyond Moscow's fiat. Settlers once lived within a zone of remarkable abundance and earned far more than workers on the *materik* [mainland]. Now Chukotka suffered acute shortages of everyday goods and food, and by the mid-1990s, prices rose to the highest level in Russia.

As a result of the outmigration of non-Indigenous inhabitants, the demographic balance between Indigenous peoples and settlers has been partially restored to levels that have not been seen since the 1950s.

The post-Soviet demographic transformation was accompanied (and accentuated) by a socio-economic crisis in the region, as subsidized industries shut down because they were unprofitable in a market context. Basic services in areas such as health care and education were starved of resources, and traditional activities, in particular reindeer herding and fur trading, went into decline (Chukotka 2014; Abryutina 2007a). Despite investments in infrastructure and services during the Abramovich era, such problems persist today. In a recent meeting between representatives of the regional government and senators representing Chukotka in the Federation Council, the upper chamber of the Russian parliament, Senator Aramays Dallakyan noted "the lack of funding for the implementation of the Strategy of socio-economic development of the Chukotskii Autonomous Okrug" (Chukotskii Avtonomnyi *Okrug* 2015). In a separate interview, the Head of the *Okrug's* Department of Social Policy, Anastasia Zhukova, commented on the importance of continued investment in infrastructure such as roads, airports and seaports as a key component of the overall strategy to develop the region (Masalova 2015).

One area of particular concern is marine hunting, an integral part of the fishing industry in the region and an important part of the economic development of Indigenous communities. According to the Deputy Head

of the *okrug's* Department of Agricultural Policy and Environmental Management, Evgenyi Marochkin, it was unfortunate that marine hunting was not included in the list of activities targeted by the federal program on the development of the agricultural economy and the regulation of agricultural products, raw materials and food for 2013-2020 (Noskov i Omruv'e 2015). In response, the Head of the Regional Duma, Valentina Rudchenko, said that "[the region] must continue to work with federal agencies, for federal support is very important for us, as the district budget is clearly not enough for the implementation of government programs" (Noskov i Omruv'e 2015). These comments from regional officials demonstrate the hierarchical nature of politics in contemporary Russia. At the same time, they also reveal the underlying frustrations and dependencies that characterize Chukotka's relationship with the federal government.

Impacts of development on Chukotka's Indigenous peoples during the Soviet period

Chukotka's diverse Indigenous population consists of the Chukchi, Yupik, Even, Kerek, Koryak, Yukaghir, and Chuvan peoples (Diatchkova 2002, 2010; Leonova 2011). Before the Soviet era, Chukotka's Indigenous peoples maintained their independence from the Russian empire and traded freely with Russians, Americans and each other. In fact:

the Chukchi tribesmen were the only native Siberian tribe violent and warlike enough ever to fight the Russian invaders to a negotiated peace, concluded in 1778. Even after the Russian withdrawal from the *ostrog* of Anadyrsk⁴ under the terms of the treaty, the Chukchi remained notorious raiders of Russian settlements and caravans. (Matthews 2013. See also Znamenski 1999)

The Russian Revolution, however, ushered in the era of Soviet rule, initiating the subjugation of Chukotka's Indigenous peoples and forever changing their relationship with the state.

The economic activity of Chukotka's Indigenous peoples in the early Soviet era was intrinsically linked with the landscape. Coastal peoples such as the Yupik were sea mammal hunters, while tundra and inland dwellers such as the Yukaghir and Koryaks were reindeer herders. The Chukchi, the largest Indigenous group in Chukotka, were comprised of both herders and hunters, depending on whether they resided on the tundra or the coast. Both occupations required a great deal of travel, and the Indigenous peoples were either nomadic or semi-nomadic peoples (Diatchkova 2010). Soviet

authority was slow to penetrate Chukotka's Indigenous peoples, likely because of the great distance between Moscow and the region, coupled with their nomadic lifestyles, but also because they had resisted political control during the Tsarist period. Indeed, the first step to managing Chukotka's Indigenous peoples was sedentarization.

According to Pika (1999), there were three stages of state policy towards northern Indigenous peoples in the Soviet Union. Between 1929 and the early 1930s, the state offered "assistance oriented towards education, self-government, and the formation of cooperatives" (Pika 1999: 59). From the 1930s through the mid-1950s, the state's concern was the development and solidification of the "totalitarian administrative command system" and the exploitation of the Indigenous labour pool to meet state planning objectives (Pika 1999: 59). Finally, the mid-1950s through the early 1980s ushered in the era of "state bureaucratic paternalism," which was characterized by the formation of "minor privileges, perks and ineffective aid" (Pika 1999: 59). In the formative years of the Soviet Union, the "frontline strategy for civilizing the North" was the *kultbaza* (culture base), a Soviet school for Indigenous children (Gray 2005: 104). The first such school in Chukotka opened in Uelen in 1923. The *komsomol* (communist youth league) was instituted to lead the "cultural revolution," and, in Chukotka particularly, to bring "literacy to the tundra" (Gray 2005: 101). A policy of *korenizatsia* (indigenization) was instituted to grant self-determination to Soviet Indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples were recruited to key roles within state enterprises to create an Indigenous elite, competent in Marxist-Leninist principles and loyal to the communist regime (Gray 2005). However, as Kerttula (2000: 10) argues, rather than serving to "homogenize the Union," *korenizatsia* instead "institutionalized ethnic identity." Over the course of the post-war period, participation in state organs by Indigenous peoples significantly decreased. For example, in 1945, 72% of Chukotka's *komsomol* members were Indigenous, but by 1980, membership had dropped to 14.2% (Gray 2005). This decline may also have been a reflection of the significant decrease in the number of Indigenous peoples as an overall proportion of the population in Chukotka, due to in-migration from other parts of the Soviet Union.

By the 1930s, the collectivization of reindeer herds had begun in Chukotka, although it would be the 1950s before the Soviet authorities completed the sedentarization of Chukchi herders (Thompson 2008). The Soviet policy of *ukreplenie* (consolidation) closed villages and relocated residents to permanent settlements for reasons of administrative efficiency

in the provision of services (Gray 2001) and for strategic military purposes (Abryutina 2007b). The results were two-fold: post-relocation villages consisted of mixed Russian and Indigenous populations (Krupnik & Chlenov 2007), and control over the economic drivers of Indigenous society was relinquished to outsiders (Pelaudeix 2012). Chukotka's Indigenous peoples became state employees, losing authority over their herds to Russian specialists (Thompson 2008). Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, the policy of *ukreplenie* was employed to consolidate residents into larger communities (Krupnik & Chlenov 2007).

Thompson (2002) describes the early post-war period as the era of "Soviet mastery" – the extraction of resource wealth and the enlightenment of the Indigenous peoples. The key feature of Soviet mastery was the establishment of large, permanent settler populations (Thompson 2002). This period featured the large-scale and rapid development of the industrial complex of the Russian Far North (Gray 2005; Sillanpää 2008). A massive in-migration of new skilled workers occurred, and these workers were tasked with organizing mining operations, consolidating state farms, preparing cadres and searching for new ways to organize reindeer herding (Gray 2005). Substantial development and industrialization shifted the demographic profile of Chukotka from a largely rural to a largely urban population and, as in other Indigenous regions in northern and eastern Russia, Indigenous peoples became outnumbered by settlers (Gray 2005; Schindler 1996).

During the 1960s, infrastructure was built to support mining and nuclear energy development (Sillanpää 2008). Indigenous peoples' employment in *sovkhozy* (state farms) was largely directed at supplying goods to the industrial development of the Soviet Union. They were underrepresented in the new industrial workforce, while traditional activities such as trapping, hunting and fishing were unprofitable and unsuccessful, as there was no infrastructure to support traditional economic activity (Sillanpää 2008). Chukotka's economy was constructed to secure the supply of minerals and strategic resources for the development of the national economy (Krupnik & Vakhtin 2002); however, damaging and unsustainable practices in resource extraction resulted in multiple centres of industrial pollution and environmental degradation (Diatchkova 2010).

The collapse of the Soviet Union brought about another set of changes to the lives of Chukotka's Indigenous peoples. Between 1985 and 2000, the already low employment rate of Indigenous peoples dropped from 59% to 21.5%, and purchasing power to buy food decreased by 12.3% (Borodin et

al. 2002). Soviet-era social programs and subsidies ended, a reality that was felt particularly in remote villages where there was nothing to replace the lost structures. People became politically and physically disenfranchised. Inflation depleted savings and made pensions worthless, and, as noted above, massive depopulation and out-migration ensued. Medical supplies and facilities were depleted, and unemployment increased while access to goods decreased (Kerttula 2000).

In the 1990s, Chukotka was in an advanced state of humanitarian crisis initiated by the exodus of non-Indigenous skilled labour, the failure of shipping deliveries and the liquidation of state enterprises. As a result, starvation, suicide and alcoholism became prevalent amongst the Indigenous population (Thompson 2008). There was also a shift in the local administrative demographic. As settlers left Chukotka, villagers replaced them in positions in the administration of local government (Krupnik & Vakhtin 2002). Indigenous peoples were even more disadvantaged in terms of transitioning to the market economy. Traditional economic activity shifted from supporting industrial development to isolated economic activity, resulting in ethnic stratification and unequal access to goods and services (Schindler 1992). Perhaps the one positive outcome for Indigenous peoples was that the increased reliance on traditional subsistence activities, necessary for survival, led to increased cultural awareness (Kerttula 2000).

Indigenous self-determination in Chukotka

Against the backdrop of this socio-economic crisis, there were also some significant political and legislative changes that impacted Indigenous peoples in Chukotka. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, new local and regional associations began to appear in Chukotka. In 1990, federal legislation entitled *Unhindered Ethnic Development of Citizens of the USSR who live Outside their Ethnic Areas or Have no Such Areas Within the Territory of the USSR* allowed for the creation of political associations based on nationality (Kryazhkov 2013). The “Yupik Eskimo Society of Chukotka” (YESC) and the “Association of Indigenous Peoples of Chukotka”⁵ formed to promote Indigenous rights and self-determination for Chukotka’s Indigenous peoples. These new local Indigenous institutions were supported by the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia, and the Far East (RAIPON), a larger national association with members from 35 regional organizations and 41 Indigenous groups (Gray 2007). RAIPON’s goals include greater self-determination for Indigenous peoples through self-government, human rights protection and the legal protection

of Indigenous social, economic and environmental interests (Arctic Council 2011).

The above-mentioned collapse of central authority throughout the country reinforced the *de facto* autonomy of the regional government throughout much of the 1990s. In Chukotka, the Nazarov administration began to secure the region from outside influence. Indigenous organizations seeking political legitimacy were harassed and often co-opted by the regional authorities (Thompson 2008). Newly enacted federal legislation, such as the law *On Guarantees of the Rights of Small-Numbered Indigenous Peoples*, was at odds with regional legislation, and enforcement by the federal authorities was problematic (Pelaudeix 2012), a reflection of the weakness of the federal government. While the Indigenous rights movement in Chukotka gained some momentum in the late Soviet and early post-Soviet periods, the regional bureaucracy opposed and interfered with local attempts at Indigenous self-determination (Krupnik & Vakhtin 2002). Indigenous peoples' organizations sought the status of "political organizations" in order to be taken seriously by regional authorities (Diatchkova 2010).

By the end of the 1990s, the Nazarov administration had successfully marginalized Chukotka's Indigenous movement by framing Russia's new democratic principles of equality in opposition to "Indigenous" self-determination (Tennberg 2010). Funding for Indigenous political organizations was limited, and was dispersed at the discretion of the regional authorities. In 1999, the Arbitration Court of the Chukchi Autonomous *Okrug* ordered the offices of YESC to be closed and its assets liquidated (Ainana, Zelensky & Bychkov 2001).

The rights of Indigenous peoples are guaranteed by the Russian Federation's Constitution (1993). Article 69 "guarantees the rights of indigenous peoples in compliance with the universally recognized principles and norms of international law and treaties concluded with the Russian Federation." Article 69 is legally implemented with the formal adoption of three federal statutes: *On Guarantees of the Rights of Small-Numbered Indigenous Peoples* (1999), *On the General Principles for the Organization of Obshchiny* (2001) and *On the Territories of Traditional Nature Use* [TTNUs] (2001). At the *okrug* level, the Charter of the Chukotka Autonomous Region (1997) protects Indigenous peoples' rights in Articles 1, 3, 19, 43 and 63 (Kriazhkov 2006). Indeed, on paper, Indigenous rights in Russia have robust protection by law. In practice, however, terms are defined

broadly and often regional and federal statutes are misaligned, resulting in conflicting interpretations and application of the law.⁶

As outlined in more detail in the next section, the leadership of Chukotka's Indigenous political organizations, made up of members of the former Soviet Indigenous intelligentsia, sought outside help from the transnational Indigenous rights movement, which was particularly evident throughout the circumpolar North (Gray 2007). Through collaboration with the Inuit Circumpolar Council and Alaskan municipal associations, humanitarian aid, funding, equipment and various projects were established throughout the Russian Far East to help Indigenous peoples survive the transition. However, the new millennium would bring a new centralizing force to the Russian presidency, eventually curtailing international aid and reframing the debate regarding Indigenous self-determination as conflicting with nationalist principles of equality.

Despite the initially negative effects of the transition, the changes that have taken place over the last two decades could provide the basis for a reawakening of Indigenous identity and control in Chukotka. At the same time, such a reawakening must be viewed within the broader context that shapes Indigenous-state relations in Russia at the start of the 21st century. The following section will outline a number of developments that have either facilitated or hindered the political status of Indigenous peoples in Chukotka since 2000.

The return of the Obshchina

In the immediate aftermath of the Soviet collapse, the issue of Indigenous land rights in Russia garnered interest among both Western and Russian scholars (Fondahl & Poelzer 2003; Fondahl, Lazebnik, Poelzer & Robbek 2001). In her work on land and Indigenous rights in Chukotka in the late 1990s and 2000s, Patty Gray noted movement towards the return of the *obshchina*, “or ‘ancestral community,’ a special category of land tenure defined in Russian law” (Gray 2001: 1). Although *obshchiny* existed in other parts of the Russian Federation (Stammmler 2005; Fondahl 1998), in Chukotka they were fewer in number because the “regional authorities [under Nazarov] were more reluctant to give up centralized control of local production and administration” (Gray 2001: 1). The rebirth of *obshchiny*, however, was critical to the rejuvenation of traditional land tenure practices and activities. In many respects, these territorial formations represent a form of Indigenous self-governance. In 2001, a new federal law on traditional resource management and the end of Nazarov's term in office brought new

hope that the number of *obshchiny* would grow. In practice, however, requests to establish TTNU of federal significance have been rejected (Kryazhkov 2013). Furthermore, a December 2013 amendment to the federal act *On Specially Protected Conservation Areas* removed TTNU from its purview, exposing them to the possibility of unmitigated industrial development and expansion (International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs 2014b).

The Abramovich era and beyond

In the early 2000s, Chukotka's second post-Soviet governor, Roman Abramovich, brought with him from Moscow a young and well-educated cadre of professionals to fill administrative positions in the regional government (Thompson 2008). He also made significant investments in infrastructure in the region. While ethnic stratification and state paternalism remained in regional decision-making bodies, an "Indigenous Representatives Council" was established to resolve Indigenous issues and reserve seats in the Regional Duma (parliament) for Chukotka's Indigenous peoples (Diatchkova 2010). Despite these developments, however, there is still no clear indication that Indigenous peoples have any meaningful representation in regional or federal government institutions. Survey research conducted through the international Survey of Living Conditions in the Arctic (SLiCA) project found that Indigenous respondents "[considered] the governorship of Roman Abramovich especially warmly" (Abryutina 2007a). At the same time, at the end of Abramovich's time in office, Diatchkova (2010: 226) noted:

The participants of the 2009 Congress of Chukotka's indigenous peoples also discussed the absence of any critical information on regional politics or indigenous issues in the media. This is the main reason for the lack of knowledge in respect of indigenous rights among current indigenous representatives.

Under current governor Roman Kopin, there have been some attempts to address the development of Indigenous peoples in the region. As noted above, often this involves struggles with the federal government for resources to fund programs to support traditional livelihoods such as marine mammal hunting. In a recent interview, the Head of the Department of Social Policy, Anastasia Zhukova, commented that "the government will continue to solve the problems of the indigenous population of the district" (Masalova 2015). Although the government's intentions are clearly worded, this top-down, paternalistic approach to development simply reinforces the power of the

state over Indigenous peoples in the region, rather than allowing them to have greater control over their lives and their land.

Legislation on non-governmental organizations (NGOs)

Although the Putin era has brought political and economic stability to Russia, it has also been characterized by increasing political repression, especially of political opponents and organizations that function outside the state. During the late Soviet and immediate post-Soviet period, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were an important means to develop Russian civil society, and could rely on external financial support from foreign organizations (Daucé 2010). By the mid-2000s, however, civil society had been largely coopted by the state through the creation of bodies such as the Public Chamber and the increasing repression of NGOs. In 2006, the federal government passed the legislation *On Introducing Amendments into Certain Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation*, commonly referred to as the “NGO Law” (Crotty & Hall 2013). Among other things, this law required groups to register with the state and divulge personal information regarding their members and founders. It allowed state officials unrestricted access to group meetings including private policy and campaigning activities, and required the reporting of foreign financial support, including how funds were being obtained and spent, effectively restricting funding to domestic sources (Crotty & Hall 2013). In July of 2012, additional legislation required NGOs with political activities and foreign funding to register as “foreign agents” and submit a report of their financial activities every quarter (Crotty, Hall & Ljubownikow 2014). As a result, the state actively discriminates against internationally integrated NGOs and western-funded human rights organizations (Fröhlich 2012). In fact, recently-enacted legislation states that members of an NGO that is labelled “undesirable” may be subject to fines and jail time (Tétrault-Farber 2015).

These changes have impacted the ability of Indigenous organizations such as RAIPON and affiliated organizations in Chukotka such as YESC to operate and to engage with Indigenous organizations outside Russia. In 2012, the Russian Ministry of Justice found “irregularities in [RAIPON’s] organizational statutes” and forced RAIPON to cease operations (Staaleser 2013). Both organizations were accused of failing to abide by the aforementioned legislation requiring NGOs to register with the state and secure themselves as “legal entities” while obtaining funding from outside of Russia. As well, the suspensions of both organizations lasted for about a year

before the state determined that the appropriate paperwork was submitted and they could return to their business. In 2014, an Indigenous hunters' association in Chukotka was asked to voluntarily register as a foreign agent because the association was using joint American and Russian funding to study walruses. Although the organization was not involved in political activities, the leader was a candidate for a seat in local government, which clearly constituted a political activity to the authorities (International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs 2014a). The association refused, but the authorities made it clear that they would be harassed, and in the end would be forced to register as a foreign agent.

International collaboration

The geographical proximity of Chukotka to the United States (Alaska) and Canada, coupled with historical connections between the Indigenous peoples of this part of the circumpolar North, has facilitated international collaboration since the collapse of the Soviet Union. In particular, the representatives from YESC have become actively involved in the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), a transnational organization representing Inuit peoples in four different countries. During the socio-economic crisis in the early to mid-1990s, the ICC worked with the Canadian government and other organizations to deliver humanitarian aid to the Indigenous peoples of Chukotka and the Russian North (Wilson 2007). Additionally, a number of bilateral projects dedicated to wildlife management, cultural preservation and environmental protection were initiated between Alaska and Chukotka, including the Chukotka Walrus Harvest Monitoring Project and the joint US/Russia Polar Bear Commission (Diatchkova 2010). Such examples of collaboration between the Indigenous peoples of Russia and other regions in the circumpolar North are important because they open the region and its inhabitants up to the outside world after decades of isolation during the Soviet period, thereby allowing for the sharing of best practices and new ideas. The Inuit peoples of Alaska, Canada and Greenland, for example, have made great strides over the last several decades in their quest for political and economic autonomy. Their progress provides a benchmark for other Indigenous peoples, not only in Russia, but also in other parts of the world.

Of course, there are many barriers to continued international collaboration on the part of Russian Indigenous peoples. In addition to the controls that the state places on non-governmental organizations, Indigenous groups that do engage actively in international collaboration are

often very small in number and have limited human and financial resources to draw on. Tatiana Achirgina, the President of the Inuit Circumpolar Council, Chukotka, has commented that her organization simply lacks competent and persistent leaders who are able to attend international forums and work hard and consistently to preserve Yupik culture and traditions (Leonova 2015).

Conclusions

As in other regions and countries around the world, Indigenous peoples in Chukotka have suffered greatly at the hands of the state. After centuries of relative isolation within the Russian Empire, Soviet communism brought about a wholesale change in the political and economic circumstances facing Indigenous peoples in Chukotka. Soviet development also brought an influx of settlers from other parts of the Soviet Union, which demographically overwhelmed and marginalized the Indigenous populations of the region. The demise of the Soviet Union brought new and unprecedented challenges, namely in the form of socio-economic collapse and a massive outmigration of people from the region. While Indigenous peoples now form a very strong plurality in Chukotka, they still struggle to realize and assert their traditional Indigenous rights.

As the Indigenous peoples of Chukotka look to the future, there is some hope that they will be able to achieve some measure of self-governance and control. The stabilization of the region (at least relative to the chaos of the 1990s), coupled with other developments such as the prospects for developing *obshchiny* and connecting with Indigenous peoples in other parts of the circumpolar North who have been successful in building self-governing Indigenous regions, is a sign that the future may hold some promise. As noted earlier, the Indigenous peoples of this region have a long history of resistance and independence and, as leaders such as Aleksandr Omrypkir and Tatiana Achirgina have argued, it is critically important that they preserve their traditions and remain united in the face of political and economic change. At the same time, it is important to note the very different and difficult political context in which Indigenous peoples in Russia operate. Whereas Indigenous peoples in Alaska and Canada have been able to work with other levels of government to achieve self-governance, the federal and regional governments in Russia are still suspicious of and even hostile towards any attempts to bolster Indigenous autonomy. As a result, Indigenous peoples in Chukotka still find themselves at the margins of Russian society, politically, economically and geographically.

Notes

1. Chukotka was the only one of the ten autonomous *okrugs* to become independent from their host regions. Since 1991, several autonomous *okrugs* have been politically and territorially amalgamated into their host regions (Wilson 2003). For a more in-depth discussion of Russia's autonomous *okrugs* and their status within the federal system, see Wilson (2001 and 2003).
2. Popular discontent with the Nazarov administration and the extremely poor living conditions in the region was also reflected in a collective letter that was sent by the residents of Provideniya in eastern Chukotka to the President of the Russian Federation in 1999 (Bogoslovskaya 2000).
3. Similar demographic transitions were also experienced in other northern regions such as Khanty-Mansiysk in Western Siberia (see Wilson 2001).
4. An *ostrog* is a stockade town that served as a colonial outpost in Siberia, the Russian Far East and Russian America during the Tsarist period.
5. The Association of Indigenous Peoples of Chukotka just celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2015 (see Kopylova 2015).
6. Authority over lands protected for the traditional use of Indigenous peoples is shared between the federal and regional governments. Often federal and regional statutes disagree or are in conflict. While the laws *On Obshinas* and *On TTNUs* were created to give Indigenous peoples free and hereditary use and transfer of traditional lands, the Forest Code of the Russian Federation excludes Indigenous peoples from holding land tenure rights (Laletin 2012).

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18

Security of Indigenous Peoples in Russia's Arctic Policy: Exposing the Oxymoron of State-Determined Self-Determination

Agne Cepinskyte

Since the late 1980s, international law and academic scholarship have been devoting increasing attention to the security of Indigenous peoples. The international community has accepted Indigenous peoples as collective actors with distinct rights under international law. Similarly, academic scholarship has recognized them as both referent objects of security and, to an extent, security actors. Post-Cold War transformations in the Arctic exemplify the special role of Indigenous peoples in the field of security. However, their security still largely depends on the policy of states under whose jurisdiction they live. Russia's domestic policy developments, particularly amid the increased suppression of civil society since 2011, have deviated from the course of international law and scholarship. While policymakers have persistently referred to the protection of Indigenous peoples as one of the primary objectives of Russia's Arctic policy, human rights bodies have repeatedly noted the government's violations of Indigenous rights, especially in the context of the "foreign agent" legislation and gas infrastructure development in the Yamal Peninsula. Instead of treating this discordance as merely a case of dishonest political rhetoric, this article aims to explain it by exposing the government's paternalistic relation to society, which underlies Russia's policy. It thereby reveals a paradox of state-determined self-determination – a rejection of this right as inherent in peoples. The article concludes that Russia's denial of this right compromises Indigenous security, because the government alone cannot ensure its protection. Such findings could facilitate a critical assessment of the protection of Indigenous security in states whose regimes dominate society.

Introduction

Since the late 1980s, both international law and academic scholarship have been devoting increasing attention to Indigenous peoples and their security. International legal documents, most notably the 1989 Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (ILO 169) and the 2007 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), enshrine a body of Indigenous rights and impose on state governments the responsibility to guarantee the free enjoyment of these rights. UNDRIP explicitly recognizes the collective right of Indigenous peoples to live in freedom, peace and security (Articles 7, 20). Even though over 160 states have not ratified the ILO 169 Convention, and UNDRIP is a legally non-binding resolution of the UN General Assembly, the core provisions of these documents reflect customary international law, with which states are required to comply (ILA, 2010: 6, 43; ILA, 2012: 28).

In 2010, the International Law Association (ILA) concluded that “the international community has come to a consensus that Indigenous peoples are a concern of international law”, and customary rules on Indigenous rights constitute a part of the contemporary international legal order. The crystallization of the fundamental norms concerning Indigenous peoples as customary international law signifies the development of state practice (both at the domestic and international, jurisdictional and legislative levels) and affirms the responsibility of states to ensure the protection of the fundamental rights and security of Indigenous communities (ILA, 2010: 43–52). Even those states that initially voted against the UNDRIP, namely Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States, have subsequently changed their position and endorsed the declaration.¹ Thus, the international community has come to accept Indigenous peoples as collective actors with distinct rights and status under international law.

Similarly, academic scholarship has recognized Indigenous peoples as both referent objects of security and, to an extent, security actors. Following the end of the Cold War, scholars have challenged the traditional state-centric, military-focused view of security and redefined it as a concept encompassing multiple dimensions and engaging various actors, including Indigenous peoples. The Copenhagen School of Security Studies has introduced the notion of societal security as one of the five sectors of security. Societal security concerns threats to the collective identities of “large, self-sustaining identity groups”, such as Indigenous peoples, and refers to the sustainability of their “traditional patterns of language, culture

and religious and national identity and custom” (Buzan, 2007: 112; Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde, 1998: 119-121). The security of Indigenous peoples is also linked to human security – a concept that derives from the 1994 UN Human Development Report and aims to protect the survival, livelihood and dignity of people.

Post-Cold War transformations in the Arctic provide an example by which to explain the increased international legal and scholarly attention to the security of Indigenous peoples. Even though some Arctic Indigenous peoples, such as the Nordic Sámi and the Canadian Inuit, began mobilizing decades before the end of the Cold War, their engagement in Arctic security matters has increased since the 1990s, as the dominance of nuclear and military deterrence faded from the Arctic policy of the circumpolar states. In 1994, under the auspices of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS), the Arctic states assigned three organizations representing the Arctic’s Indigenous peoples (the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON), and the Saami Council) the special status of Permanent Participants (PP).

As the AEPS evolved into the Arctic Council in 1996, the three organizations retained their PP status, which allowed them to participate and be consulted in the intergovernmental decision-making processes. Within the next few years, the Arctic Council granted three other Indigenous peoples’ organizations (the Aleut International Association (AIA), the Arctic Athabaskan Council (AAC), and the Gwich’in Council International (GCI)) PP status. The three organizations joined the ICC, RAIPON and the Saami Council at the Arctic Council Indigenous Peoples’ Secretariat. Furthermore, three groups of Indigenous peoples in the Barents Region – the Sámi, Nenets and Veps – take part in the Barents Regional Council, which was set up in 1993.

These regional political institutions have integrated Indigenous peoples within the framework of the Arctic transnational political structure, allowing them to contribute to countering security threats posed to their collective identity by socio-cultural, environmental and other transformations in the region (Hossain, 2016: 420). However, even though the Arctic Indigenous peoples engage in political consultations within such bodies as the Arctic Council and the Barents Regional Council, they do not have international legal standing to defend their collective rights and identity on their own. Consequently, the security of Indigenous peoples

largely depends on the national policies of the states under whose jurisdiction they live.

In most Arctic states, Indigenous peoples have made significant progress toward achieving a greater recognition of their rights through engagement in domestic political processes. The Sámi people in Finland, Norway and Sweden represent themselves in the Sámi Parliaments, which provide an avenue for Indigenous participation in political decision-making (Josefsen, 2010). In Canada, the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), a national representational organization, advocates the rights and promotes the unified interests of the Inuit people. Even though challenges for the Nordic Sámi and the Inuit in preserving their identity and traditional ways of life still persist, overall, Canada, Finland, Norway and Sweden have made positive steps forward in accommodating Indigenous rights (Anaya, 2011; Anaya, 2014; Carstens, 2016; Wilson & Selle, 2019).

By contrast, Russia's domestic policy concerning Indigenous rights has been regressive. It has deviated from the course of international law and scholarship that, as observed above, demonstrates an attempt to overcome the state-centric view of security by strengthening the agency of Indigenous peoples. The Russian government, particularly amid the increased suppression of civil society since 2011, has been restricting the exercise of Indigenous rights. While Russia's policymakers have embellished political discourse with references to the protection of Indigenous peoples as one of the primary objectives of the state's Arctic policy, domestic and international non-governmental organizations as well as supervisory bodies of human rights treaties have repeatedly drawn attention to the Russian government's violations of Indigenous rights.

Instead of treating this discordance as merely a case of dishonest political rhetoric, the present article aims to explain it by exposing the state's relation to society, which underlies and rationalizes Russia's policy towards Indigenous peoples in the Arctic. Relying on Barry Buzan's arguments concerning the socio-political origins of a state's national security policy, it proposes that the government's policy towards the Arctic Indigenous peoples and their security is constructed on the backbone of the idea of the state, which underscores the conceptual link between the Russian state and the nation (i.e., between the governing institutions and society). This article thereby questions the possibility of a universal definition of Indigenous security in the Arctic. It suggests that the understanding of it and,

consequently, its protection ultimately depend on the socio-political strands of the state in question.

The article begins by revealing the socio-political underpinnings of Russia's policy towards Indigenous peoples and their security. It then discusses the policy concerning the protection of Indigenous peoples in the context of Russia's "foreign agent" legislation and gas infrastructure development in the Yamal Peninsula. The article concludes by exposing the paradoxical phenomenon of state-determined self-determination, which stems from the socio-political relation between the Russian government and society while also underlying the policy towards Indigenous peoples, and considers the implications for Indigenous security.

The socio-political underpinnings of Indigenous security policy

There is no universally accepted definition of Indigenous security. However, it concerns the security of communities and as such is closely related to the concept of human security. The concept complements the traditional state-centric view of security by centring on individuals as well as communities and by acknowledging interdependencies between human rights and national security. The empowerment of individuals and communities to withstand and counter non-military threats is a crucial part of the human security framework (CHS, 2003; UNGA 64/701). In the case of Indigenous peoples, international law guarantees such empowerment through the right to self-determination, which entitles them to "freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development" (ICCPR; ICESCR, Article 1.1; UNDRIP, Article 3).

The right to self-determination inherently belongs to Indigenous peoples. While the right is not granted by the state, the exercise of it cannot jeopardize the territorial integrity or political unity of states, i.e., it cannot violate state sovereignty (UNDRIP, Article 46(1)). However, the human security approach suggests that human rights and state sovereignty complement rather than compete with one another. The empowerment of individuals and communities in protecting their rights and ensuring security does not undermine state sovereignty but enhances it, because human and national security are inseparable (UNGA 64/701: 6). Such an argument is based on the assumption that sovereignty derives from the nation, and thus the protection of state sovereignty, which is at the core of national security policy, fails if people are insecure. Nonetheless, in some states, such as those with non-democratic regimes, sovereignty rests with the government rather

than the people. Consequently, the national security policy of these states is likely to be based on the state-centric instead of the human rights approach.

This article argues that a state's Indigenous security policy has socio-political underpinnings. It derives from the conceptual relation between the government and society. This argument relies on Barry Buzan's reasoning that national security fundamentally concerns the relation between nation and state, which is captured in the "idea of the state" (Buzan, 2007: 70-83). The article distinguishes between two ideas of the state: a nation-state where the nation legitimizes the state and a state-nation where the government dominates the nation. It proposes that national policy concerning groups of people, such as Indigenous communities, reflects the relationship between the government and society: the more the government dominates society, the more its security policy is shaped by state interests and *vice versa*. Accordingly, state-nations are unlikely to adopt the human rights-based approach to security, especially if that conflicts with the perceived interests of the state.

Mostafa Rejai and Cynthia Enloe, who introduced the state-nation concept in 1969, differentiated between states where chronologically the nation preceded the formation of political institutions (nation-states) and those where the state played an active role in mobilizing and creating the nation (state-nations). In the former case, the national identity usually developed upward and towards certain common goals, whilst in the latter case, it was often officially sponsored, generated at the top and then filtered downward. In state-nations, political authorities usually suppress bottom-up identities, because the government perceives them as potentially undermining rather than consolidating the state's authority (Rejai & Enloe, 1969: 144, 152-153).

Thus, in state-nations, the government's relation to society is constructed from above, and the source of sovereignty is the government rather than the nation. According to Barry Buzan, state-nations often incorporate a multitude of nationalities as well as Indigenous communities. However, even in such cases, state-nations tend to absorb or subordinate Indigenous peoples by either obliterating their identities or adding a new layer of collective identity (Buzan, 2007: 76-77). In this sense, Buzan agrees with Rejai and Enloe's argument that state-nations seek to prevent the empowerment of bottom-up identities, particularly if they could potentially compromise the government's authority.

Putin's Russia fits the definition of a state-nation: it is a strong authoritative political structure, where the government is envisioned as the sole protector of its people's rights and liberties. In post-Soviet Russia, the communist ideology, the one common denominator that society had known for decades, was abruptly discarded. There was no uniform and uniting idea of the Russian state in the 1990s. Russia's imperial tradition of a strong monarch, reinforced by the immediate necessity to uphold a strong indivisible state authority to prevent the fragmentation of the nation and of the government itself, determined that post-communist Russia would ultimately derive its legitimacy from the sovereign. Boris Yeltsin's policies were leading up to this idea of the state in an intermittent manner, but it has been consolidated during Putin's rule.

The Putin government's idea of the state has been developed around the narrative of a strong central government and a subordinate civil society, which would be protected by the authoritative state – an idea consistent with that of a state-nation. Such an idea of the state is meant to strengthen people's attachment to the state and the government rather than encourage the growth of a self-dependent nation. Just before Yeltsin stepped down, Putin published the so-called "Millennium Manifesto". A great part of this document was devoted to explaining what state Putin aspired to create and how the nation should be unified. He continued Yeltsin's approach by making it clear that Russia needed a "strong state power". Putin indicated state centredness (*gosudarstvennichestvo*) as one of the traditional Russian values and advocated the creation of a great power state with centralized authority and a submissive society. In his first annual address to the Federal Assembly, the new president declared:

But our position is very clear: only a strong, or effective if someone dislikes the word 'strong', an effective state and a democratic state is capable of protecting civil, political and economic freedoms, capable of creating conditions for people to lead happy lives and for our country to flourish ... (Putin, 2000)

Over the last two decades, the Russian government has strengthened its authoritative power and curtailed the freedom of civil society. Already in 2005, Freedom House re-categorized Russia from "partly free" to "not free", noting "an increase in state power over civil society", and this has remained the case to date. The idea of a strong centralized state that is the sole guarantor and protector of the rights and security of its people underlies Russia's policy towards Indigenous peoples. Such an idea conflicts with the

right to self-determination, which seeks to strengthen the agency of Indigenous peoples by empowering them to freely determine their political status and pursue economic, social and cultural development. The next section demonstrates how this conflict manifests itself in two case studies: the enforcement of Russia's "foreign agent" legislation against Indigenous peoples and the implications of gas infrastructure development in the Yamal Peninsula on the security of the Nenets Indigenous community.

Foreign agents, gas and the protection of Indigenous peoples

Indigenous peoples of the North in post-Soviet Russia

The Indigenous peoples of (Soviet) Russia began mobilizing in the late 1980s. In 1990, they held their first congress and established the Association of Small Peoples of the Soviet North (the predecessor of RAIPON).² Around the same time, a number of regional Indigenous organizations, most of them based on the principle of territorial representation, emerged and eventually started functioning as RAIPON's regional branches. Following the appointment of Sergey Kharyuchi, an experienced politician from the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug (district), in 1997, RAIPON started acting as an active advocate for Indigenous rights both domestically and internationally (IWGIA, 2014: 23-25).

Between 1999 and 2001, largely due to the successful advocacy of RAIPON, Russian legislators passed three laws ("On Guarantees of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples", "On Territories of Traditional Nature Use" and "On General Principles of the Organisation of Obshchinas [village communes]"), which aimed to create a legal framework, consistent with international legal standards, for protecting the rights of Indigenous peoples. Despite subsequent challenges in their implementation, the mere adoption of these laws was a milestone achievement for Russia's Indigenous peoples. The three documents specified the state's commitment, enshrined in the 1993 Constitution of the Russian Federation, to "guarantee the rights of Indigenous small peoples in accordance with the universally-recognised principles and norms of international law and international treaties of the Russian Federation" (Article 69).

However, from the early 2000s, the government started to limit the political space for Indigenous activism by constraining foreign support for civil society organizations. It also weakened legislative restrictions protecting Indigenous rights to land, forests and waters (IWGIA, 2014: 26). Fundamentally, this policy was a result of Vladimir Putin's government's

determination to centralize political power and prevent a potential disintegration of the state (Gosart, 2017: 203-204). During his first two presidential terms, Putin strengthened the central government's authority and, in his own words, built "an effective state system" (Putin, 2005). Maria Lipman (2006: 7) has described Putin's "effective state system" as "the growing centralization of government and the weakening of all centers, branches and institutions of power except for the president and his administration".

Despite the deteriorating protection of Indigenous rights, the government's document on the "Foundations of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic for the Period until 2020 and Beyond", adopted in 2008, stated that the "improvement of [the] quality of life of the Indigenous population and social conditions of economic activities in the Arctic" was one of the state's strategic priorities (Provision III.7.h). A year later, the government elaborated a plan for the achievement of this goal in the "Concept of Sustainable Development of Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation". The concept affirmed a number of tasks and measures aimed at strengthening the "socio-economic potential while preserving the original habitat, traditional lifestyle and cultural values" of Indigenous peoples in the North (Section I).

Two months after the Concept's adoption, RAIPON published a resolution in which it outlined numerous unresolved problems in the government's policy towards Indigenous peoples. They included the ineffective management of sustainable development, the failure to involve Indigenous peoples in decision-making processes, the absence of the legislation necessary to guarantee Indigenous rights and the lack of opportunities to use land and natural resources for the preservation and maintenance of traditional lifestyles and industries (Yarovoy, Sergunin & Heininen, 2014: 84).

The government reiterated its responsibilities towards Indigenous peoples in the 2013 Development Strategy of the Arctic Zone. President Putin has also continuously declared the state's "special responsibility" to improve the quality of life of Indigenous peoples in the Arctic, and to protect their interests, environment, culture and tradition (Putin, 2014a; Putin, 2014b; Putin, 2017a; Putin, 2017b). However, international human rights bodies have repeatedly expressed concerns over Russia's regressive legislation and ineffective policy concerning the protection of the rights and security of

Indigenous populations (CERD, 2013b: 5-6; CERD, 2017b: 2-3, 6-8; IWGIA, 2014; IWGIA & INFOE, 2015: 14-15, 19-22; IWGIA et al., 2017: 3). The remainder of this section discusses the discrepancy between the Russian government's proclaimed policy on the protection of Indigenous peoples in the North and its practical implementation (or lack thereof) in the context of Russia's legislative and infrastructural developments.

Indigenous peoples as "foreign agents"

In 2012, following protests by NGOs against alleged voter fraud in the presidential election, the Russian State Duma adopted a federal law "On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation Regarding the Regulation of the Activities of Non-Commercial Organisations Performing the Functions of a Foreign Agent", commonly referred to as the "foreign agent" law. The law requires that all civil society organizations, which a) receive funding from abroad and b) are engaged in political activity in Russia, register as "foreign agents" (Article 1.1). Both of these points are interpreted extremely broadly: no difference is made between financial support from foreign state budgets, international organizations, scientific foundations or private persons, while political activity can be anything aimed at influencing state policies or public opinion (Vedomosti, 2012: 3). The controversial term "foreign agent" (*inostranniy agent*), which in the Soviet Union was associated with a "foreign spy" and a "traitor", has a connotation of stigma or ostracism (CommDH, 2013: 16). It implies allegiance to foreign government(s) and thereby refutes the independence of civil society organizations.

Following the law's adoption, RAIPON warned that the Russian government would likely consider the protection and promotion of Indigenous rights as "political activity". Thus, such organizations would have to either lose their international funding or register as "foreign agents". Being labelled a "foreign agent" would stigmatize them and compromise their relationship with regional authorities and other partners. In RAIPON's view, the "foreign agent" law violates the freedom of association and the internationally-recognized Indigenous right to have access to financial and technical assistance from states and through international cooperation (ICCPR, Article 22; UNDRIP, Article 39; RAIPON et al., 2013: 15-16; IWGIA & INFOE, 2015: 14-15).

Less than a half-year after the adoption of the “foreign agent” law, Russia’s Ministry of Justice suspended RAIPON’s activities, citing inconsistency between the organization’s statutes and federal laws (Digges, 2012). Following the required revision of RAIPON’s statutes and the mounting international pressure against such government actions, Russian authorities allowed the organization to reopen in 2013. Nonetheless, shortly afterwards, the government exerted pressure on Indigenous representatives at the RAIPON Congress to elect the government’s favoured candidate, Gregory Ledkov, a member of Putin’s United Russia Party and the State Duma, as a new president of RAIPON. Pavel Sulyandziga, an ardent activist of Indigenous rights in Russia and a long-time vice president of RAIPON, who won the first two rounds of the election with clear majorities, was forced to step down (IWGIA, 2013). In 2016, the Ministry of Justice declared the Indigenous organization that Sulyandziga chaired, the Batani Foundation, a “foreign agent” and liquidated it a year later (Berezhkov & Sulyandziga, 2019).

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) has repeatedly expressed concerns over the “foreign agent” law and urged the Russian government to review it in order to ensure that the work of Indigenous peoples and ethnic minority NGOs is not unduly interfered with or subjected to onerous obligations (CERD, 2013b: 5-6; CERD, 2017b: 2-3). Yet despite CERD’s recommendations, defenders of Indigenous rights in Russia have continued to face harassment. Their political activity has been severely limited by such means as increased surveillance, the seizure of passports, threats of imprisonment and the preclusion of Indigenous activists from participating in international forums (IWGIA et al., 2017: 3, 6-8; Berezhkov & Sulyandziga, 2019). Multiple Indigenous organizations have been declared to be “foreign agents”. They have received fines or have been forced to cease their activities (Pettersen, 2015; Pettersen, 2016a; Pettersen, 2016b; YLE, 2015).

In 2015, the legislators adopted a follow-up law, “On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation”, also referred to as the “undesirable organizations” law. It granted prosecutors the right to extrajudicially categorize a foreign or international NGO as “undesirable” and close it down. Freedom House has stated that “[t]his designation, in combination with Russia’s “foreign agents” legislation, continues a pattern in which the Russian state is attacking the very institutions it needs in order to be a modern, democratic society. Using the “undesirable” label ... reveals the Russian government’s disregard for the broader interests of its people”

(Freedom House, 2019). Meanwhile, Russian authorities have explained the restrictions imposed on civil society organizations, including the organizations of Indigenous peoples, by the “foreign agent” and “undesirable organizations” laws as necessary measures to increase the transparency of non-profit organizations in order to prevent foreign states from interfering with Russia’s domestic affairs by using financial resources (CERD, 2013a: 5; CERD, 2017a: 9, Putin, 2014c; Putin, 2015; Russian Federation, 2016: 31-32).

The Nenets and gas in the Yamal Peninsula

The first Indigenous peoples’ organization that was declared a “foreign agent” in the Barents Region was Yasavey Manzara, an NGO representing the Nenets Indigenous people (Pettersen, 2015). The Nenets comprise around 70% of the population in the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug. The district contains some 20% of the world’s known natural gas. It is Russia’s main gas reserve, accounting for approximately 80% of the state’s total natural gas production. At least half of the around 10,000 Nenets practice nomadic reindeer herding, which makes them the largest fully nomadic reindeer herding community in the world. Reindeer herding is also a cornerstone of the Nenets culture. Climate change and the rapid industrial development of the region have already disrupted Indigenous migration routes, reduced the grazing land and interfered with the traditional Nenets economies, culture and way of life.

The multi-billion-dollar Yamal liquefied natural gas project (Yamal LNG), which was launched at the end of 2017 and is operated by Russia’s second-largest gas producer, Novatek, in cooperation with French and Chinese companies, is particularly concerning in this respect. According to international NGOs, the locals in the Yamal region have reported that development and shipping activity associated with the Yamal LNG project have severely reduced fish stocks in the rivers and lakes and destroyed the swathes of dry elevated land, which the Nenets had previously used for pasture and migration. As fishing and reindeer herding are vital sources of food and income for the Nenets, such damage has gravely affected their way of life by, for instance, forcing them to abandon their nomadic lifestyle – a change that has had a considerable negative impact on their lives (IWGIA et al., 2016: 11; IWGIA et al., 2017: 12; Cultural Survival, 2017: 5; IFIP, 2018: 7).

Furthermore, despite Yamal LNG’s claims that it has obtained the free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) of the Indigenous people, a number of

international NGOs have referred to their local sources and raised concerns that the Nenets have not been adequately consulted on the project, nor have they granted their FPIC (IWGIA et al., 2016: 3-4, 11-12; IWGIA et al., 2017: 3-4, 12-13; IFIP, 2018: 7). It is virtually impossible to verify whether good-faith consultations have indeed taken place and whether the consent to the project has been informed and obtained free from any external pressure, as Yamal LNG has not provided the minutes of the meetings or any other evidence to support its statements. It is also noteworthy that the Russian government has categorized the region as a border zone. Consequently, civic oversight is not permitted in the Yamal Peninsula: non-residents cannot access the region without the permission of governmental security services (IWGIA et al., 2016: 11; IWGIA et al., 2017: 12; Cultural Survival, 2017: 5).

International concerns about potential violations of Indigenous rights in the Yamal Peninsula are at odds with persistent assurances regarding the protection of Indigenous peoples that are provided in Russia's political discourse. President Putin has underlined on multiple occasions that the well-being and stable development of Indigenous peoples in the North are among Russia's fundamental socio-economic tasks in the region, and that the protection of the Indigenous interests and traditional lifestyles is a key priority. Putin has noted Russia's "special responsibility" in the Arctic territory to create a modern infrastructure, develop natural resources and strengthen the industrial potential, but to do so in a sustainable way while aiming to improve the quality of life of Indigenous peoples. The President did, however, imply that the state's interests would take precedence over Indigenous concerns when he referred to the latter as "an additional burden" and declared that major national projects would proceed even if they contradicted Indigenous interests, although in such cases, compensation and substitution measures would be provided (Putin, 2013; Putin, 2014a; Putin, 2014b; Putin, 2017a; Putin, 2017b; Putin, 2017c; Putin, 2019).

Thus, much as in the case of the "foreign agent" legislation, the Russian government has presented infrastructural developments in the North as serving rather than undermining the rights of Indigenous peoples. The following section aims to explain the Russian government's approach to the protection of Indigenous rights in further detail and considers its implications for Indigenous security.

State-determined self-determination and Indigenous security

The two cases discussed in the previous section highlight the incongruity between the Russian government's reassurances about the protection of Indigenous peoples, on the one hand, and the concerns of Indigenous peoples and human rights organizations about the violations of Indigenous rights, on the other. While in the view of Indigenous activists and organizations Russia's "foreign agent" law has unduly restricted their freedom, policymakers have justified the law as ensuring transparency and protecting civil society organizations from being taken advantage of by foreign actors (CERD, 2013a: 5; Putin, 2014c; Putin, 2015; Russian Federation, 2016: 31-32; CERD, 2017a: 9). Similarly, gas infrastructure development in the Yamal Peninsula has reportedly disrupted the traditional way of life and culture of the Nenets, but the government has claimed that it has raised the quality of life and improved the economic progress of the Indigenous people (Putin, 2017a).

Fundamentally, the discordance between the Russian government and human rights organizations regarding the perception of Indigenous security stems from the disagreement about the source of Indigenous rights, primarily the right to self-determination. Human rights organizations consider Indigenous self-determination an inalienable right, which inherently belongs to Indigenous peoples: it is "the right to have rights, in particular collective rights, as opposed to being granted rights by an all-powerful state" (IWGIA, 2014: 16). By contrast, the Russian government perceives the protection of people, including Indigenous peoples, as its exclusive domain: the rights are determined and safeguarded by the state. As the "foreign agent" and the Yamal LNG cases demonstrate, the Russian government has continued to single-handedly define what the protection of Indigenous security entails, showing little if any regard for the concerns of Indigenous peoples and human rights organizations.

As argued in the first section of this article, this policy is rooted in the understanding of the state as the sole guarantor of its people's rights and security, which is characteristic of states whose governments dominate society (state-nations). It is consistent with Russia's "idea of the state" as an authoritative political structure responsible for the protection of its subordinate society's security and well-being. Such a top-down approach leads to the oxymoron of the state-determined self-determination of Indigenous peoples – a denial of this right as inherent in peoples. As the two notions contradict one another, the Russian government does not recognize

the Indigenous right to self-determination altogether: the word does not appear in Russian political discourse and legislation. State authorities associate the concept of self-determination with separatism and extremism and consider it as a potential threat to state sovereignty (IWGIA, 2014: 16; Vladimirova, 2015). By rejecting the Indigenous right to self-determination, the government suppresses the bottom-up developments in society, thereby depriving Indigenous peoples of the ability to freely determine their political, social and economic affairs and compelling them to entirely depend on the state (IWGIA, 2014: 16; Gosart, 2017: 200).

Russia's paternalistic approach to the protection of Indigenous rights compromises the human security of Indigenous peoples. According to the Commission on Human Security (CHS), threats to human security cannot be countered solely through the conventional top-down state protective mechanism. Instead, the human security framework rests on two pillars: state protection and the empowerment of people. Protection strategies (norms, institutions and processes) are established by states as well as international and non-governmental organizations and private sector actors to shield individuals and communities from threats. Protection implies a top-down approach. Meanwhile, empowerment strategies are a bottom-up process: they seek "to develop the capabilities of individuals and communities to make informed choices and to act on their own behalf" in order to build resilience to conditions that challenge their security. The CHS has concluded that protection and empowerment are mutually reinforcing and that both "are required in nearly all situations of human insecurity" (CHS, 2003).

The right to self-determination of Indigenous peoples is precisely aimed at empowering Indigenous communities by entitling them to freely maintain and protect their identities, culture and way of life. The state's protective mechanism is supposed to facilitate and complement this bottom-up process rather than constrain it. However, the Russian government restricts bottom-up processes in order to preserve the indivisible state authority. For that reason, it denies the right to self-determination for Indigenous peoples, and by virtue of that, obliterates the empowerment part of the human security framework. Thus, despite the reassurances in political discourse about the protection of Indigenous interests and security, the socio-political relationship between the state and society, in which the former dominates the latter, precludes the Russian government from ensuring the protection of the (human) security of Indigenous peoples.

Conclusion

Failing a universally accepted definition of Indigenous security, the human security framework, which comprises both the top-down protection of human rights and the bottom-up empowerment of individuals and communities, is useful for understanding it. The right of Indigenous peoples to self-determination legitimizes the empowerment of Indigenous communities. Therefore, the recognition of this right is essential for ensuring the protection of Indigenous security. However, the empowerment of people contradicts the idea of a state-nation, in which the government aims to preserve its indivisible authority and dominate society.

Such an idea of the state, which underscores the government's paternalistic relationship to society, underlies and rationalizes the Russian government's policy concerning the security of Indigenous peoples in the Arctic. The government has reserved for itself the exclusive responsibility for the protection of Indigenous peoples and has thus denied the Indigenous right to self-determination. It has thereby restricted the agency of Indigenous peoples and, by doing so, has failed to ensure human security, because it cannot be protected solely through the state's top-down protective mechanism. In addition to drawing attention to the case of Russia, such findings could contribute to further research concerning the critical assessment of the protection of Indigenous security in states whose regimes dominate society.

Notes

1. Russia, along with ten other states, abstained during the vote on the UNDRIP.
2. In Russia's legislation and political discourse, Indigenous peoples are referred to as "Indigenous small-numbered (*malochislennye*) peoples". The government does not recognize Indigenous communities with a population exceeding 50,000 as Indigenous peoples. By contrast, the UN's working definition of Indigenous peoples does not contain any numerical threshold (Martínez Cobo, 1986: para. 379).

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19

Indigenous Women as Water Protectors, Men as Firefighters? Gender and Indigeneity in the Context of Climate Change in Sakha (Yakutia)

Daria Burnashev

Indigenous women as water protectors, men as firefighters – this paper contributes to the understanding of gender and indigeneity in the context of climate change by looking at what is underneath this established dichotomy. In the last decades, Sakha (Yakutia) in northeast Russia has literally gone through fire and water. The devastating floods and wildfires have caused not only economic and environmental losses but most importantly, social and cultural consequences. However, this paper does not intend to look at the vulnerability, adaptability, and resilience of Indigenous communities in the face of climate change and related disasters. Instead, it attempts to understand what has shaped the existing power relations, strengthened social inequalities and their gendered dynamics in this particular context. As an Indigenous feminist, I approach these issues from Sakha Indigenous paradigm. In Sakha-speaking rural communities, we still call ourselves people of woods and we refer to big water bodies as our grandmothers. This particular ontological viewpoint has been a methodological suggestion for my research and defined the specific way the analysis has been conducted. As a result, I claim that an entire shift in paradigm is needed in order to adequately address the climate change impacts such as wildfires. We should think not only about fighting wildfires but also about protecting forests, which will shift our perspective from what to fight to what to protect. In academic research, shifting the subject of study can raise novel research questions and opportunities for new critical analysis. Addressing the root causes of the wildfires will mean not only fighting its consequences but preventing this disaster. Finally, in the Indigenous feminist paradigms, protecting waters and forests means taking care of our human and other-than-human relations and, on a greater scale, our ways-of-being in this world.

Introduction

I come from the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), one of the northern- and easternmost regions of the Russian Federation. I grew up in a taiga area of central Sakha (Yakutia) where the river Lena, our *ebe* [Sa. 'grandmother'] carries her cold, silvery waters along sandy banks and hills covered with bushes, birches and pine trees. I have picked wild berries and mushrooms with my mother, observed my brother and father shooting grouse and wild ducks. We are *tya djono* [Sa. 'people of woods'], the way rural people are referred to in our native Sakha language, as opposed to *kuorat djono* [Sa. 'city people']. As most of our generation, me and my brother, cousins, and classmates are city people now. However, we still strongly identify ourselves as *people of woods*, as taiga is not only a source of subsistence, but most importantly, foundation of our cultural identity.

Global trends inform that women and their livelihoods are more affected by climate change than men. Since most studies on this issue are conducted in the Global South, there is a gap in knowledge and lack of understanding of how climate change impacts Indigenous women in the margins of the Global North. This gap is even more significant in the Russian North and especially in the context of wildfires. The wildfires problem is yet to be explored in-depth from different perspectives and mainstreamed in Russian academic discourse on climate change. Despite having serious negative impacts on human health and wellbeing, it still lacks critical reflection in social studies. In this connection, research done from Indigenous feminist paradigm can contribute to a better understanding of the issue.

The Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) is the biggest federal subject of the Russian Federation. Covering 3 million square kilometers, it is sparsely populated by less than a million people, while almost one- third of them reside in the major urbanized area around the capital Yakutsk. The territory of Sakha (Yakutia), as with most of Russia's North, is being increasingly affected by global climate change trends. Climate-related changes cause permafrost thawing and subsequent landscape degradation, however, the most devastating consequences have been caused by wildfires. The wildfires in Sakha (Yakutia) destroy the taiga, which is highly important both in terms of food security, as well as social and emotional wellbeing.

In summer of 2021, 8.5 million hectares of taiga have burnt in Sakha (Yakutia). Combined with heat waves and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, it put even greater pressure on the local communities. That

summer, the increasing female participation in wildfire mitigation and management has been observed as women started to create themselves space in this highly masculine domain. Historically, being active members of the labor force, women around Soviet Russia have always been present in disaster prevention and mitigation field. However, in 2021, female participation and contribution became highly visible as they fought at the forefronts of wildfire management along with men both on professional and volunteer roles, while their stories were shared by female social media activists and journalists. As a result, active and articulate female voices have challenged the masculinized narratives around wildfires.

Thinking about wildfires from an Indigenous feminist paradigm, I center my focus *not on Indigenous women as subjects of study* but the *forests as a space* where important meanings, concepts and identities are being shaped influenced by gender and indigeneity. This paper does not intend to look at the vulnerability, adaptability, and resilience of Indigenous women and communities in the face of climate change and wildfires. Instead, focusing on forests, I aim to better understand the existing power relations, domination and inequality, and how they increase under social, economic, and environmental crisis caused by wildfires. In Sakha-speaking rural communities, we still call ourselves *people of woods*, and we refer to big water bodies as *our grandmothers*. This particular ontological viewpoint has been a methodological suggestion for my research and defined the specific way the analysis has been conducted.

As a result, I claim that a shift in paradigm is needed in order to adequately address the wildfires. We should think not only about *fighting wildfires* but also about *protecting forests*, which will shift our perspective from often-limited '*what to fight*' to more productive and critical '*what to protect*'. In academic research, shifting the subject of study will help raise novel research questions and opportunities for new critical analysis. Addressing the root causes of this issue would mean not only fighting its consequences but preventing its development. Finally, in the Indigenous feminist paradigms, protecting waters and forests means taking care of our human and *other-than-human* relations and, on a greater scale, our *ways-of-being* in this world. Though women in Sakha (Yakutia) have demonstrated their potential for strong female leadership in wildfires mitigation and management, their roles should eventually stretch beyond caretaking positions and reach the highest levels of decision-making processes.

Grounding my epistemic location as Sakha Indigenous feminist

Studies made by feminist scholars on climate change come from two major paradigms: ecofeminist and Indigenous feminist. Though both paradigms have a lot in common, the relationship between them is not easy. The main critique of classical ecofeminism is its essentialism and support of women and nature, men and culture binaries, which justifies and maintains the female subordination (Ortner, 1974; Warren, 1998). Early Indigenous feminists are criticized for similar essentialist views but in another way – claiming higher status of Indigenous women in society before colonialism and their alleged power and authority (Anderson, 2016).

Indigenous feminist does not equal ecofeminist, or even broadly feminist. It is easier to think of Indigenous paradigms as feminist as indigeneity itself in general has been vocalized and strongly influenced by female scholars and their experiences (e.g. Smith, 1999), is derived from holistic, collective experiences and knowledges (Kuokkanen, 2000; Porsanger, 2004; Wilson, 2005), not exclusively female or male, but also not even exclusively human (Anderson, 2016; TallBear, 2019; Todd, 2014).

Indigenous feminist theories are multiple, there is no one Native feminist standpoint (Goeman & Denetdale, 2009) as there is no one single Indigenous paradigm. It would be naïve and narrow idea to think that all Indigenous peoples share the same worldview, similar epistemologies and ontologies. However, there are close relationships and values shared among them that makes it possible to see them as alternatives to ‘Western’, including most ecofeminist theories which are located in white, ‘Western’ paradigms.

In the current body of critical reflections both on ecofeminism and Indigenous feminism, several frictions can be found. Ecofeminism is being criticized by some Indigenous feminists who argue that ‘Western’ feminists invoke Aboriginal cultural beliefs and histories (Wilson, 2005), some warn about appropriation of Indigenous concepts when developing ecofeminist theories (Nixon, 2015). Some call for ethical and respectful inclusion of Indigenous women voices to greater feminist movements (Kwaymullina, 2017), while others only see the possibility of partial connection between them (Sempertegui, 2019).

Unified views of ‘Western’ ecofeminism and Indigenous feminism can harm the way Indigenous women are perceived. The application of Western gender theory and policy to Indigenous has tended to reduce women and girls’ experiences to the categories of ‘victim’ and ‘other’ (Chilisa & Ntseane,

2010). Similarly, in many Indigenous contexts, the predominant discourse of liberal feminism tends to focus exclusively on gender discrimination and gender equality. The problem is the lack of recognition of Indigenous women's articulations and conceptualizations of feminism that do not focus solely on gender discrimination or gender equality (Flowers, 2015; Knoblock & Kuokkanen, 2015). Such an approach towards Indigenous women was demonstrated in the recent Gender Equality in the Arctic Report, where, unfortunately, indigeneity is mentioned only in the context of violence and reconciliation (2021).

While there is a clear tendency of reducing indigeneity and gender in climate change to the concept of vulnerability, Indigenous feminisms debate this dominant discourse as they come out of a long history of activism to address different types of oppression in their communities (Anderson, 2020). Importantly, Indigenous feminism has been 'instrumental' in the resistance to resource extraction (Yazzie & Baldy, 2018) especially in water protection movements.

This approach also acknowledges the particular positioning of Indigenous women as researchers who 'stand with' their communities in an ethic of 'staying in relation' (TallBear, 2014). Indigenous research and activism are understood as a whole, as a 'scientific service to one's people' (Vinokurova, 2017), where a person becomes a 'transformative healer, who resists dominant research discourses in order to develop processes of social justice and healing in the community' (Chilisa & Ntseane, 2010). This 'epistemic disobedience' (Mignolo, 2009) leads to transnational Indigenous feminisms that negate powerlessness and center on relationships beyond dominating paradigms (Aikau et al., 2015; Evans, 1994). The interconnectedness between Indigenous women's bodies and the lands that women caretaker becomes central, thus, responsibility to lands and waters is a key part of the collective and radical relationality work of Indigenous feminists (Yazzie & Baldy, 2018).

In developing my research, I am largely inspired by Indigenous feminist theories of relationality (e.g. Anderson, 2016; TallBear, 2019; Todd, 2014) and guided by Indigenous methodologies principles as defined by Indigenous scholars (e.g. Kovach, 2010; Kuokkanen, 2000; Porsanger, 2004; Wilson, 2000). The Indigenous feminist paradigm shaped by Sakha perspective will contribute to better understanding of gender and indigeneity in the context of climate change. Thinking about how feminist theorizing, concepts, discourses, and understandings can be developed to better accommodate Indigenous feminist perspectives and understandings (Sinevaara-Niskanen,

2010), I would like to place Indigenous feminism from a Sakha perspective within the mainstream and as part of Indigenous feminisms rooted in other Indigenous lands and minds throughout the world.

Localizing the problem in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), Russia

Climate change is a major challenge to Arctic and other Indigenous peoples, but often its impacts are largely understood in policy and research frameworks and separately from issues of health, poverty, education, cultural vitality, equity, and justice (Huntington et al., 2019). Climate change threatens global sustainable development while very often its massive burden is carried by the poorest and most vulnerable. Its impacts are felt by everyone, but not equally: women and men experience the changing climate differently.

According to the UN Gender, Climate and Security report (2020), ‘a gender-blind’ approach to addressing climate-related security risks – or a ‘climate-blind’ approach to women, peace and security programming – can exacerbate the vulnerabilities of groups exposed to climate change, thus deepening already existing inequalities and potentially aggravating environmental and security threats. Furthermore, Indigenous women often face multilayered risks as they are discriminated against as environmental activists, as women and as part of an ethnic minority group.

Up until recently, the topic of gender did not figure prominently in Arctic research (Hoogensen, 2017; Vladimirova & Habeck, 2018). Moreover, most studies focus on women and female experiences, while those of men’s and outside gender binaries are still understudied (Oddsdóttir & Ágústsson, 2021). In Sakha (Yakutia), the leading female scholars of the Institute for Humanities and Indigenous Issues have been the most active writers on gender and women. They have made a significant contribution to understanding the role and situation of women in Sakha (Yakutia), mostly focusing on female political participation and role of Indigenous women in society (Vinokurova et al., 2004). Unlike systemic research on some women issues, sporadic research has been done on Indigenous men and masculinities. The most recent studies are ethnographical accounts which look at how current Sakha masculinities are being shaped (Yakutia) (e.g. Bragina, 2021; Tarasova, 2021; Ventsel, 2018).

Interestingly, unlike research on Indigenous women in Canada in regards to their land-based activities and climate change, no similar study has been

done on female experiences in Sakha (Yakutia). These are gaps in knowledge that should be addressed. In the regional context, studies on the Russian Arctic and especially Sakha (Yakutia) lack social and cultural research done from Indigenous paradigms, as most works are done in a framework of Western sociology and ethnography. Thus, despite a body of knowledge produced on gender aspects of various social phenomena in Sakha (Yakutia), there is no well-established tradition of critical gender studies, especially from an Indigenous feminist paradigm.

Due to climate change, the Arctic has been warming at more than twice the global rate over the past 50 years, causing drastic changes in its environment (AMAP, 2019). While indigeneity in general received relatively more attention in climate change scholarship in the Arctic, its gendered aspects remain marginal in the studies of climate change adaptation, resilience, and vulnerability (Bunce & Ford, 2015). Previous contribution to the issue has demonstrated that climate change-related disasters strengthen patriarchal structures in Indigenous societies (Vinokurova, 2017). Thus, climate change should be seen as a disruption of, first and foremost, relations with our human and other relatives (Burnasheva, 2020).

Traditional land-based activities and wildfires: looking into (stereo)typical gendered activities in forests

Research done in the Northwest Territories (NWT), Canada on experiences of wildfire season demonstrates consequences of ‘summer of smoke’ for health and well-being. For instance, people reported not only physical consequences such as limited activity and interruption of traditional summer activities, such as berry harvesting and fishing, but also emotional, such as fear, stress, uncertainty and isolation. For some, the only way to cope was by leaving their communities, so wildfires produced literal separation from the land (Dodd et al., 2017). The same was observed in Sakha (Yakutia) during the summer wildfires in 2021, when some people reported leaving to other Russian regions until fires are over, or even considering moving to other regions of Russia. People shared disappointment and sadness about the non-ability to enjoy the short northern summer.

Across the Arctic, environmental and climate change is altering and disrupting hunting, foraging, fishing, and trapping among Indigenous communities (Beaumier & Ford, 2010; Ford et al., 2016; Cunsolo et al., 2012). While local food production alone cannot solve all the food-related issues northerners are facing today (Herrmann et al., 2021), traditional subsistence systems and food remain a crucial part of ensuring ‘food

resilience' (Tendall et al., 2015) in the rural communities. The wildfires have direct negative impacts on everyone regardless of gender. However, as recent wildfires in Sakha (Yakutia) demonstrated, they can impact land-based activities associated with men and women differently. I use the examples of berry-picking and hunting on purpose because it has been an example in other case studies done among Inuit in Canada (Ford et al., 2016). It is an instructive and fruitful analytical tool to use analogies from different parts of the North to see similarities and contrasts.

Though men also go berry picking and some women hunt, berry picking is a female-dominated land-based activity in contrast to hunting (also fishing) which are predominantly male. In central Sakha (Yakutia) which is a focus of my research, berry picking and hunting take place in taiga. These activities provide important food – berries and game, which are essential part of traditional diet and food security. They are both important types of socialization, also important in terms of mental and emotional well-being (Ford et al., 2016). Apart from being both subsistence and recreation source, hunting is imbued with symbolic meanings and status. Unsurprisingly, hunting is directly linked to notions of masculinity and ethnic identity for young men.

For women, berry picking does not have such meanings. As Ford et al. (2016) note, berry picking in Inuit communities does not conflict with work and childcare duties, unlike hunting. Similarly, in rural Sakha communities, women often combine berry picking and childcare, so many children are exposed to this activity since the early age, unlike hunting, where boys are introduced only after they are able to take care of themselves. Again, Ford et al. (2016) note that unlike hunting, berry picking does not necessarily require access to transport, though it is changing now due to changing rain patterns and plant communities.

Notably, rural women often sell berries to have more income. Children of school age, especially girls, are also involved in this labor. Unlike berries, game is usually not sold. Selling game is a very new phenomenon in urban settings as traditionally it was shared with elders and relatives. Also, game is no longer a substantial part of traditional diets even in rural areas, it is not everyday food unlike berries, yet it requires more time and money spent on the process. Berry picking does not require any investments unlike hunting but it is much more productive in terms of revenue. It also has less of a recreational character unlike hunting.

Identifying discrepancies and inequality

While in most cases berry picking does not require from women anything but free time, a bucket and walking (Ford et al., 2016), men hunting requires expenses related to buying, building, and maintaining seasonal hunting gear, hunting hut, transport, gasoline, rifles, dogs, and food, and importantly, vacation time. There are fundamental differences between these land-based activities which demonstrate fundamental gender inequality. I do not intend to diminish hunting as inherently discriminative, however, in most cases, there is a clear tendency of uneven distribution of resources and contribution to family food security. There is a whole industry around men's outdoor and hunting clothing and equipment, while women who also spend much time outdoors, have more limited opportunities.

Both hunting and berry picking are necessary as symbols of stability, seasonal changes and cultural identity, it is at once an 'important traditional food, subsistence economy and social fabric' (Ksenofontov et al., 2017). Both of them are now affected by climate change: women and men express the same concerns and anxiety regarding the decreasing availability of wild game and berries. Climate change means not only disruption of traditional food systems but is also a threat to social and emotional wellbeing. It also involves more time, efforts and costs as decreased opportunities have caused longer trips both for hunting and berry picking. Especially, it affected women who used to cover shorter distances but now they have to expand their areas, which involves more walking and organizing, which means more mental and physical labor (also in Ford et al., 2016).

Both berry-picking and hunting are demonstrative examples for understanding different types of traditional gendered land-based activities in the context of cultural, social, economic, and environmental changes happening in the region. They are activities that are at the same time subsistence, recreation, non-paid labor and unofficial income. During the wildfires in summer 2021, there were attempts by the local government to officially regulate land-based activities. It was strongly recommended to avoid the forests, also due to outbreak of pest infestations and subsequent treatment with pesticides. Since the wildfires have lasted throughout the summer months, they affected mainly female activities, hunting was not affected as much as berry-picking since its season is in early fall and late spring, when most wildfires have not started yet or are managed and naturally extinguished due to fall rains and decreasing temperatures.

Although women have their space in the taiga, the forests remain almost exclusively a male realm where men exercise their heteronormative masculinity and support patriarchal values. Shaped largely by male-dominated hunting, forests are constructed as a conservative, masculine, heterosexual space. It is coupled with a limited, unsustainable, excessively centralized approach of Russian forestry management (Sokolov, 2020; FNO, 2012). Thus, the forests in Sakha (Yakutia) suffer from ‘masculinization’ and can enormously benefit from ‘feminization’.

Feminizing the masculinized: from fighting fires to protecting forests. Why adding women to firefighter brigades is not enough?

Encouraged by Socialist ideology and Soviet growth strategy (Ofer, 1985), women have had high labor force participation even in areas traditionally perceived as masculine, such as emergency preparedness and management. Although no data is available on gender composition of numerous state agencies responsible for management of wildfires, women have always been present in its bureaucratic structures. For example, in central agencies for management and mitigation of emergency situations in Russia’s federal districts every third officer is a woman (Kashina, 2021). Although the Ministry for Emergency is often associated with natural disasters, the wildfires are in fact an area of responsibility of several state agencies with complicated hierarchies and structures of their own. As experts suggest, the Russian fire management system is in deep crisis (Sokolov et al., 2020).

The summer wildfire season of 2021 in Sakha (Yakutia) was different from previous ones. It was so far the most devastating as it caused human loss among volunteers and dozens of burnt houses in a rural settlement of Bes Kuel. From the very beginning women have been continuously active in social media sharing pictures and videos of wildfires threatening the rural communities. As the situation got worse, female social media influencers started social media campaigns locally and internationally to raise awareness. They led several campaigns for crowdfunding to help the firefighters with food supplies and inventory (Iakutiia sgoraet zazhivo: blogery zapustili fleshmob za spasenie respubliki ot pozharov, 2021).

Active female leadership helped establish the work of the Volunteer center in Yakutsk. While its major activities were coordinated by women, only men were recruited to firefighter’s roles due to high risks and difficult working

conditions. However, women were most active and willing to join the firefighter brigades. At the beginning, they were not accepted to the field, however, the most determined female volunteers convinced the recruiters and were assigned to the brigades as cooks. However, as female stories show, their responsibilities stretched beyond cooking as they took care of men cheering them up, guiding them through and providing support when needed (Efremova, 2021; Toytonova, 2021). Thus, female caretaking responsibilities at firefighter brigades should not be diminished to mere service providing roles, as they are proved to be the bedrock of this system.

In remote rural areas, far away from more centralized organization and supply, women performed work typically assigned to and considered as male from the very beginning. In some villages, women formed female firefighter brigades which raised discussion in social media, namely, the most popular news outlet. Some criticized the state agencies and local government, some compared them with Soviet women fighting the fascism during the Second World War, some expressed solidarity and pointed out to sense of belonging and unity among people (Zhenshchiny vyshli na bor'bu s lesnymi pozharemi v Iakutii, 2021; Foto s zhenshchinami, tushivshimi pozhary v Ytyk- Kuele vyzvalo vozmushchenie v sotsetiakh, 2021). Unfortunately, there is no data available on the scale of female participation in professional and volunteer firefighter brigades. However, much more than previously, it has been visible in media discourse. The voices of female activists, firefighters and journalists made visible what was previously hidden behind the bureaucratic reports, and it made wildfires discourse more transparent and put a human face onto it.

Similar to a feminist claim 'adding women and solar panels is not enough' made by Bell et al. (2020) in regards to energy systems, adding women to a firefighter brigade is not enough. Placing the wildfires within larger system and structures of power would help us understand how power works more broadly in the context of climate change and related disasters. In this sense, if we approach the dynamic of power relations, domination and vulnerabilities, we will be able to see the wider picture. The unsustainable wildfire mitigation and forest management systems require fundamental restructuring of institutions and sharing power. However, it is not a mere restructuration, but an entire shift in paradigm is needed in order to challenge the established unsustainable system of behaviors and norms, as well as knowledge and laws around wildfires and forests.

Adding more women to firefighter brigades is not enough because it does not challenge the unsustainable system and established power relations. We have to ensure female participation on all levels – starting from firefighter brigades on land to the political offices on the highest level. Despite active female participation, their further involvement in larger decision-making processes remains uncertain. Following the general Soviet trends, women in Sakha (Yakutia) have been actively participating in labor force and have acquired leading positions. However, throughout all the levels there is still a gender asymmetry and disproportionate distribution of power (Ivanova, 2016; Egorova et al., 2017; Evseev, 2016; Petrov & Lukina, 2020).

Shifting the paradigm

Unlike wildfires, water narratives are feminized narratives. In Indigenous feminist paradigms, not only water is ‘other-than-human’ and ‘more-than-human’ relative (Anderson et al., 2013; Stevenson, 2018; TallBear, 2019; Todd, 2017; Yazzie & Baldy, 2018), but it is literally perceived as grandmother, particularly in the Sakha paradigm (Burnasheva, 2020; Danilova, 2015; Prokopeva, 2015). In Sakha (Yakutia), the water protection narrative is a currently dominating ‘water narrative’ despite devastating floods (Stammler-Gossmann, 2012). It is true in many other Indigenous contexts, as in the well-known case of the Standing Rock protest movement with strong female leadership of LaDonna Brave Bull Allard (Chavez & Pember. 2021). The water protection is a powerful narrative on its own connected to other Indigenous and female led initiatives around the world.

Meanwhile, fighting, not protection, has become a dominating ‘forest narrative’ in Sakha (Yakutia). While ‘protection’ is informed by female perspectives and caretaking experiences, ‘fight’ belongs more to a masculine conceptual field, especially when militarized language is used in the firefighting structures, such as *desant* [Ru. ‘troops’] or *brigada* [Ru. ‘brigade’]. In connection to it, limiting the understanding of women in firefighting by caretaking roles diminishes them to mere service providers. Thus, the female caretaker role should be understood beyond these meanings in relation to greater processes of life support to avoid its usage as an “archetype that supports the patriarchal militarism” (Kaplan, 1994: 123). With shifting the paradigm more questions would arise. For example, an A.D.I.R (actors, drivers, impacts and responses) framework looking at those elements altogether will ensure gender informed analysis and further, gender informed intervention (Seager, 2021).

Very much like water protection activism, “using trees as the entry point” (Green belt movement 2003) might be useful in the case of forest protection in Sakha (Yakutia). The example of Wangari Maathai and planting trees movement in Kenya offers an insightful and instructive framework and perspective on environmental justice that challenges patriarchal structures (Muthuki, 2006). Moreover, other studies done in Kenya and Nepal suggest reasons that limit women’s involvement in forestry projects: limited access to productive resources, limited decision-making roles, limited participation in the labor market and lack of incentives for project workers to incorporate women (Boyer-Rechlin, 2010). At least two of them – limited access to productive resources and limited decision-making roles – might be applicable to the case. These suppositions require deeper analysis in the future. While water protection activism in Sakha (Yakutia) connects to other Indigenous and female led initiatives around the world, the same approach might benefit the forests protection if connected to globally renowned initiatives.

The feminization of wildfires narratives is thus a counter discourse to the masculinized; it is “celebrating feminine values as an important contribution to the achievement of peace, economic justice, and ecological sustainability” (Ingólfssdóttir, 2011). Also, a feminist perspective on the wildfires can be seen as an alternative to ‘white technomasculine’ (Bell et al., 2020) aerial views on the forests which are used as the primary control method (Sokolov et al., 2003). This aerial view is now going even further up with the introduction of satellite imagery. These methods used for both monitoring and research drive our views away from human communities and their everyday relations to lands and waters by making them invisible. Therefore, they should be used along with research done in the field, on the grassroots level. This is the knowledge which is equally valuable for understanding climate change, and these two systems of ‘air-born’ and ‘grass-born’ knowledges should work together.

Conclusion

In recent decades, Sakha (Yakutia) has literally gone through fire and water. The devastating floods and wildfires have heavily impacted several rural Indigenous communities that still rely on land- based activities both in terms of subsistence and cultural identity. There are differences how two disasters are approached: despite the devastating effects of floods, the dominating water narrative is water protection with strong female agency. Wildfires discourse is dominated by firefighting narratives. Forest protection, unlike water protection, is almost non-present. Unlike water, the forests are

imbued with masculinity on cultural, social and political level, which impacts the ways they are managed and protected from wildfires. In order to change the established unsustainable approach to forests, shift in paradigm is needed – we can change our perspective from fighting wildfires to protecting the forests. This shift would change the often-limited perspective of ‘what to fight’ to a more productive and critical ‘what to protect’ and ‘what to take care of’. It might help address and focus our attention to the root causes of the wildfires.

In Indigenous feminist paradigms, protecting waters and forests means taking care of our human and *other-than-human* relations and, on a greater scale, our *ways-of-being* in this world. Wildfires threaten the wellbeing of all living things, as well as economies and infrastructures. Moreover, in Sakha (Yakutia), they induce permafrost thaw and landscape degradation. Forests preserve permafrost, the foundation of our culture and identity shaped by the coldest climate on the Earth. Last summer, women, children and elders fought wildfires along with men to protect their relations and ways-of-being in this world. Therefore, assumptions about Indigenous women in the Global North feeling the climate change in indirect ways (unlike women in Global South) diminish and make their struggles invisible in one of its remotest and marginalized areas.

However, as much as it is harmful for people to put on them the pressure of adaptation to climate change, it is equally harmful to think of them as mere victims, inherently vulnerable and powerless. The wildfires of summer 2021 in Sakha (Yakutia) have demonstrated the potential of female leadership in disaster mitigation and management. It is necessary to include women in these processes as their knowledge and experience can strengthen the social and political response to challenges caused by climate change. In order to do so, we should concentrate not only on disaster itself, but most importantly, on post-disaster processes.

This paper did not intend to address the adaptation, resilience and vulnerability, though these concepts are directly connected to gender, indigeneity and climate change. These concepts are now being critically addressed since often pressure and responsibility to adapt are put on people, not on the root causes. Indigenous peoples throughout the world have been adaptive and resilient for centuries, enduring impacts of colonialism and industrialization. However, there are limits to Indigenous resilience and adaptive capabilities. The pressure of adaptability and resilience should be put on the unsustainable systems and structures which should be held

accountable for creating and supporting these power relations, domination and inequality.

Post-Script

Climate change as a metaphor: the world where men fight and women protect

On the forefront of climate change in the Arctic, indigenous men fight wildfires, women protect waters. This commentary employs this dichotomy as a metaphor to better understand larger processes shaping current situation in Russia. On September 25, a few days after the mass mobilisation started in Russia, women of Yakutsk held a peaceful protest. They performed a traditional circle dance until police intervened. Female protesters had been protecting *their men* and have been threatened and detained by *other men*. The female protests in Sakha (Yakutia) was one of a few taking place in Russian Federation those days so it caught the attention of many Russian and international media outlets. However, in academic research, female protest in Sakha (Yakutia) should be covered and analysed by Sakha women themselves. Let us read, see, and listen to women who protect and protest.

Question of epistemological justice

Considering current, and most importantly, future lack of our voices in international academic fora, our voices may be appropriated by outsider researchers who will then get all the benefits, not giving anything back to the communities affected. Recently, a friend of mine, an early-career scholar and native anthropologist themselves, had been approached by a researcher from a European country. My friend was asked by that person for assistance in establishing contacts among Buryat men who fled to Mongolia to avoid mass mobilisation. The further intention of that person was to apply for a research grant in Europe. This is a demonstrative example of how the industry of knowledge extraction keeps reaping benefits from conflicts and disasters hitting the poorest, most marginalized, and neglected groups. Benefiting and building careers on such data should be strongly discouraged as they are exploitative, extractive, and colonial in nature. Instead of framing people as a study subject, one should help them become actors. It can be done by sharing resources and power. Let us bring epistemological justice and not extract, appropriate, and benefit from tears and fears of women.

Question of agency

Our roots grow deep into the frozen ground. Today this ground is rapidly thawing, degrading and falling through, literally and figuratively. How do we keep ourselves and our roots alive? How does one keep agency when everything has been taken, native lands and waters lost to extractive industries, men taken to death and voices being shut and appropriated? How to not completely lose capacity of acting when actions are not allowed? Our tears and panic attacks, late over-the-tea discussions in small kitchens of panel blocks, sleepless nights filled with anxiety, phone calls, and messages, belong to nobody but us. This time, we have too much to lose. *This time, we should and will own our voices.* It comes through owning our pain and facing the reality. Using this kind of approach it is truly in our powers to contribute to better, just future for all of us in a world where women do not face risks protecting their human and non-human relatives.

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20

Indigenous Peoples of Russia During Wartime

Ekaterina Zmyvalova

This paper explores the legal changes which have been taking place in Russia since the start of the full-scale war in Ukraine in February 2022. The paper also demonstrates that due to socioeconomic reasons and disinformation, the number of Indigenous combatants in the war is proportionally higher than the number of ethnic Russians. The partial mobilization was mostly carried out in the remote regions of Russia, where most of Indigenous peoples reside. Thus, a high number of Indigenous individuals have been summoned to the war. The paper demonstrates how Russia distances itself from its international commitments, and how this affects the Indigenous peoples of Russia. As a result, for example, Russian citizens, inter alia Indigenous individuals, cannot apply to the European Court of Human Rights, as Russia is not under its jurisdiction any longer. International cooperation of Indigenous peoples of Russia has significantly decreased. Changes in the national legislation have resulted in the aggravation of responsibility under criminal and administrative law. The analysis of the changes reveals the tendency of the Russian Federation's attempts to summon as many combatants to the war as possible. This paper demonstrates the impact of these changes on the rights of Indigenous peoples. The initiatives have been undertaken to promote laws on the exemption of Indigenous individuals from the mobilization. However, without success.

Introduction

According to the data of the Arctic Council, 4 million people reside in the Arctic (Arctic Council, 2023a). About half a million of them are Indigenous Peoples. A significant part of these Indigenous peoples are Russian Indigenous peoples. (Regulation N 255, 2000; Edict N 296, 2014). The rights of the Indigenous peoples of Russia were violated before the war (Anaya, 2010: para. 20; HRC, 2015: para. 24; Zmyvalova, 2020: 334–359).

Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, the situation with the rights of Indigenous peoples of Russia keeps getting worse (Berezhkov, 2022; Zmyvalova, 2022: 407–414; Free Idel-Ural, 2022). The challenges caused by the violations of the rights of the Indigenous peoples of Russia, including those living in the Arctic, can have a broad impact, also on the Arctic policy.

This paper explores the legal changes¹ which have been taking place in Russia since the start of the war in Ukraine in February 2022. Furthermore, the paper explores how these legal changes have been impacting the rights of Indigenous peoples in the Russian Federation (henceforth referred to as RF).

The legal changes are taking place against the background of the following social realities. According to Alexey Bessudnov, the number of Indigenous combatants in the war is proportionally higher than the number of ethnic Russian combatants (Bessudnov, 2022). Before the announcement of the partial mobilization (Edict N 647, 2022), there was a high ratio of Indigenous peoples choosing to participate in the war due to, *inter alia*, socioeconomic reasons (Zmyvalova, 2023c: 71–72). By socioeconomic reasons I mean the poorer socioeconomic status of Indigenous peoples compared to more stable socioeconomic status of ethnic Russians. James Anaya also draws attention to the fact that Indigenous peoples' socioeconomic status on average is lower compared to ethnic Russians (Anaya, 2010: para. 59). Participation in the war is financially more attractive for Indigenous peoples. Bessudnov observes that the death rates of the residents of the poor regions with low income is higher compared to the other regions of Russia (Bessudnov, 2022: 893).

Disinformation was another reason for Indigenous peoples' massive participation in the war. By disinformation I mean the dominance of false information in the Russian media, and the absence of access to relatively objective news coverage regarding the war in Ukraine (Zmyvalova, 2023c: 71–72). The Government of the RF confirms that there is lack of access to high-speed internet and a poor quality of communication channels in most of the places of traditional residence of Indigenous peoples (Order N 978-p, 2021).

After the announcement of the partial mobilization, there appeared another factor of Indigenous peoples' massive participation in the war. This factor was geographical localization of the mobilization events. The partial mobilization took place primarily in remote areas where the Indigenous population mostly resides. Thus, a significant number of Indigenous individuals have been summoned to the war (Latypova, 2022; Light, 2022).

According to Bessudnov, the highest mortality rates are observed with regard to the mobilized from the Buryatia and Tuva, while the lowest mortality rates are among those from Moscow and Saint Petersburg (Bessudnov, 2022: 888). Buryatia and Tuva are the two republics in Siberia with a significant ratio of population consisting of minority groups, such as Buryats and Yakuts, who are not recognized as Indigenous peoples as they number more than 50 000 (see clarification regarding the terms 'Indigenous peoples' used in the international law and 'Indigenous small-numbered peoples' used in the Russian law below in this section) (Regulation N 255, 2000). 240 out of 100 000 men from Buryatia have died in the war. In contrast, 3.1 out of 100 000 men from Moscow and 10.2 out of 100 000 men from Saint Petersburg have died in Ukraine (Bessudnov, 2022: 893). The nonprofit group Cultural Survival reports that almost all of the male population of the conscription age from small settlements of the Far North were summoned to the war (Cultural Survival, 2022). For example, in the Olenek Evenki National District, 39.07% of the male population were mobilized. Another example is given by the social media site Radio Svoboda. In the small village Ust'-Kabyrza of the Shor region, all men of the conscription age were mobilized during the first days of the partial mobilization. One of the inhabitants explains: "[i]t was easy to take them. All the villages were searched, and everybody who was not in the taiga at that time were taken. People in these areas are simple-minded and easy to persuade" (Sibreal, 2023).

It is noteworthy, from the very start, the mobilization was carried out chaotically. Legal breaches in connection with the recruitment of Indigenous individuals occurred (Cultural Survival, 2022). Ivan Shamaev gives an example of such legal breaches. Even those peoples who were exempted from the mobilization for valid grounds were summoned anyway (Shamaev, 2022). Another example is suggested by the Cultural Survival, which explains that military subpoenas were handed in to the recruits between 1:00 and 2:00 AM, and people were given two to three hours to pack their things. Those who refused were threatened with imprisonment of up to five years. The next morning, the mobilized were loaded on the buses and planes to Yakutsk. In Yakutsk, the mobilized experienced a lack of equipment and accommodation (Cultural Survival, 2022).

The topic of violation of human rights of Russian Indigenous peoples during the war time was discussed on different platforms (FIDH, 2023; Indigenous Russia, 2023). However, systematic research on the issue of the legal changes in Russia and its impact on the rights of Indigenous peoples has not been carried out. This paper intends to fill in this gap.

This paper is based on the analysis of legal and statistical sources. Because of the lack of data, the analysis also relies on information from the mass media. Moreover, this paper is based on personal communication with some Indigenous individuals.

To clarify the terminology in this paper, it shall be noted that international law employs the term “Indigenous peoples”, whereas the Russian legislation uses the term “Indigenous small-numbered peoples”. Article 1 (1) of the Federal Law (henceforth referred to as FL) ‘On Guarantees’ defines Indigenous small-numbered peoples of the RF as “peoples who live in the territories traditionally inhabited by their ancestors, maintain their traditional way of life and economic activity, number fewer than 50 000, and identify themselves as separate ethnic communities”. The FL ‘On Guarantees’ applies a quantitative criterion for identifying Indigenous peoples in Russia. Consequently, some Indigenous peoples are denied legal support because their population exceeds 50 000, and, thus, are not recognized as Indigenous peoples according to the Russian legislation. Examples include the Sakha-Yakuts, the Komi, the Tuvans, the Altay, the Khakas, the Buryats, and the Karelians. I mostly focus on the Indigenous peoples who are recognized as small-numbered peoples in Russia. Nevertheless, I also provide examples of the communities who are not formally recognized as Indigenous small-numbered peoples because of the numerical criterion.

The paper is organized as follows. The introductory part is followed by Section 1 which describes the changes in the status of international law in Russia today, and the impact of these changes on the rights of Indigenous peoples. Moreover, it describes the current situation of international cooperation of the Russian Indigenous peoples. Section 2 describes the changes in the national legislation and their impact on the rights of Indigenous peoples. This section also presents an overview of legislative initiatives on the exemption of Indigenous peoples from participation in the war. Section 3 is devoted to concluding remarks.

Russia and international law

The status of international law in Russia

According to Article 15 (4) of the Russian Constitution, international principles and norms are an integral part of the Russian legal system. However, Russia is distancing itself increasingly from its international

commitments. The changes in Russian legal practice regarding the hierarchy of legal sources show that the Russian Constitution shall prevail over international law.

I will now demonstrate prerequisites of the changes regarding the hierarchy of legal sources with two examples which occurred before the start of the war. The first example is the Judgement of the Constitutional Court of the RF of 2015 (Judgment, 2015). According to the Judgement, the Constitution of the RF has priority over the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights (henceforth referred to as ECHR). In cases when the Constitutional Court of the RF finds a decision of the ECHR contradictory to the provisions of the Constitution, the decision of the ECHR does not come into effect in Russia. Olga Komshukova observes that this Judgment of the Constitutional Court has in fact enshrined Russia's right not to enforce decisions of the ECHR in exceptional cases (Komshukova, 2019: 117–118). Furthermore, Maria Filatova claims that according to this Judgement, the Constitution has legal precedence in the territory of the RF as compared to international law (Filatova, 2016). Legal experts concurred that this decision was not legally and logically argued (Komshukova, 2019: 119). Furthermore, the legal experts agreed that this decision was aimed at the regulation of international interference into the foreign affairs of Russia (Komshukova, 2019, 119). I agree that this decision creates grounds of precedence of the national Constitution in Russia and supports Russia's distancing from its obligations under the international law.

Another example of Russia's increasing distancing from its international commitments is the 2020 amendments to the Constitution. Here the focus is the Amendment to Article 79. According to the Amendment, decisions of international bodies based on international treaties of the RF, which contradict the Constitution, *are not subject to enforcement in the RF*.

Legal scholars have interpreted this amendment differently. Some of them explained this amendment as a natural change in the legislation due to the need to prioritize the Russian Constitution. Commenting on this amendment, Taliya Khabrieva and Andrey Klishas observe that this amendment manifests the continuation of the state policy to prioritize the Russian Constitution over the decisions of the international bodies (Khabrieva & Klishas, 2020: 88–92). Vlada Lukyanova explains this change similarly. According to her, the 2020 Amendments reflect “the new formula of proportionality between international (including universal) and national legal values, principles and norms.” She states that the Amendment to Article

79 is central in establishing the new formula of proportionality. Lukyanova further explains that Amendments create a solid foundation for the realization of the constitutional principles in Russia (Lukyanova, 2022: 58). Another group of scholars with a similar opinion includes Andrey Morozov and Anna Kashirkina. Commenting on the Amendment, they observe that the Constitution of the RF takes into account international principles and norms with respect. However, the legal provisions of the Constitution, which regulate the hierarchy of international and national law, have been modernized to protect the constitutional order of the RF, as well as the rights and freedoms of Russian citizens in the light of a changing international situation (Morozov & Kashirkina, 2022: 120).

I rather concur with the group of scientists and international bodies who are concerned about these changes because Russian law is distancing even further from international law. According to Yulia Ioffe, Russia has established its own approach to international law by the 2020 amendments and “may destroy any hope of a common language of international law and result in Russia’s further isolation” (Ioffe, 2020). International bodies have expressed their concern about the implications of 2020 amendments. For example, the Venice Commission (officially the European Commission for Democracy through Law) declared that they are “alarmed” by the “entrenchment” of the Constitutional Court’s power to put to an end to enforcement of the judgments of the ECHR.

According to the Commission, this contradicts the obligations of the RF under the European Convention on Human Rights (European Commission for Democracy through Law, 2020).

I will now demonstrate the legal changes after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine with the following examples. The first example of Russia’s distancing from its international commitments is that Russia withdrew from the European Council in 2022. The European Council, in turn, canceled Russia’s membership (Resolution CM/Res(2022)2, 2022). For the first time in history, a member State was excluded from this body.

The RF withdrew from the European Convention on Human Rights and some other European Council treaties (Council of Europe, 2022; Regulation N 1155, 2022). The President of Russia signed a number of laws that the ECHR’s judgements are not to be enforced in Russia (Kremlin, 2022).

The treaty of the European Council which directly regulated minorities’, inter alia Indigenous peoples’, rights, and which Russia has denounced, is the

Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. This treaty was denounced by the FL N 500-FL (FL of 2023, October 19). The deputies of the State Duma explain the document in the following way: “[c]onsidering the fact that the termination of Russia’s participation in [the European Convention on Human Rights] will permit the avoidance of a discriminatory attitude towards the RF within the framework of the monitoring mechanism of the Council of Europe, and will not violate national minorities’ rights implementation, a denunciation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities is proposed” (State Duma, 2023).

Another example is the adoption of the FL N 157-FZ (FL of 2023, April 28). This Law introduced the norm legalizing the punishment of up to five years of imprisonment for supporting decisions of international organizations of which Russia is not a member of (Radio Svoboda, 2023). There are different interpretations of this norm. The prevailing opinion is that Article supports the international immunity. This Article supports inadmissibility of criminal prosecution of the officials of the public authorities of the RF (European-court-help, 2023). This means that this article attempts to discharge Russian official and military personnel from any criminal responsibility. It is claimed that this Article is an outcome after the warrant of arrest that was issued for President Putin by the International Criminal Court (International Criminal Court, 2022).

These examples illustrate just a few of the many legal changes related to Russia’s distancing from its international commitments.² In the next subsection, I will demonstrate the impact of these changes on the Indigenous peoples of Russia.

Russia’s distancing from its international commitments and its impact on Indigenous peoples

Priyanka Shankar claims that the RF’s withdrawal from the Council of Europe has raised concerns in the international community because the victims of the Kremlin’s abuses of their rights cannot apply for defence of their rights in the ECHR (Shankar, 2022). This also includes Indigenous individuals. Indigenous peoples of Russia applied to the ECHR earlier. This can be demonstrated by the application of the Indigenous Peoples’ Centre (henceforth referred to as CSIPN) (The Center for Support of Indigenous Peoples, 2023) to the ECHR in 2016. The reason for the application was that the CSIPN received the status of a foreign agent. According to the ECHR’s decision (Ecodefence and Others v. Russia, 2022), the CSIPN was

among the organizations who “were active in civil society issues, human rights, the protection of the environment and cultural heritage, education, social security and migration” (*Ecodefence and Others v. Russia*, 2022: para. 4). The mission of CSIPN was assisting the Indigenous peoples of the North of Russia (*Ecodefence and Others v. Russia*, 2022: para. 415). The ECHR took the side of the CSIPN and required the RF to reimburse all the procedural expenses.

One of the latest applications to the ECHR from Russian citizens concerns violation of their rights to a safe environment. A group of 20 persons, including three Indigenous individuals, applied to the ECHR in September 2023. They claim that insufficient actions of the Russian Government on the mitigation of the consequences of the climate change violate their rights, enshrined in the European Convention of the Human Rights (*Kedr.media*, 2023). The applicants also explain that the consequences of climate change have a negative impact especially on Indigenous peoples of the North. They clarify that the temperature in the Arctic increases faster than in the rest of the planet. It creates risks of spreading diseases earlier unknown for the Indigenous population of the Arctic and endangers their traditional way of life. The ECHR cannot consider the cases on the violations of the rights which occurred after September, 16 2022 (*VSRF*, 2022). However, the ECHR “remains competent to deal with applications directed against the Russian Federation in relation to acts or omissions capable of constituting a violation of the Convention provided that they occurred until 16 September 2022” (*Resolution of the ECHR*, 2022). The violations in this claim occurred before September, 16 2022 and, thus, this case is under consideration of the court.

Denouncement of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities was disapproved by some representatives of the national minorities of Russia. According to Anvar Kurmanakaev, the termination of the participation in the Convention demonstrated an intention to completely deprive international organizations of the possibility to monitor the situation in Russia (*Krasno*, 2023). A similar opinion was expressed by Aslan Beshto. He observes that over the last 20 years, the rights of the national minorities in Russia have been systematically infringed. He illustrates it with the following example: not only instruction in the native language is terminated but also teaching of the native language is limited in many territories of Russia (*Krasno*, 2023). He claims that the situation with minority language teaching worsened after amendments to the Constitution

of 2020.³ In particular, he mentions the amendment on recognizing the Russian language as the language of the State-forming people. I support these opinions. The rights of the national minorities, inter alia Indigenous peoples, were infringed even before the denouncement of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. The denouncement can result in further violations of their rights. The Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities who is responsible for evaluating the implementation of the Convention carried out several monitoring cycles on the implementation of the Convention with regards to the rights of national minorities in Russia. In their opinions the Committee several times observed violations of Indigenous peoples' rights in Russia (Advisory Committee, 2012; Advisory Committee, 2018).

International cooperation of Russian Indigenous Peoples

Section 1 is devoted to the changes in the status of international law in Russia today, and the impact of these changes on the rights of Indigenous peoples. In addition, I describe the current situation with international cooperation of the Russian Indigenous peoples. Since the start of the full-scale war in Ukraine, the international cooperation of Indigenous peoples of Russia has reduced substantially. It has especially affected those Indigenous peoples who had close ties with their Indigenous sisters and brothers in other countries. One of the examples of these Indigenous peoples is the Sámi who live in the territory of Sápmi stretching through the four nation States, namely Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia.

According to Zmyvalova, Indigenous peoples had different reactions to the war (Zmyvalova, 2023a: 223). Indigenous peoples' organizations backing the ideology of the federal center have supported the war (RAIPON, 2022). Some others have condemned the RF's aggression. It resulted in the polarization of opinions within the Indigenous community in Russia.

One of those who actively supported Russia's aggression is the Association of Indigenous Small- numbered Peoples of the North, Siberia, and the Far East of the Russian Federation (henceforth referred to as RAIPON). The RAIPON is the biggest Indigenous organization in Russia. The association unites 40 Indigenous peoples. It is also the Permanent Participant of the Arctic Council. In the beginning of the full-scale war in Ukraine, the RAIPON appealed to the RF President with the Letter to support the war. The Letter contained 33 signatures. Two of the 33 signatures belonged to individuals. These individuals were President of the RAIPON and Vice-president of the RAIPON. The rest of the signatures

belonged to different Indigenous organizations. Some other Russian Indigenous organizations who did not join the letter, also expressed their support to Russia's aggression in Ukraine (Indigenous Russia, 2022). The reason that the RAIPON supported the war in Ukraine is that it is a pro-governmental organization. Commenting on the pro-governmental orientation of the RAIPON, Pavel Sulyandziga explains that the RAIPON "is not an organization of Indigenous Peoples but part of the structure of the Russian regime" (Lackenbauer, Sidorova & Sukhankin, 2023: 1). P. Whitney Lackenbauer, Evgeniia Sidorova and Sergey Sukhankin claim that the RAIPON "has been coopted by the Kremlin and is now little more than a mouthpiece for government directives" (Lackenbauer, Sidorova & Sukhankin, 2023: 3).

One of those who openly took up the anti-war position is the Sámi activist Andrei Danilov (Zmyvalova, 2023b; Nilsen, 2022). He left Russia immediately after the start of the war. Currently, he resides in Norway. Another Sámi activist Aleksandr Slupachik is also seeking asylum in Norway (Staalesen & Chentemirov, 2023). Andrei Zhvavyi is a Russian Sámi activist who is awaiting the decision regarding asylum in Finland (Sjögren, 2023).

The Sámi Council suspended the cooperation with the Russian Sámi for an indefinite period. (Fjellheim, 2022). Sámi Council is an organization (Saami Council, 2023a) with voluntary membership of Sámi organizations in Finland, Russia, Norway, and Sweden. According to Zmyvalova, the suspension of cooperation does not prevent the Sámi Council in their attempts to support the Russian Sámi individuals (Zmyvalova, 2023a: 224). The example of such attempts is the establishment of the memorial fund in honor of the work and life of Jevgenij Jushkov. The Fund's main objective is to stimulate education in the Sámi languages for individuals from the Russian side of Sápmi (Saami Council, 2023b). As one of Zmyvalova's personal contacts among the Sámi individuals explains, this is a worthy initiative. However, challenges occur for the Russian Sámi individuals in the Russian part of Sápmi because of the sanctions and aggravated legislation. The sanctions impact monetary transfers from the Sámi Council to the private bank accounts in the RF. According to the new aggravated legislation, individuals can be recognized foreign agents in the RF if they receive a foreign financial support (see the clarification regarding the foreign agents in subsection 2.1). Russian citizens living in Russia are afraid of being recognized foreign agents. These challenges create obstacles for those who potentially are interested in learning the Sámi language.

Another example is the collaboration of Russia with the Arctic Council. According to Serafima Andreeva, the Arctic Council is “an intergovernmental and consensus-based forum that promotes cooperation among the Arctic states, indigenous peoples, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and non-Arctic observer states” (Andreeva, 2023: 112–113). Ida Folkestad Soltvedt informs that the Arctic Council was criticized for “the lack of legal status and, consequently, the supposedly low level of implementation among member states” (Soltvedt, 2017: 73). Further, she expresses her disagreement with this critique (Soltvedt, 2017: 73–94). Discussing its significance for Indigenous peoples, Paula Kankaanpää and Oran R. Young state that “it has become a mechanism for increasing the prominence of the concerns of the Arctic’s indigenous peoples” (Kankaanpää & Young, 2012). Besides the eight Arctic member States, six permanent participants representing Indigenous peoples of the Arctic, are part of the Arctic Council (Arctic Council, 2023a). One of these permanent participants is the RAIPON. In March 2022, all member States except Russia, decided to abstain from activities of the Arctic Council (Office of the Spokesperson of the Department of State, 2022a). In June 2022, these States decided to continue the Arctic Council’s activities partly but all the links with Russia were put on hold (Office of the Spokesperson of the Department of State, 2022b). The decision on the suspension of the Arctic Council’s activities was taken without prior consultations with the Permanent Participants. According to some scholars, this situation leads to ousting of Indigenous peoples from their stakeholder role. Barry Scott Zellen claims that the States again have become those stakeholders who take important decisions in the Arctic governance (Zellen, 2023: 148). It is impossible to predict whether and how the Arctic Council will continue its activity. According to the Russian Minister of foreign affairs Sergey Lavrov, Russia has considered its withdrawal from the Arctic Council (Ria Novosti, 2023; Sever- Press, 2023).

Changes in Russian legislation

Criminal and administrative punishments

Since the beginning of the war, numerous legislative acts of the RF have undergone substantial changes. The most substantial changes were made to the Criminal Code and the Code of the RF on Administrative Offenses. According to the Chairman of the lower house of the Russian Parliament (State Duma) Vyacheslav Volodin, 653 law drafts were considered in the State Duma in 2022 (Yurishina, 2023). According to Elena Yurishina, the

changes to the Criminal Code of 2022 demonstrate that this year was ‘the most repressive’ since the adoption of the Criminal Code (Yurishina, 2023). 19 new articles were introduced. 16 of them provide for criminal responsibility for war crimes (Yurishina, 2023). In addition, some existing articles were amended (Yurishina, 2023). Characterizing these changes, media outlet *Mediazona* claims that the wave of military laws passed in 2022 forced all those who disagreed to be silent, or to leave the country (Mediazona, 2023).

Criminal punishments were introduced for offenses such as “fakes about the Russian authorities” (FL N 63-FZ, 2022) and “fakes about the army” (FL N 32-FZ, 2022). In addition, the criminal punishment for fakes about the Russian authorities and the punishment for disseminating of “false information” about the activity of the Russian State bodies were initiated. The administrative responsibility for the activity as a foreign agent has been aggravated since the start of the war (FL N 622-FZ, 2022).⁴

The presented legal changes are examples of the changes in the Administrative and the Criminal Code of the RF that occurred after the start of the war in Ukraine. Consequently, there were detained 19 718 individuals from 2022, February 24 up to June 2023 for their anti-war position. There were registered 6 839 cases on discredit of the Russian army (OVD-Info, 2023a; OVD-Info, 2023b).⁵ Furthermore, 584 individuals were pursued for their anti-war position in accordance with the regulations of the Criminal Code

Other changes in the legislation

In addition to the changes in the criminal and administrative legislation, the Russian legislation has undergone changes in other legal branches. I suggest categorizing and describing the main changes in each of the periods.

The following stages can be distinguished:⁶

- From the start of the war to the announcement of the partial mobilization (February 2022- September 2022);
- From the announcement of the partial mobilization to the introduction of the legal regulations on the digital subpoenas and military digital register of military servicemen (September 2022- June 2023);
- From the introduction of the legal regulations on the digital subpoenas and military digital register of military servicemen up

to date. (June 2023-until now).

The *first stage* is characterized by the introduction of military censorship. The military censorship of this stage implies infringement of the freedom of speech, the information freedom, and the freedom of assembly (FL N 255-FZ, 2022).

The *second stage* is characterized continuation of the introduction of massive changes in the legislation (FL N 478-FZ, 2022) and the compulsory recruitment of military servicemen in accordance with the Edict of President of the RF September 21, 2022 (Edict N 647, 2022).

The *third stage* is characterized by the attempts of the State to recruit as many combatants as possible. Ekaterina Zmyvalova illustrates this tendency by referring to the amendments to the Law 'On Military Duty and Military Service' (Zmyvalova, 2023a: 223; FL N 127-FZ, 2023). According to these amendments, "military subpoenas on paper were to be sent alongside digital subpoenas to the private accounts on digital platforms" (Zmyvalova, 2023a: 223). If a person has not read a digital subpoena online or has not signed the subpoena in paper, the subpoena is counted as delivered anyway after seven days of its placement in the digital register. This means that an individual is obliged to come in person to the military commissariat. It is worth mentioning that the digital military register of military servicemen is still under development. The launching of the electronic military register is planned for Spring 2024. However, it was already announced by the Deputy Head of the Ministry of Digital Development, Communications and Mass Media, Oleg Kachanov, that meeting this deadline is impossible due to the lack of the proper infrastructure, among other things (Litoi, 2023).

To illustrate other changes concerning the recruitment of the biggest possible number of combatants, there can be given an example of the changes in the Russian legislation on the age of the individuals to be summoned to the short-term military service. The upper limit of the age of recruitment will be increased to 30 years from 2024. Earlier, the upper limit of the age to be summoned to the military service was 27. (FL N 439-FZ, 2023). Also, from October 2023, fines for the failure to assist the military commissariats in their mobilization work when mobilization is announced are introduced (FL N 404-FZ, 2023). Furthermore, from October 2023, the penalties for those who do not comply with the obligations on the military registration are aggravated.

The impact of the legislative changes on Indigenous peoples

In the present subsection I will present the impact of the legal changes within each of the periods presented in Subsection 2.2 on the rights of Indigenous peoples of Russia.

From the *very start of the war* in Ukraine, Indigenous peoples have been affected by the war. Even before the announcement of the partial mobilization, the number of Indigenous combatants was proportionally higher than the number of ethnic Russians (Bessudnov, 2022). Also, the proportion of Indigenous individuals who died at the war was higher than the number of the killed Russian combatants (Free Idel-Ural, 2022). Indigenous individuals chose to participate in the war for several reasons. Among them there were economic reasons, including their poverty and the need to receive monetary rewards for their participation in the war. Besides, the lack of reliable and objective information about the war in Ukraine has misled them and did not allow to them evaluate the situation objectively. As a result, this has increased the number of Indigenous combatants (Zmyvalova, 2023a: 221). According Loode, the Russian army is a mirror of the social and economic challenges of the State, especially in the remote territories where Indigenous peoples live. He observes that most of the recruits come from outskirt territories where unemployment, drug addiction and criminal situations are typical. Thus, for these recruits, participation in the war becomes a life-saving opportunity (Idelreal, 2022).

From the *start of the partial mobilization*, the mobilization was mostly carried out in the remote territories of the RF (Latypova, 2022; Light, 2022). According to the official statement from the Ministry of Defense, only one per cent of those who could be potentially mobilized would be recruited (Vesti, 2022). The number of the mobilized in fact is unknown due to the absence of official statistics. According to Prince, from the very beginning the events of the mobilization were poorly regulated by law and, thus, the mobilization was carried out chaotically (Prince, 2022; News UN, 2022). No unified criteria existed in Russian legislation regarding the number of mobilized and the mobilization in general. This resulted in varying practices in the federal subunits. Moreover, the absence of the unified criteria has led to legal breaches. Ekaterina Zmyvalova states that the informal mobilization criteria applied at the beginning of the mobilization (Zmyvalova, 2023c: 71). When President Putin announced partial mobilization, different subunits interpreted his order differently. In addition to the examples of the legal breaches during the partial mobilization presented in the Introduction of this

paper, the following examples can be given. Nanai activist Andrei Belda says that people from his village participated in the military activities in Donbas area already from 2014. Many of them died in Ukraine. Some of the families of the dead received military subpoenas for the dead to be summoned to the war in 2022. He continues: “[e]ven the dead were called up ... The military subpoenas were sent to those who died long time ago. The youth, the old - everybody went [to the war]. A little bit later those who had not fit were returned from Khabarovsk-these are the disabled and teachers” (Sevrinovskiy, 2023). According to Belda, every fifth person from his village was mobilized rather than one per cent of the village population, as was promised by the Minister of Defense. Other Nanai individuals confirm that the military commissariat “grabbed everyone they could” (Sevrinovskiy, 2023).

The introduction of the legal regulations on the digital subpoenas and military digital register of military servicemen will impact Indigenous peoples negatively. According to Uliana Vinokurova, Indigenous peoples reside in the territories of “digital inequality” (Vinokurova, 2023). The absence of technology in the territories of traditional residence of Indigenous peoples can result in the situations when those Indigenous individuals who do not have access to the internet and, thus, cannot get access to their digital military subpoenas will be punished.

Legislative initiatives on the exemption of Indigenous peoples from participation in the war

Notably, there exist no special rules of exemption for the mobilization of Indigenous peoples to the war. This subsection gives an overview of the legislative initiatives on the exemption of Indigenous peoples from participation in the war.

One of the examples of such initiatives is the initiative of the deputy of the State Duma and former mayor of the city of Yakutsk Sardana Avksentyeva. She proposed that men belonging to Indigenous peoples officially recognized by the Order of the Government of the RF of 2006, April 17 N 536-p ‘On Approval of the List of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation’ should not be mobilized (Avksentyeva, 2022).

Another initiative was undertaken by the deputy of the State Duma from the Nenets Autonomous Okrug Sergey Kotkin. He planned to initiate a bill on the exemption of reindeer herders from the mobilization (National

Accent, 2022). Governor of the Nenets Autonomous Okrug Yuriy Bezdudny supported this initiative. He claimed that reindeer herders could not be conscripted because they provided for the food security in the region (New Izvestiya, 2022).

Another initiative was undertaken by Head of the Association of the Indigenous Peoples of the North of the Khabarovsk Region Lyubov Odzhal. She appealed to President Putin, the Prosecutor the General's Office of the RF, and some other bodies of State power, to stop the mobilization of Indigenous individuals (Activatica, 2022).

The two latter initiatives did not result in any law drafts on either the federal or the subunits' level. The only legal initiative that ended in the Parliament as a law draft was initiated by Sardana Avksentyeva and Maksim Gulin (Draft of the FL, 2022). According to this law draft, Indigenous small-numbered peoples have the right to change their military service to the alternative civil service. This law draft regarded Indigenous peoples who had a traditional way of life and carried out traditional economic activities and Indigenous crafts. This draft has never become the law.

Some scholars have expressed their opinion on the exemption of Indigenous individuals from the mobilization. Vinokurova suggests two criteria for the exemption. The first criterion is living in the areas of extreme climactic conditions and working in the life-supporting sectors. The second criterion is that an individual belongs to Russia's ethnocultural diversity (Vinokurova, 2022).

Thus, despite the initiatives, no law was adopted on the exemption of Indigenous individuals from the mobilization.

Concluding remarks

The legal changes in Russia which have taken place since the start of the war in Ukraine in February 2022, demonstrate that Russia has distanced itself from its international commitments. Moreover, the changes in the punitive legislation demonstrate that the year of 2022 was the most repressive since the adoption of the Criminal Code in 1996. Also, the Code of the RF on Administrative Offenses of 2001 was changed substantially. In addition, the changes were also introduced into other legal acts. These changes concern, inter alia, the military censorship and demonstrate attempts of the State to recruit as many combatants as possible. Rapid legal changes create chaos in

implementation of the new laws. Announcement of the partial mobilization is an example of such challenging implementation.

All the legislative changes have a direct impact on the Indigenous peoples in Russia. For example, from the start of the war, high numbers of Indigenous persons participated in the war due to socio- economic reasons and disinformation. From the start of partial mobilization, a significant number of Indigenous persons were summoned from the remote areas where Indigenous peoples traditionally reside. This paper describes some legal initiatives to adopt legislation regarding the exemption of Indigenous individuals from the mobilization. However, no laws were adopted as a result of these initiatives.

The analysis also shows that international cooperation of Indigenous organizations of Russia has reduced substantially. This might have an irreversible impact on their culture, language, and rights. Some examples were given to demonstrate that Indigenous individuals were supported internationally in their strive for their language. However, this support was hard to manage due to the sanctions and aggravation of the Russian legislation.

Notes

1. Legal changes' is a broad term which also includes other sources of the Russian law in addition to the legislation. Examples of these additional sources are court decisions.
2. For more examples see: Katzarova, 2023.
3. For more information see Zmyvalova, 2020: 350–351.
4. A foreign agent is an individual or a legal entity who has received any foreign support or who is under a foreign influence, or both. According to Article 2 (1) of this Law, foreign influence is providing support by a foreign source or impacting a foreign agent, also by coercion, persuasion or in other ways. According to Article 2 (2) of this Law, the support is providing a foreign agent with monetary funds and (or) other property, as well as providing organizational, methodological, scientific-technical assistance, or any support in other forms.
5. Article 20.3.3 of the Code of the RF on Administrative Offenses regulates issue of discreditation.
6. I am solely responsible for the suggested categorization.

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Section 5:

Cross-Border Cooperation

21

Kirkenes-Nikel: Catching a Second Wind of Twinning?

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This article examines the unfolding of relations between two northern towns, Kirkenes and Nikel, as a rather recent case of city twinning. This endeavour, launched in 2008, did not emerge in the standard bottom-up type of fashion, with the cities in question defying to some extent the divisive impact of statist borders. It came instead into being as part and parcel of broader schemes of cross-border cooperation between Norway and Russia, encouraged by central authorities. It might thus be assumed that the twinning project is doomed to succeed. The towns might well turn into a bridge, altering decades of closure and isolation, although it is also conceivable that being tied to a broader setting largely outside the control of the towns themselves hampers cooperation. The two towns do not necessarily engage in the production of familiarity and closeness in the way they are assumed and encouraged to, but pursue policies of their own, premised on unfamiliarity and bordering rather than de-bordering. Our aim is thus to chart the experiences gained during the initial years of the project's implementation as well as the difficulties encountered in this process. Exploring the somewhat particular case of Kirkenes-Nikel arguably adds to the insight concerning city-twinning in Northern Europe, but it also invites for a probing of the various aspects of a rather complicated relationship, where interest in cooperation and the establishment of an in-between space, premised on rather far-reaching togetherness, co-exists and struggles with feelings of animosity and distrust.

Introduction: The Changing Meanings of Twinning

City-twinning has gradually turned into a widespread phenomenon in various parts of Europe, including the former socialist countries. The previous pattern of “friendship” and “sister” cities that existed during the years of the Cold War in order to signal symbolic togetherness has changed in character, as there is currently much more emphasis on concrete and functional cooperation. Out of a very large number of European cities being

in various ways linked to each other, some 50 cities exist as city-pairs cooperating across a shared border (Schultz, 2002: 3). In general, twinning is seen by local actors as an adequate and preferable response to the numerous challenges that they face in their day-to-day lives. It is pursued by many European – including some Russian – municipalities not only as an efficient instrument for solving local problems: twinning is also employed in efforts to ensure their sustainable development. The municipalities depart from the assumption that various border-related resources can be utilized more effectively with cooperation extending beyond state borders, although the efficiency and scale of twinning varies considerably across Europe (Ploszaj, 2012; Schultz, 2005).

It should be noted that the very concept of “twin cities” figures as a rather vexed question in the research literature. Different schools suggest different interpretations and use various synonyms (often of a misleading character). To summarize the ongoing academic discussion, the following definitions of the concept can be identified.

In the domestic context, twin cities are a special case of two cities or urban centres that are founded in close geographic proximity and then grow into each other over time. Originally, this concept referred specifically to the cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul, located in Minnesota (Twin cities, 2011), but with time it was used to describe the same phenomenon in other countries. It should be noted, however, that with some exceptions (e.g., Porsgrunn and Skien, Fredrikstad and Sarpsborg in Norway), Northern Europe lacks this kind of twin cities. Instead, there are a number of the so-called “satellite” cities in the region, which have emerged in order to “groom” larger urban centres and/or fulfill specific functions (to host university campuses, techno-parks, industries, transport infrastructure, military bases, etc.). Stavanger-Sandnes (Norway), Espoo-Helsinki (Finland), Severomorsk-Murmansk, and Severodvinsk-Arkhangelsk (Russia) are cases in point. The craving for larger and more competitive entities is bound to increase the pressures towards mergers.

In the international sense, there are two – broad and narrow – definitions of the concept “twin cities/towns.” Under the broader understanding, the term “twin cities” has been employed to connote cooperative agreements between cities, towns, and even counties that are not neighbours but are located at a considerable distance and even in separate countries, to promote economic, commercial, and cultural ties (Stephen, 2008). Most town-twinning unfolds between cities facing similar social, economic, and

political situations or sharing historical links. In Europe, a variety of terms are used, although “twin cities” appears to be the most common one. However, other terms such as sister, fraternal, connected, double, transborder, bi-national, neighboured, coupled, partner, and friendship are utilized in naming the city-pairs (Buursink, 2001; Schultz, 2002). In the case of Russia (similar to the Soviet time), along with the twin-towns concept, the terms of brother/fraternal (*pobratimyy*) or related (*porodnennyye*) cities are used.

In the narrow sense, twin cities are border towns adjacent to each other. According to Buursink (1994), there are two sub-categories of neighboured border towns: double towns that aim at cooperation and supplementing each other, and town couples that often compete with each other. Schultz (2002) asserts that only double towns can be seen as real twins and sets a number of criteria for selecting twin towns. They should not only consist of border towns, but also have the following characteristics:

- They should harbour a joint history as cities that have existed as administrative units in the past, prior to national borders separating them.
- Although previously separated by borders, this delimiting should have been traded for open borders.
- A preferable case consists of cities where a river both separates and connects the cities facing each other across the river (and, for this reason, they are called bridge towns).
- There should be connecting factors and features conducive to cooperation, such as ethnic minorities as well as command of the neighbour’s language.
- There should be a certain level of institutionalization of cooperation between the twins in terms of unified administrative structures and common urban planning. The most advanced twin towns purport themselves as “Euro-cities” in emphasizing their European rather than national identity.

While agreeing with most of the above criteria, we nonetheless base our study on a somewhat different and more extensive definition of twin towns, with adjacency and the breaking of spatial fixations in the form of national borders as our main point of departure. Whereas twinning is in most cases seen as residing in the application of a particular form of “urban logic,” it also inevitably provides the cities engaged in such activities with

transnational and international features. It does so as they contribute, in varying degrees, to the formation of a commonality reaching beyond national configurations (Joenniemi and Sergunin, 2011; 2012).

Notably, twinning stands for shared citiness and figures as a manifestation of new forms of urban policies. It testifies, as an aspect of regionalization, with considerable clarity that the order-producing impact of national borders is waning. The changing character of inner-oriented borders turning into outwards-oriented frontiers and allowing for the emergence of shared borderlands is visible also in Northern Europe, as exemplified by twinning. City-twinning has turned into one of the departures used by cities aspiring for a distinct, visible, and favourable profile, and it is, in this sense, part and parcel of their policies of place-marketing and branding in the context of the increasingly intense and transnational regionalization.

Twinning has also accrued broader institutional forms with the establishment of the City Twins Association (CTA) in December 2006. Altogether, 14 cities have joined the CTA, including four pairs located in Northern Europe: Valka-Valga (Latvia-Estonia), Imatra-Svetogorsk (Finland- Russia), Narva-Ivangorod (Estonia-Russia), and Tornio-Haparanda (Finland-Sweden) (City Twins Association, 2010).

These pairs, coming into being during the 1980s or 1990s through initiatives taken by the cities themselves, differ as to success and effectiveness. Tornio-Haparanda obviously stands out as a success story, and Valka-Valga as well as Imatra-Svetogorsk belong more or less to the same category. Narva-Ivangorod has, in turn, experienced some initial difficulties in implementing various schemes of twinning, although the record of this Estonian-Russian pair has, to some extent, improved over time (Joenniemi and Sergunin, 2012).

It is also to be noted that the trend of twinning in Northern Europe has not been a straight-forward one of increasing success and deepening integration. Instead, the outbreak of the world economic crisis (2008), as well as the subsequent crisis of the Eurozone and the new round of the Schengen zone's expansion (2007), has, to some extent, impacted the unfolding of twinning in Northern Europe. Progress has, over the recent years, been limited, with the case of Tornio-Haparanda standing out as an exception.

It appears, against this background, that the initiative pertaining to Kirkenes-Nikel, taken in 2008, breaks the pattern. It emerges as a kind of latecomer and represents an attempt to revive the very idea and spirit of twinning in Northern Europe. Moreover, the initiative did not just emerge in a dialogue between the cities themselves, as also the Norwegian and Russian foreign ministries were actively involved in pushing for such an outcome. They did so, it appears, as part of an effort to initiate broader regional and cross-border cooperation between the two countries, thus providing the twinning between Kirkenes and Nickel with features of a top-down – rather than the ordinary bottom-up – type of endeavour (Figenschou, 2011; Haugseth, 2013). The active and encouraging role of the ministries has also been reflected in the 2010 decision to establish a visa-free zone for residents living in the vicinity of the border between the Sør-Varanger commune and the Russian towns of Nickel, Zapolyarny, Petchenga, and Korzunovo. The Kirkenes-Nikel constellation has been further complicated by the fact that the agreement on twinning has not been concluded between the cities themselves, but came into being through a joint declaration issued by the municipalities of Sør-Varanger on the Norwegian side and that of Pechenga on the Russian one. Kirkenes and Nickel form the largest entities within their respective municipalities, but their nested position within the two somewhat broader entities may nonetheless complicate their aim and pursuance of twinning.

There are thus good reasons to interrogate the unfolding of twinning in the case of Kirkenes- Nickel. Being an integral part of broader plans for cooperation and cross-border regionalization between Norway and Russia potentially provides the two northern cities with the position of front-runners. The option is there to transgress and reach beyond the border and the various binary divisions into “we” and “them” that for a considerable period of time have prevented the development of any interaction, and to make it malleable and part of a border-related space premised on cooperation and friendly relations. They may transcend the national appropriations that have characterized the policies pursued in the past. It is, however, also possible that they encounter various obstacles related to the burden of the past, the somewhat complicated structures in which they have been embedded, and/or various actors resisting the downgrading of the divisive impact of their national border. For the latter type of reasons, it might have been difficult for twinning to take off in various spheres of economic, social, and cultural relations and for closer relations to develop

between Kirkenes and Nikel, providing substance to the notion of city-twinning.

In addition to charting success or failure in various efforts of cooperation, our aim is to address the way the encounter has unfolded in terms of the narratives employed as well as the discourses used in grounding the twin-city relationship between Kirkenes and Nikel. This is done in order to offer additional insight into the quite complex cross-border relationship. The options available on the basis of the national histories consist both of familiarity and unfamiliarity. Obviously, the encounter consists of meeting the other as clearly different from oneself – in spite of the term “twins” suggesting the existence of a far-reaching similitude – and yet the difference can be interpreted as benign or threatening in nature. It may be depicted as a familiar kind of strangeness conducive to curiosity, fascination, and nostalgia, these then either contributing to interaction or amounting instead to resentment and perhaps even animosity. Both options are, in general, there, as noted by Spierings and van der Velde (2008) and Scott (2013). The prevalence of familiarity amounting to moves of inclusion, rather than unfamiliarity inviting exclusion, would contribute to progress in the sphere of twinning, whereas the latter would complicate, if not undermine, various efforts to change the meaning of the border through increasing closeness and intense cooperation.

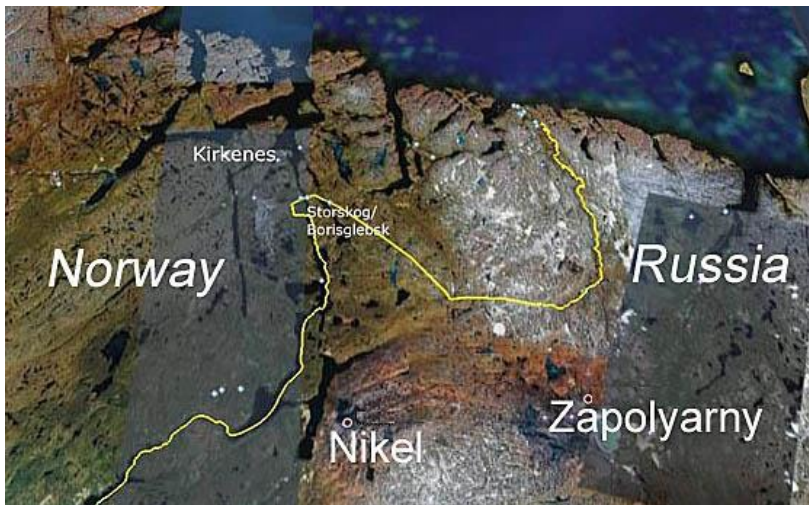


Figure 25-1: Map of the Kirkenes-Nikel Area

The Duality of the Past

The history of the region offers elements for the construction of familiarity as well as unfamiliarity. Modern bordering, part of extending state-formation to the north, took place at a relatively late juncture and was presided by a “common land” period and interaction that paid scant, if any, attention to state-related borders and efforts at bordering. In particular, a Sámi population moved flexibly across borders, and also Finnish speakers were strongly present in the region, straddling various borders. Borders emerged more clearly during the Swedish-Norwegian Union (1826-1905). They were finally drawn in 1826, although the demarcation and delimitation proceeded quite slowly, with borders preserving their natural frontiers up to the beginning of the 20th century (Niemi, 2005). The period of openness was then followed by one of closure, premised on notions of unfamiliarity, above all because of the Russian Revolution in 1917. With Finland gaining independence in 1917, the Norwegian-Russian border became a Finnish- Norwegian borderline up to 1944. This implied that Nikel (Nikkeli) and the surrounding area of Pechenga (Petsamo) were part of Finland up to the end of WWII, with the border turning again into a Norwegian-Soviet/Russian one.

The various historical turns implied that the Sør-Varanger region remained for a long period quite multicultural, in essence containing Norwegian, Finnish-speaking Kvens, Sámi, as well as Russian elements. The interaction was locally premised in large part on familiarity, whereas the policies pursued by the Norwegian state rested on “Norwegianization” (Rogova, 2008: 11; Viken et al., 2008: 27).

The Second World War implied that security – or rather insecurity – gained the upper hand. There was much resistance against the German occupation, particularly in northern Norway, and to some extent with the partisans cooperating with the Soviet forces (Niemi, 2005). Towards the end of the war, the Red Army liberated northeastern areas of Norway, including Kirkenes, from German occupation. Although the fighting amounted to an almost full dismantling of the dwellings in the region and caused profound destruction, the image of the Soviet forces has remained rather positive, as indicated, among other things, by the statue devoted to a Soviet soldier still standing on a hilltop in Kirkenes.

However, the war implied in general that security remained a core constitutive argument and also forcefully impacted the Norwegian-Soviet relations. It also implied that the emphasis on Norwegianization continued,

with the state of Norway pursuing policies based on unfamiliarity and exclusion rather than familiarity and inclusion. A garrison mentality prevailed both on the Norwegian as well as the Soviet sides, amounting to the presence of various military installations and entities as part of the ideological and systemic East-West conflict. The dominance of the quite securitized national discourse implied that the border remained almost entirely closed. The border was for a long time comprehended as “a symbolic end of the world for people living on the two sides of it,” as noted by Anastasia Rogova (2009: 33).

This changed, though, with the end of the Cold War and the beginning of the 1990s. More space opened up for the application of notions premised on familiarity and the border turned increasingly flexible, allowing for various transactions to unfold. The discourses not only changed locally, as also various state-related authorities changed footing to encourage interaction. Notions pertaining to the more multicultural and interactionist periods in the history of northern Norway grew in significance, as also evidenced by the frequent use in the current discourse on Norwegian-Russian cross-border cooperation of the term *Pomor*, i.e., a reference to ancient coastal trade between Russians and the rest of the local population (Niemi, 1992). Even the Norwegian and Russian militaries have exploited the connotations of commonality embedded in the term by naming their joint exercise in 2013 *Pomor*.

Towards a More Cooperative Pattern

At large, the constitutive themes grounding the political space have changed profoundly in the North since the end of the Cold War, and this goes particularly for Norwegian-Russian relations. The two countries perceive each other as “partners,” with a considerable amount of cooperation in various fields. The agreement reached on the delimitation of the Barents Sea in 2010 has contributed considerably to a decline in securitization and has opened up more friendly and cooperative relations, although within limits. The various environmental challenges as well as the different economic options – pertaining above all to the extraction of oil and gas, but also to new shipping lines such as those of the Northern Sea Route (Northeast Passage) – are of such a magnitude that the incentives for cooperation have become quite considerable. The constitutive discourse increasingly relates, therefore, to various projects, particularly in fields related to the production of oil, gas, and shipping, and in general the significance of the northern areas to the national economies as well as the

dangers to be averted in the environmental field. For Norway, the northern areas have turned into a strategic priority area in the sphere of the country's foreign policy, as articulated, for example, in the Government's Strategy of 2006 (The Norwegian Government's High North Strategy, 2006) and updated in the 2009 document (New Building Blocks in the North, 2009). A similar development has been discernible in Russia, as evidenced by the emphasis placed on the Arctic region's significance by the Government's Strategy for the Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation issued in 2008 (Medvedev, 2008) and in a follow-up version published in 2013 (Putin, 2013). This implies, in reality, that the national diplomacies and municipal "paradiplomacies" conducted by various local actors such as Kirkenes and Nikel reinforce and compliment, rather than contradict, each other.

It also follows from these that the northern areas have grown in centrality and are no longer, as used to be the case, regarded as utterly peripheral in nature. It is to be noted, however, that the various plans and predictions have not always materialized, at least not in the way initially thought and expected. The different endeavours and plans pertaining to extensive cooperation may sometimes fail or have to be postponed, as shown clearly by the backlash experienced in the case of the Shtokman gas and oil field, with Norwegian Statoil giving up its shares in the field and the Russian companies putting their plans for the development on ice.

Twinning as a Development Strategy

Kirkenes in particular has been able to capitalize on the growing significance of the northern areas. Rather than just being at the edge of Norway and of some importance due to national security, it has increasingly turned into a hub for a variety of industrial activities, commercial services, and tourism, with considerable features of internationalization and a political centre for different activities related to the Barents Sea cooperation. It hosts, among other things, the International and Norwegian Barents Secretariats and the Barents Institute. It is hence unsurprising that Viken and Nyseth (2009) describe its current profile as pointing to "miners and ministers," implying changes in terms of industrialization as well as internationalization. The change is formidable, as Kirkenes experienced severe difficulties in the 1980s and with the mine being laid down in the mid-1990s. Instead of the rather bleak future that seemed, then, to be the destiny of the town, with the changing and more open character of the border, as well as the other options offered by the altered and more

internationalized environment, the town has become dynamic and flourishing.

Nikel has been less touched by the changes in the external environment. The local economic base has basically remained the same and it has not changed in the way that Kirkenes has, although it is also to be noted that the underlying discourse on the part of Nikel shows at least some signs of desecuritization. This is in particular evidenced by the fact that Nikel no longer has the status – as it had before 2008 – of a closed border territory (Russian Ministry of Justice, 2008). The town still hosts some minor military entities and thus has the character of a garrison town, and in hosting the Norilsk Nickel plant, it is also a heavily industrialized town. One aspect of such industrialization is that due to the smelting part of the production of nickel, Nikel also has the reputation of a rather polluted mining town. The town seems in general to have declined in importance due to a variety of factors such as reduced support from the central government, cuts in the number of military personnel, as well as declining production at the Norilsk Nickel plant. This diminishing standing is well reflected in the fact that the number of inhabitants (around 12,500 in 2012) has dropped by a third in comparison to the days of the Cold War.

Clearly, Kirkenes and Nikel deviate from each other with respect to their profiles and dynamics of development. They are proximate in terms of geography, both have an industrial profile and host military entities, but in most other regards they differ from each other. Yet they have been prepared to utilize the changes in their external environments and the increased prospects of partnership by engaging in town-twinning. Notably, the emphasis on cooperation boils down to an extension of previous policies, as the search for togetherness between Kirkenes and Nikel goes back to 1973 and the era of the Cold War. Kirkenes and the Pechenga district (part of the Murmansk region) – including Nikel – at that time signed an agreement pertaining to friendship, with emphasis on cultural and sport exchange, in order to alleviate the divisive impact of the border and develop familiarity in order to leave behind various negativities residing in the past, as well as the-then prevailing situation (Viken et al., 2008: 30). In fact, at that time, the collaborative ties between the two towns consisted, for the most part, of irregular cultural contacts (Brednikova and Voronkov, 1999). The togetherness was rather limited, although since the initial period it has been taken much further in the post-Soviet era, with both the Norwegian and Russian sides expressing interest in reinvigorating their town-to-town relations on a principally new and more pragmatic basis.

The mutual interest and intensified contacts between the towns resulted in the signing of an agreement between the Sør-Varanger community and the Pechenga district (March 28, 2008), including an agreement on a special Kirkenes-Nikel twin city project (*Soglashenie o razvitii druzhestvennyx svjazy*, 2008). Notably, this agreement was preceded by a letter from the Norwegian Foreign Minister, Jonas Gahr Støre, in March 2008 to the chairperson of Sør-Varanger, referring to talks conducted between the Norwegian minister and Russia's Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov. Støre also articulated progress in talks to establish, in the long term, a joint economic and industrial zone of cooperation (Pomor) reaching across the Norwegian-Russian border. He recommended that the representatives of Sør-Varanger and Pechenga come together in order for Kirkenes and Nickel to turn into twin cities for such an arrangement to be part of the zone arrangement (Haugseth, 2013). As a consequence, and following success in the talks between the two municipalities, the twinning between Kirkenes and Nickel was approved by the Norwegian and Russian foreign ministers at their meeting in Kirkenes on June 9, 2008 (*Pogoretskaya*, 2008). The same day, a joint statement on the prospects of twinning was issued by the Sør-Varanger and Pechenga leaders (*Sovmestnoe zayavlenie o sotrudnichestve*, 2008).

More specifically, the 2008 agreement on twinning covered cooperative areas, such as support for small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs); the establishment of a joint Business Cooperation Center in Nickel; environmental protection; health care (including direct cooperative schemes between municipal hospitals); education (direct links between elementary and secondary schools); training programs for municipal officials; tourism; cultural festivals and exhibitions; library and museum cooperation; mass media cooperation; women and youth cooperation; and sports (*Soglashenie o razvitii druzhestvennyx svjazy*, 2008; *Smirnova*, 2008).

In spring 2011, the agreement was updated by the two municipalities and an action plan for 2011-2012 was adopted. It was decided to focus on priorities such as support for SMEs; the creation of a common labour market; good governance practices at the municipal level; educational projects; culture (including the Barents Spectacle festival, regular art exhibitions, library and museum cooperation, and joint festivities to commemorate the Murmansk and Finnmark regions' liberation from German occupation in 1944); and sports (ice hockey and football tournaments, and swimming competitions). Special attention was paid to early preparations for the introduction of the visa-free regime for the border

regions' residents (establishing a special corridor for border resident card holders at the Borisoglebsk-Storskog border crossing, the liberalization of the customs regime in the border zone, etc.) (Plan sotrudnichestva, 2011; Lebed, 2011).

The new leadership of the Sør-Varanger community that was elected in the municipal elections in 2011 confirmed its adherence to both the above agreement and action plan (Belova, 2011). In addition, the partners decided to opt for a new action plan by the fall of 2013.

The way that twinning emerged in the case of Kirkenes-Nikel points to the fact that the two towns were in general expected to contribute to the demise of the divisive effects of the Norwegian-Russian border and to generate experiences applicable more generally to cooperation between Norway and Russia. They have been invited to implement spatial strategies that contribute to the emergence of a bridgehead towards Russia, a common trans-border area, and an integrated borderland, in order for the experiences then also to be utilized in other spheres of Norwegian-Russian cooperation in the North. The two towns are expected to reach beyond their national roles and connect the local with the international through their particularly close relations in terms of twinning.

In general, the strategy of twinning as a form of inter-town and inter-municipal cooperation seems to boil down to three issue areas: capacity-building (aiming at developing various capabilities of the parties); problem-solving (cooperation in functional areas with the aim to ensure sustainable development); and cultural interaction (in order for negative perceptions of the neighbour to be downgraded and familiarity to be upgraded).

Capacity-Building Strategies

These strategies include a wide array of methods.

One crucial area consists of attracting investments. Both domestic and foreign investments are searched for, and this applies both to the existing sectors (such as the mining industries or transport infrastructure) as well as potential projects (e.g., new railway connections and industrial parks). For example, the Sør-Varanger community managed to attract the Tschudi Group, a large Norwegian investment company, to the region in order for the Bjørnevatn iron ore open-pit mine to be reopened in 2009. The mine is important for Sør-Varanger in terms of employment, and it actually adds to the shortage of labour that has been there already for some time, thus also contributing to the idea that some part of the work force could be recruited

from the Russian side of the border. The mine does not only contribute to the local economy, with iron ore being extracted there, but the ore is also hauled via the Kirkenes-Bjørnevatn Line over to Kirkenes in order to be processed and shipped out. The mine already has a long history, as it was initially opened in 1906 – leading then also to the grounding of Kirkenes – but then closed in 1996 because of its own inefficiency and the decline in the price of iron ore (Viken et al., 2008: 28-29). The reopening is, in turn, related to more favourable prices, allowing also the Tschudi Group to invite some external investors to contribute to the reopening. They have invested altogether some 2,400 million Norwegian krone (NOK) for the mine to be modernized and reopened.

Among the other large investment projects, the Sør-Varanger community is looking for investors to renovate the Kirkenes international airport, European routes 06 and 105, as well as the local road system. It is to be noted that all these projects have been advertized as gateways or links to the Murmansk region or Russia in general.

As for the Russian side, an event called the Russian-Norwegian Cross-Border Cooperation Days was organized in November 2011 in Nikel and was exemplary in terms of investment policies. A number of international business associations such as SIBA International Management, Foreign Investors Business Association (FIBA), Norwegian Business Association (NBA), and Naringshage (Kirkenes business association) took part. The Pechenga district has organized a poster session titled “Russia’s north-western gates” to demonstrate investment opportunities for foreign businesses (Bulygin, 2011).

Branding/PR strategies: In order to attract foreign investors and for twinning to gain both regional and national support, the municipalities have launched rather active PR campaigns. For example, they have arranged exhibitions, held “days of cooperation” and arranged festivals in towns with which they are related, taken part in international fairs, and advertised themselves in the partner cities’ mass media (see photograph below). In addition, the municipal leaders undertake regular trips abroad for public relations purposes. Kirkenes, Nikel, and Pechenga run bilingual periodicals and websites oriented towards audiences in the regional neighbourhoods. The main message of this campaign is to present twin cities as creative and innovative platforms rather than remote and depressive areas.



Figure 25-2: A Sør-Varanger community ad in the Pechenga district's newspaper: Welcome to Kirkenes – your nearest shopping center!

Cooperation with international organizations: In the hope of getting international assistance and recognition, many northern European municipalities try to develop relations with regional and sub-regional organizations, such as the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC), Arctic Council, Council of Europe, European Congress of Municipal and Regional Governments, European Regions Assembly, etc. For example, the BEAC has both its headquarters and Norwegian national offices in Kirkenes and its office in Murmansk. These offices help to coordinate cooperative projects at the regional/municipal level, including the Kirkenes-Nikel twinning project. The Sør-Varanger community, being a part of the Finnmark county, cooperates with the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities, which, in turn, is a member of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (Council of European Municipalities and Regions, 2013: 11). As mentioned above, both municipalities have contacts with the CTA and even think about joining it in due time. It should be noted that cooperation with international organizations is important for the twinning municipalities not only in terms of survival or getting additional resources for their developmental programs, but also in terms of opening them up for the world-wide processes of globalization and regionalization.

The use of the “treaty-making power”: As far as the Russian side is concerned, over the past two decades, this strategy was at the centre of the heated debate

on the treaty-making powers of the federal centre, regions (members of the Russian Federation), and municipalities. Despite Moscow's resistance since the early 1990s, many Russian border municipalities have concluded direct agreements with same-type international partners. As a compromise between the central and local actors, it was decided that such agreements should not have the status of full-fledged international treaties (which is considered a federal prerogative) and should be prepared with the Russian Foreign Ministry's assistance. Nevertheless, these would-be "treaty-making" activities of the municipalities were one of the most effective instruments both to build their capacities and strengthen their international prestige.

Twinning Strategies: Problem-Solving/Functional Cooperation

The Kirkenes-Nikel twinning project aims to help these towns solve the numerous problems they face and promote their further sustainable development. Their cooperation covers the following areas:

Industrial cooperation: Their cooperation is, more particularly, connected to the Norwegian Pomor Plan, i.e., a plan initiated by Norwegian experts in 2006 and aiming at the establishment of a Pomor Special Industrial Zone (PSIZ) in the Sør-Varanger community/Pechenga district on the border region, but potentially also transcending the Norwegian-Russian border (Cherednichenko, 2008).

One of the prime aims of establishing a PSIZ consisted of facilitating the development and use of the Shtokman gas field in the Barents Sea, among other things, by providing a major bulk of the required regional transport infrastructure and the construction of a plant for the production of liquid gas. Russia and Norway have also decided to connect some of their gas pipelines in the Barents Sea area, and in bringing the pipeline on land, an appendage might also reach Nickel (so the nickel depositories could be processed on spot rather than traded on the world market as raw material, as has been the case so far). The plans to build metallurgy and oil refinery plants on the coast of Pechenga Bay were mentioned as well (Pechenga, 2008). These activities open up some interesting prospects also for twinning.

Developing transport infrastructure: There was also a project to build a 40-kilometre railroad from Nickel to Kirkenes. Such a connection would be needed in order to switch a part of the broader flow of goods (coming from the Far East and Russia's High North to Europe and North America via Murmansk) to Kirkenes. A special company, the World Port Kirkenes Group AS, was established in Norway in 2001. According to the company's

plans, the link should be created not only to the Russian but also to the Finnish railway system, and the connection between the Kirkenes, Murmansk, and Arkhangelsk ports should be established (World Port Kirekenes Group, 2002: 11). However, the Murmansk regional authorities were reserved about this project because they did not want to transform Kirkenes into a world-class port capable of being a competitor to the Murmansk harbours. Instead, they proposed a plan of the radical reconstruction of the Murmansk port to receive the growing flow of goods. Owing to competitive interests, the railway project has made little progress, and instead Oslo has been pushing for the exploration of the viability of a railroad from Rovaniemi (Finland) to Tromsø or Finnmark county (including Kirkenes) in order to develop an alternative version of the transport corridor (Regnum, 2009). According to the Norwegian Foreign Minister, Jonas Gahr Støre (2010), the plan is being assessed “on a serious basis.”

The regional authorities are modernizing the E-105 highway from Murmansk to Kirkenes (via the Borisoglebsk-Storskog border crossing) and building several shortcuts that bypass Pechenga and Nikel, thus making the distance shorter. The Norwegian side is modernizing its part of the E-105 as well. Both projects should be completed by 2014 (Barents Observer, 2011).

Creating a common labour market: One aspect of twinning consists of relations in the sphere of work. There is a considerable shortage of skilled labour in Sør-Varanger and Finnmark more generally, and this has become more acute with the reopening of iron mines in the vicinity of Kirkenes. Efforts have been taken to improve the flow of labour in the Barents Region between Norway and Russia, for example, by providing training for jobs in the offshore sector and by the changing experience in the promotion of an inclusive labour market (Støre, 2010: 10). There were plans to partially staff the Kirkenes mines with workers from Nikel who could commute daily or work on shift basis. These plans, however, were postponed because the introduction of new visa/work permit regulations was delayed.

Promoting a visa facilitation regime: The intensified contacts between Finnmark and the Murmansk region have entailed the need for the liberalization of the visa regime for border residents. In that context, an agreement was reached on a local border traffic zone and the introduction of a border resident ID card on November 2, 2010. Those who live within the 30 kilometre border area on the Norwegian and Russian sides are eligible

to get a three-year ID card and are able to cross the border without a visa and stay on the other side up to 15 days each time (Soglashenie mezhdru Pravitel'stvom Korolevstva Norvegija i Pravitel'stvom Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 2010). The whole Sør-Varanger community (with the exception of the Sámi village of Neiden), as well as the Russian towns of Nikel, Zapolyarny, Pechenga, and Korzunovo, were covered by these arrangements.

The agreement was ratified by both the Norwegian and Russian sides in early 2011. However, it entered into force only on May 29, 2012, one and a half years after it had been signed. The numerous technical difficulties, ranging from providing border residents with reliable ID cards to the renovation of the Borisoglebsk-Storskog border crossing, have repeatedly delayed its implementation. It is estimated that there is a need for 9,000 cards on the Norwegian and 35,000 IDs on the Russian side (Lebed, 2012). At the Kiruna BEAC summit on June 4, 2013, the Russian and Norwegian prime ministers signed a protocol to extend the 2010 agreement to Neiden, thus covering the whole Sør-Varanger community by a visa-free regime (Pogoretskaya, 2013a).

The increased contacts imply that the number of border crossings has grown considerably. The border crossing in Borisoglebsk-Storskog at the Norwegian-Russian border close to Kirkenes was reopened in 1991, but initially the number of border crossings remained low with only a few thousand crossings a year. In 2010 and 2012, the figures were more than 100,000 and 250,000 crossings respectively (Pogoretskaya, 2013a; Støre, 2010: 9). It is expected that this figure will be doubled in 2013.

This also means an increased load on the Russian and Norwegian consulates. For example, in 2011-2012, the Russian consulate in Kirkenes issued 7,000 visas each year. Moreover, it issued 2,200 border resident ID cards from mid-2012 to mid-2013 (Pettersen, 2013). To facilitate visa application, processing, and issuing, the Russian Visa Center was opened on March 28, 2013 in Kirkenes. The novelty is that it is operated by a Western private company, not by the Russian consulate. The visa applications can be made via mail or online, and there is no need to go to the visa centre in person for an interview or to receive the visa (Pettersen, 2013). The Norwegian side introduced similar online services in its consulate in Murmansk and opened a visa centre there. In the summer of 2012, a temporary Norwegian consular office was opened in Zapolyarny to issue ID cards for the local border residents. It functioned during several days and

received more than 100 Russian applicants (Nickel News, 2013). The Norwegian side also plans to open an honorary consulate in Nikel to handle applications from the local residents.

As Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre underlined on one occasion, Norway was one of the first Schengen countries to undertake such an experiment on the liberalization of the visa regime (Lebed, 2012). On the other occasion, he told his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov that he expects the introduction of a visa-free regime with Russia in the foreseeable future (Pogoretskaya, 2013a).

Education: Cooperation between twins in the sphere of education started from collaborative projects between elementary and secondary schools, as well as from various language courses: the training and retraining of school teachers of English (with the help of the University of Nordland (Bodø, Norway) and Murmansk State Institute for Humanities) and Norwegian-language courses for Nikel residents. These projects proved to be efficient and are continued to date (Lebed, 2011).

In December 2012, an ambitious project to establish an international Master's program in Border Studies (Bordology) was launched by the University of Nordland and the Murmansk State Institute for Humanities. The main idea of the project is to train specialists in border management for the Norwegian and Russian border regions. The group of 20 students was recruited from candidates with bachelor degrees and was composed of ten Russian (5 slots are reserved for students from Nikel and Pechenga) and ten Norwegian representatives who are being trained in Nikel, Murmansk, and Kirkenes for 3.5 years. The program is a combination of classroom lectures and seminars with web-based distant-learning technologies. The courses are taught in English by teachers from Norwegian and Russian universities and practitioners from various governmental and municipal bodies. The program's curriculum is built on the Bologna Process principles and should result in getting a MA degree from the University of Nordland (Bulygin, 2012; Grimmer, 2013; Pogoretskaya, 2013b). For the time being, it is difficult to say whether the project will be a success story or not, but the demand for specialists in border management is very high in both twinning communities.

Cultural Strategies: Increasing Familiarity

The Sør-Varanger community and the Pechenga district have well-established and multifaceted cultural cooperative ties with each other.

The core of twinning cultural activities is the Barents Spektakel, a festival that is held in Kirkenes on an annual basis from 2004. As the organizers describe it, “[t]he festival is a cultural-political cocktail with contemporary art, performances, literature, theatre, film, seminars and concerts as ingredients, spiced with the current issues related to the Barents Region and the High North in general” (Barentsspektakel website). The main aim of the festival is to promote cultural contacts between different countries and peoples of the Barents Region, with the goal to develop a common Barents/Arctic culture. Along with its cultural connotation, the festival has a clear political connotation: to encourage the states and people of the region to solve existing disputes over territories, borders, natural resources, environmental problems, etc., in a peaceful and non-violent way.

For example, the Barents Spektakel 2013 had the title “Ticking Barents,” which was explained by the organizers in the following way: “[w]hat is ticking, one might ask. The Arctic is hotter than ever and definitely ticking!” The organizers called for a revolution on ice to solve the most compelling Arctic problems: “[t]he festival plays out alternative social structures and local formats of communal self-organization: A revolution in our mind, a revolution as a community-building process” (ibid.).

In addition to the Barents Spektakel, the two twinning communities have established numerous direct contacts between local writers, poets, artists, actors, dancers, libraries, and museums, which formed a dense network of cultural cooperative ties in the region.

The twinning communities have to include Indigenous peoples in their cooperative plans as well. For example, there is the small Skolt Sámi village of Neiden, which is – being a part of the Sør-Varanger community – located on the Norwegian-Finnish border. The Skolts form a minority group among the Sámi and are distinct from other groups in a number of ways. There are approximately 1,000 Skolt Sámi in Northern Europe: 600 live in Finland, 250 in Russia, and 15 in Norway. The Russian culture has had a strong influence on the Skolts, who adopted Christianity in its Eastern Orthodox form in the 16th century. The Skolt Sámi language is highly endangered and not spoken actively in Neiden today. Almost all speakers live in Finland. The protected area around Neiden includes a number of different monuments, including the tiny (13 square metres) Russian Orthodox St. George’s Chapel, built by Tryphon of Pechenga in 1565.

The Skolt Sámi culture across borders, a cooperative project between Finland, Norway, and Russia, was launched in 2010. Its aim is to contribute

to the strengthening and revitalization of the Skolt Sámi culture, language, and identity (Skoltsami website). The project offices are located in Sevettijärvi (Finland), Neiden (Norway), and Murmansk (Russia). Visitors from Murmansk and the Pechenga district visit Neiden on a regular basis (Oboishikova, 2011).

There was a considerable increase in familiarity between the twinning communities as a result of the above cultural interactions. For instance, Kirkenes, consisting of some 7,000 inhabitants but growing, has, in fact, been a major meeting point for Russian-Norwegian contacts since the 1990s on a variety of levels and in different forms. It is multicultural in the sense that in addition to a Norwegian majority, there is a Sámi population in the region, a considerable number of Finnish- speakers, as well as an increasing number of Russians and Russian-speakers in the town and its vicinity. The latter group amounts to some 10% of the town's population (Rogova, 2008: 29).

It appears also that a considerable number of Russians living in the Murmansk region nowadays view the Norwegian-Russian border in terms of a shared borderland. The border has turned far less divisive not just politically and in administrative terms, but also culturally and identity-wise. Anastasia Rogova (2009: 31) claims that a borderland has emerged "which is neither Russia, nor Norway to the full extent." Russians visiting Kirkenes do not have the feeling of being abroad, as also indicated by Kirkenes being named "Kirsanovka" or "Kirik," with connotations of a small local and nearby entity/village, in the language used in the Murmansk region. Visits have become frequent for reasons of shopping or, for that matter, using the Kirkenes airport for flights abroad.

In one of its aspects, the Norwegian-Russian cross-border cooperation can draw upon the somewhat idealized legacy of the so-called Pomor trade, i.e., a trade with Pomors exchanging flour for fish (Niemi, 2005). These coastal trade contacts, which lasted for nearly three centuries before dwindling out after the Russian Revolution in 1917, were quite important for the development of the Northern areas. The legacy is frequently referred to and activated, with the current-day cooperation and border crossing seen as a return to traditional constellations.

Still another memory impacting particular local attitudes consists of the fact that a considerable number of German troops were stationed in the region in the Second World War, pursuing quite repressive policies, and it was freed by the Soviet Army in 1944. For sure, the Cold War period, with

perceptions of enmity as the prevalent approach, impacted the views on Russians. The negative views have, however, gradually changed and normalized. As mentioned above, it became a common tradition to jointly celebrate the date of the liberation of the Murmansk region and East Finnmark from the Nazi occupants in October 1944.

In addition to a growing number of Russian and Russian-speaking inhabitants in Kirkenes, there are a considerable number of Russians arriving from the Murmansk region for shopping, as well as sailors visiting the town. The latter group is there because Russian fishing vessels frequently visit the port of Kirkenes (with some 30-50 ships at port at any time) (Rogova, 2008: 15). A shopping mall has been recently built in the town, with visiting Russians seen as an essential part of the customers. Overall, various forms of cooperation across the border have become rather significant for the economy of the town as well as for Sør-Varanger at large.

Conclusions

The Kirkenes-Nikel twinning initiative that was launched in 2008 demonstrates a quite positive dynamic, regardless of the unfavourable economic and political conditions surrounding this project. It covers a broad spectrum of issues ranging from ambitious industrial and transport infrastructure projects to cultural, educational, youth, and women's cooperative schemes. There is still considerable emphasis on the humanitarian aspects of twinning, although the cultural/humanitarian bonds have been increasingly related to more pragmatic and interest-driven forms of cooperation. The case of Kirkenes-Nikel is hence clearly to be understood as a laboratory introduced in order to explore and test the prospects for cooperation in a broader context.

The broader background also implies that over time, the twinning between Kirkenes-Nikel might be integrated into a broader pattern of trans-border cooperation between Norway and Russia, with several other cities and regional actors as part of the configuration.

The town pair has developed a rather sophisticated and innovative arsenal of policy strategies that aim at the twins' capacity-building, problem-solving (implying issues to be dealt with on the local political agenda), and cultural interaction (to increase familiarity).

To overcome the divisive effect of state borders, the twins initiated the introduction of a visa-free regime for the local residents that – upon its approval at the central governments' level – facilitated the cross-border

exchanges to a greater extent. This experiment can be seen as a near- success story, and its experiences can be replicated in other border areas between Russia and the European countries belonging to the Schengen zone. However, it should be noted that this experiment did not turn the Norwegian-Russian border from a divisive line to a borderland that serves as a zone for cooperation and unites rather than divides people. Despite the existence of a dense network of economic and humanitarian contacts between them, Kirkenes and Nikel still do not form a unified entity and are far from being a EuroCity model, as demonstrated by the Tornio-Haparanda case.

As experts (Figenschou, 2011; Haugseth, 2013; Joenniemi and Sergunin, 2012; Viken and Nyseth, 2009) point out, there are some serious obstacles both to the implementation of the existing twinning projects and to the transformation of the inter-municipal cooperation into a more advanced and far-reaching form of collaboration. The bureaucratic barriers, visa-related problems, lack of funding and political will on the Russian side (which is explained by the reluctance of the regional and federal authorities to support in full the twinning experiment), and the delay with the establishment of the Pomor special economic zone (which was seen as an additional spur for the twinning project) should be mentioned among the factors that prevented the Kirkenes-Nikel twinning project from becoming another success story and caused it to generate quite modest results.

But looking at the bright side of the story, it appears, in general, that in spite of the above obstacles, the twinning project has reasonably good prospects of growth for the foreseeable future as part of increased cooperation between Norway and Russia. As mentioned, the Kirkenes-Nikel pair plans to join the CTA if the project succeeds. In any case, their decision to become city twins seems to indicate that the concept of twinning has retained its attractiveness in Northern Europe, and has also become of interest for some of the states of the region to advance and support.

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22

The Barents Region: The Arctic Council as a Stabilizing Magnet

Florian Vidal

The Arctic Council (AC) is a stabilized and consolidated intergovernmental regional body created in 1996. It has deployed consistent work on environmental issues and produced key documents such as the Agreement on Search and Rescue (SAR) reached in 2011. In the context of the Barents Region, the Arctic Council is not the core of the regional dynamics, as other regional institutions emerged earlier in the 1990s. Meanwhile, the establishment of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) in 1993, and then the Barents Regional Council (BRC), underlined the willingness to encourage neighbouring cooperation and coordination; it marks the openness process between the Russian Federation and Western countries, and particularly the Northern European countries. Far from competing, these organizations, according to their nature and functioning, are complementing each other in some way. The lack of legal framework in the area for over two decades is substantially moving forward as concrete steps on both environmental issues and social and economic projects are further interlocked than ever. Adding to that, the Barents Region is unique in the Arctic context for its evolving neighbouring policy between Nordic countries and the Russian Federation. Despite the tumult of the geopolitical tensions, the Barents institutions, followed by the support of the Arctic Council, have demonstrated their ability to be resilient and bargain for further development. As a result, the Barents Region is itself a major influence for shaping Arctic governance.

Introduction

The establishment of the Arctic Council has been a notable step – but not decisive – for cooperation in the Barents area. Its perspective goes beyond the premise of a regional governance attempt. Indeed, the Arctic Council brings forward a new sphere of cooperation on security issues such as Arctic search and rescue (SAR). In that perspective, the Arctic Council symbolizes a dramatic shift from a tense political and military confrontation

to a peaceful and constructive intergovernmental arena. Although the Arctic held the status of a sensitive theatre for military deployment during the Cold War, the region became a focal point for political initiatives to set out transnational cooperation (Young, 2005: 9).

For over two decades, the Barents Region has experienced significant progress in neighbouring cooperation. The case of the Norwegian-Russian cooperation in the area has been illustrated through various ways of an enhancing dialogue. In light of the establishment of the Arctic Council, the regional organization has made the case to improve cooperation in the area. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that other regional organizations, such as the Barents Euro-Arctic Council,¹ have also been created to catalyze cooperation in the post-Cold War era.

In order to understand the institutional mechanism at stake in the Barents Region, Cécile Pelaudeix properly identified involvedness as a characterization of governance:

Since there is no official or dominant definition of governance, scientists refer either to processes, activities, set of rules or the very framing of governance issues. The analytical logic used by scientists and the different ontological assumptions or theories within disciplines that they refer to, determine the criteria of evaluation used in the analysis. (Pelaudeix, 2015: 401)

As a result, the parallel evolution of both the Arctic Council and the Barents regional institutions identifies a new path for local governance and illustrates the empirical building of a sophisticated mechanism and vast governance network in the area. For this purpose, the Barents Region may be seen as a significant core for applying this empirical model. To this point, it can be assumed to be a substantial success for over two decades.

20 Years of Strengthening Cooperation in the Barents Region

As Norway and Russia pledge to expand business and institutional cooperation in the Barents Region, we can trace the institutionalization process in the Barents Region to the end of the Cold War, starting in 1993 with the Kirkenes Declaration. Signed on January 11, 1993, by ministers of foreign affairs and other delegates from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the Commission of the European Communities (EC), the Declaration aimed to enhance cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region: the signatories agreed to contribute substantially both to stability and progress. This institutionalization process

in the area is a component of the European construction in order to overcome the confrontation and division that characterized the 20th century. By that perspective, the Barents cooperation is studied as a part of the process of the evolving European cooperation and integration (Declaration on the 20th Anniversary of the Barents Euro-Arctic Cooperation, 2013).

For over 20 years, Barents cooperation has played a constructive role in economic and social development. The region has been the centre for promoting people-to-people contacts, including the creation of positive conditions for interregional exchange in a significant number of fields (e.g., culture, Indigenous peoples, youth, education, IT, trade, environment, transportation and so on). As a remarkable example, the project “Finnish-Russian Arctic Mining Initiative” was carried out by Spinverse Ltd. in recent years. It aimed to create sub-clusters of companies, research organizations and other actors to offer better service to the customer. As the project was funded by the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it sought to spot key needs for research and innovation activities concerning mining in northwestern Russia.

The BEAC was established as a forum in order to materialize the idea of Northern cooperation as it was previously promoted by the Nordic Council of Ministers (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden), during the 1960s. Four key documents articulate Barents regional governance since 1993:

1. The Kirkenes Declaration (January 11, 1993)
2. Regional agreement signed by regional authorities and a representative of the Sámi people (1993)
3. The Barents Euro-Arctic 10th Anniversary Declaration 2003 (January, 2003)
4. The Barents Euro-Arctic 20th Anniversary Declaration 2013 (June 3-4, 2013)

Along with the establishment of a Barents governance mechanism, the wider grouping of Arctic states began to structure themselves as a region. Since 1996, the Arctic Council has emerged as a legitimate regional body. Since then, several aspects such as the environment, health and maritime safety issues have been under the auspices of the Arctic Council.² The Arctic organization enhances multilateral relations through a legal and supportive framework. Established by the Ottawa Declaration, the Arctic Council seeks to promote “cooperation, coordination and interaction

among the Arctic States” (Ottawa Declaration, 1996).

In addition, a bilateral agreement between the Russian Federation and the Kingdom of Norway regarding Maritime Delimitation and Cooperation in the Barents Sea and the Arctic Ocean was signed on September 15, 2010, an illustration of “the decisive role that trust can play in settling disputes and creating new opportunities for cooperation” (Declaration on the 20th Anniversary of the Barents Euro-Arctic Cooperation, 2010). As the agreement between the two countries was welcomed, it has a significant value regarding Barents cooperation. On one hand, this signed agreement solved a complex and long-term issue. On the other hand, it exemplified a successful cooperation between equal parties in the Arctic region, and represented momentum in Barents cooperation.

Since then, constant convergence has emerged as a key evolution of the regional governance in the Barents area. Tangible steps are taken particularly at a working group level to enhance the coherence and synergy of regional and cross-border cooperation between different forums, such as the Arctic Council, the Council of the Baltic Sea States, the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Northern Dimension (BEAC 15th Ministerial Session, 2013). Indeed, regarding the different working groups in action within the framework of the BEAC, many issues are similarly tackled at the Arctic Council. For instance, the working group on rescue cooperation from the BEAC found a striking echo with the “Agreement on Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic” reached by the Arctic Council members in 2009. Other similar issues such as environmental protection and water issues are dealt with by both regional organizations. This increasing synergy is a fundamental factor in avoiding redundancy and the loss of efficiency in a regional cooperation mechanism.

It is important to underline that after decades of isolationism, the Russian Northwest progressively opened up to Western Europe. As a consequence, this geopolitical change partially opened a unique atmosphere of cooperation and shared ideas of mutual prosperity in the region (Plouffe, 2013). Following two decades of positive development in the Barents Region, however, there have been, over the past two years, serious challenges as relationships between the Russian Federation and the West have sharply deteriorated since the 2014 Ukrainian crisis. New questions have arisen regarding the nature and density of cooperation with the Russian political regime, questions that involve Nordic countries and their commitment to maintain constant and fruitful relations with their Arctic neighbour.

The Perception of the Russian Federation

At this juncture, it is relevant to have a comprehensive understanding of the geopolitical dynamics in the Barents Region by focusing on Russian policy and strategy. According to the Russian vision, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council has become an effective and relevant regional cooperation mechanism. Described as a success story, the BEAC's activities managed, according to their point of view, to create a neighbourhood of confidence and stability in Northern Europe. Based on the principles of indivisible and comprehensive security, this council would not be affected by fluctuations in the political environment (Lavrov, 2015). To this point, Russian public authorities openly praise the work of the Barents institutions. In that unique regional governance scheme, the conduct of the Russian Federation, as a key player in maintaining stability and peaceful development in the Barents Region, towards these regional organizations is critical.

During the presidency of Dmitry Medvedev (2008-2012), further improvements in Barents cooperation were reached between the relevant parties. The Foreign Policy Concept (2013) stressed Russia's positive appreciation for practical cooperation with Northern Europe. The nature of this cooperation includes the completion of joint projects through various multilateral structures both in the Barents and Arctic regions. During that time, the Russian government expressed its support for the BEAC, and viewed both the latter and the Arctic Council as valuable structures by which to organize regional governance (Oldberg, 2014: 45).

Within regional organizations in the High North, Russia limits itself to tackling "soft" security issues in multilateral fora. Indeed, Russia rules out resolving most existential concerns through these regional institutions (Oldberg, 2014: 62). The Russian Federation defines its policy in accordance with the role it aims to offer to various international intergovernmental organizations. Both the Arctic Council and the subregional Barents organizations have therefore been conceived of as limited but workable institutions. In that respect, the Russian Federation continuously praises the councils for their constructive and fruitful role in the cooperative sphere in the region.

According to the 2008 Russian doctrine, the Arctic policy until 2020 defines its national interests in the area in the following terms (Basic Principles of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic up to 2020, 2008; Oldberg, 2014):

- To use and expand the resource base for Russia's socio-economic development
- To maintain peace and cooperation in the Arctic, including military security
- To safeguard the unique ecological systems
- To use and develop the Northern Sea Route

The main objective of this defined political orientation is to maintain the Russian Federation as a "leading Arctic power". Undeniably, this position has been upheld for over two decades. Consequently, the Arctic Council, in the context of the Barents Region, represented a helpful instrument for the Russian government to resolve peripheral issues. With respect to environmental security issues, the Arctic Council brought to Russia an enhancement of neighbouring cooperation on a long-ignored matter.

The Arctic Council vs. Barents Institutions: Neither Superposition, Nor Competing, but Complementing Regional Governance

As the vision of the Barents cooperation is to improve the living conditions in northernmost Europe, the Arctic Council is committed to protecting the Arctic ecosystem and safeguarding human well-being in the area. However, the Barents regional governance bodies also underline their commitment both to supporting sustainable economic and social development and to contributing to stability, progress and peaceful development. In this specific context, the Arctic Council appears as a supportive governance tool for this Arctic subregion. As a result of this duality in the intergovernmental institutions in the area, the Barents Region is a consistent example of the post-Cold War governance enhancement that paves the way for fruitful cooperation between neighbouring states.

The Arctic Council aims to cope with national interests in the High North as they have no clear boundaries. Therefore, the Ilulissat Declaration (2008) encompasses the need for an institutional framework to resolve boundary issues in the Arctic region. As a result, the five member states of the Arctic Council pledge that "questions of jurisdiction and territorial claims should be solved by negotiations within the existing international legal framework" (Østerud & Hønneland, 2014: 165).

According to Østerud and Hønneland, the Arctic Council remains a forum for coordinating Arctic environmental monitoring and science. In

order to do so, the Council organizes itself by producing and exchanging information, through several working groups. And one of the manifestations of the efficiency of this framework is the treaty coordinating international SAR coverage and response in the Arctic.

It is worth mentioning that the Arctic Council strongly welcomes in its framework the strong participation of the region's Indigenous peoples. At the same time, the Barents Euro-Arctic Region collaboration – as well as the EU Northern Dimension – was struggling to meet the initial expectations of thriving East-West cooperation on trade and industry. Despite all the benefits produced by the regional organization, it is described as lacking a legal framework in key issues related to sustainable development and environmental protection (Lamers, Pristupa, Amelung & Knol, 2016: 50). To date, the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) provides a roughly accepted legal mechanism to promote the interests of the Arctic states that signed the Convention. However, the United States did not sign the Convention, and consequently it is not bound by this international legal framework.

The Arctic Council is the most prominent intergovernmental body that generates and exchanges information about Arctic (marine) ecosystems and the economic activities that affect these ecosystems (Lamers et al., 2016: 51). By doing so, the AC exemplifies a model of regional governance to resolve complicated issues such as marine governance, despite no legal framework specific to the Arctic having yet been implemented and entered into force. Furthermore, the consistent role played by the AC in this domain has positively attracted non-state stakeholders (i.e., NGOs, private companies, civil society and so on). For the Barents Region, the purpose of the AC's core activities implies a range of issues compatible with its regional political framework. Indeed, SAR operations encompass the current economic and social development in the area, alongside the transportation and oil and gas exploration in the Barents Sea.

By that view, the Arctic Council gives an impression of complementarity towards the Barents institutions. As the latter are devoted to supporting and maintaining essentially economic and social cooperation between the neighbouring states, the decisions adopted by the AC enhance the feasibility of promoting sustainable development in the Barents Region through an environmental framework.

The Future of the Arctic Council: Challenges and Opportunities

Before delving into the Barents context, it is worth stating that the Ukrainian crisis has shaped new dynamics in the relationship between the West and Russia. The imposition of financial and economic sanctions, mainly by the European Union and the United States, and counter-sanctions, led by the Russian Federation, threaten to undermine relations. Indeed, a primary consequence of the sanction and counter-sanction regimes has been a negative impact on the local economy in the Barents Region. The fishery industries, for example, have been severely affected by the embargo on food products initiated by the Russian Federation against the Scandinavian countries – and beyond, to include other Western countries. Accordingly, in the long term, the stability and cooperation relations in various spots could be shaken wherever Russian and Western interests confront one another.

To date, the Russian Federation has expressed its support for Arctic regional bodies to increase international cooperation in order to solve numerous problems in the area and ensure the sustainable development of the region overall (Heininen, Sergunin & Yarovoy, 2013). But as a balance to these regular and acclaimed political statements, the current geopolitical landscape in the Barents Region demonstrates that an increase in challenges needs to be coped with. Both climate change and the resulting (potentially) economic boom are interlocked as accelerated ice melting may open new spaces for further economic opportunities (e.g., in maritime transportation, oil and gas (O&G) exploitation and the fishing industry).

The Arctic Council remains the central organization for maintaining cooperation and substantial coordination on various issues at stake in the scope of its mandate. According to speeches delivered by the Arctic states' ministers and representatives in April 2015, it is imperative to preserve regional stability far from the strained international situation:

It is in no-one's interest to let problems elsewhere to impact negatively on Arctic cooperation and the Arctic environment. (Tuomioja, 2015)

There is no room for confrontation or aggravation of tension in the Arctic region – especially from outside sources – and there is a strong public demand for joint responses to common challenges and for joint use of shared opportunities in the Arctic. (Donskoy, 2015)

From these statements, respectively from Finland and Russia, public

positions in the Barents Region are presumably positive, though somewhat surprisingly considering the political and military tensions in the Barents-Baltic axis.³ Regarded as a potentially conflicting position, parties on both sides appear to prioritize economic and social goals in the Barents Region.

In light of this impending outlook, Tromsø – the largest Norwegian city above the Arctic Circle (~70,000 inhabitants) – has, since 2013, permanently hosted the Arctic Council Secretariat (ACS), designed to “strengthen the capacity of the Arctic Council to respond to the challenges and opportunities facing the Arctic” (Nuuk Declaration, 2011). Indeed, the installation of the ACS in the Barents Region is more of a symbolic than a strategic decision in terms of regional governance. The function of the Arctic Council Secretariat is first of all an operational one. As it is stated, the ACS is an administrative and organizational unit for coordinating all involved processes of the Arctic Council (e.g., arranging and servicing meetings, assisting the Chair, transmitting reports and so on).

Economic Cooperation: A Core Pillar for the Barents Region

More recently, on September 8, 2015, the Arctic Economic Council Secretariat was officially opened in Tromsø. It is worth mentioning that this organization is not formally connected to the Arctic Council. As an independent organization, it aims to facilitate business-to-business activities in the Arctic. But again, the establishment of this regional organization within the so-called Norwegian Arctic capital underlines the ongoing build-up of the municipality as a hub for Arctic governance.

As economic cooperation is one of the pillars of the BEAC, this establishment may emphasize once again the regional stakeholders’ will to implement a lasting peaceful cooperation. The regional governance through the Barents institutions has involved economic and social development in the premise of its objectives for over 20 years. Indeed, the Declaration on the 20th Anniversary of the Barents Euro-Arctic Cooperation reminds us that the Barents intergovernmental platform expresses its support for the sustainable development of the region’s natural resources.

Within this context, the Arctic Council Indigenous Peoples’ Secretariat (IPS), established in 1994 as a support body for the international Indigenous peoples’ organizations with Permanent Participant status in the Arctic Council, moved its office to Tromsø in January 2016. The IPS’s office is located within the premises of the ACS. For this purpose, Ethel Blake (2015) underlined that this move aims to benefit both the ACS and IPS by

allowing them to work closely together. Finally, the Barents Region has emerged as a formidable magnet for combining the region's governance with the support of the Arctic Council framework.

Conclusion

The extent to which the Barents Region has evolved can be explained only through a condition of tremendous circumstance. Emerging from the Cold War years, stakeholders experienced a glum picture of how extreme geopolitical differences could wreak havoc on a region locked in a posture of heavy militarization. Similarly, nowadays the region faces the prospect of a melting cryosphere, bringing amplified awareness to the High North as a region where human beings have once more spoiled the environment. Indeed, it is the outcome of industrialization processes over the past two centuries (Dingman, 2015: 96). The Barents Region has witnessed the establishment of complex intergovernmental and interregional institutions for over 20 years. Alongside the AC, the Barents institutions, such as the BEAC and BRC, are known for their main value and strength: consensus. Consequently, the capacity for effectiveness relies on the desire of nations to provide the strategy and structure capable of promoting and supporting cooperation.

If this example can inform the global European policy both on border dialogues and sustainable development, the Arctic Council, for its part, can play a key role in stabilizing critical issues that have emerged in the post-Cold War transition timeframe. Besides, Heather Exner-Pirot stresses the importance of the critical move, decided by the eight Arctic states, for establishing a Permanent Secretariat in Tromsø. It has afterward enlightened "the idea that the Arctic states are newly accepting of a level of authority from the Arctic Council that has previously been unknown" (Exner-Pirot, 2012: 235).

Since the Arctic Council is a consensus-based body, the endorsement of its actions by all Arctic states is essential to its continued functioning. As a result, conditions of animosity may significantly reduce the scope of action for the chair and limit its potential to deliver practical resolutions (Smieszek & Kankaanpää, 2015: 12). In the same way, Barents institutions also established on the basis of consensus are exposed to the turbulent breeze of the geopolitical tensions between Russia and the West. Nonetheless, regional governance in the area somehow demonstrates its ability to resist, and thus provides acknowledgement of the resilience of the Barents cooperation.

To sum up, the Arctic Council strengthens the function of the BEAC and legitimizes it as a key stakeholder by providing a framework and emphasizing this lasting cooperation. In the meantime, the Arctic Council supports the development of cooperation in the Barents Region in the context of specific geopolitical dynamics. Indeed, it openly exposes the fragility of the established cooperation with the Russian Federation in the Arctic for over two decades.

Notes

1. The Barents Euro-Arctic Council holds two secretarial bodies: the International Barents Secretariat and the Norwegian Barents Secretariat. On the one hand, the International Barents Secretariat aims to provide technical support for the multilaterally coordinated activities within the framework of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Barents Regional Council. On the other hand, the Norwegian Barents Secretariat aims to make it as easy as possible to initiate Norwegian-Russian cooperation projects.
2. The Arctic Council has six working groups tackling environmental and safety issues in the Arctic region. The structure of these groups are as follows: the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP); Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF); Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (EPPR); Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME); Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG); and Arctic Contaminants Action Program (ACAP).
3. Currently under my investigation, the concept of the Barents-Baltic axis is based on a spatial insight for a geopolitical purpose. By interlocking two seas, this vertical axis proposes another analysis of the existing dynamics (e.g., military, policy, economics and so on) between the Northern European countries and the Russian Federation.

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23

Innovations for the Arctic through Cross-border Cooperation

Ekaterina Shlapeco

The Arctic region is an area of growing strategic importance, especially in terms of the increasing access to natural resources and new transport routes. Nevertheless, the extreme Arctic climate makes the region a challenging place to live and sets lots of tasks for creating an attractive and comfortable environment for people. There are supporters and opponents of Arctic exploration; thus, the Arctic has become a space in which the interests of a number of global actors (states, TNCs, NGOs) collide and intersect. Many Arctic people are concentrated in the border areas with large disparities, considered as peripheral and lagging behind others. However, the European experience of cross-border cooperation (CBC) has proven itself as an effective tool for supporting the stability and prosperity of border territories. It is believed that CBC has the potential to transform a border into a possibility for development. Since the 1980s, the European Union (EU) has been providing border regions with the financial means (Interreg) to boost co-working for finding solutions to common challenges and to achieve a more balanced and harmonious EU territory.

Most of the Arctic zone of the USSR was closed to foreigners, and it was the central authorities that took care of the Northern territories' development and supply. The situation changed with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the establishment of the Arctic Council, and the introduction of the Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States program.

The northwestern Russian regions also got access to cross-border funding after Finland and Sweden joined the EU. Large-scale CBC projects were aimed at improving border infrastructure (communications, roads, etc.), while small projects fostered people-to-people contacts as well as networks between local communities. In the late 1990s, many activities promoted by the Nordic partners were new, and even innovative, for

Russians. Internet expansion, health care legislation reform, and the construction of pollution control facilities would have been impossible without foreign investment and expertise. When the European neighbourhood and partnership instrument was launched in 2007, the Russian Federation began to co-finance CBC programs, declaring the equality of partners from both sides of the border. The structure of the Russian economy is still characterized by the dominance of large companies and a small number of high-tech industries. However, the state strategy for the development of the Arctic zone relies on an innovative and restorative approach with the aim of forming a new technological basis.

Nowadays, the smart specialization of regions is one of the key European directions to gain sustainable and inclusive growth. Sweden, Denmark, and Finland are the top performers according to the European Commission's Innovation Union Scoreboard 2015. In order to find out how to strengthen the innovation capacity of regions, in 2013, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) conducted case studies of six cross-border areas, including four Nordic examples: the Bothnian Arc (Sweden-Finland), Hedmark-Dalarna (Norway-Sweden), Helsinki-Tallinn (Finland-Estonia), and the Øresund Region (Denmark-Sweden). The studies confirmed that growth opportunities can come from working effectively with a neighbour. Geographic proximity remains important for the innovation process. Some major benefits for the regions from CBC in innovation are wider business and knowledge networks, higher quality products and services, the diversity of assets, greater visibility with national policymakers, and internal and external recognition. For instance, the Bothnian Arc collaboration was initiated by the mayors of Oulu and Luleå (300 kilometres apart) seeking to diversify from the traditional mining, forestry, and metal sectors. Due to the Nordic tradition of cooperation and common areas of specialization, as well as complementary expertise (information and communications technologies (ICT) cluster, innovation ecosystem), both areas are developing an internationally recognized brand as the technology hub of the North.

The interrelation of CBC and innovations led to the formation of a new concept: a cross-border regional innovation system. The researchers from the University of Surrey define the dimensions and measurable indicators of CBC in a regional innovation system: economic structure and specialization (statistics), science base (publications), nature of linkages (patents), institutional set-up (common institutions), and accessibility (cross-border traffic). The authors stress that due to availability issues, the suggested

indicators depict innovation in a rather narrow “science, technology and innovation” mode (Makkonen et al., 2016). We suggest using cross-border projects for a broader view, including also the “doing, using and interacting” mode of innovation.

The implemented projects under the Kolarctic ENPI CBC make it possible to assess the intensity of cross-border contacts and define the functional area for cross-border innovations. The contiguous regions of the relevant program are Lapland in Finland; Norrbotten in Sweden; Finnmark, Troms, and Nordland in Norway; and Murmansk Oblast, Arkhangelsk Oblast, and Nenets Autonomous District in Russia. The population of the program’s area is about 2.87 million people, and almost 70% of them live in the Russian part. The total budget allocated for 51 projects was 70.48 million Euros. The projects were implemented under three priorities: economic and social development, people-to-people cooperation and identity building, and common challenges.

The project profiles (<https://www.keep.eu/>) provide information about the leading organization, partners, main goals, and achievements. Table 27-1 shows the number of implemented projects between regions under the Kolarctic CBC 2007-2013 and the density of interregional links.

The majority of the leading partners represent Finnish organizations (23 projects), then Murmansk Oblast (6), Norrbotten (4), and Troms/Finnmark (3). It is particularly remarkable that more than half of the projects were initiated by organizations from Lapland (23 projects). In addition, applications from educational institutions predominate, as seen in the University of Lapland (7), Lapland University of Applied Sciences (5), and Lapland Vocational College and University of Oulu. The high level of network interaction is evidenced by the participation of regional representatives and enterprises from at least three countries, as well as the number of partner-organizations from three to twenty. For example, the Northern (Arctic) Federal University, named after M.V. Lomonosov, became part of the consortium for the implementation of six international projects. Among the Swedish institutions, Luleå University of Technology took part in more than ten projects on tourism, geology, logistics, and ICT. For example, collaboration between the academic institutions and the ICT industry was increased due to “Kolarctic IT Education, Networking, Partnership and Innovation”. The special cooperation interest in innova-

Table 23-1: Density of Interregional Links in Kolarctic CBC

Region	Lap- land	Murm- -ansk	Norr- botten	Finn- mark	Troms	Arkhan- -gelsk	Nord- -land	NAD
Lapland (FI)	-	35	17	13	12	11	7	4
Murmansk (RU)		-	17	12	10	7	7	2
Norrbotten (SE)			-	5	6	8	4	-
Finnmark (NO)				-	5	3	4	-
Troms (NO)					-	5	3	-
Arkhangelsk (RU)						-	3	1
Nordland (NO)							-	-
NAD (RU)								-

Source: <https://www.keep.eu/keep/programme/147/2007%2B-%2B2013%2BKolarctic%2BENPI%2BCBC>

tions is demonstrated by research institutes and secondary and higher educational institutions in the Arctic. Only five projects do not have a research or educational component. The contribution of Kolarctic projects to the development of universities is obvious, because it increases academic mobility and networking, stimulates original educational products, opens new scientific directions, and attracts extra funding.

The projects that affect human health and environment are implemented by the leading regional organizations – the Norwegian Institute for Air Research (food security), Finnish Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority (radiation safety), and the State Regional Center of Standardization, Metrology and Testing in the Murmansk region (response to oil spills). For instance, the project “Coastal Environment, technology and innovation in the Arctic” resulted in the integrated approach to monitoring the coastal environment and developing technologies to combat pollution.

Cross-border programs are platforms for discussion among public and private actors that allow for the revealing of regional opportunities and

planning of investments in competitive projects. Many projects are coordinated by municipal and regional authorities, especially from the Russian regions of Murmansk and Arkhangelsk. The share of commercial enterprises and business associations is high in projects connected with tourism, innovations, and youth employment. Undoubtedly, international projects give companies a competitive advantage in introducing technologies, training personnel, working out mechanisms for interaction with authorities, etc. The less integrated and effectively more remote is the Nenets Autonomous District, where only two projects were implemented (on the use of renewable energy sources and the launch of ethnic and ecologically sustainable tourism).

Based on the project's goals, it is possible to identify the priority areas of Arctic development: the effective use of energy, the development of the mining and construction industries, information and communications technologies, and tourism. The greatest importance is given to keeping the traditional agricultural industries (reindeer husbandry, hunting, and fishing) and promoting plant growing in Northern latitudes. The steady directions include the support of Indigenous peoples and the promotion of the Nordic identity and Barents culture. However, a cooperation dynamism is still restrained by the lack of regional regulative powers, visa issues, language barriers, etc.

Nevertheless, international projects offer opportunities for the Arctic regions to get access to the accumulated knowledge and establish stable data transfer. There is a unique research and educational potential, with a wide range of competences in Northern Europe. Established contacts and a high concentration of projects in the region lead to the consolidation of local communities for addressing common challenges. Thus, the Kolarctic program region has every reason to become a knowledge-intensive one. Further innovative development can be connected with border clusters that largely depend on the implementation of large investment projects in the Barents and Baltic regions.

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24

Strategy, Competition, and Legitimization: Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation

Sergey Sukhankin, Troy Bouffard & P. Whitney Lackenbauer

In late October 2020, President Vladimir Putin approved the “Strategy for the Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation and Ensuring National Security for the Period through 2035.”¹ Although the casual observer might dismiss this document as yet another Arctic strategy recasting old ideas with fresh rhetoric, the importance of the timing and substance of this Russian strategy is not lost on Arctic observers. The Russian government sequentially released three major Arctic national documents in 2020 that lay out direct requirements and intents across political, military, economic, social, and environmental security sectors. Concurrently, the Kremlin decisively arranged its Arctic political leadership and national advisory groups. Throughout, Russian leadership effectively scripted Arctic national priorities and developed them into narratives, which were synchronized across relevant sectors.

How should Western analysts read the Arctic in Russian domestic and foreign policy discourse under Putin, who has “set the task to restore the development and controllability of Russia’s Arctic territories and raised ... AZRF [(Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation)] development to the level of a national project”?² French analyst Morgane Fert-Malka has observed that “Russia’s Arctic policy and postures are often misunderstood, overblown, or underrated because they take place in a complex regional context and result from complex internal politics.”³ Thus, one might wonder if Russian motivations, core interests, and strategic priorities changed substantively in the face of newly emergent challenges, or if Russian Arctic policy is “evolutionary and largely consistent,” as political scientist Maria Lagutina suggests.⁴

The three key policy documents in Russia’s updated plan for the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation (AZRF) (see Figure 1), when read together,

Literature review

Russian experts dedicated to the problems of the Russian Arctic and the Kremlin's regional strategy fall into three distinct, yet partially interdependent, schools of thought. The first school, which we conditionally define as the "geopolitical school," is comprised of a broad and diverse group whose opinions do not always converge. These experts are, however, connected in their vision of the Arctic as a "geopolitical battlefield" between great powers. When referring to the region, many of these experts actively employ anti-Western vocabulary, featuring ideas about "conquest", a "great game", "greatness", "struggle", "sovereignty", "increasing conflict potential", and "confrontation." This points to their conceptual vision of the Arctic as an arena for competition, not a platform for inter-governmental dialogue. The fundamental ideas that connect members of this school are postulates (clichés) about a "worsening military-political situation" in the region and "growing competition for Arctic resource[s]," as well as the desire of non-Russian actors to "undermine Russia's dominating regional position." Although these authors consider competition in the Arctic as a part of a larger geopolitical game (and despite the ongoing militarization of the region), they generally concur that regional competition is unlikely to lead to major military conflict. The most prolific writers in this school include Alexander Khramchihin, who sees the Arctic as a potential field of competition between Russia, China, and the US, but who argues that Moscow and Ottawa have many common and few dividing lines in the Arctic.⁶ Another noteworthy expert, Valery Zhuravel, the head of the Centre for Arctic Research at the Institute of Europe under the auspices of the Russian Academy of Science, sees the US, China, Japan, and Finland as posing a primary threat to Russia in aiming to internationalize the status of the Northern Sea Route.⁷ Other authors – primarily former military officers and military thinkers – believe that military-political competition will grow in the future,⁸ with NATO posing the main challenge to Russia and its national interests.⁹

A second, "nationalist" school is understudied in the West. Consequently, its role and influence on the Kremlin is misunderstood. This school is primarily grouped around authors coming from the ultra-conservative and nationalistic Izborsk Club. Insisting on Russia's need to increase its military buildup in the Arctic, this group includes such prominent conservatives and influential thinkers as Leonid Ivashov, Vladislav Shurygin, and Alexey Podberezkin,¹⁰ who draw clear "red lines" for foreign actors seeking to undermine Russia's sovereignty in the Arctic.

Many members of this school of thought also extend their assertion, underscoring not only the strategic but also the *sacred* place of the Arctic region in Russia's statehood and its fundamental meaning for Russia as the new centre of greater Eurasia, which means that Moscow has to embark on expansionist policies in this region. Alexander Dugin, Alexander Mazharov (deputy governor of the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Region), Vyacheslav Shtyrov (former Head of the Sakha Republic), and devoted Stalinist Alexander Prokhanov are prominent members of this school,¹¹ which envisages the Arctic region as "the northernmost part of the Russian World."¹²

A third school of "institutionalists," consisting of experts from different political orientations, describes Russia's Arctic strategy as pragmatic and commensurate with its national interests. They see military buildup and other Russian behaviour – which they acknowledge is sometimes questionable by international standards – as motivated by a combination of internal factors, such as Russia's political culture and negative experience in dealing with the West in the 1990s, as well as external circumstances. They also argue that, despite what Western commentators interpret as aggressive Russian moves in Ukraine, Georgia, and Syria, Russia does not aim to undertake similar actions in the Arctic. Alexander Sergunin, Valery Konyshchev, and Dmitri Trenin¹³ are key representatives of this "institutionalist" school.

Foreign writers, experts, and thinkers analyzing Russia's Arctic strategy are conditionally divided into two large schools of thought. First, the "neorealists" pursue a hardline approach toward Russia, which they cast as a rogue and increasingly assertive power (alongside China) that seeks to disrupt the existing balance of power in the Arctic, and generally call on the United States and its NATO allies to confront Russia in the region. According to the neorealist school, Moscow's actions in the region are primarily driven by geopolitical competition in a zero-sum game. Therefore, Western allies must confront Russia using all means necessary to prevent it from expanding its control in and over the region. Keir Giles, Pavel Baev, Stephen Blank, and Paul Goble are prominent analysts within this school. In general, these authors – and like-minded experts – do not see room for the West to engage in constructive dialogue with Russia in the Arctic owing to the Kremlin's growing assertiveness and violation of international law, as demonstrated in other parts of the world. Similar ideas are expressed by Canadian political scientist Rob Huebert, who argues that "Canada could find itself pushed to the margins in the New Arctic Strategic Triangle

Environment (NASTE)” as a result of growing Russian and Chinese assertiveness in the Arctic.¹⁴

A second school of thought, the “neoliberal institutionalists,” recognizes that Russia – by far the largest player in the Arctic – has internationally recognized sovereign rights and special interests in this region and, therefore, has a right to protect them. These experts also argue that the probability of military conflict emanating from regional disputes is very low and that Russia, despite investing in rebuilding its military capabilities in the region after allowing them to degrade substantively in the 1990s, is not likely to violate international law through military coercion in the Arctic. Thus far, these authors observe, Russia has remained a stalwart promoter of an institutionalist approach in the region, adhering to international legal norms through the United Nations (UN) and other major multilateral forums. Furthermore, the Arctic region remains a strategic source of economic dividends for Moscow, which makes the prospect of military escalation highly undesirable. Two of the authors of this article (Troy Bouffard and Whitney Lackenbauer) fall within this school, which also includes Elana Wilson Rowe, Andreas Østhagen, Mathieu Boulègue, Elizabeth Buchanan, Kari Roberts, and Marlène Laruelle, all of whom emphasize that Russia faces significant challenges that constrain its ability to fully dominate the region.

On this basis, Russia is likely to seize opportunities to highlight its Arctic developments and priorities in carefully crafted language during its 2021-23 chairmanship of the Arctic Council, with a goal of expanding and enhancing its self-defined position in the Circumpolar North. It has set the major pieces in place to pursue a *legitimizing* campaign, and international audiences should expect clear messaging that emphasizes the Arctic’s importance for Russia and the centrality of Russia in circumpolar affairs. Optimistically, this is part of an overarching strategy that does not seek to revise Arctic governance structures or undermine regional peace but rather represents Russia’s strategic “centre of gravity” for the Arctic and is designed to showcase the importance of its northern priorities and interests. Pessimistically, such goals could easily be undermined by a combination of internal factors (such as scarce funds and expanding military expenditures) and heightened competition with the West.¹⁵

The Russian Arctic strategy in context: Updating Russia’s strategic plan for the AZRF

Russia has solidified the development of its comprehensive strategic plan for the Arctic region over the past year. In March 2020, Putin signed “The

Foundations of State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic through 2035,”¹⁶ which outlines Moscow’s key goals and Arctic agenda, including a focus on the exploitation of natural resources.¹⁷ Following this direction, the Ministry for the Development of the Russian Far East and Arctic submitted a draft implementation strategy for the government’s consideration in May 2020.¹⁸ The third document, released on 26 October, outlines the mechanisms to realize the “State Policy” and “Socio-Economic Development” plans in the Arctic. “Most of the challenges tabled in terms of developing the Russian Arctic are indeed domestic in nature,” political scientist Elizabeth Buchanan observes, which is predictable given that the strategic document is dedicated to developing Russia’s Arctic zone.¹⁹ The documents provide both bureaucratic guidance as well as the primary content from which internal actors can develop and deliver consistent narratives.

In an authoritarian state with significantly centralized powers, Putin and the Kremlin face little governmental resistance or social interference when enacting core strategies. Unlike the democratic West, Russia does not need civic buy-in and public deliberation, only the illusion of it. Nor does the illusion of election concerns and consequences matter the same way that they do in liberal democracies. For the West, inclusivity remains the hallmark of a healthy relationship between society and government. Embracing viewpoint diversity and dissent can impede strategic coherence and cohesiveness, however, particularly when multiple strategies must be synchronized across various stakeholder groups to achieve optimal national objectives. By contrast, even when autocratic leaders pursue the wrong course of action, they can publish new strategies to adjust course while their subordinates suffer the brunt of the blame. With regard to Russia’s new Arctic strategy, members of the Duma (депутаты Госдумы) reportedly were not consulted or given opportunity to deliberate or contribute to policy development.²⁰

In 2019, veteran analyst Pavel Baev of the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) observed that Russia’s two-track Arctic policy pursues “poorly compatible tracks of expanding military activities and committing to international cooperation.” Russian commentators would likely point to similar dynamics in the regional policies of the other Arctic states as well. Similarly, they might apply Baev’s observation that “Russia’s Arctic policy, as it is officially formulated and interpreted in mainstream Russian commentary, [features] an astounding amount of exaggeration and inflated threat assessment.” Baev’s evidence, however, identifies specific hallmarks of

Russian narratives that were subsequently reflected in the nation's 2020 strategic documents:

The volume and value of natural resources on the Arctic shelf, particularly hydrocarbons, is grossly overestimated without meaningful Russian data, so that the only reference point even for informed Moscow experts is the appraisal of US Geological Survey from 2008, which is habitually misinterpreted. The appetites of international oil companies are perceived as insatiable, and the struggle for resources, as well as for access to transport routes, is identified in the Foreign Policy Concept (2016) as a key driver for escalation of global tensions. Expeditious growth of international shipping in the Northern Sea Route (Sevmorput) is confidently predicted, despite the miniscule volume of transit traffic in the 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017 navigations. The most dramatic of all exaggerations, however, is about the intensity of external military threats to Russia's interests in the Arctic.²¹

Baev's nuanced critique also explains why Moscow's "oscillating" commitment to circumpolar cooperation "should not be taken for a mere camouflage for Russia's military buildup in the High North." Stakeholders such as Gazprom and Rosneft understandably seek to promote Arctic exceptionalism that brackets out regional relationships from resurgent strategic competition between Russia and NATO and brings an end to sanctions hindering cooperation with Western energy companies. Industry also tends to avoid doing business under circumstances that involve unresolved regional and international issues, especially any that include aspects of territorial rights and/or sovereignty. Furthermore, Russian investments to promote the Northern Sea Route (NSR) as a major international transportation artery would not benefit from increasing geopolitical uncertainty in the region.²² Russia's strategic documents thus reflect two-track messaging promoting both international cooperation and the perceived need for robust national defences.²³

Domestic priorities

On 26 October 2020, President Vladimir Putin formally adopted the "Strategy for Developing the Russian Arctic Zone and Ensuring National Security until 2035," which situates the region in the country's broader socio-economic development and national security goals.²⁴ Specifying clear development objectives, implementation stages and mechanisms, and the expected results, the Strategy represents the refined, collective goals

developed, pursued, and tested over several years. Explicit goals include a reiteration of Russia's commitment to comprehensively develop seaport infrastructure and shipping routes in the waters of the NSR and the Barents, White, and Pechora Seas. The policy mentions several significant threats and challenges that create risks for the development of the AZRF, including intensive climate change, decreasing birth rates in and migration to the region, poor access to public services, and higher risk of diseases.

The Strategy is comprised of a series of lists that articulate demographic, economic, social, political, and security priorities and objectives. It begins with a statement of Arctic exceptionalism from a Russian national perspective, emphasizing the specific characteristics of the AZRF that demand "special approaches to its socio-economic development" and to "ensure national security in the Arctic":

- a) extreme natural and climatic conditions, extremely low population density and low development of transport and social infrastructure;
- b) high sensitivity of environmental systems to external influences, especially in the places of residence of the minority Indigenous peoples of the Russian Federation (hereinafter referred to as "Indigenous peoples");
- c) climate change contributing to the emergence of both new economic opportunities and risks for the economy and the environment;
- d) stable geographic, historical and economic ties with the Northern Sea Route;
- e) uneven industrial and economic development of certain territories of the Arctic Zone, focus of the economy on the extraction of natural resources and their shipment to industrially developed regions of the Russian Federation and export;
- f) high resource intensity of economic activity and essential services for the population, their dependence on the supply of fuel, food and other vital goods from various constituent entities of the Russian Federation;
- g) growing potential for conflict in the Arctic.²⁵

This lays the foundation for Russia to build its case for why the AZRF is important for socio-economic development and national security, with a deliberate emphasis on oil and gas resources (both terrestrial and on the continental shelf), expectations of heightened demand for the NSR "as a

transport corridor of global importance,” climate change effects on the environment and security, the presence of Indigenous peoples, and Russia’s positioning of strategic deterrent forces in the region.

Most of the actions specified in the 26 October strategy document revolve around the Northern Sea Route (NSR) – which Russia boasts is the shortest, least expensive, and safest way of reaching northern and western Europe from Asia by sea. While this narrative downplays persistent physical environmental constraints, Russia leveraged the *Ever Given* incident (which blocked the Suez Canal in March 2021) to promote the NSR for safety and convenience, especially in contrast to the Indian Ocean and Red Sea. Russia views the NSR simultaneously as a source of income and a means of strengthening its partnership with China.²⁶ Specifically, the Strategy commits to the following measures by 2035:

- Development of general marine infrastructure (seaports and transportation routes/lanes), primarily in strategic junctures of the NSR: the Barents, White, and Pechora Seas;
- Establishment of “headquarters on marine/sea operations and management of naval transportation” along the entire NSR;
- Digitalization of services (particularly in the realm of cargo transportation and delivery), although “Arctic Connect” plans have been suspended until further assessment;²⁷
- Building of five Project 22220 and three *Leader*-class icebreakers, in line with Russia’s “Icebreaker Diplomacy,” which seeks to rely on its icebreaker fleet in the Arctic as a means of strengthening Moscow’s regional superiority²⁸ – a position established and maintained since the late 19th century;
- Increasing navigation capabilities via the White Sea–Baltic Canal in general and via the basins of the Onega, Northern Dvina, Mezen, Pechora, Ob, Yenisey, Lena and Kolyma rivers in particular. In effect, this draws on yet another aspect of the “Icebreaker Diplomacy” approach specifically concerned with upgrading navigation in Russia’s High North areas (rivers adjacent to the Arctic Ocean);
- Harboring plans on creating/strengthening land-based transportation infrastructure as an addition to the NSR.²⁹

Taken together, these measures are expected to enhance the navigability of the NSR and facilitate the rapid transportation/delivery of Russia’s energy resources to Asian markets.³⁰

The strategy document also emphasizes that a dramatic improvement in local socio-economic conditions is essential to preserve Russia's standing in the region and to effectively exploit its natural resources. By creating "a special economic regime, stimulating a transition toward a circular economy," and paving the way toward economic and ecological sustainability, the Kremlin hopes to curb out-migration and Arctic depopulation trends by attracting human capital to the region.³¹ Accordingly, the Strategy is notable for articulating specific targets for improving social outcomes in the Russian Arctic, beginning with the modernization of health care and education, the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage and Indigenous languages, improved economic opportunities and social security, and the "creation of a state support system for the delivery of fuel, food, and other vital goods to settlements located in remote areas." This reinforces how the Kremlin considers its northern population to be vital to its strategic goals, and it has integrated input from a wide range of capable and trusted advisors. Specific sections set out main objectives for infrastructure development (with a heavy focus on the NSR), science and technology, environmental protection and environmental safety, emergency and disaster response, and public safety (including anti-extremism and anti-terrorism, anti-drug enforcement, and crime prevention).³² With regard to reversing and stabilizing the population decline issue in the Russian Arctic Zone, no unity of opinion exists on a solution. Some propose a form of previous Soviet methods while others argue the need for a seasonal workforce to offset year-round prohibitive costs as well as incentivizing a desire to maintain northern residence through "improved comfortable living standards."

As Minister for the Development of the Russian Far East and Arctic Alexander Kozlov highlighted, this amplification of socio-economic development priorities and deliberate region-specific approach to implementation (in contrast to previous pan-AZRF strategies) distinguishes this strategy from its predecessors.³³ While the Strategy mentions parts of Arkhangelsk Oblast, the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), and the Karelia and Komi Republics, it assigns a clear priority in the Russian High North to Murmansk Oblast, the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug, Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug (YaNAO), and Nenets Autonomous Okrug.³⁴ The document ascribes each of these latter four entities a special role in promoting Russia's ambitions and achieving its specific objectives in the Arctic.

The Strategy continues to invest particular significance in Murmansk Oblast, emphasizing a broad range of complex and multifaceted transformative measures targeting this province.³⁵ As a result of the relatively warm North Atlantic waters from the Gulf Stream keeping much of the Murmansk maritime area ice-free, the location has always offered a permissive operating environment as well as proximity to urban centres, thus serving as a natural northern strategic epicentre and the Russian Federation's most prioritized Arctic entity.³⁶ When Russian writer Konstantin Paustovsky visited Murmansk in May of 1932, he referred to it as "Прима Полярэ (Prima Polare)," which has been translated into modern use as "Столица Арктики (The Capital of the Arctic)." Nine decades later, the Russian Federation passed a resolution officially declaring it the advanced socio-economic development "Capital of the Arctic,"³⁷ which the Murmansk government promotes on its TOP "Столица Арктики" investment portal website.³⁸ There is strong rationale for this status in light of traditional hydrocarbon and bio-marine resources, high industry (shipbuilding), and strategic transportation potential in and for this region.³⁹ Murmansk is also home to three major ports and several key institutes involving the Northern Sea Route, including the Northern Sea Route Administration (NSRA) established in 2013,⁴⁰ the Northern Fleet Joint Strategic Command (Russian military district in force starting on January 2021), and the Northern Sea Route Directorate.⁴¹

To reverse the downward demographic trends in the region, Konstantin Dolgov, a member of the Federation Council (the upper chamber of the Russian parliament) from Murmansk, suggests that the Russian strategy will create 200,000 new jobs by 2035.⁴² Multi-modal infrastructure investments seek to transform Murmansk into a complex multi-dimensional transportation hub and a key link along the NSR. The Strategy also underscores a perceived imperative to modernize the oblast's military and dual-purpose infrastructure for national security reasons. A second set of measures focuses on the development of Murmansk's natural resource potential, particularly hydrocarbons and rare-earth minerals (which are strategically important for both military and civilian applications).⁴³

Other regions play a more limited, even supporting, role within the Russian Strategy. Article 22 articulates an explicit resource-oriented approach to Chukotka, emphasizing ambitious transit projects including the Pevek seaport and terminals (Chaun Bay), a transportation-logistical hub in the Provideniya port (Bering Sea), and a year-round sea terminal on the Arinay Lagoon (also on the Bering Sea). For the YaNAO (Article 23), a

multi-dimensional program outlines the development of an integrated system of sea- and land-based transportation infrastructure, including the port of Sabetta (with supporting facilities) and the canal in the Gulf of Ob. Concurrently, promised facilities related to liquefied natural gas (LNG) and oil production and processing specifically prioritize the gas-endowed Yamal and Gyda peninsulas. The Kremlin also envisages the YaNAO as a major testing ground for Russia's import-substitution strategy in the realm of petroleum-extraction and -processing capabilities. In the oil-endowed Nadym-Pur and Pur-Taz districts, Russia promises to employ the most up-to-date, domestically-produced means of drilling and extraction.⁴⁴ Furthermore, the Strategy calls for a regional recreational cluster connecting the towns of Salekhard, Labytnangi, and Kharp – featuring a world-class ski resort with a developed network of hotels, restaurants, and recreational facilities – to generate additional revenue and diversify the local economy.⁴⁵ With respect to the neighbouring Nenets Autonomous Okrug, Article 21 of the Strategy discusses five major dimensions, including a deepwater port to serve as a hub for Russian commercial exports; modernizing Nenets' energy-related infrastructure and extracting and processing facilities; the exploration and production of rare-earth minerals; measures to address local food security concerns; and “the development of tourism and recreation as both a job creation engine and as a means to diversify the local economy away from its heavy natural resource-oriented base.”⁴⁶

Taken as a whole, Russia's October 2020 Arctic development strategy introduces a qualitatively new approach to dealing with the various issues and challenges faced by local populations and economies. Instead of its traditional one-size-fits-all prescriptions, which *de facto* ignored the needs of many parts of the Russian High North, Moscow's implementation of a more region-specific policy allows each Arctic federal entity to use its unique, region-specific competitive advantage to contribute to the development of the Northern Sea Route. It remains to be seen, however, whether Russia carries through on this strategy or ultimately reverts to a simpler policy fixated on non-renewable resource exploitation.⁴⁷

Comparing the Kremlin's stated ambitions in the Strategy and the limitations imposed by Russia's long-term socio-economic realities suggests that Russia will encounter difficulties in its practical implementation. In this regard, two main concerns should be voiced. First, despite the rhetorical prioritization of the socio-economic component in Arctic development, one might doubt Russia's ability to implement this plan based on its limited economic means to achieve such an ambitious plan, as well as deeply rooted

corrupt practices and mismanagement. A second concern relates to the method of implementation. Commentary and analysis from leading Russian experts suggest that, in pursuing this objective, Moscow is likely to rely on the “mobilization” option, which heavily depends on so-called command-administrative (*kommandno-administrativnii*) measures.⁴⁸ This method – which was a distinctive feature of the Soviet period – can prove effective in the short term but is unlikely to yield favourable long-term results. For example, Russia’s defence industry lacks private investment and suffers from huge indebtedness that is openly recognized and admitted by Russian ruling circles.⁴⁹ Additionally, given the public image of the Arctic throughout Russia as a far-flung and disadvantaged region, few Russians may be willing to move to remote regions for employment. Previous models predicated on significant Soviet fiscal stimuli proved flawed: once the money ran out, locals immediately began pouring out of the region.⁵⁰

Today, it is not apparent that Moscow can or will actually enact policies to dramatically increase, at a high cost, the size of the population residing in the High North. In fact, Russia already has the largest share of the population (2.5 million) living near or north of the Arctic Circle, and any hypothetical increases could prove detrimental to the Russian economy. Indeed, several influential Russian experts claim that Russia should follow the example of other Arctic players (such as Canada, the United States, and Norway) that rely on the fly-in/fly-out method for their regional labour forces as a more cost-effective way to exploit natural resources in remote areas.⁵¹

Despite the seemingly marginal role that militarization and military-related efforts play in the newly adopted Arctic strategy document, these aspects constitute one of the central pillars of Russia’s overarching approach to the High North and will be the main recipients of financial outlays from the federal centre. The military buildup to protect strategic nuclear assets on the Kola Peninsula, project power in the Barents Sea region, and secure the eastern part of the Russian Arctic fits awkwardly with international messaging that emphasizes circumpolar cooperation and seeks to “bracket out” confrontation between the West and Russia from Arctic affairs (with the desired Russian goal of ending Western sanctions that hinder Arctic development). “The emphasis on countering external threats by expanding military presence in the High North doesn’t answer the interests of Russian energy giants *Gazprom* and *Rosneft* focused on developing co-operation with Western oil and service companies, even if those interests are squeezed by the sanctions regime,” Baev observes. “Plans for making the *Sevmorput* into

an international transportation avenue also fit poorly with the progressive militarization of infrastructure along its route.”⁵²

Given current economic hardships, we expect that Russia will pursue an approach premised on selective investment in strategic “links” connecting key parts of the NSR, while at the same time increasing its military capabilities along the maritime artery – which, in Russian logic, are not two mutually exclusive ideas.

International orientation

Russia’s strategic international orientation reflects a two-track approach that seeks to legitimize its position, status, and definitions of the Arctic through mixed messaging that reinforces themes of peace, cooperation, and stability through multilateral and bilateral relationships while also emphasizing foreign threats to Russian sovereignty over territory and waters that require investments in defensive capabilities. On the one hand, Russian political elites and academics emphasize the benefits of and need for multilateral diplomacy and stable regional and international governance systems to solve myriad environmental and human security challenges. Accordingly, the October 2020 Strategy promises to “implement multi-vector foreign policy activities aimed at preserving the Arctic as a territory of peace, stability, and mutually beneficial cooperation” and to “ensure mutually beneficial bilateral and multilateral cooperation of the Russian Federation with foreign states, including under international treaties, agreements, and conventions to which it is a party.”⁵³ On the other hand, Russia’s great power aspirations and self-perception as the foremost Arctic state, coupled with increasing strategic competition with the West since 2014, have heightened the perceived desire or need for a military buildup to defend against national security challenges. Accordingly, the Kremlin’s strategic messaging seeks to project the idea of Russian superiority over the West, legitimize Russia as the largest Arctic rightsholder, and reinforce the requirement to defend Russian Arctic territory. Thus, the Arctic development doctrine (including the NSR), icebreaking and construction programs, modernized military infrastructure and capabilities, and reiterations of Russia’s adherence to international law, respect for sovereignty, openness to circumpolar dialogue, and readiness to cooperate on common issues with other Arctic and non-Arctic states, are all intertwined.

Given the primacy of economic development and control of regional resources, maritime jurisdiction in the AZRF features prominently in both the domestic and international dimensions of Russian policy. Accordingly, Russia's strategies seek to sediment its definition of the NSR (as defined by Russian Federation law) as internal waters, which provides Russia complete control over access in accordance with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Moscow's ultimate goal – to develop the NSR “as a globally competitive national transport corridor” – remains contingent upon a range of international factors, including global energy prices, Asian demand for resources, the comparative accessibility of well-established international straits, physical environmental constraints, and regional stability to ensure conflict-free operation.⁵⁴ Ekaterina Klimenko astutely notes that “while the Russian Government has continuously pushed both private and state companies to develop the Arctic resource projects, the feasibility of their implementation is under question now more than ever,” and the NSR cannot be considered a competitor to other international sea routes when transit traffic does not exceed 500,000 tons annually.⁵⁵

Furthermore, Russia's extensive Arctic coastline affords it sovereign rights to continental shelf resources in accordance with UNCLOS. While Russian commentators often cite the as-yet-undetermined limits of the shelf as a prime example of the Western powers' alleged attempts to usurp control over the resources on the Arctic seabed, this is a clear example of what Pavel Baev identifies as widespread “exaggeration and inflated threat assessment” in mainstream Russian commentary.⁵⁶ By all rational accounts, Russia stands to gain the most if the process of determining the extent of its continental shelf beyond its 200-nautical mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ) unfolds in a manner consistent with established international law.⁵⁷ Accordingly, its Arctic strategy commits to “formalizing the outer boundary of the continental shelf in international legal terms and maintaining interaction with the Arctic states to protect national interests and implement the rights of a coastal state in the Arctic provided for in international acts, including those related to the exploration and development of resources of the continental shelf and the establishment of its external boundaries.”⁵⁸ On the sensitive issue of Svalbard, which remains a sovereign territory of Norway under a treaty that allows unique, legal access to the international community, Russia pledges to ensure a “Russian presence in the Svalbard archipelago on the basis of equal and mutually beneficial cooperation with Norway and other states of the Svalbard Treaty of February 9, 1920” – an affirmation of the primacy of the treaty and international law that

simultaneously protects Russia's legal position on the archipelago's continental shelf and on fisheries protection (which deviate strongly from Norway's interpretation).⁵⁹

Russian strategic documents depict the Arctic Council (AC) as "both a centerpiece and cornerstone of the regional governance system," given that all Arctic states are represented, its multidimensional mandate, and its science-based approach that preserves the autonomous decision-making powers of its members.⁶⁰ In March 2021, former Russian Senior Arctic Official and Ambassador to Iceland Anton Vasiliev (one of Putin's key Arctic emissaries) noted:

The Arctic Council turns 25 this year as unquestionably one of the most successful multilateral regional and international bodies of our times. Its success is based on common interests and efforts of the Arctic States, clear agenda and the rules of the game, as well as reasonable flexibility to meet new challenges. Russia intends to build on this success, including the excellent outcome of the current Icelandic Chairmanship which had to overcome unprecedented pandemic-related difficulties, to lead the Council into its second quarter century.

The Russian Chairmanship will also be motivated by the national Arctic Strategy updated in 2020 for the period up to 2035. It provides for a major step forward in development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation and welcomes mutually beneficial cooperation of Russia with its Arctic partners and, besides, interested non-regional states.⁶¹

Accordingly, Russia's Arctic Council chairmanship (2021-23)⁶² represents a key opportunity for agenda-setting and for showcasing the country's "Arctic-ness" and circumpolar leadership for domestic and foreign audiences. Its four priorities – "the Arctic inhabitants, including Indigenous peoples; environmental protection and climate change; social and economic growth; and further strengthening the Arctic Council – the key framework of international Arctic cooperation"⁶³ – connect directly to Russian strategic objectives. Specific lines of effort include enhanced economic cooperation; investments in Arctic urban infrastructure, health care, education, and Indigenous welfare; and the "restoration of consensus in the Arctic Council on climate change" (a thinly veiled critique at the Trump administration's stance at the Council ministerial meeting in 2019). Furthermore, the strong emphasis on the "rational use of natural resources,"⁶⁴ presented in the

language of stewardship and socio-economic wellbeing, reinforces Russia's strong emphasis on energy resource development.⁶⁵ Promoting the NSR as a priority for "safe and beneficial all-season navigation" and the enhancement of search and rescue capacities also dovetail with national priorities. Ultimately, in illustrating "the serious, holistic and constructive approach of Russia to its forthcoming Chairmanship," Vasiliev ended with the declaration that "*Russia bears special responsibility for the state of affairs in the Arctic* and counts on support from its regional partners" (emphasis added).⁶⁶

It is unlikely that Russia will seek to fundamentally revise the Council or its established processes during its chairmanship. Sergunin notes that Moscow will avoid former appeals to "transform the Council from an intergovernmental forum to a full-fledged international organization and bring military security problematique to the Council's agenda," and instead will focus its chairmanship on strengthening the forum's "role in asserting regional stewardship by responding to the challenges of a rapidly changing Arctic and the increasingly more integrated policy frameworks from local to global scales."⁶⁷ This maps well with language in the Kremlin's October 2020 Strategy that emphasizes Russia's leadership role in "ensuring the effective operation of the Arctic Council ..., including the promotion of joint projects, including those aimed at ensuring sustainable development of the Arctic and preserving the cultural heritage of Indigenous peoples."⁶⁸

The role of Indigenous peoples' organizations as Permanent Participants represents the most innovative feature of the Arctic Council – but also a historic source of concern for Russia's national leaders. Moscow decided in 2012 to suspend the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON), the only nation-wide Indigenous peoples' organization in the country, which had criticized the central government for ignoring the persistent problems that Indigenous peoples faced in the AZRF, on the arbitrary grounds that the organization was captive to foreign influence. In draconian fashion, the Kremlin imposed new "friendly" RAIPON leadership before allowing the organization to resume operations the following year, thus drawing the ire of Western commentators⁶⁹ who likely look with skepticism at Russia's pledge to:

- i) support in strengthening ties between the Indigenous peoples living in the Arctic Zone and the Indigenous peoples living in the Arctic territories of foreign states and convening relevant international forums;

j) promoting the well-rounded development of the young generation of Indigenous peoples through educational, humanitarian and cultural exchanges with young people from other Arctic states.⁷⁰
[original numbering]

Given the Kremlin's hypersensitivity to Indigenous peoples' critiques that their rights are largely ignored,⁷¹ these commitments may represent insincere gestures that, in practical terms, are likely to be quashed at the first sign of serious criticism of Russian state practice.

Various non-governmental organizations also have accredited Observer status within the Council. Russia ostensibly supports this involvement – although it also has had uneasy relations with interest groups and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that are critical of the state, and the Putin regime does not welcome critique from civil society actors in the Arctic space any more than it does elsewhere. “Civil society in Russia is still in embryonic form and for this reason its impact on Arctic policy-making is either relatively insignificant or sporadic/chaotic,” Sergunin and Konyshev explain.⁷² Nevertheless, the Russian strategy sees opportunities for Russian organizations to work with foreign partners to design and implement “professional educational programs related to the development and exploration of the Arctic.” Furthermore, Russia co-chaired the Scientific Cooperation Task Force, which produced the text for the third legally binding agreement negotiated under the auspices of the Arctic Council, signed in 2017. As a prime example of how Russia collaborated with the US to advance a cooperative circumpolar initiative at a time of deteriorating relations between the two countries in the wake of the Ukrainian crisis, the strategic commitment to “ensur[e] the implementation of the Agreement on Enhancing International Arctic Scientific Cooperation”⁷³ serves as a useful basis for scientific diplomacy that promotes Russia's good circumpolar citizenship.⁷⁴

Given the strong national emphasis on the development of the AZRF, Russia's strategy seeks to elevate the profile of its activities internationally to build prestige, secure its central position in the circumpolar order, justify and defend its national interests, and promote its definitions of core concepts such as “sustainable development.” Creating and promoting an online “multilingual information resource dedicated to the development of the Arctic Zone and Russia's activities in the Arctic” (such as the Arctic Russia investment portal at <https://arctic-russia.ru/en/about/>) alongside comprehensive Russian-focused websites featuring diverse experts

(exemplified by the Arctic 2035 project at <https://www.arctic2035.ru/>) are key strategic tools to frame and disseminate messages. Other commitments seek to promote Russia's Arctic economic interests by "strengthening ... the role of the Arctic Economic Council as one of the central forums for sustainable development of the Arctic," "developing general principles for the implementation of investment projects in the Arctic Zone with the participation of foreign capital," and "organizing events aimed at attracting foreign investors to participate in the implementation of economic (investment) projects in the Arctic Zone." While "sustainable development" carries different connotations in Russia and the other Arctic states,⁷⁵ all these lines of effort seek to promote the mutual benefits of economic cooperation and secure foreign investments and technology transfer on terms favourable to Russia – ideally, in Russia's view, by enticing the West to end its sanctions.

The list of main objectives for military security, defence, and border protection in the October 2020 Russian Strategy is shorter than the list of commitments for international cooperation, but it nevertheless reinforces Russia's ongoing commitment to increase its military presence and capabilities in the Arctic.⁷⁶ Specific provisions commit to "improv[ing] the composition and structure of Armed Forces" in the AZRF, maintaining an appropriate level of combat readiness "in compliance with the actual and forecast military dangers and threats faced by the Russian Federation in the Arctic," equipping forces with modern weapons and special equipment adapted to Arctic conditions, developing base infrastructure and logistics, and promoting the "use of dual-use technologies and infrastructure to achieve a comprehensive solution to defense objectives in the Arctic Zone."⁷⁷ Given that many of the capabilities have potential offensive as well as defensive applications, Western commentators continue to debate whether they can trust the Kremlin's declared justifications, since Putin returned to power as president in 2012, for consistent and systematic investments in an Arctic military buildup.⁷⁸

Given established Russian state narratives since 2008, it should come as no surprise that "ensuring sovereignty and territorial integrity" sit atop the list of Russia's national interests in the Arctic. "Whilst this could indicate a continuous securitisation of the region by the Russian Government," Klimenko observes, "it does not in practice indicate a significant change in ... policy since Russia will continue its long-term enforcement of its sovereignty over Arctic territories and waters."⁷⁹ Other Russian commentators suggest that significant military investments are consistent

and compatible with regional stability predicated on respect for Arctic state sovereignty. “Similar to other coastal states, Moscow sees its military presence in the region as an efficient instrument to demonstrate its sovereignty over and protect its national interests in the Arctic,” Sergunin explains. “On the other hand, the Kremlin believes that there are no serious military threats emanating from the Arctic and, for this reason, defense and security issues are put on the bottom of Moscow’s priority list in its strategic documents.” He notes that Russian investments in military capabilities in the region do not represent “a renewed arms race” and that, instead, investments represent “limited modernization and increases or changes in equipment, force levels, and force structure.” Conflating the modernization of strategic nuclear forces based in the Arctic, which are intended to bolster global deterrence, with Arctic issues is problematic. Instead, Sergunin emphasizes that the creation of new cold-weather units, warships, aircraft, and command structures in the AZRF “have little or nothing to do with power projection into the potentially disputed areas (where the Arctic coastal states’ claims overlap) or region at large; rather, they are for the patrolling and protecting of recognized national territories and waters that are becoming more accessible, including for illegal activities, such as overfishing, poaching, smuggling, and uncontrolled migration.” In his assessment, these modernization programs do not inhibit or degrade the prospects of regional cooperation.⁸⁰

While military considerations are subordinated to other priorities in this document, they still “constitute one of the central pillars of Russia’s overarching approach to the High North and will be the main recipients of financial outlays from the federal center.”⁸¹ Russian narratives point to US and NATO aggression in the Arctic as a pretext for investments in robust defences to protect the AZRF, strategic resources, and people. Accordingly, in an era of resurgent great power competition, Moscow seeks to delegitimize, discredit, and destabilize the Western alliance and continue to promote that the US and NATO – not Russia – are responsible for Arctic “militarization,” while using this to justify its own militarization agenda. Conversely, Russian narratives promoting “constructive” and “peaceful” Arctic relations (including calls to resume a military-to-military dialogue on Arctic affairs) seek to normalize relations with the West to solidify a new *status quo* in which Russian aggression in Ukraine and elsewhere becomes a *fait accompli* and Moscow can secure an end to Western sanctions.

Implementation plans and leveraging the private sector⁸²

Russia's October 2020 Strategy concluded with a three-stage implementation plan, with specific targets to measure results at each stage. The "unified action plan" would involve coordinated action by "federal government bodies, executive bodies of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation, local government bodies, state academies of sciences, other scientific and educational organizations, funds for supporting scientific, technical and innovative activities, nonprofit organizations, state corporations, state companies, joint stock companies with state participation and the business community." President Putin would oversee "the general management of the implementation of this Strategy," thus ensuring centralized control.⁸³

Towards these ends, Putin reshuffled his government on 9 November 2020 with a strong nod to the Arctic.⁸⁴ Minister of Transportation Yevgeny Dietrich was relieved owing to lagging NSR developments. Dmitry Kobytkin was removed as Minister of Natural Resources and the Environment, likely because of the major fuel spill in Norilsk in May 2020⁸⁵ and the marine pollution incident in Kamchatka that October.⁸⁶ The Minister of Development of the Far East and Arctic, Alexander Kozlov, replaced Kobytkin as Minister of Natural Resources and Environment,⁸⁷ and Alexei Chekunov was advanced to the Minister for the Development of the Far East and Arctic. Later that month, Putin signed a decree to establish the Committee on Russia's Chairmanship in the Arctic Council in 2021-23, with Presidential Plenipotentiary Envoy to the Far Eastern Federal District Yuriy Trutnev assigned as the committee chair.⁸⁸ These political changes represented an attempt by Russia to refresh its Arctic image in the face of recent environmental disasters, growing public discontent in the Far East with Russia's failure to address local problems, and slow progress on economic improvements in the AZRF. Regional levels also received attention when the Kremlin combined two ministries to establish the Ministry of Arctic and Economic Development for the Murmansk Region – an area that serves as an epicentre of Arctic public- and private-sector interests.⁸⁹

On 15 April 2021, the Russian government approved a single action plan for the implementation of the *Basic Principles of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic until 2035* and the *Strategy for Developing the Russian Arctic Zone and Ensuring National Security until 2035*. This 54-page document lists 268 measures and lead agencies, schedules specific actions

for the 2021-22 timeframe (although some, such as the development of the icebreakers fleet, are longer term), and intends to serve as a stable foundation for Russia to realize its strategic development ambitions for the AZRF. The plan does not prioritize military investments, and instead has an explicitly socio-economic orientation. In other words, its primary strategic goal is to improve the standards of living for Russia's Arctic population, with particular emphasis on:

- solving the most acute social problems;
- stimulating industrial production and creating jobs;
- improving the quality of medical services (with the use of up-to-date technologies);
- improving supply chain mechanisms to deliver staples and food to the Russian Arctic and High North; and
- improving local infrastructure (ports and airports) to ensure transportation flows.

Another strategic aspect in the document pertains to Russia's readiness to provide more freedom and opportunities for joint public and private sector investments (such as airport reconstruction in Arkhangelsk). Being firmly integrated in the global economy, and thus attentive to global macroeconomic and financial trends, Russia's leadership clearly understands that failing to engage private capital is archaic and unsustainable in managing large projects.

While the Russian state has always played a central role in nearly all Arctic-related projects, Moscow indicates a growing understanding of the necessity to increase the share of private sector involvement. The Ministry for the Development of the Russian Far East and Arctic (*Minvostokrazvitia*) voiced its first concrete idea on the subject in 2020 when declaring its "serious preferences" and economic stimuli for private companies willing to invest in the Arctic.⁹⁰ On 1 February 2021, Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin signed a decree approving the launch of six major state-supported investment projects that allow the participation of private companies to promote the comprehensive development of the AZRF. According to the document, Russia expects to attract more than 200 billion rubles (approximately \$2.7 billion) in outside investments aimed at regional economic revitalization, and the state is ready to defray up to 20% of total investment costs for projects of at least 300 million rubles (\$4 million).⁹¹ If this condition is fulfilled, the federal government promises to partially compensate Russian companies for infrastructure-related construction

expenditures (transportation, energy, and electricity). This subsidy extends to both completed (operational) projects and those still under development, with available data suggesting that the Russian side is prepared to divert up to 13 billion rubles (\$176 million) for this purpose until 2023. The decree also names six large projects in Murmansk Oblast, the Novaya Zemlya archipelago, and the Taymyr Peninsula that must be completed by 2027.⁹² *Minvostokrazvitia* head Alexei Chekunkov underscored that “private businesses will have to invest ten times more than the Russian government,” generating 5,800 new jobs and 42 billion rubles (\$569 million) in tax revenues. He also articulated how “the realization of these [six major projects] solves the strategic goals related to the development of local logistics, the modernization of seaport infrastructure, and safeguarding of transportation along the Northern Sea Route [NSR].”⁹³

Various forums assembling representatives of Russian academia, policymakers, the business community, and the public sector have grappled with how to increase the overall share of private sector involvement in Arctic-based projects. For example, the fifth international “Arktika-2020” conference, held in Moscow in February 2020, focused on the development of Russia’s continental shelf and the AZRF more broadly. Yuri Vazhenin, a member of the Federation Council, openly stated that “from [a] technological point of view, Russia is still unable to explore [the] resource-endowed Arctic region,” noting an ongoing reliance on foreign technologies to explore and exploit resources. The head of Russia’s oil and gas producers’ union, Gennady Shmal, observed that the logic of oil/gas exploration in the Arctic has shifted from a fixation on large deposits toward smaller ones. Given the low levels of Russian investment in research and development, however, he expressed skepticism about the country’s ability to transition successfully to this new model and adjust to a changing reality. Other speakers highlighted the strategic importance of digital connectivity for public life and industrial development, with lagging technology inhibiting resource exploration and decreasing the region’s attractiveness to professionals who might work there.⁹⁴ Inspired by this guidance, the *Minvostokrazvitia* proposed liberalizing access to Russia’s Arctic continental shelf, particularly for foreign and domestic companies actively investing in oil and natural gas/liquefied natural gas (LNG) development. The ministry also began to devise flexible and up-to-date leasing mechanisms for the region,⁹⁵ which Krutikov explained in November 2020 during the “Days of the Arctic and Antarctic in Moscow” forum.⁹⁶

Nevertheless, Russia's ideas about the private sector's role in Arctic development, while more refined than previously, remain unclear with respect to five major issues. The first relates to the legal framework. Specifically, a new law passed in February 2021 facilitates the more rapid transportation of goods via the NSR⁹⁷ and draws upon Russia's desire to promote the region as a free economic zone (FEZ), but Russia's recent experience with these zones (particularly in the Kaliningrad Oblast) has proven largely unsuccessful. A second issue relates to the lack of clarity about the economic model behind the general implementation plan. While Russian mainstream experts and policymakers accept that economic development requires private sector resources, some commentators (such as Aleksandr Tsybulskii, the head of Arkhangelsk Oblast), insist that the "Arctic territories need to develop as a single macro-region with the help of some sort of a Gosplan [State Planning Committee]."⁹⁸ Given Russia's brutal historical experience with a mobilization-type, centrally planned economy, such ideas are questionable and even unpalatable. It remains unclear how Russia wishes to, or could, combine this economic model with free market principles over the long term.

The third issue concerns the Kremlin placing an increasingly pronounced emphasis on region-specific initiatives for NSR and AZRF development. For example, local authorities in Murmansk are creating a Ministry for the Development of the Arctic and Economics which, according to local governor Andrei Chibis, will "not only boost the leading role of Murmansk oblast ... but also facilitate and streamline the process of attracting investors."⁹⁹ This approach was unfathomable in the pre-1991 period of Russian/Soviet history, when the Arctic region was treated as a homogenous entity without due consideration for sub-regional specificities. This positive idea, however, might have one flipside. While prioritizing the development of some regions for intensive growth using both private and state funds, other areas might be used as sources of natural resources and raw materials. For now, when these ideas/projects remain at the development stage, this dynamic might not seem worrisome. In the future, however, deciding which regions receive what status could raise questions affecting the long-term cohesiveness of the Russian Federation. The federal centre has clearly chosen a handful of "prioritized" regions that will enjoy massive federal support to bolster Arctic development. If the local elites of neighbouring regions (less endowed with strategic natural resources or less important for the NSR) feel frustrated at being excluded, economically driven tensions could transform into political grievances, thus sharpening

inter-regional rivalries as well as heightening centrifugal dynamics across the Russian Arctic. Incidentally, deep analysis of Russian-language sources explicitly points to this concern.¹⁰⁰

A fourth issue arises from a combination of two security-related factors: international sanctions against Russia and the militarization of the Arctic region, which could turn the Bering Strait into a bottleneck. Both factors could discourage prospective foreign partners from investing in the AZRF or using the NSR as a transportation route.

Furthermore, it remains uncertain whether private sector partners – especially foreign entities – will be enthusiastic about the massive financial investments required to develop both Russian Arctic-based energy projects and the NSR as a viable international transit route. In light of growing international momentum to reduce dependencies on non-renewable energy, both European and major Asian players (including China) may be dissuaded from investing heavily in Russia's Arctic initiatives. Several key Russian experts already acknowledge this challenge,¹⁰¹ which may jeopardize Russia's ability to fully implement its Arctic strategy.

Conclusions

Recent Russian strategic documents and implementation plans confirm that the development of the AZRF is one of the country's highest national priorities. "For Russia, the Arctic is not some remote, hard-to-reach territory," Lagutina notes, "but an actual part of state territory, fully integrated into the socioeconomic and political systems of the Russian Federation." Accordingly, its domestic and foreign policies reflect core priorities: to ensure sovereignty and territorial integrity, improve standards of living for regional residents, protect the environment, and develop the Russian Arctic "as a strategic resource base."¹⁰² In effect, the development of the Arctic for Russia represents the central, overarching focus from which to synchronize, align, and assign primary purpose to other related state activities.

Russia must sell this priority to both the domestic and international audiences, which involves the maintenance and delivery of a dual narrative: one aspect emphasizing good circumpolar citizenship and the other offering overexaggerated threat assessments. Both serve a purpose consistent with legitimizing goals that seek to shape perspectives and secure advantage from international competition without undermining national interests. "A framework of institutional governance represents the *status quo* in the

region, and in many ways this benefits Russia,” political scientist Kari Roberts astutely notes. “There is little real evidence to forewarn of Russian disruption in the Arctic, apart from those who rush to connect its activities elsewhere to its priorities in the North or assume that its Arctic military spending is inherently more offensive than defensive.”¹⁰³

Our analysis also supports Baev’s assessment that “in Russian strategic planning and military preparations, the Arctic occupies a more prominent place than it ‘objectively’ deserves. Whatever the economic dreams about looting the ‘treasure chest’ of natural resources in the High North or the nationalistic ambitions about ‘owning’ and ‘conquering’ the vast Northern spaces, Russia’s interests in the Arctic are not threatened in any practical or symbolic way by its neighbors.”¹⁰⁴ While exaggerated threat assessments of foreign threats to the AZRF inform the latest Russian Arctic and national security strategies, they do not dominate the narrative. After all, Russian experts acknowledge that the military dimension can only play a modest (and perhaps even negligible) role in helping to overcome deep-rooted population and economic stability issues in the region. Nevertheless, Russia is highly unlikely to reduce its Arctic military presence given its strategic deterrence function, symbolism as a form of regional dominance, and practical dual-use benefits that support shipping, resource extraction, and human and environmental security agendas.

As for any Arctic nation, articulating northern goals is one thing; reality often prescribes outcomes that are notably different. The Arctic environment presents significant limitations on the ability to achieve objectives without tremendous burden and cost. The authoritarian nature of the Russian Federation means that the Kremlin is not as forthcoming about difficulties as are its Western counterparts in terms of accountability or the ability to question power. Accordingly, practical difficulties associated with Arctic development should lead Western commentators to avoid overzealous and excessively alarmist rhetoric about Russia’s regional goals – most of which are clearly within its sovereign rights and jurisdiction as an Arctic state. Alternatively, more focus should be directed toward analyzing the feasibility of Russia meeting its objectives and its actual developments (rather than its desired or forecasted ones). This article presents several examples of substantive problems that Russia faces in terms of implementing its strategies – including ever-present industrial and market forces that heighten uncertainty, alongside the challenges posed by an austere and harsh physical environment in flux owing to global climate change. Even if Russia manages to align and synchronize public- and private-sector actors, its

strategic implementation plans for the Arctic will remain highly ambitious – but should encourage investment across political, military, economic, social, and environmental security sectors that advances Russia’s multi-track domestic, circumpolar, and international strategies.

Notes

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Implications for Sino-Russian Cooperation on the Polar Silk Road

Yu Cao

This paper explores Russia's cooperation with China on the development agenda of the Polar Silk Road (PSR). China formally introduced the PSR initiative in 2017 to jointly develop Arctic shipping routes, of which the Northern Sea Route (NSR) is a major focus. Russia and China have been cooperating on infrastructure building on both land and sea and liquefied natural gas (LNG) projects as part of the development goals of the PSR. The research question is: what are the major goals and perspectives of Sino-Russian cooperation in the Arctic? Moreover, what opportunities and risks does Sino-Russian cooperation on the PSR present for the region and beyond? This paper seeks to understand how Russia's eastern focus affects the Arctic West and how the shifting geopolitical environment affects the directions for Sino-Russian cooperation. The questions are important to discuss amid the on-going Western sanctions on Russia after it invaded Ukraine. By identifying Sino-Russian cooperation projects along the PSR in the energy, shipping and infrastructure areas, this paper discusses Russia's development strategies in the Arctic and China's contributions to the realization of these projects. The argument is: the increasing tension between Russia and the West stimulates the convergence of China and Russia's interests in the Arctic region, especially along the NSR. The PSR serves as a "vehicle" for Russia to increase investment in building Arctic infrastructure and to expand resource exploration. Under the umbrella of the PSR, Russia has increased economic and security ties with the East. The Sino-Russian cooperation in the Arctic reflects the two countries' increasing influence over the geopolitics in the region.

Introduction

Climate change, energy demand, shipping prospects, globalisation and the changing geopolitical order have become new driving forces for governance and cooperation in the Arctic region. With its abundant natural

resources and development capacities, the Arctic region is becoming the focus of both Russia and China's Arctic strategy.

Both Russia and China have long been seeking development opportunities for Arctic shipping routes. To export its energy products, Russia has been advancing its infrastructure both on land and along the Northern Sea Route (NSR). China expressed its interest in NSR during the construction of its first icebreaker "Snow Dragon" in 2009. In 2011, Russian Minister of Emergency Management Sergey Shoygu proposed the concept of "Silk Road on Ice", as a joint investment initiative along the NSR during a conference (Tillman et al., 2018).

The concept did not raise much awareness then, but has slowly gained attention as China grows into a stronger player in Arctic affairs. In May 2013, after much discussion and speculation, six non-Arctic states including China were welcomed to become new Observers at the Arctic Council at the Ministerial Meeting in Kiruna, which was held by eight Arctic states and leaders of Arctic Indigenous peoples' Permanent Participant organizations (Chaturvedi, 2022). Since then, China has been actively cooperating with other Arctic states and participating in Arctic-related dialogues (Chen, 2012).

In 2017, China formally introduced the Polar Silk Road (PSR) initiative as part of its international infrastructure development program – the Belt and Road Initiative, or the BRI, which was originally launched in 2013 (The World Bank, 2018). The PSR initiative outlines China's economic and infrastructure development goals on both land and sea in the Arctic region. It has a major focus in developing projects such as constructing port terminals and logistics centres along Arctic shipping routes that connect North America, East Asia and Western Europe (Gladkiy et al., 2020; Silk Road Briefing, 2021). Among the shipping routes, the NSR is of key interest as it reduces the time and cost for shipping between East Asia and Europe by maximum ~35% (Silk Road Briefing, 2021).

China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi said during a press meeting with Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov that, "China regards Russia as an important strategic partner of the joint construction of the 'Belt and Road'", and that "China welcomes and supports the 'Ice Silk Road' initiative proposed by Russia in 2011" (Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United States of America, 2017). Wang Yi expressed the alignment of China and Russia's development strategies and China's willingness to establish long-term partnerships with Russia. In 2017, Chinese president Xi Jinping

and Russia's Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev agreed to jointly develop the PSR through the implementation of various connectivity projects (Biedermann, 2021). Also in 2017, Russian President Vladimir Putin further stressed Russia's intention to cooperate with China by saying, "the silk road has reached the North. We will combine it with the Northern Sea Route, and it will be what is needed, and we will make the Northern Sea Route Silk" (Gladkiy et al., 2020).

The Belt and Road Initiative Maritime Cooperation Plan, which was released in 2017 by China's National Development and Reform Commission and the State Oceanic Administration defines the "Arctic Waterway" as one of the three major maritime channels of the BRI (Biedermann, 2021).

In 2018, China published its Arctic Policy White Paper, which serves as a major government document for analysing its activities in the Arctic region. In this document, China claims itself as an important stakeholder in Arctic affairs. China's goals in the Arctic region are: "to understand, protect, develop and participate in the governance of the Arctic, so as to safeguard the common interests of all countries and the international community in the Arctic, and promote sustainable development of the Arctic" (The State Council - The People's Republic of China, 2018).

The White Paper confirmed the plan to develop the PSR along with China's other interests in the region. With the document, China legitimises itself in participating in Arctic affairs with regard to environmental protection, scientific research, shipping, and resource development.

The concept of the PSR was first brought about by Russia, with a focus on the joint development of NSR. China further broadened the concept and laid out its development plans for the whole Arctic region. The PSR initiative has brought more cooperation opportunities for both Russia and China. Among other Arctic states, China has the closest cooperation with Russia, especially in the energy sector and shipping logistics along the NSR. Then, what are the major goals and perspectives of the Sino-Russian cooperation in the Arctic and what opportunities and risks does Sino-Russian cooperation on the PSR present for the region and beyond?

This paper seeks to understand the implications for Sino-Russian cooperation through a discussion of various projects along the PSR in the energy, shipping, and infrastructure areas: the Yamal LNG project, the Arctic LNG 2 project, the Payakha oilfield project, and the Zarubino port project.

These projects demonstrate Russia and China's ambitions in the region and help to explain the two countries' economic development path and strategic considerations.

This paper concludes with a discussion of how Russia's eastern focus affects the Arctic West and how the shifting geopolitical environment affects the directions for Sino-Russian cooperation, considering the future prospect of the projects along the PSR with the western sanctions and the potential North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) expansion.

This paper argues that the increasing tension between Russia and the West stimulates the convergence of China and Russia's interests in the Arctic region, especially along the NSR. For China, the co-development of NSR stimulates its economy and provides raw materials necessary for its industries. For Russia, the PSR serves as a "vehicle" to increase investment in building Arctic infrastructure and to expand resource exploration (Russia Briefing, 2019). Under the umbrella of the PSR, Russia has increased economic and security ties with the East. Both Russia and China gain influence over the geopolitics in the region through cooperation and coordination.

Sino-Russian Cooperation Projects along the PSR

Yamal LNG Project

Located to the northeast of Russia's Yamal Peninsula in the Arctic Circle, the Yamal Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) project serves as an example of Sino-Russian cooperation in the energy sector. It is the first cooperation project between China and Russia under the PSR initiative. It is China's largest investment project in Russia and the largest LNG project in the world (Yamal LNG, 2022).

The project is developed by JSC Yamal LNG. Novatek, the largest Russian private natural gas producer owns 50.1% stake of the project. Total S.A., a French multinational oil and gas company, and China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), one of the key state-owned enterprises, each own 20%. China's Silk Road Fund, a state-owned investment fund, owns 9.9% equity stake (Gas Processing & LNG; Silk Road Fund, 2022).

The first LNG Train became operational in December 2017. The Yamal LNG plant has the capacity to produce a total of 926 billion cubic meters of LNG (Yamal LNG, 2022). The project drives the development of Russia's energy sector and the economic prosperity of Russia's border areas. LNG is supposed to be delivered to the European market via westward routes

through one of the European regasification terminals, and to Northeast Asia in the summertime through the NSR (Yamal LNG, 2022).

Though the project mainly involves oil and gas development, it also encompasses shipping and infrastructure building. The project has commissioned both LNG icebreakers and ARC 7 ice class carriers, which all have year-round operational capacity, to export its natural gas products to the Asian Pacific and European markets. Moreover, as part of the project, the Sabetta Sea port was constructed to facilitate LNG products' shipment. The project also includes the construction of an operational camp, airport, and power plant (Yamal LNG, 2022). The long-term agreement between Russian and Chinese companies reflects the positive potential for a cooperation regarding logistics and vessel construction between the two countries (Kobzeva, 2022).

According to Putin, the Yamal LNG project "is of great significance, for it can help strengthen our economic cooperation with countries in the Asia Pacific region, particularly the People's Republic of China, one of our most important partners in the region. Meanwhile, it is a model for successful international cooperation with France, Italy, Germany and other European countries" (CNPC). Putin also emphasized Russia's willingness to cooperate with China in Arctic energy projects.

The first LNG shipment was delivered to China via NSR in July 2018. The project has the potential to provide three million tons of LNG to China for its clean energy development every year.

Arctic LNG 2 Project

The Arctic LNG 2 project is a major LNG development project located on the Gydan peninsula, Russia (Humpert, 2022). The Utrenneye field is the resource base for the project. The project's expected production capacity is 19.8 million tons per year. The LNG construction centre was built in Belokamenka near Murmansk to provide fabrication of the gravity-based structures (GBS). Overall, the project provides locals with more job opportunities and boosts local economy (Novatek).

Novatek has a direct 60% interest of the project. TotalEnergies, China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC), CNPC, and a Mitsui-Jogmec consortium, Japan Arctic LNG each owns 10% (TotalEnergies, 2019). Because of the war against Ukraine, the project's western partners, for instance, Total from France, Linde and Siemens from Germany, and Mitsui from Japan have exited the project over the past six months. Novatek has thus

been looking for new partners for technical support, services, and financing (Humpert, 2022).

The project was originally expected to export its first LNG cargo by 2023 (Humpert, 2022; TotalEnergies, 2019). The construction process of the floating foundations has been delayed and will not be completed until August 2023. With the western sanctions targeting the Russian energy sector, Novatek announced in September 2022 that the project will be delayed by at least a year.

The project involves the construction of three LNG trains. Each of them has a capacity of 6.6 million tons of LNG per year. The first train is close to completion while the second and third train were under construction in China. The European Union (EU) sanctions forced several Chinese yards constructing LNG modules to halt work in May 2022.

The Chinese banks, including the China Development Bank (CDB) and the Export-Import Bank of China have provided financing for the project. Putin said during the Third Russian-Chinese Energy Business Forum in 2021 that “the relations of comprehensive partnership and strategic interaction between the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China are at an unprecedented high level”, and that the energy cooperation “has developed significantly in recent years” (Nilsen, 2021). But with the ongoing war in Ukraine and the EU sanctions, Sino-Russian cooperation on the Arctic LNG 2 project is facing challenges.

Payakha Oilfield

Located in the Krasnoyarsk border region of Russia, the Payakha oilfield project is another cooperation project in the energy sector between Russia and China under the PSR initiative. The Payakha oilfield is one of the largest oil storage facilities in the Arctic region and has abundant oil reserves: an estimated of 420 million tons of 2P oil reserves and two billion tons of 3P oil reserves (China Chemical Engineering, 2019).

In 2019, during the 23rd St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, China National Chemical Engineering Group Co., Ltd. signed a four-year cooperation agreement with Russian Oil Gas Holding to joint develop the Payakha oilfield project in St. Petersburg. Under the agreement, China Chemical Engineering Co., Ltd. is responsible for the construction of six crude oil treatment processing units, a crude oil loading dock with an annual capacity of fifty million tons, a crude oil pressure pipeline of more than 410 kilometers, a power station, and a tank farm. The project is expected to be

put into operation in 2023 and the products will be exported to the Asian and European markets (Shihua, 2019).

As an important project along the PSR, the successful implementation of the project will enrich China's clean energy supply and thus optimize China's energy structure. For Russia, the project is part of its government's strategic plan in strengthening its Arctic energy industry.

Port of Zarubino

The port project in Zarubino, Russia is among the many cooperation projects between Russia and China's Jilin Province (located to the northeast of China). Zarubino is in the coastal border area of Russia and is only sixty kilometers away from Hunchun, a Chinese port city in Jilin province (Chun, 2020). As an ice-free port, and because of its nature and location, the construction of the port is an integral part of Jilin's "Borrowing ports for marine shipping" strategy (Digital Observatory, 2021). The strategy outlines Jilin's plan in developing shipping routes that connects Hunchun with the East-Asian and European markets through the Zarubino port, which is owned by Russia. The new terminal will be used to handle part of Russia's grain exports and cargo exports from China's north-eastern provinces (He, 2016).

Officials from Jilin province and Russian Suma Group, Russia's largest and Europe's third largest port operator, signed the agreement to jointly construct the Zarubino seaport in 2014. The goal of both sides is to build an international port with an annual capacity of sixty million tons.

During an interview with Russian media in 2016, Chi Chuang, the Deputy Director of Jilin Provincial Bureau of Economic and Technological Cooperation said that the project is moving smoothly. Participating parties, including the Jilin provincial government, China Merchants Group and Russia Suma group have established business and financing model plans and have been conducting the required consultations (He, 2016).

In 2018, the first shipping route, "Hunchun (China) - Zarubino port (Russia) - Busan (Korea) - Ningbo (China)" was established with a round-trip cycle of 15 days. On September 7th, 2018, 4300 tons of copper smelting raw materials were transferred from Peru to Hunchun through the Busan Port in South Korea and the Zarubino port in Russia (Jilin Province Development and Reform Commission, 2020). In 2020, a second shipping route, "Hunchun (China) - Zarubino port (Russia) - Qingdao (China)" was established. Currently, Jilin is still working on developing other cross-

border lands-sea intermodal routes from Hunchun to Japan, South Korea, Europe, and North America via Zarubino port (The State Council - The People's Republic of China, 2020).

The Sino-Russian joint construction of the Zarubino seaport project not only contributes to the revitalization of northeast China's old industrial towns, but also promotes the economy of Russia's Far East. For China, the Zarubino port serves as a crucial connecting point for its planned shipping routes. For Russia, the Zarubino port would potentially strengthen its maritime security in the region. With the current geopolitical structure and the continuing sanctions from the West, Russia is moving eastward and enhancing its cooperation with China to build a firm foundation in east Asia.

Russia's Asian Interest

Sino-Russian cooperation since the fall of the Soviet Union can be traced back to 1997, when then Russian President Yeltsin signed the joint declaration for the formation of a strategic partnership with then Chinese President Jiang Zemin. In mid-2013, with the closer Sino-Russian economic and political ties, Putin announced its "pivot to Asia" strategy. The strategy acknowledges the growing economic power of Northeast Asia and stresses the importance of strengthening ties with Asian countries (Lanteigne, 2018). In 2014, the western sanctions resulted from the Ukraine Crisis and the rapid deterioration of relations with the United States pushed Russia to further seek cooperation with Asian countries and develop its Far East region (Alexeeva & Lasserre, 2018).

The Sino-Russian relationship has developed gradually with the introduction of BRI in 2013. In 2016, during the Russia-ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Business Forum, Putin again stressed the need to coordinate with China's BRI project. According to Putin, Russia aims to create "a broad cross border partnership with the participation of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), the ASEAN community, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)" (Alexeeva & Lasserre, 2018). Sergey Karaganov, head of the Council on Foreign and Defense Policy of Russia, introduced the concept of a Greater Eurasian Partnership to promote international cooperation in the region. East Asia's position in the global trade pattern has strengthened. Putin seeks for a more extensive Eurasian partnership through joint development with countries such as China, Japan, South Korea, India, and other ASEAN and SCO countries (Alexeeva & Lasserre, 2018). These countries are important partners who provide Russia with the necessary energy markets. Before, the European countries were the

main customers of Russia's oil and natural gas energy supply. The recent trend of renewable energy development means that European countries may become less dependent on Russian oil and natural gas in the future. The reduction of the European demand will directly compress Russia's energy exports and affect Russia's energy development in the Arctic region. Russia might slowly lose its strategic advantage over Europe based on energy exports. For this reason, Russia looks towards the East to establish the Greater Eurasian Partnership.

Russia has special interest in cooperating with China and China was the first to respond to Russia's Greater Eurasian Partnership. During Putin's official visit to China in 2016, Russia and China signed a joint agreement to confirm the formation of the Eurasian partnership, as a strategy to deepen regional integration. The agreement reads (Li, 2018):

Russia and China advocate building a comprehensive Eurasian partnership on the basis of openness, transparency and the consideration of each other's interests, including the possible involvement of the member countries of the EAEU, SCO, and ASEAN. In this regard, the heads of state instructed the governments of the two countries to work through the relevant departments and propose measures to implement this initiative in order to promote the deepening of the integration processes in the region.

Both China and Russia have been seeking ways to promote bilateral trade. In 2017, Chinese Commerce Minister Zhong Shan and Russian Economic Development Minister Maxim Oreshkin signed a Joint Declaration of the Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation and the Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China regarding the Feasibility Study of the Eurasian Economic Partnership Agreement. The agreement contributes to the creation of a more favorable trade environment for both countries (Gladkiy, 2020). In 2020, Russia declared the Russian Arctic a complete Free Trade Zone and has been encouraging business in the region (Russia Briefing, 2020). In this way, Russia is attracting more partners to be part of its Greater Eurasian Partnership.

Sino-Russian Cooperation along the NSR

Building on the existing relationship, the 2017 PSR initiative provides more opportunities for the two countries to cooperate on the development of the NSR. In the energy sector, China became Russia's key foreign partner on LNG production projects, for instance, the Yamal LNG, the Arctic LNG,

and the Payakha oilfield project. With the rising competition from energy producer countries from the Middle East and North America, the construction and development of these LNG projects are critical for Russia's development in the economic sphere. Moreover, China has been the largest importer of Russian crude oil. In the infrastructure sector, the Belkomur railway link project increases the accessibility of the Siberia region and further connects Russia's land transportation system with its marine transportation system.

In the shipping sector, Russia continues to push forward for its natural resource production and commercial shipping through the NSR by supporting Russian shipping and energy companies. Originally, Russia took Arctic shipping as a domestic issue as it wanted to use the NSR as a national transport route. In 2017, Russia announced amendments into the Merchant Shipping Code, which grant vessels navigating under the Russia flag the exclusive rights to utilize NSR for shipment of oil and gas, and coal produced in Russia (TASS, 2017). In 2020, Putin approved the Basic Principles of Russian Federation State Policy in the Arctic 2035. The policy further confirmed that Russia would like to develop the NSR as "a globally competitive national transport corridor" (Biedermann, 2021: 8).

Since the first Chinese vessel *Xuelong's* navigation to the NSR in 2012, Chinese shipping companies, such as the leading state-owned Arctic shipping company COSCO, have been showing increasing interest to Arctic shipping routes (Huang, Lasserre & Alexeeva, 2015). China also has significantly contributed to ensure the development of navigation along the NSR, in the realm of navigation technologies, informational logistics, port infrastructure, and financing. China becomes "an investor, supplier, and consumer of Arctic shipping" (Kobzeva, 2022: 318). The advanced development of NSR means that for China, cooperating with Russia is the most feasible Arctic policy (Kobzeva, 2022).

China and Russia both benefit from the construction of the Zarubino port project. Ships have obstacles to go through NSR, with the harsh environmental condition and the limited infrastructure. Sino-Russian cooperation contributes to the infrastructure development along NSR. The newly established ports and logistics make it easier and feasible for ships to go through NSR, as a "Transcontinental Eurasian Sea Transport Corridor" (Li, 2018). China benefits from the NSR's development through the increasing trade opportunities and the natural resource supplies. NSR

successfully establishes a link between European and Asian markets (Kobzeva, 2020).

Other than the above-mentioned projects that fit under the PSR initiative, China and Russia have also cooperated in constructing pipelines, railroads, shipping routes, cross-border bridges, and subsea cables under the broader BRI in the Arctic region. The China-Russia East-Route Natural Gas pipeline provides stable supplies to China and helps Russia secure its energy sector. The Primorye-1 and Primorye-2 international transport corridors encourage trade and investment between Russia and China (Russia Briefing, 2017). The Blagoveshchensk-Heihe Bridge (completed in 2019) and the Nizhneleninskoe-Tongjiang Railway Bridge (completed in 2022) are two cross-border bridges that were jointly built by Russia and China (Bannerman, 2021; Chen & Nekhay, 2022; Pengpai News, 2022). These bridges facilitate travel between Russia and China. In 2021, with China's technological support, Russia began to construct a Polar Express Arctic subsea cable valued at \$889 million (Bannerman, 2021).

These projects demonstrate a close economic relationship between China's northeast and Russia's Far East. Infrastructure development on both land and sea stimulates trade in the region. Northeast China and the Far East of Russia are located at the core of the Northeast Asian logistics network and are the key nodes connecting the Eurasian transportation corridor. Russia considers the economic development of the Far East as a strategic priority. In 2010, Putin signed the Social and Economic Development Strategy of the Far East and the Baikal region before 2025. The Sino-Russian cooperation and development plan in the Russian Far East region (2018-2024) further outlines the specific cooperation projects between China and Russia in the northeast and Far East and provides corresponding policy guidelines. This plan has become a specific guide for the cooperation between Northeast China and the Russian Far East. It also lays a foundation for promoting the comprehensive and practical cooperation between the two regions (Hu & Yi, 2020).

The Future of Sino-Russian Cooperation

Sino-Russian cooperation also faces challenges, both internally and externally. Internally, first, China has limited activity in the Arctic region. Though being an Observer at the Arctic Council, China, as a non-Arctic state still has limited decision-making capacity on Arctic affairs. While Russia is an Arctic sovereign state, China is also a legitimate Arctic actor (Kobzeva, 2020). The Arctic region, as a strategic resource hub, is central to Russia's

national security and is core to Russia's status as a great power (MacDonald, 2021). The development of Arctic resources is of geopolitical significance for Russia in the long term (Chanyшева & Ilinova, 2021). From the realism perspective, China's increasing economic power and geopolitical status in the Arctic region could be concerning for Russia, as China is gradually gaining its geopolitical power through the BRI and the PSR initiatives. Russian experts fear that the long-term effects of China's influence in the Arctic may threaten Russia's Arctic sovereignty. Russia has been reluctant to hand in more controlling power to Chinese companies investing in NSR projects. For Russia, a multi-polar world best ensures its strategic autonomy in the polar region. Instead of committing to "an ever-tightening relationship" with China, Russia has thus engaged with diverse investment partners including Japan and India (MacDonald, 2021: 199-200).

The above discussed projects reflect the asymmetric nature of the Sino-Russian cooperation in the Arctic region. Cooperation on the LNG projects holds exciting potential for both countries given Russia's abundant nature resources, China's growing consumer market, and the Chinese government's need to secure and diversify its energy supply. These factors should drive both countries to build a mutual beneficial collaboration. But practically, Sino-Russian cooperation in the Arctic has developed slowly over a long period of time. Russia and China diverge in the national interests in the Arctic region, such as the ambiguities for bilateral cooperation. China portrays the Arctic as a region for all humankind while Russia continues to tighten its national security along the NSR. Moreover, Russia continues to secure the Arctic Council as the key regional institution for international cooperation (Biedermann, 2021). PSR projects such as the Yamal LNG links East Asia with continental Europe through the NSR. Russia thus has been finding ways to seek balance between openness and control of its natural resources and shipping routes. For China, a closer tie with Russia might repel its European partners (Kobzeva, 2022). China also feels no obligation to fully accommodate Russia's rules as it is also interested in cooperating with other Nordic countries (MacDonald, 2021). For Russia, an increasing dependence on Chinese investment threatens its Arctic sovereignty. Russia may lose its strategic advantage over China in the Arctic region (Kobzeva, 2022). According to MacDonald (2021), Sino-Russian relationship is best defined as an entente: "an understanding to regularly cooperate, consult and in some cases coordinate activities across multiple domains due to mutual, but not perfectly aligned or comprehensive, strategic interests while remaining autonomous and equal actors with limited hard commitments between

them” (p. 196). In the future, China and Russia would have to find a way to cooperate considering the legitimate use of the natural resources and the shipping routes of the Russian Arctic.

Second, the unpredictable weather conditions, the fragile Arctic environment, and the limited accessibility of the Arctic shipping routes add on to the existing challenges.

External threats come from the existing geopolitical disputes in the Arctic. For instance, the United States and Canada have a border dispute in the Beaufort Sea region; Russia and the United States have disputes over the legal status of the Bering Strait boundary and the NSR; and Russia, Canada, and Denmark have disputes over the continental shelf boundary (Yoder, 2022).

External threats also come from the EU and NATO. For NATO, Sino-Russian cooperation pose security challenges to the Arctic region (MacDonald, 2021). Russia’s invasion to Ukraine in February 2022 provides opportunities for NATO expansion. Both Finland and Sweden are in the process of joining NATO (Atlantic Council experts, 2022; Haltiwanger, 2022). The war in Ukraine is changing the future development course of Sino-Russian cooperation in the Arctic.

Some of the Sino-Russian cooperation projects under the PSR initiative have been challenged by the western sanctions. In May 2022, the European Council adopted a sixth package of sanctions targeting Russian oil, banks, and military officials. Under the new restrictions, Russian oil exports to European countries will be banned. Russian crude oil and petroleum products will be barred from entering the EU by the end of 2022. The package also includes a ban on EU companies providing insurance for Russian oil shipment (European Commission, 2022). South Korea has also joined the sanction and bans the exports of strategic items such as electronic and marine equipment to Russia (Shin & Kim, 2022). Also, as mentioned above, EU sanctions have caused the delay to the opening of the Arctic LNG 2 project due to western companies’ exit of the project and Chinese firms’ halt of module production for the project.

The EU sanctions and the associated consequences are forcing Russian oil companies to look for new export routes and markets for their Arctic oil (Staalesen, 2022). The increasing tension between Russia and the West stimulates the convergence of China and Russia’s interests in the Arctic region, especially along the NSR.

Since the 2010s, with the increased tensions between Russia and the West, China has become the key foreign financial supporter, the major customer, and the principal technological partner in Russian Arctic projects. To develop its natural resources, Russia needs both external financial and technological support that it lacks. China provides the essential investment and other necessary technological resources to support Russia's projects (Filimonova & Krivokhizh, 2018). China has gradually become Russia's main foreign partner with its participation in the Yamal LNG and Arctic LNG 2 projects. These two projects represent Sino-Russian cooperation in the Arctic region (Spivak and Gabuev, 2021). Novatek's Chairman of the Management Board Leonid Mikhelson said that the Chinese market is the firm's key target (Financial Times, 2021). China has become Russia's most important export destination since 2021 (Biedermann, 2021). China's support is crucial for the development of the NSR (Biedermann, 2021).

Looking ahead, Sino-Russian cooperation might again face challenges with the ongoing geopolitical shift. Putin signed the new naval doctrine on July 31, 2022. The doctrine emphasizes the strategic importance of the Arctic region. It includes measures that Russia would take to strengthen its Navy's warfare capabilities in the Arctic and beyond. With the potential growth of the NATO military alliance and the United States' desire to weaken Russia's control over the NSR, the doctrine identifies U.S. and NATO maritime activities in the Arctic as major threats to Russia's security. Putin said that Russia will ensure the protection of its Arctic waters "firmly and by all means" (RFE/RL's Russian Service, 2022). The naval doctrine might make the joint Sino-Russian use of the NSR problematic, given the increased tension between Russia and the West.

Conclusion

The PSR initiative connects Northeast Asia with Western Europe through the NSR. China, Russia, and Western European countries are the direct beneficiaries. The tightening Sino-Russian relationship has influenced the geopolitical environment in the region (MacDonald, 2021). Future studies could focus on how the shifting geopolitical environment is going to affect cooperation and interaction among various actors, including the Arctic states and non-Arctic states in the Arctic region.

China and Russia have a high degree of strategic mutual trust and a stable foundation for cooperation. Throughout the history, the two countries have developed cooperation projects in the political, defensive, economic, and

scientific realms. China has gained political and economic power over the years. Its legitimacy in participating in Arctic affairs has also increased. The Chinese investment helps Russia in the construction of Arctic infrastructure, the development of NSR and the enhancement of the development capacity of Russian Arctic resources. Sino-Russian cooperation is of long-term strategic significance for Russia.

Vladimir Putin's attendance at the 2021 Beijing Winter Olympics Games' opening ceremony and the subsequent meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping signal closer ties between the two countries. The increasing use of NSR as an alternative for traditional waterways moves the world economic centre northward. The world political and economic order is changing with the closer Sino-Russian cooperation under the PSR initiative. Russia has an urgent need to develop its Arctic region in order to maintain its status as a great power. Russia considers the PSR as a "vehicle" to attract investment and technical supports in constructing its Arctic infrastructure and extracting natural resources. The current western sanctions and the potential expansion of NATO would strengthen Russia's "pivot to Asia" strategy that was brought about in 2013. Sino-Russian cooperation contributes to the formation of their collective security system in the region (Alexeeva & Lasserre, 2018).

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26

Looking Beyond China: Non-Western Actors in the Russian Arctic after February 2022

Sergey Sukhankin & P. Whitney Lackenbauer

This article examines Russia's changing approach regarding the role and place of non-western actors in the Arctic. The outbreak of Russia's large-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has exacerbated political and economic tensions between Moscow and its Western counterparts, seriously undermining Arctic cooperation. Consequently, Russia has looked for alternatives to Western partners in the Arctic. China occupies a special place, but Beijing's economic might and growing military ambitions preclude Moscow from considering China its only partner in the Arctic. Accordingly, Russia is actively trying to engage other partners from BRICS and G-20 platforms – such as India, Brazil, South Korea, and Singapore – who, in addition to foreign direct investment, could contribute expertise and unique competences to regional development. Yet, cooperation with these partners, while lucrative and promising in theory, cannot replace what Russia has lost by destroying its traditional ties with other Arctic nations. While some actors (such as Brazil) have only limited interest in the Arctic, others (such as India, South Korea, and Singapore) will likely abstain from comprehensive cooperation because of the economic and geopolitical risks posed by Russia's continued aggression against Ukraine and the prospect of secondary sanctions.

Introduction

Over the last couple of decades, the Arctic region – once largely isolated – has become increasingly integrated into global economic, transportation, and geopolitical systems. Consequently, Arctic and non-Arctic states have elevated the region to a higher priority and integrated it into broader efforts to advance economic and security agendas. This also means that states have worked to define the Arctic in terms favourable to their interests.

Geographically, the Russian Federation is the largest Arctic state with a vast Arctic territory covering approximately 9 million square kilometers. Its Arctic coastline stretches over 24,150 kilometres, extending more than halfway around the Circumpolar North. More than 2.5 million Russians live in the Arctic, representing nearly half of the global population living in the circumpolar North – but less than 2 percent of the Russian population resides there. Activity within the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation generates between 12–15 percent of the country’s GDP and, before the West introduced expanded economic sanctions in 2022, represented one-quarter of Russia’s total exports (Kozlov, 2019). Accordingly, sustainable development of the region is amongst Russia’s foremost national priorities, which also include “the use of the Arctic region as a strategic resource base” for socio- economic development, the “preservation of the Arctic as an area of peace and cooperation,” protection of Arctic ecosystems, and the promotion of the Northern Sea Route as a major transportation artery (Arctic Council, 2022).

Russia has laid out a comprehensive strategic plan for the Arctic region in a series of documents released since March 2020.² They are rooted in a Russian national perspective on the idea of Arctic exceptionalism, emphasizing specific characteristics that demand “special approaches to its socio- economic development” in the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation (AZRF) and to “ensure national security in the Arctic.” This lays the foundation for Russia to build its case for why the AZRF is important for socio-economic development and national security, with a deliberate emphasis on oil and gas resources (both terrestrial and on the continental shelf), expectations of heightened demand for the NSR “as a transport corridor of global importance,” climate change effects on the environment and security, the presence of Indigenous peoples, and Russia’s positioning of strategic deterrent forces in the region (President of the Russian Federation, 2020). The external-facing dimensions of Russia’s strategy articulate core objectives to foster international cooperation, as well as those intended to bolster defence, security, and border protection. Specific language promises to implement “multi- vector foreign policy activities aimed at preserving the Arctic as a territory of peace, stability, and mutually beneficial cooperation.” External priorities also include asserting control over foreign activities in the Northern Sea Route (NSR) and reducing the impact of foreign sanctions (Sukhankin, 2020c).

Russia’s intensifying war on Ukraine since February 2022 has forced the Kremlin to recalibrate its approach to circumpolar affairs and the

partnerships that it needs to achieve its domestic and regional goals. An insightful study by Marina Lomaeva and Fujio Ohnishi (2022) on how Russian experts assessed their country's isolation from Arctic governance fora in the domestic, government-controlled media from March-October 2022 indicates how Russian experts perceived the decision by the other seven Arctic states to "pause" their engagement with Russia through the Arctic Council as a threat to the existing Arctic governance structure and the privileged position of the Arctic states in the region. This has generated debate about whether Russia should divert its energy to other international Arctic fora to advance its regional agenda. It has also led Russia to invite non-Arctic states, such as China and India, to partner with Russian companies to develop the AZRF (Arctic: Territory of Dialogue, 2022a). For example, Putin's advisor Anton Kobayakov stated in July 2022 that "Russia is interested in international cooperation and joint work within the framework of major infrastructure projects in the Arctic ..., but we are faced with the unwillingness of various countries to cooperate in projects of mutual interest. In this regard, the Russian side is ready to cooperate with non-Arctic countries in projects of any scale. Only the joint work of all interested countries can help strengthen mutual trust and reduce security risks in the Arctic" (Arctic: Territory of Dialogue, 2022b).

This article critically examines Russia's recent pivot to seeking partnerships with non-Western, non-Arctic states to advance regional cooperation. While significant academic attention is dedicated to the Sino-Russian relationship,² there has been less discussion about Russia's interest in attracting other foreign actors. We begin with an overview of Russia's strategic shift towards non-Western partners, its perception of how the Arctic might serve to break Russia's West-imposed international isolation, and Russian concerns and constraints with respect to this pivot. We then look specifically at Russia's interests in cooperating with four particular states: India, South Korea, Singapore, and Brazil. While some of this interest predated February 2022 (Sukhankin, 2020a, 2020b), we analyze how the War in Ukraine has served as a driver for Russia to diversify its partnerships, a cause for caution or withdrawal on the part of some prospective partners, or a catalyst for new relationships as Moscow is driven to seek new markets, new sources of investment, new scientific partners, and new legitimacy as an Arctic actor that is largely isolated from its Arctic state peers.

This article also does not discuss various other non-Western states that have demonstrated their interest in the economic, science, and research-related potential of the Russian Arctic. Given the amount of recent academic

and public commentary on China and its evolving relationship with Russia, we have deliberately chosen to exclude the Sino-Russian Arctic relationship from our analysis – except where it influences relationships with other prospective non-Western partners in the region. Russia also views the Republic of South Africa as a potential partner in Arctic affairs. Although this interest is reciprocated, South Africa focuses primarily on its own (domestic) issues and has, at least for now, limited capabilities in expanding its presence or collaboration with Russia in the Arctic. The strained Russo-Japanese relationship is substantively different from Russia's ties with the actors that fall within the scope of this article – and has profoundly worsened since February 2022. The Kremlin immediately branded Japan, alongside Ukraine and members of the Trans-Atlantic alliance, as an “unfriendly” country. For its part, Tokyo was one of the first countries to introduce anti-Russian sanctions on February 25. This voided any remaining prospect of Russo-Japanese cooperation in the Arctic. Accordingly, we have focused on other actors who represent more interesting cases of Russian interest and partnership aspirations.

The strategic shift in Russia's perception of cooperation in the Arctic

Away from the West, toward the non-Western world

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, followed by next-to-complete collapse of ties between Moscow and its Western counterparts, marked a decisive turning point in the Kremlin's strategic re-orientation toward the non-Western world. This turn was somewhat expected: powerful conservative politician Yevgey Primakov championed these ideas in the early 1990s, which were reflected in the Concept of the National Security of the Russian Federation adopted in 1997 (President of the Russian Federation, 1997). Over time, a pool of Russian conservative and anti-Western thinkers expanded alongside the Kremlin's growing frustration with the West, which Russia accused of predatory foreign policies and blamed for Russia's domestic failures. Former liberal-turned-conservative intellectual Sergey Karaganov exemplified the influential proponents of strategic re-orientation away from West, outlining these arguments in a book published in 2001 arguing that Russia should exploit its abundant natural resources in Siberia, the Far East, and the Arctic region as a bridge to the rapidly growing economies of Asia (Leksin & Shvetsov, 2001).

In an article published in December 1999, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin supported these ideas and shared (albeit cautiously) similar thoughts. Over the next several years, Putin's rhetoric about the need to change the vector of Russia's economic, cultural, and "civilizational development" became more pronounced and increasingly anti-Western. Prior to the Russo-Ukrainian war in 2022, Putin publicly expressed these ideas on at least six major occasions:

- In 2005, during the thousand-year celebration of Kazan (President of the Russian Federation, 2005).
- In 2007, during celebration of 450th anniversary of Bashkiria's accession to Russia (President of the Russian Federation, 2007).
- In 2012, during his inaugural address (President of the Russian Federation, 2012).
- In 2013, during his speech at the Valdai discussion club (President of the Russian Federation, 2013).
- In 2017, during his visit to Beijing, where he referred to "Big Eurasia" – with Russia in its heart – as a "civilizational forward-looking project" (President of the Russian Federation, 2017).
- In 2018, in his telegram to the Institute of Eastern Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Science, where he emphasised the need to study history, culture, and traditions of the Orient – factors that have a special meaning for Russia "as a great Eurasian power" (President of the Russian Federation, 2018).

Accordingly, the foundations of Russia's strategic re-orientation from the West to the non-Western world – with Russia's North-Eastern territories serving as the key enabler – were laid well before 2022 (Paderina, 2019). Despite previous moves in this direction, however, completing and legitimizing this full turn required a powerful impetus: Russia launching its large-scale war on Ukraine and the concomitant (nearly complete) breakdown in economic, political, and diplomatic ties between Russia and its Western counterparts.

The Kremlin's perceived role of the Arctic region since 2022

Unlike the Western sanctions imposed on Russia in 2014, those introduced in 2022 were robust and cannot be discussed as merely symbolic. Within months of its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Russia found itself increasingly isolated by the West and its allies and partners. In its

struggle to break the looming isolation, Russia could only rely on the following competitive advantages: its size (critical for transportation and logistics); its abundant natural resources (essential for economic growth and production of products in both developed and rising economies); its indispensability in certain scientific research (such as climate change); and an integrated global economy, enabled by 1990s reforms that made Russia a significant actor in international business and trade as well as an integral part of global supply chain networks.

Russia's ability to capitalize on all these factors simultaneously are inseparable from its plans for the Arctic region, Siberia, and the Far East, which Moscow seeks to use to overcome its international isolation. President Putin clearly articulated this intent in a 13 April 2022 speech during "consultations on the development of the Arctic Zone" (President of the Russian Federation, 2022), when he appealed to Russia's foreign partners – which he characterized as "responsible" and "friendly countries" – to explore opportunities in the Russia Arctic and replace those who chose to abandon the country after February 2022. To break West-imposed isolation, the Kremlin intends to use the Arctic region and its resources in three main ways.

First, Russia sees the exploitation of the Arctic as a source of geoeconomic power. Aside from its vast natural resources, the NSR offers secure maritime passage from Asia to Europe. Given ongoing instability in the Middle East (Sukhankin, 2024a), Russia has been urging its foreign partners to choose the NSR as a safer, shorter, and cheaper alternative. In effect, Russia's top-level politicians perceive the NSR as a way to redraw the transportation map of Eurasia, allowing Russia to bridge Asia and Europe and become indispensable for both (Radio Sputnik, 2024). Towards this end, Russia has adopted legislative amendments and infrastructural initiatives to attract foreign investors in the Arctic. The Federation Council (the upper house of the Federal Assembly of Russia) approved a law incorporating two municipalities of the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous District – Yugra into the AZRF ("Sovfed prinyal zakon" 2024), extending its administrative borders and Free Economic Zone (FEZ) preferences granted in the Arctic region ("V Sankt-Peterburge sostoyalsya XII Mezhdunarodnyy Forum", 2022) to attract foreign investors (Ria Novosti, 2024a). To bolster the attractiveness of the region, Russia is considering refurbishing or building new intra-Arctic railroad transportation arteries within the macro-region to strengthen economic ties. One example is the "Northern Latitudinal Railway" (*Severny Shorotnyii Khod*) (Arctic Russia, 2023) in the

Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District, a resource-rich region that has one of the weakest transportation networks in Russia (Ofitsyalny sayt polnomochnogo predstavatelya Prezidenta Rossiyskoy Federatsii v Uralskom federalnom okruge, 2024).

Second, Russia promotes research and scientific activities with “friendly countries” in the Arctic region, with a specific emphasis on the BRICS (a cooperation platform for emerging economies comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa). This represents a new and interesting turn in Russia’s approach to cooperation with foreign actors in the Arctic, which used to be rather China-centric. This idea was clearly emphasised by Nikolay Korchunov, the Russian Foreign Ministry Ambassador at Large for International Cooperation in the Arctic and Senior Arctic Official at the Arctic Council, during the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF) in 2023 (TASS, 2023c). Within the realm of Arctic research, climate change is particularly appealing to nearly all members of the BRICS (and G- 20 countries). For instance, during the BRICS Johannesburg summit in August 2023, the final declaration explicitly stated the need for BRICS+ members (including Iran, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Egypt, and Ethiopia) to strengthen cooperation in sustainable development, combat climate change, and preserve biodiversity (Ministerstvo Inostrannyh Del Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 2023). Prior to this, Russian authorities had already claimed that its BRICS partners found climate change and Arctic research to be key points of interest (TASS, 2023c).

Third, Russia envisages the Arctic region as a platform for tightening political cooperation with non- Western countries, primarily from the BRICS and G-20 blocs. Prior to February 2022 and the seven like-minded Arctic states’ pause on Arctic Council participation, Russian political and intellectual elites adopted a reserved stance on granting more weight to non-Arctic nations in that forum. Russia’s approach has changed saliently, as the amended version of the “Foundations of the Russian Federation State Policy in the Arctic for the Period up to 2035” (adopted in 2020) revealed. The amended Point 16, which discusses “main goals in the domain of the development of international cooperation” in the Arctic, no longer includes a reference to “strengthening friendly neighbourly relations with Arctic states.” Instead, it emphasizes “the development of ties with foreign nations [no specification provided] on the grounds of bilateral ties in the framework of multilateral structures and mechanisms” (President of the Russian Federation, 2023). Russian sources clearly indicate that these primarily include BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (a Eurasian

political, economic, security, and defence organization established by China and Russia in 2001) whose members “are starting to showcase much greater rate of participation” in Arctic-related problems and affairs (Matveyev, 2024).

Discussions in Russia about the possibility of either completely abandoning the Arctic Council or creating an alternative structure comprised of so-called “friendly countries,” with Russia playing a more central role, reveal how the country is seeking to use the Arctic region to advance its geopolitical objectives. While mainstream Russian intellectuals and politicians have been cautious about breaking from the status quo (Sukhankin and Lackenbauer, 2023), voices championing the idea of creating a regional organization in the Arctic “with BRICS office” (based either in Russia or on the territory of a friendly country) are becoming more audible in Russia’s intellectual discourse (Zhuravel & Medvedev, 2023).

The Arctic region and Russia’s strategic shift: concerns and constraints

While the overwhelming majority of mainstream Russian intellectuals, policymakers, and politicians ardently support the idea of using the Arctic region and its resources as a means to diversify the country’s economic, cultural, and scientific ties, some prominent Russian experts caution that this approach may have serious limitations and should not be seen as a panacea. Three main factors, both external and intrinsic to Russia’s way of thinking, could seriously strain Russia’s plans to use the Arctic as a platform to strategically re-orient toward non-Western partners.

First, Russia’s growing strategic overreliance on China is a source of persistent concern. Prominent Russian experts such as Anatoly Torkunov warn about the dangers associated with this emerging reality and argue for a more balanced approach in dealing with foreign partners. To avoid imbalance, they suggest Russia should dramatically increase its profile in the “Big Eurasia” by playing a greater role in major infrastructure projects in the India-Pacific macro-region, thus becoming a strategic nexus between all parties. At the same time, they propose that Russia should increase its presence in such regional platforms, forums, and organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, BRICS, Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), and ASEAN+Russia. Russian experts also urge Russian political leaders to take a more active role in forming multilateral linkages (such as Moscow-Beijing-Seoul; Moscow-Beijing-Seoul- Pyongyang; Tokyo-Moscow-Seoul; Moscow-Hanoi-Beijing; or

Moscow-Hanoi-Delhi) which would amplify Russia's political opportunities beyond bilateral engagement (Streltsov & Torkunov, 2023).

Second, Russian experts worry about a lack of sustainable, long-term interest among Russia's non-Western partners. They observe that these partners have expressed little commitment to strategic economic projects in the Arctic given, in addition to geopolitical instability, the relatively high start up and annual operational fixed costs associated with developing Arctic-based projects. Consequently, Russia "is rarely mentioned [in strategic documents] as the key partner" (Regnum, 2023). While Russia's Arctic resource base is immense and attractive to many countries, the actual amount of Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) is extremely modest given economic sanctions, general uncertainty, and threat of secondary sanctions. This makes it inadequate to propel any major endeavours. Some Russian experts state that, while the country's Arctic-based natural resources are extensive, there are simply not enough new export markets or investors to make many of the development opportunities economically sustainable (Nikolayev, 2024). Furthermore, despite Russia's continuous official touting about growing Arctic scientific interest amongst Russia's non-Western partners, foreign experts point out that Russia's BRICS partners had not carried out a single large scientific project in the AZRF as of 2023 (Yasin, 2023).

Third, Russian thinking about the Arctic is heavily influenced by zero-sum logic and the prism of geopolitical competition. Many Russian experts, especially those with military-political backgrounds (whose profile has grown exponentially since 2022), perceive the macro-region as a theatre of expanding "hybrid confrontation" with the US and its NATO allies. For instance, Aleksandr Bartosh, the corresponding member of the Academy of Military Sciences and Experts of the League of Military Diplomats, portrays the Arctic as a sphere of confrontation between "three circles" of adversaries. The "first circle" is composed of the coastal Arctic states. The "second circle" of rivals also encompasses sub-Arctic countries such as Finland, Sweden, and Iceland. The last "circle" is composed of countries such as China, Japan, India, Singapore, South Korea, and Australia – actors that do not have direct access to the Arctic but express increasingly explicit interest in the macro-region and its resources (Bartosh, 2023).

Russia's continuous official rhetoric about the Arctic being a "territory of peace and dialogue" is contradicted by Russian military actions and ideas generated in powerful military-political circles that construct the region as

a new geopolitical playground. This means that foreign investors, including those in what Russia perceives as “friendly countries,” are unlikely to commit to large, expensive projects in an unstable, insecure region. Consequently, some experts anticipate that the local resource base and commercial transportation routes will not receive the strategic foreign investments that the Kremlin promotes in its messaging.

Russia: Looking beyond China

India: a cautious Elephant in the Arctic

Among all non-Western countries, India is Russia’s second most significant political and economic partner (after China). Russia is one of just five countries with which India has a 2+2 dialogue mechanism, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Putin have met twenty times since 2014. The India-Russia Strategic Partnership was elevated to the level of a Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership in 2010 (the only Indian example of this type of partnership). On January 26, 2024, Putin stated that Russia cherishes its privileged strategic relationships with New Delhi, which chooses to conduct independent and pragmatic foreign policy (Izvestia, 2024). The Russian side also trumpets that, despite economic sanctions imposed by the West, the level of the Russo-Indian bi-lateral trade hit a record \$50 billion in 2023 (Izvestia, 2023). Accordingly, Russia is receptive to India having adopted an Arctic policy titled “India and the Arctic: building a partnership for sustainable development” on March 17, 2022 (Government of India, 2022) and welcomes its growing interest in the region. Russian experts applaud the Indian document for its “neutral, politically correct [language] that avoids any confrontation such as the concept of the ‘near Arctic state’ promulgated by China” (Brodt, 2023). Specifically, the Kremlin seeks to attract India’s attention and engage its as a “friendly country” in Arctic affairs in three primary areas.

First, Russia seeks to expand its energy exports to India. Prior to 2022, Russo-Indian cooperation in the Arctic was driven primarily by import-export ties in oil, natural gas, coal, and ferrous metallurgy. Indian corporations such as ONGC Videsh acquired shares in Sakhalin-1 and Vankorneft (Interfax, 2020), with Russian sources stating that cumulative Indian investments in Russia’s oil and gas sector stood at \$15 billion in 2021 (Neftegazovaya Vertikal, 2021). The two countries reportedly worked on developing a road map to strengthen trade and partnerships under the auspices of the India Energy Office (IEO) in Moscow which opened in 2021 (INGC Videsh Ltd., 2021). Strategically, Russia anticipates that it

can help India meet its rising demand for oil and natural gas owing to the growing number of vehicles users in the country (expected to reach 300 million users by 2040) (Sukhag, 2022) and India's unhappiness with EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (Dhoot, 2023).

Second, tighter Russo-Indian transportation and logistical ties are premised on three main hopes. On the other hand, Russian commentators expect that the construction of the Vladivostok-Chennai transportation corridor, agreed on in 2019 during the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok, would foster a "logistical alliance" between Russia (with its access to the Arctic resources) and India (with access to East African resources) (Kupriyanov & Korolev, 2019). All talks on the project ceased after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, although Russian sources claimed that they would be renewed in 2013 (TASS, 2023e). It appears that New Delhi is not rushing to commit to this project while secondary economic sanctions remain a factor. Conversely, Russia seeks to capitalize on the strenuous ties between India and China. Given high security risks in bilateral relations between Beijing and New Delhi, Russian experts assume that India might be interested in investing in alternative trade and transportation routes through the Russian Arctic in case China blocks transportation through the Malacca Strait. According to this logic, intensified competition between India and China – including in Arctic projects – could benefit Russia (Kortunov, A., Saymon, T. et al., 2024), providing Moscow with additional room to politically manoeuvre and effectively transform it into a peacebreaker between two Eurasian giants. Ultimately, Russia pins growing hope on the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), a 7,200-kilometer-long ship, rail, and road route for moving freight between India, Iran, Azerbaijan, Russia, and Central Asia. This corridor could provide the Kremlin with a means to reassert its influence over regional transit and trade by reducing the time to transport goods from Russia to India by 10–15 days compared with the Suez Canal. Although there has been meagre

development of infrastructure along the INSTC to date, Russia's pivot from the West and its prospective integration with the Indo-Pacific region could provide Moscow with a significant competitive advantage if it can control larger parts of north-south transit routes (Sukhankin, 2024b).

Third, India has enhanced its cooperation with Russia in scientific research and development surrounding climate change, which is of existential concern to India given its reliance on agriculture to feed a rapidly

growing population (Shyrgazina, 2022). Russia is interested in integrating India into its Yamal (Snowflake station) (Nilsen, 2023) and prospective Svalbard-based Arctic projects (TASS, 2023d).

While these plans appear promising on the surface, the expansion of the Russo-Ukrainian war and uncertainty posed by economic sanctions and the political isolation of Russia by the West make them less attractive for three general reasons. First is the nature of trade and economic cooperation between the two countries. As Russian officials have indicated, Russo-Indian trade relations have surged since February 2022, stimulated primarily by India's purchases of discounted Russian oil (Sukhankin, 2024a). Nevertheless, Indian investors have not indicated any substantive interest in Russia's major oil and natural gas projects in the Arctic: the Vostok Oil mega-project (Sukhankin, 2024c) or Arctic LNG-2 project which, after US sanctions, has lost foreign investors (Sukhankin, 2024d). Paradoxically, the sheer volume of bilateral trade and Russia's overwhelming trade surplus with India has become a matter of concern in Russian circles. Mikhail Zadornov, chairman of the management board of Otkritie FC Bank, noted that Russia does "not have any goods that we can import from China and especially India compared to the volumes of oil, gas and oil products destined for these countries" (RBC, 2023). Russian experts note that the use of the Indian rupee (which has lost more than 10 percent against the US dollar and 25 percent against the ruble in value) in bilateral trade poses a major strategic challenge for Russia in terms of how it will deal with the oversupply of rupees that it receives for its raw materials, particularly given the trade imbalance (Komrakov, 2022).

In the late 2023/early 2024, Russian sources reported shifts in the trajectory of the Russo-Indian economic cooperation in the Arctic that might indicate a change in the nature of bilateral collaboration. The Russian side claims that Indian businesses are considering opening local operations on the Kola Peninsula (MKRU Murmansk, 2023) and building an India-owned pharmaceuticals complex in Murmansk oblast by 2027 (RIA Novosti, 2023). Open-source searches did not yield any specific financial details or concrete plans regarding the realization of these plans and projects. Thus, Russo-Indian economic ties remain heavily oriented toward situational trade in discounted natural resources and lack strategic coherence (Sukhankin, 2023). Furthermore, Indian Oil Corporation Limited (India's largest oil and gas company under the ownership of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas) has stated its intent to dramatically reduce the amount of oil it purchases from Russia (ProFinance, 2024). While similar

rumours have circulated since 2022 (Yermakova, 2022), the tightening EU and US sanctions regime against Russia might encourage the Indians to follow through, thus weakening the only substantive pillar in the Russo-Indian economic partnership. According to Russian private sector experts (Moscow Times, 2024c) and public officials (such as VTB head Andrey Kostin) (Moscow Times, 2024b), US and EU sanctions have led banks from countries “friendly” to Russia to cancel payment deals with their Russian counterparts for fear of Western reprisals. Nonetheless, Russia keeps exporting commodities, resulting in “every fourth USD [earned through Russian exports] not reaching Russia.” This hits Russia’s oil and oil products sector particularly hard (Moscow Times, 2024a).

Second, India’s model of cooperation and system of partnerships in the Arctic is rather selective – and not always aligned with Russia’s expectations. India’s Arctic Policy strategic document, released in 2022, conveys that India has clear national interests in the Arctic and considers the macro-region to be the global heritage of humankind. Its emphasis on ecological sustainability as a key pillar of Arctic governance does not resonate with Russian interests and objectives, which prioritize commercial exploitation, re-militarization, and the idea of the region as an emerging geopolitical battleground (Staalesen, 2023). It is revealing that India decided to publish the document after the seven other Arctic states paused their participation in the Arctic Council under Russia’s chairship, effectively placing the primary multilateral regional forum on hold. Furthermore, India has never explicitly stated, or even implied, that Russia is its only partner in the Arctic region. Senior Indian officials argue that while Russia is “one big partner,” it also cooperates with other countries that Russia considers “unfriendly,” such as Norway and Iceland (Chandran & Viakhireva, 2024). Moreover, during the 2nd CII (Confederation of Indian Industries) India Nordic-Baltic Business Conclave in 2023, Indian Minister of External Affairs Subrahmanyam Jaishankar highlighted that India is interested in strategic collaboration on innovative projects with countries in Northern Europe and the Baltic Sea region (TASS, 2023f). In developing scientific ties with Arctic players, India has devoted more attention to Norway than Russia (Zaykov & Bhagvat, 2022). This is unsurprising in light of declining Russian scientific research spending (proportional to GDP) (RBC, 2024).

Akin to Russia reacting with concern or disfavour when its partners cooperate with “unfriendly countries” in the Arctic, India’s approach reveals a similar tendency. For example, senior Indian officials and experts frequently refer to China-related geopolitical strains when referring to

Arctic- related developments (Reddy, Sah & Viakhireva, 2024). Russia's active courting of China in the Arctic, coupled with official discourse about China representing Russia's most critical partner, may irritate India's political and diplomatic leadership.³ The director of Carnegie India, Raja Mohan, has noted concerns about inconsistencies in Russian policies toward other countries, and insisted that India will not be a "younger brother" or a "pawn" in Russian political games. He also suggested that Indian ruling elites are unsure about Russia's relationship priorities when it comes to Delhi and Beijing, recalling the bitter experience of the Indian-Chinese war of 1962 and Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev once calling India a "friend" and China a "brother" (Kupriyanov, 2016).

The Republic of Korea (ROK) in the Arctic: middle power diplomacy in action

The ROK's involvement in the Arctic dates to 1987, when the government created its Polar Research Center (PRC) under the umbrella of the Korea Ocean Research & Development Institute (KORDI). The country appeared dormant in its Arctic endeavours until 2004, when the Korean Antarctic Research Program was transformed into the Korean Polar Research Program (covering both poles) that identified six priority areas: climate change in polar zones and their global consequences; biodiversity; tectonic changes in polar zones; studies of meteors and deepwater drilling; "activization of polar studies by Asian countries that are not adjacent to polar zones"; and economic activities and transportation in the polar regions (Tolstokulakov, 2015). The ROK has become a world leader in producing Arctic-class vessels, with the first "Araon" type icebreaker built by Hanjin Heavy Industries in 2009. This expertise in enabling commercial transportation in the Arctic had made South Korea a key shipbuilding partner for Russia.

The nature of South Korea's interest in the Arctic conforms with a "middle power" approach – that of a country acknowledging that it occupies a middle-level position in the international power spectrum (Baç, 2024). Its interests are primarily related to narrow economic and scientific research issues, and it harbors no grand ambitions and aspirations for the region akin to the so-called "great powers" (Akimova, 2021). Following a constructivist approach, the ROK's behavior in the Arctic region might be defined as "role-oriented bridging diplomacy." According to Korean experts, unlike issue-oriented actors (such as Canada or Australia), the ROK could be viewed as an astute intermediary bridging conflicting viewpoints on Arctic affairs

(Suzuka, 2015). Some Korean intellectuals have even suggested that the country could serve a connecting function between Asian observers and member states in the Arctic Council, emulating the role that it plays in the G-20 as an intermediary between the G-7 and BRICS (Seryun, 2017).

Analysis of the ROK's strategic documents pertaining to the Arctic region before 2022 reveals Seoul's keen interest in developing and proliferating ties with Russia in various dimensions of Arctic cooperation (So, Pak & Chistov, 2021). For its part, Russia sees various benefits in cooperating with the ROK in the region. South Korea boasts one of the world's most innovative and fastest growing economies, is strategically dependent on imported natural resources (Minsu & Marchenkov, 2019), and seeks new export markets. Furthermore, its lack of geopolitical ambitions in the circumpolar north means that it neither threatens nor jeopardises Russia's standing in the macro-region. The Russians also appreciate that, unlike other non-Arctic states (such as Japan), South Korea does not involve its Ministry of Defence in Arctic-related issues. In theory, this makes it an attractive regional partner for Russia.

Nonetheless, there are visible constraints on the prospects of an expanded ROK-Russia partnership in the Arctic – some (but not all) of which relate to post-2022 developments and the Russo-Ukrainian war. One core limitation is Russia's traditional incredulity and apprehensiveness about foreign actors operating in its self-defined areas of exclusive interest. Thus, while Russia's stance on South Korea's Arctic involvement has been traditionally positive, Moscow perceives Seoul's scientific studies of the NSR as a risk. Given that Russia would consider any push to internationalize waters that the Kremlin considers falling under its control as a national security threat, one Russian commentator characterized ROK interests as “a camouflaged threat to Russia's national security.” He recommended that Russia not “allow [Koreans] to conduct independent scientific activities in the Arctic,” and to only admit their scientists if their areas of research were not a threat – and to “constantly and meticulously monitor” them all the same (Tolstokulakov, 2018).

The cautious and reserved approach of the ROK and the private sector to committing financial resources to Arctic cooperation also inhibits the country's relationship with Russia. Despite strong South Korean demand for natural resources (especially oil and gas), companies from that country have never gone further than reaching memorandum-type agreements on cooperation (none of which yielded concrete results) in the realm of

hydrocarbons. A case in point is the agreement between NOVATEK and Korea Gas Corporation (KOGAS) signed in 2018 (Afanasiev, 2018). Instead, the ROK imports 79 percent of its LNG from five countries: Qatar, Australia, the US, Malaysia, and Oman (Leksyutina, 2021). Given growing scepticism amongst foreign investors about Russia's major oil and natural gas projects in the Arctic (Dyatel, 2023), it is highly unlikely that South Koreans will drastically change their stance on energy cooperation in the short-to-mid-term. Although the ROK speaks of the Russian Arctic as a critical transportation artery (Arctic Policy of the Republic of Korea, n.d.), South Korean businesses have not made any substantive commitments to enhance Russian seaport infrastructure in the Far East or the Arctic. Instead, the ROK is prioritizing development of its own seaports to make Busan, Ulsan, and Gwangyang its gateways to Arctic maritime routes, relegating Russian ports to a marginal position in bilateral trade and transportation (Leksyutina, 2021).

Although the ROK did not follow the lead of its Western partners in imposing a full suite of sanctions against the regime in Moscow, sanctions inhibit deeper Korean-Russian collaboration in the Arctic. For example, South Korean shipbuilding companies faced difficulties in receiving payments from Russian clients after many Russian banks were switched off the SWIFT system, leading South Korean shipyard Daewoo Shipbuilding & Marine Engineering (now part of Hanwha Ocean) to terminate its contract with Sovcomflot. Given that a lack of Arctic-class Arc7 tankers is seriously constraining the Arctic LNG-2 project, and that contracts for Russian-built tankers have been delayed, securing the twenty Arc7 tankers commissioned from South Korean shipyards is critical to Russian plans as it is unlikely to find sufficient numbers on the secondary market (Parshynova, 2023). Russia's growing military cooperation with the ROK's strategic adversary North Korea (Shin, 2024) also fosters distrust, making the prospect of deeper ROK-Russian cooperation increasingly unlikely.

Singapore: the Arctic novice with growing ambitions

Singapore, a tiny city-state with a population close to six million people, is resource scarce but one of the world's most economically and technologically advanced nations (IMD, 2024). It became an accredited observer to the Arctic Council in 2013, with its Arctic interests boiling down to three core variables: shipping, energy resources, and climate change (Singapore MFA, 2018). Like the ROK, Singapore has never articulated any geopolitical interests or agendas in the macro-region. After securing

Arctic Council observer status, it “sought to make up for lost time by engaging in several areas of Arctic diplomacy, including on the Track II, sub-governmental level via various organisations and conferences,” Lanteigne (2017) explained. In forging an Arctic identity, Singapore still “had much ground to cover. The country is not yet a signatory to the 1920 Spitsbergen (Svalbard) Treaty, has had limited exposure to Arctic scientific endeavours, and unlike Japan and South Korea has yet to publish a comprehensive Arctic governmental white paper” (Lanteigne, 2017).

Singapore has understandable interests in climate change, given that rising sea levels owing to melting ice would have disastrous consequences for the maritime city-state. According to the Third National Climate Change Study released by the Centre for Climate Research Singapore in January 2024, sea level rise would have major implications for the country’s water resources, biodiversity, public health, and food security (CCRS, 2024). Further development of the NSR also poses a potential challenge to Singapore’s role as a global shipping hub for maritime cargo from Eastern to Western markets, with 70 to 80 percent of all oil bound for China and Japan passing through the Strait of Malacca (Arctic Institute, 2024). Accordingly, Singapore’s business sector closely observes what is happening in Arctic transportation networks. Recognizing the need to diversify both its portfolio and the geographic scope of its investments, Singapore looks at potential megaprojects around the world – and the Arctic region is no exception (Bennett, 2018).

Prior to February 2022, Russian sources identified three main directions of collaboration with Singapore in the Arctic (Yeranosyan, 2021). First, Singapore was a potential source of financing and technology to develop Russian seaport infrastructure in the Arctic and the Far East. The Russian side was particularly interested in cooperating with engineering companies Keppel Corporation and Semcorp Marine. It also looked to potential collaboration in hi-tech industries, including drilling, navigation systems, and monitoring, with Russian sources identifying up to 5,000 companies in Singapore working in these sectors. Furthermore, Singapore is a world leader in freight and cargo insurance, and Russian sources indicated that Singapore-based companies were interested in providing insurance to facilitate cargo transportation in the Arctic.

Deals between Trafigura and Norilsk Nickel in 2008 (Trader Trafigura, 2010) and between Trafigura and Russia’s Rosneft in 2013 (Afanasiev, 2020) bode well for commercial cooperation between the two countries. In

2016, during a high-profile trip to Singapore, Russian delegation member Artur Chilingarov (a polar explorer, corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, and a Hero of the Soviet Union) communicated that Moscow eagerly sought joint projects and collaboration with Singapore in the Arctic, especially to facilitate drilling on the Russian continental shelf. He also applauded Singapore's abstention from Arctic geopolitics and its concentration on economic and commercial opportunities (Ria Novosti, 2016). Practical achievements were limited, however. Following Russia's full invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Trafigura froze its investments in Russia (Trafigura zamorozila investicii, 2022) and later sold its 24.5 percent share in Nayara Energy Limited (an Indian oil downstream energy and petrochemicals company in which Rosneft holds a 49.13 percent indirect minority interest) (Hara Capital Sarl, 2023).

More generally, Singapore either paused or slowed down its international collaborations in the Arctic after February 2022. Its participation in the Arctic Council has been limited to modest projects, such as a Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna working group project in which Singapore's National Parks Board tracks Arctic migratory birds that overwinter in Singapore (Begum, 2024). Russian academic experts hold out hope that Moscow will attract Singaporean involvement in various Arctic projects and initiatives, which Singapore could use to showcase its infrastructure, communication, shipbuilding, and other innovative technologies. The experts also concede that uncertainty and geopolitical risks inhibit this prospect (Kazakov & Lystsev, 2023). When Pavel Volkov, Russia's deputy director for the development of the Far East and the Arctic, was asked about the possibility of Singaporean and other foreign non-Western investors in Russia's Arctic projects, he deflected the question to mention unspecified Chinese and Indian projects (Saprygina, 2024). The short-term opportunity space to revitalize the Russo-Singapore Arctic relationship appears non-existent.

Brazil: to the Arctic through the Antarctic

Brazil, which is projected to be the world's ninth largest economy in 2024 (Forbes India, 2024) and is home to 203 million people (World Bank, 2024), appeared disinterested in either Arctic or Antarctic affairs until 2013 when it released "Antarctic Science for Brazil: An action plan for the 2013–2022 period." This plan contained a small passage on the Arctic, noting that "the Antarctic scientific community is interested in deepening cooperation with researchers from the Arctic region at the moment that

evidence of connections between the two polar regions accumulate, such as the deep ocean circulation, climate variability processes and the Sun - Earth interaction with the atmosphere” (SEPED, 2013).

It took Brazil another decade to mention the Arctic region in another strategic document: the “Ten Year Plan for Antarctic Science in Brazil 2023–2032” (Ministério da Ciência, Tecnologia e Inovação (MCTI), 2023). In this plan, the Arctic region was allocated a separate section as “a new frontier for Brazil’s polar science” (*Uma nova fronteira para a ciência polar brasileira*) that looked at the Arctic region as a key factor in global climate change. That year, Brazil sent its first scientific expedition to the Arctic, which Brazilian sources suggested “could initiate Brazil’s integration into [Arctic] studies considered strategic from a geopolitical point of view” (Lopes, 2023).

While Brazil’s fledgling interest in the Arctic region is primarily driven by interest in the adverse consequences of climate change for Brazil and its northern coast (Blue Amazon or *A Amazônia Azul*), the country is also seeking prestige. Brazilian experts note that theirs “is the only country among the 10 largest economies in the world to have no participation in issues related to the Arctic” and, “in the future, [Brazil] may also apply for an observer seat on the Arctic Council and sign the Arctic Treaty” (Rosa, 2023). There is no “Arctic Treaty,” of course, which is telling about the state of Brazil’s Arctic knowledge in its own right. Nevertheless, commentators suggest that participation in Arctic projects could enhance Brazil’s “role in BRICS and internationally” (Casella, Lagutina, & Giannattasio, 2020).

Well aware of these sentiments, Russia has indicated a strong desire to strengthen ties with Brazil in the Arctic since February 2022. While Brasília has indicated no interest in pursuing joint economic projects, Russia has sought to pull its Brazilian counterparts into scientific cooperation. For instance, in 2023 Nikolay Korchunov noted that Russia and Brazil were planning a joint seminar on collaboration in the Arctic. His statement highlighted that Russia “took a very positive stance on Brazil’s interest in the Arctic and international cooperation in the Arctic region,” noting that the bilateral partnership on food security “already has an Arctic dimension” and that Brazil’s interest in Indigenous issues “could also become another topic of partnership” (TASS, 2023b). The extent of actual Russo-Brazilian scientific cooperation in the Arctic may exceed either Russo-Chinese or Russo- Indian scientific collaboration in the region, with Brazil and Russia

reported to be the most active participants in the BRICS working group “one ocean and polar studies” (Vyakhireva, 2023). Following Russo-Brazilian consultations on the polar regions held in the Republic Saha (Yakutia) in 2024, reports suggest that Russia and Brazil are planning to conduct a joint scientific expedition in the Arctic in 2025. (Shyshlo, 2024).

Russia also sees benefits in drawing a key BRICS partner into Arctic affairs and joint projects. In effect, Brazil can offer expertise and legitimacy on climate change, sustainable agriculture and food security, drilling technologies, development of green energy, and work with Indigenous and small numbered peoples (Roscongre, 2023) from which Russia could benefit. Russia also seeks to derive geopolitical dividends from increasing Brazil’s presence in the Arctic. When Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva returned as President of Brazil in October 2022, Russian experts and policymakers rejoiced⁴ and hoped that Brazil would once again become Russia’s premier partner in South America. With Russia largely ostracized from Western circles after February 2022, cooperation with Brazil in the Arctic region could serve as a platform to strengthen more general political ties between Brasilia and Moscow. Helping Brazil to become an accredited Arctic Council observer could be an important step in this direction, as Brazil’s Ambassador to Russia Rodrigo de Lima Baena Soares tacitly acknowledged in 2023 (TASS, 2023a).

Conclusion

Russia’s strategic shift towards non-Arctic state partners has been hastened by the pressure of growing isolation from the West after the Kremlin launched its unprovoked, full invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Desperate in its search for new markets and new sources of foreign investment in the face of Western sanctions, Russia hopes that cooperation with non-Western partners can help to solve its key problem: commercializing its vast Arctic-based natural resources. Nevertheless, our study suggests that it remains unlikely that Russia’s non-Western partners will be willing to commit to expensive, strategic projects in the AZRF – particularly while the war in Ukraine is ongoing. Novatek’s announcement this year that it is downsizing its flagship Arctic LNG 2 development is a case in point, reflecting its lack of access to new icebreaking vessels (thus curtailing its ability to recapitalize and expand the tanker fleet) which are sitting in South Korean shipyards (Staalesen, 2024).

While speculation about the current and future status of the Sino-Russian relationship in the Arctic dominates a significant amount of recent academic and think tank discussion, this article has illustrated how Russia's interests extend to other non-Western, non-Arctic states as well. Points of tension in the Sino-Russian Arctic relationship – such as Russian sovereignty and control over the NSR, scientific research as an enabler for encroachment on Russian sovereign rights, and concerns about both limited and potentially exploitative investment (Lajeunesse et al, 2023) – are also present in Russian discussions about other prospective partners. In many cases, despite handshakes and rhetorical gestures promising enhanced cooperation, there has been little actual action apart from purchasing Russian energy resources. As Russia becomes more desperate for new forms of economic and political support, we will watch with interest to see if the Kremlin is able to convert its pivot to non-Western partnerships into practical outcomes that advance its agenda in the AZRF, the broader circumpolar north, and globally.

Notes

1. In March 2020, President Putin signed the “The Foundations of State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic through 2035,” which outlines key goals and Moscow's Arctic agenda. "Президент утвердил основы государственной политики в Арктике" [The President approved the Principles of State Policy in the Arctic], администрация президента России, updated 5 March 2020, <http://kremlin.ru/acts/news/62947>. Following this direction, the Ministry for the Development of the Russian Far East and Arctic submitted a draft implementation strategy for the government's consideration in May 2020. "Минвостокразвития начало разработку новой госпрограммы развития Арктики," [The Ministry for the Development of the Russian Far East begins the development of a new state program for the development of the Arctic], TASS, 13 May 2020, <https://tass.ru/ekonomika/8464809>. The third document, released on 26 October, outlines the mechanisms to realize the ‘State Policy’ and ‘Socio-Economic Development’ plans in the Arctic. Указ Президента Российской Федерации от 26.10.2020 № 645, “О Стратегии развития Арктической зоны Российской Федерации и обеспечения национальной безопасности на период до 2035 года” [“Strategy for Developing the Russian Arctic Zone and Ensuring National Security until 2035”], 26 October 2020, <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001202010260033>.

2. See, for example, Sørensen and Klimenko, 2017; Sun, 2018; Alexeeva and Lasserre, 2018; Hsiung and Røseth, 2019; Kobzeva, 2020; MacDonald, 2021; Cao, 2022; Yang and Guo, 2022; Nan and Guo, 2022; Juris, 2022, Lajeunesse et al 2023, Moe et al, 2023.
3. One might recall Russia selling of S-400 surface-to-air missile complexes to China in 2017 before it sold them India, which generated negative reactions in India (Sukhankin, 2017).
4. During da Silva's previous tenure as president (2003-2010), he played the key role in initiating the Russo-Brazilian strategic partnership (Yakovlev, 2022).

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Section 6:

Russia, Arctic Security, and Militarization

27

Russian Military Build-up in the Arctic: Strategic Shift in the Balance of Power or Bellicose Rhetoric Only?

Barbora Padrtová

The Arctic has been playing a central role in Russia's identity and economic development. On the naval-strategic level, the most relevant for Moscow is maintaining the credibility of nuclear deterrence as well as securing strategic submarines' open access to the world's seas, and in the theoretical case of large-scale European war, the Russian Navy's strategic objective would be to interrupt the connection between Europe and North America (the latter was more eminent during the Cold War, but still it is a part of Russian strategic thinking and objectives). Besides that, recent developments show that the Arctic's importance for Russia is not only growing but also widening, and new sectors have been gradually added. Moscow's strategic goal is to establish Russia as a preeminent Arctic nation, which is eminently clear through its political, economic, and military means to "defend" its interest. As part of its effort to create a comprehensive presence in the Arctic, Russia has been steadily expanding its military component there since 2007. However, these movements are primarily focused on the protection of coastlines and offshore energy extraction installations, search-and-rescue operations, and icebreaker capabilities, and therefore should not be seen strictly as an militarization of the region. The occasional assertive statements by Russian representatives are more tailored for domestic audiences rather than threatening factor to the other Arctic states. More substantive signals of Russian intent would be its refusal to recognize the decisions or authority of international organizations in the Arctic, or its withdrawal from such organizations. In observing Russian activities in the Arctic, it is important to analyze the relevance of these statements to map it in that framework and wider context. This paper will focus on the relevance and substance of the above-mentioned developments.

Introduction

The Russian Northern territories are crucial for Moscow to keep its relevance in world affairs. The aim of this paper is to analyze Russia as a status quo power in the Arctic and the motives behind its approaches and actions. To keep its position in the Arctic as a dominant power, Russia needs to focus on the modernization of its Arctic capabilities. The official statements of the Kremlin's representatives, supported by regular exercises, are, however, often perceived as provocative to the other Arctic littoral states. Such developments can lead to a "spiral" effect, where other states feel threatened by the Russian build-up and launch countermeasures. It can lead to a classic security dilemma and increase the securitization of the whole region.

A Strategic Framework: The Development of the Arctic's Importance for Russia

In order to understand recent Russian ambitions in the Arctic, it is necessary to define a framework for the broader strategic picture of Moscow's strategic culture and security identity. Russia perceives the Arctic as a geopolitically central region and sees its own role/position there as a predominant one.

During the Cold War, the strategic importance of the Arctic was irrefutable. First, the Northern Fleet (NF), stationed in the Arctic (Kola Peninsula), guaranteed nuclear deterrence. Second, the surface combat ships protected its nuclear strategic submarines by establishing a "naval fortress" in the Arctic, preventing the access of NATO fleets that could harm its strategic submarine force. Third, if needed (in a theoretical case of war), they could conduct operations from Arctic bases to interrupt transatlantic supply lines and crucial naval communications between the US and Europe.

After the collapse of the USSR, the Arctic witnessed dual-direction simultaneous development. First, there was a slight diminishing of its importance from a strategic-military point of view, caused by the decreasing overall relevance of nuclear deterrence, which in the Russian context was guaranteed predominantly by the NF. On the other hand, that decrease was just a relative one; because of Russia's dramatically reduced conventional capabilities, the nuclear strategic forces have maintained a high level of importance in Moscow's overall strategy. Further, the relative importance of nuclear deterrence dramatically increased during the late 1990s, because of the continuous deterioration of conventional capabilities and the lowering

threshold for engaging nuclear weapons. As stated in the Russian military doctrine, “Russia retains nuclear power status for deterring (preventing) aggression against it or its allies” (Prezident Rossii 2000). This was reconfirmed in the 2010 Military Doctrine. It reversed attention back towards the elements and regions crucial for nuclear capabilities; thus the Arctic was among the biggest winners of this development, again because of its NF. In the end, it has caused the renaissance of the military factor of the Arctic’s relevance. As Baev confirms, the main permanent factor in the securitization of the Arctic agenda is still the Northern Fleet (Baev 2009).

Second, there has been an increase in the economic and political importance of Russia’s High North. Due to the loss of its Eastern European territories (especially Ukraine and Belarus) and Central Asia, the relative share of the Arctic in the overall Russian GDP/economy has increased. Moreover, the nature of the Arctic economy has been transformed. During the Soviet era, natural resources in its Northern territories were developed to provide the necessary materials for an isolated Soviet Union to industrialize. Today, this region is developed to meet the needs of international markets (Southcott 2010: 49). Currently, the Arctic accounts for around 20% of the total Russian GDP (Medvedev 2008b), comparable to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic’s (SSR’s) share before 1991.¹

Russia as the Arctic’s Status Quo Power

As stated in the Russian “Arctic Strategy,” Moscow’s key objective is to *maintain Russia’s role as a “leading Arctic power”* (Medvedev 2008a).² According to Zysk, Russian military activity in the Far North has tangibly increased in recent years. Combined with its political assertiveness and rhetorical hostility toward the West, which was a particular feature of Vladimir Putin’s second presidential term (2004–2008),³ the intensified presence of the Russian naval and air forces operating in the region has drawn much international attention and contributed to the image of Russia as the wild card in the Arctic strategic equation (Zysk 2011: 85–86).⁴ However, in contrast to its quite frequent military exercises and harsh public diplomacy, one of the main declared priorities of Russian politics is *to keep the Arctic as a zone of peace and cooperation* (Medvedev 2008a). The reason is that Russia is a dominant actor in the Arctic (with half of its territory and a majority of its population); it can thus be considered a status quo power in the region, i.e., it is not seeking revision in the regional balance of power. Moscow needs stability in its Northern territories to guarantee the necessary level of industrial and economical development. As a status quo power, it

wants to solve disputes in this region by peaceful means, with the help of international law and international organizations, as it guarantees economic, political, and security benefits (Konyshov and Sergunin 2014a).^{5,6}

In the field of socio-economic development, the Kremlin plans to *transform the Arctic as a principal source of natural resources, which will fully meet the Russian needs, by 2020*.⁷ From this perspective, the above-mentioned status quo and stability are crucial. A potential military conflict could negatively influence the assurance of Russia's national interests (Strategia 2009). Therefore, in this case, the economic interests prevail over other intentions. Furthermore, Moscow realizes that it is very much in its interest to avoid significant militarization in the Arctic, as it needs to have good relations with Western corporations, first and foremost because of Western capital and know-how to develop its Arctic oil and gas resources.

On the other hand, Moscow has expressed its readiness to protect its interests in the Northern territories even by military force. This does not necessarily mean a change in the existing strategic balance, but rather applies to situations where some potential factor threatens Russia's security or economic development, and thus threatens the status quo (in geopolitical terms).

The Modernization of Russian Military Capabilities: A Key Factor in Maintaining the Status Quo

In a strategic context, Arctic military capabilities play a crucial role in Russia's ability to maintain its current advantages and deter potential challengers. In recent years, all Arctic countries have increased their capabilities to operate militarily in the Far North. They have also started to increase their military presences and have presented plans for additional military build-up (acquiring specific equipment capable in the polar conditions, improving military infrastructure, and increasing military forces) (for detailed information, see Annex 1). While these changes are sometimes portrayed as significant military build-ups and potential threats to security, the five littoral states are making only limited increases in their capabilities to project military power beyond their recognized national territories (Wezeman 2012).

However, this development could be perceived in Moscow as a challenge to the status quo, which is favourable to Russia.⁸ The reaction included the development of several modernization plans tailor-made for the Arctic. It includes the modernization of military hardware, but also support

capabilities and necessary infrastructure in the High North. In the vast distances of the Arctic, the maintenance of infrastructure is a necessary precondition for an effective military presence. In this context, the Ministry of Defence has announced plans to modernize its Arctic military and border patrol capabilities and to reopen its airfields and ports on the New Siberian Islands and the Franz Josef Land archipelago, which were mothballed in 1993 (Ria Novosti 2014a). In 2013, Russia also completed the reconstruction of the runway at the airport “*Rogachevo*” (“Anderma-2”), which is located on the *Gusinaya Zemlya* peninsula (part of the Novaya Zemlya archipelago), and has started to restore its airfield “Temp” on Kotelny Island near the city of Norilsk. It is also overhauling urban facilities in Tiksi, Naryan-Mar, and Anadyr. Additionally, seven airstrips on the continental part of the Arctic Circle are planned to be reopened. The location of these islands is strategic as it enables Russia to control the entire region (Muhin 2013; RT 2013).

Besides infrastructure, the Kremlin also seeks to reinforce its military. Russia emphasizes the importance of maintaining a “necessary combat potential” in the North (Medvedev 2008a). President Putin supported this statement, saying that Russia needs to use every means to protect its national interests in the region. “Next year, we have to complete the formation of new large units and military divisions (in the Arctic)” (BBC News 2013; Ria Novosti 2014c). In March 2009, the Kremlin announced a plan for a special military force to protect Arctic interests. Later on (in May 2011), it was reported that two Arctic special forces brigades had been unveiled, based at Pechenga on the Kola Peninsula. Despite the fact that the concrete status of these brigades still remains unclear, the first brigade should be the 200th Independent Motorised Rifle Brigade (200 IMRB), which was resubordinated from Ground Forces to the Russian Navy’s Northern Fleet in 2012. It should receive modernized systems and upgraded equipment suited to the polar conditions, while retaining its existing armoured vehicles and tanks. The whole process was planned to be completed by the end of 2011; however, as the Russian officials saw their limits to fulfill the proposed plans, the timetable for achieving the full readiness of the “Arctic brigades” has been extended to somewhere between 2015 and 2020. The second brigade is to be based at Arkhangelsk. This brigade’s disposition also remains to be clarified. The fundamental equipment changes (such as snow-capable vehicles) are still to be fulfilled. Each of the Arctic brigades should have about 4,000 troops, although what ultimate size, scale, composition, and

missions these new “Arctic brigades” will have will become much clearer after the complete transformation of these formations (O’Gorman 2013).⁹

According to some experts, Moscow’s legitimacy for such a plan (together with the new equipment for Russian border guards and coast guard forces) has been presented to the domestic audience as a necessity to protect its interests and borders against the US and Canada. However, there is no such threat, neither from the US nor Canada, that Moscow should fear. Therefore, it looks like more political and economic posturing than a real, cross-Arctic, rapid-intervention force capability (O’Gorman 2013).

Even more importantly, these investments will also focus on enablers as automatic systems for the constant surveillance of the furthestmost Arctic reaches, including stationary and mobile electro-optical and infrared systems, as well as meteorological, communication, and radar satellites within the space system “Arktika” (Zysk 2010).

The Air Force is perceived by Moscow as a central element in its demonstration of power. Two Tu-95MSs, based in the Saratov region at the Engels aviation base with mid-flight refuelling capability, now regularly patrol the Arctic. The Russian Air Force has a fleet of aging long- and medium-range bombers available for operations in the Arctic. The Air Force consists of 63 turbo-propelled Tu-95MSs, which are very old but remain a strategic aviation component. The Air Force further includes 18 long-range Tu-160 Blackjack bombers, as well as 80 Tu-22M Backfire medium bombers. In regards to the Russian Air Force, no credible plans to modernize the above fleet are known (Konyshchev and Sergunin 2014a).¹⁰

The NF is responsible for the protection of the Northern territories – the largest of the Russian fleets – which is stationed at several large naval and air bases on the Kola Peninsula and along the coasts of the Barents and White Seas. It plays a crucial role in securing Russian sovereignty over its part of the Arctic. The NF includes 30 nuclear-powered submarines, of which seven are nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs), protected by surface ships. Russia’s only aircraft carrier, “Admiral Kuznetsov,” is also dedicated to the NF; however, its primary role is to project power into the Atlantic Ocean and beyond. The fleet also includes 17 cruisers, destroyers, and frigates, including the flagship of the Navy, “Pyotr Velikiy”, a nuclear-powered guided missile cruiser, and 33 auxiliary vessels.

According to the latest news, 40 new ships and logistics vessels will be supplied to the NF by 2020, including six multi-role nuclear and conventional submarines, two large landing vessels, a destroyer, five frigates, five trawlers, and 21 logistics vessels. As confirmed by Fleet Commander Admiral Vladimir Korolyov, “it is planned to replenish the Northern Fleet with new vessels and upgrade those in service by 2020 as part of the state armaments program and by 2016, the amount of new equipment should reach 50 percent, by 2020, it has to rise to 85 percent” (Lenta.Ru 2014). Priority has also been given to the modernization of the Russian nuclear arsenals, including the building of Russia’s first multi-purpose nuclear submarine, the Yasen class (NATO classification *Severodvinsk*), which officially started service in 2013. An additional four Yasen-class submarines are planned to be completed by 2020 (Staalesen 2012).

Currently, Moscow is preparing a detailed plan for this new structure, which should become operational by the end of 2014 (Ria Novosti 2014b). The new command structure, “Northern Fleet - Unified Strategic Command (SF-USC),” will include the NF, Arctic warfare brigades, part of the Air Force and Air Defence units, as well as additional administrative structures. The new command will be subordinate to the Commander of the NF (Admiral Vladimir Korolev in 2014) and will be responsible for protecting Russia’s Arctic shipping and fishing, oil and gas fields on the Arctic shelf, and the country’s national borders in the North (Pettersen 2014a).

Specifics of Russian Arctic Capabilities: Icebreaker Fleet and Nuclear Deterrence

One of the crucial enablers of the NF is the unique icebreaker capability of Russia. In the geographical context and circumstances of the Arctic, icebreakers have a superior strategic importance. Icebreakers guarantee the necessary level of access to territories – without that access there is no real, but only a theoretical, capability to deploy forces or use the territory for military or economic purposes. The unique capabilities of Russia’s icebreaker fleet give it a central position in Russian strategic thinking and considerations. In this context, it is a crucial factor that Russia has the world’s largest and most powerful icebreaker fleet. At present, Rosatomflot possesses 18 icebreakers, of which six are active nuclear-powered and 12 are diesel-powered.¹¹ The Kremlin has been actively using icebreakers created mainly for the purpose of supplying and servicing the country’s Northern

settlements, including the export of natural resources and ensuring naval and civilian ship traffic across thick ice along the route (Ragner 2008).

At the moment, the icebreaker fleet is largely capable of fulfilling needs in the Russian Arctic, but while capacity is bound to diminish, the need for icebreaker services will increase as petroleum activities and transport increase in the Barents and Kara Seas. In a not-too-distant future, needs will surpass capacities (Ragner 2008). While refurbishing efforts have been made to enable the nuclear icebreakers to operate beyond their normal service life, several of the remaining icebreakers will inevitably be decommissioned within the coming decade. The icebreaker fleet is aging; therefore, under current conditions of limited funding, perhaps the highest priority is the life extension of the icebreakers.¹² Since the planning and building of a new generation of large (nuclear) icebreakers can be assumed to take at least ten years from the time a decision is made, it seems obvious that Russia's icebreaker fleet will shrink considerably before it grows again.¹³ Currently, there is only one ship under construction – the biggest nuclear-powered icebreaker, the *Arktika*, which is planned to be commissioned in 2017. This ship will be able to reach any point in the Arctic Ocean at any time of the year (Weaver 2013).¹⁴

Nuclear icebreakers remain important for the economic survival of Russia's Arctic regions, as they guarantee free naval transport through Far North territories and secure access to isolated regions. Therefore, they are a central element of the Northern Sea Route development strategy (Bukharin 2006).

Besides the icebreaker fleet, the nuclear deterrence force stationed at the bases of the Kola Peninsula should be considered Russian-specific, but in the Arctic. The Kola Peninsula hosts two-thirds of the Russian sea-based nuclear forces. However, it is necessary to underline that those forces are not useful in the case of a conventional military conflict in the High North. Their primary role is global strategic deterrence, and the only connection with the Arctic is that their home bases and parts of their operational area are located there. While not tailored for strikes in the Arctic, their presence gives very specific importance to the Russian military in general.

In this context, it is crucial to secure open access to the world's oceans and the possibility of broad operational manoeuvre for the submarine forces (unlike the ports on the Black Sea or the Baltic, which have choke points to open oceans controlled by NATO countries). Moreover, there is a relatively

developed military infrastructure that makes this region well suited for strategic naval operations, and land territories also provide a test bed for new weapons and host a range of important military installations and defence industries.

The specific importance of the Arctic is emphasized by the fact that the nuclear deterrent remains not only a key element of the Russian military strategy, but serves also as a symbol and guarantee of Russia's great power status. Maintaining strategic nuclear capabilities is, therefore, one of the highest priorities of Russia's military policies both in the North and globally (Zysk 2010; Konyshev and Sergunin 2014a). Currently, one of the main Arctic-related strategic motivations of the Kremlin is to regain status as a "world naval power," as it is declared in the National Security Strategy, and this is impossible without guaranteed access to the Atlantic Ocean (Strategia 2009).

Conclusion

Russia's growing attention to the geopolitics of the Arctic has been occasionally accompanied by rhetoric, and to some extent, an increase in northern military presence to protect Russian interests. Certainly, the two new "Arctic brigades," as well as the military infrastructure development in the High North, can be considered as an increase in Russia's Arctic presence.

While those improvements are often seen as serious in terms of military capabilities, the majority of advertised military programs have been launched to modernize current capabilities and replace decommissioned weapon systems. It means, in the best-case scenario, that they slow the gradual downsizing of armed forces. The icebreaker fleet is a cogent example of the continuously shrinking capabilities, which will not be able to maintain current levels even through the already-declared modernization plans. Altogether, these changes have little or nothing to do with power projection outside of Russian territory. Most of them are supporting border patrol capabilities and protecting national territories that have recently become more accessible.

Therefore, the Kremlin's strong announcements about the large acquisition of military capabilities are misleading and have little prospect of being completely realized (mainly for financial reasons). These "political dances" are mostly a message for domestic audiences, even though they have drawn international attention. The Russian strategic interest is to maintain the status quo, as within the current situation they have the most advantage.

Cooperation with other Arctic states is the utmost priority for Moscow, as it guarantees some level of stability and necessary know-how for economic prospects. Any change at the international platforms, which could lead to the isolation of Russia, would have dramatic consequences, as it could weaken Russia's Arctic position. As Byers notes, even though the Arctic Council was established as part of the efforts to engage Russia in the post-Cold War era, the latest developments might stir the Kremlin's biggest concern – that is, that NATO could potentially speak with one voice against Russia (Byers 2014).

Russian shortfalls in its transparency about its long-term military ambitions could also have a negative impact on the region's security and, in the end, on Moscow's strategic position as well. Russia's unclear and insufficient communication about the current status of its armed forces and modernization plans could lead to serious concerns on the part of other Arctic states. If their concerns reach a critical level, the reaction would be the further securitization of the region, in an atmosphere that currently lacks confidence-building measures.

Notes

1. Paradoxically, during the 1990s, Russia's Arctic regions were perceived by the federal government as a burden or source of various socio-economic problems rather than an economically promising region. The far Northern regions were almost abandoned by Moscow and had to rely on themselves (or foreign humanitarian assistance) for their survival (Konyshev and Sergunin 2014a).
2. Strategic document for Russian policy in the Arctic. *Osnovy gosudarstvennoi politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii v Arktike na period do 2020 goda i dalneishuiu perspektivu*, 2008, Sovet Bezopasnosti Rossiiskoi Federatsii, retrieved from <http://www.scrf.gov.ru/documents/15/98.html>, hereafter "Foundations" 2008.
3. One of the best-known examples of the assertiveness is found in a famous speech by President Putin at the 2007 Security Conference in Munich. The address, which many observers felt to be reminiscent of the Cold War, contributed to the perception of Russia as a resurgent power with an approach to international relations rooted deeply in classical realpolitik and an inherently conflictual zero-sum game (Zysk 2011). The speech was delivered on February 10, 2007, and is available at the conference's website: <http://www.securityconference.de>.

4. The military activity includes regular aircraft surveillance patrols by Russia's long-range aviation (LRA) and support aircrafts to the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. This practice was resumed in August 2007 after a fifteen-year-long pause. The increase in the activity was remarkable – 14 flights of Russian strategic bombers along the Norwegian coast in 2006; next year, in 2007, the number was 88 flights, in 2008 the number was 97 flights, and in 2009 the number slightly decreased to 75 flights (Zysk 2011). For more information, see: Pål Guttormsen, "Møter færre russerfly", Finnmarken, 3 August 2010.

5. Russia's privileged position in the Arctic is very unique, because on other borders (like Ukraine or the South Caucasus) the Kremlin doesn't have such a position, and is rather challenging the balance of power in terms of geopolitics and strategy.

6. Even though the rhetoric over the Arctic was politically charged, Russia and the other Arctic countries have been cooperating on a regular basis. The military cooperation between Russia and NATO countries, such as Norway and the US, has been a distinctive and exceptional Arctic feature. The first bilateral Russian-US exercise, "Northern Eagle," was conducted in 2004, and Norway joined these exercises in 2008. Since that time, the exercises have been held every two years in the Barents and Norwegian Seas. For more information, see: Pettersen, T. (2014b March 5). USA cancels joint exercises with Russia. Barents Observer. Retrieved from <http://barentsobserver.com/en/security/2014/03/usa-cancels-joint-exercises-russia-05-03>. However, the cooperation has been disturbed this year, when the biannual "Northern Eagle" was called off after the US announced that it would be cancelling its participation as a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Furthermore, Canada boycotted an Arctic Council Working Group meeting in Moscow. As this is the first time that an Arctic Council meeting was boycotted by one of the state members, this event remains historical in terms of Arctic cooperation. The cancellation of these events could have serious impacts on the future status of relations among the Arctic leaders. Mainly in regard to the next US chairmanship of the Arctic Council, the other littoral states might not be willing to include Russia at the negotiation table.

7. "Foundations" 2008.

8. Russian national interests and main strategies in the Arctic were formulated in the draft of the document "Foundations of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic," which was approved by the Russian Cabinet on June 14, 2001. After seven years, on September 18, 2008, President Medvedev approved the "Foundations of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic Up to and Beyond 2020," which was the first Russian post-Soviet Arctic strategy. Russia was one of the first among the

Arctic states to adopt such a document (only Norway had its official doctrine for the North in 2006). Since the Strategy-2008 was of a rather general nature, it should be specified and regularly updated by other documents. On February 20, 2013, a document titled “The Strategy for the Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation” was approved by President Vladimir Putin (Konyshhev and Sergunin 2014a). For more information, see Konyshhev, V., Sergunin, A. (2014a). *Is Russia a revisionist military power in the Arctic?* Defense & Security Analysis. Routledge.

9. Russia has several aspirations for these new military reforms, but the one that most pertains to the formation of the Arctic brigades can be found resonating in a statement from then-Russian Minister of Defence Anatoliy Serdyukov: “*All ground forces to become fully manned, permanent-readiness units.*” In practical terms, this meant the desire for the most modern equipment, the adoption of regular training, and the readiness to deploy on short notice (six to eight hours) within their areas of responsibility (O’Gorman 2013).

10. Overflights of Russian military aircraft over the Arctic fell from 500 per year during the Soviet period to only half a dozen in the 1990s and at the start of the 2000s. In 2007, Russian strategic bombers flew over the Arctic for the first time since the end of the Cold War (Konyshhev and Sergunin 2014a).

11. The primary difference between nuclear-powered and diesel-powered ships is that the former are bigger, more powerful, without almost any range limitations, and, most importantly, don’t require refuelling for several years (five to seven years) (<http://arcticjournal.com/politics/243/russia-building-largest-nuclear-ice-breaker>).

12. Icebreaker life expectancy depends on operational tempo, ice conditions, maintenance, and other factors. The expected service life is 100,000 full power hours, which corresponds to about 20 years of ship operation. Makarov et al., “The Experience of Designing and Operation of Civilian Ship Reactor Units,” *Atomnaia Energia* (September 2000): 179-189 (Bukharin 2006).

13. After the *Yamal* joined the fleet in 1993, it took 14 years until another major icebreaker – the *50 Let Pobedy* – was launched in 2007. Bigger and more powerful icebreakers of the *Arktika* class, such as the *50 Let Pobedy* and the *Yamal*, have been playing the first fiddle, as it were, since the 1970s.

14. The *Arktika* icebreaker is able to open passages through 3-metres-thick ice fields, in comparison to current icebreakers, which are able to cut through average ice fields of about 1.5-2 metres depth (Bukharin 2006).

15. Canada's current defence policy is contained in the Canada First Defence Strategy of 2008, which includes plans for investments until 2028 (Canadian Department of National Defence (DND), Canada First Defence Strategy (DND: Ottawa, 18 June 2008)). Canada's Arctic policy is specified in the government's Northern Strategy, which was released in July 2009. Canadian Government, Canada's Northern Strategy: Our North, Our Heritage, Our Future (Minister of Public Works and Government Services: Ottawa, July 2009).

16. Denmark's defence policy for the period 2010-2014 is contained in the 2009 Danish Defence Agreement, which underlines the changing geostrategic significance of the Arctic (Danish Ministry of Defence (MOD), Danish Defence Agreement 2010-2014 (MOD: Copenhagen, 24 June 2009). A special Arctic strategy was adopted in 2011 (Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Greenland Department of Foreign Affairs and Faroe Islands Foreign Service, Kongerigets Danmarks Strategi for Arktis 2011-2020 [The Kingdom of Denmark's strategy for the Arctic 2011-2020] (MFA: Copenhagen, Aug. 2011). In July 2009, the Danish Parliament approved a plan for an Arctic military command and task force to be set up by 2014 (Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Greenland Department of Foreign Affairs and Faroe Islands Foreign Service). The Arctic Military Command will merge the Greenland and Faroe Islands commands and will be headquartered in Nuuk, Greenland (ibid.)

17. Norwegian defence policy is guided by the 2007 Soria Moria Declaration on International Policy, which made the north of Norway and Svalbard a priority in national defence (Office of the Norwegian Prime Minister, "The Soria Moria declaration on international policy", 4 Feb. 2007, retrieved from <http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/smk/documents/Reports-and-action-plans/rapporter/2005/The-Soria-Moria-Declaration-on-Internati.html>; Norwegian Ministry of Defence (MOD), Norwegian Defence: Facts and Figures 2011 (MOD: Oslo, 2011), p. 30.

18. The US Arctic Policy was first presented in 1994, and then was replaced during the President Bush administration in 2009 (White House, "Arctic region policy", National Security Presidential Directive no. 66 and Homeland Security Presidential Directive no. 26, 9 Jan. 2009, retrieved from <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2009/01/20090112-3.html>). The Arctic was not mentioned at all in a January 2012 document outlining security priorities for the 21st century. Later on, in May 2013, the US published its National Strategy for the Arctic Region, retrieved from http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/nat_arctic_strategy.pdf.

The new strategy is being unveiled as the United States begins preparations to take over the rotating chairmanship of the Arctic Council (<http://www.ipsnews.net/2013/11/u-s-unveils-military-strategy-arctic/>).

19. Russia's latest Arctic military exercises took place in March 2014, when paratroopers (a 350-strong battalion) landed on the New Siberian Islands. Such an exercise was realized for the first time in Russian history (Ria Novosti 2014a).

20. The most prominent military capabilities located in the US region of the Arctic are connected with the air force base in Alaska, which are dealing with Russian far east, and – as the most recent development – there has been a build-up of anti-missile capabilities tailored to countering missile threats from northeast Asia. It means that the most important US military capabilities in the Arctic, notably in Alaska, are there to counter security threats and challenges rooted in other-than-Arctic regions. The American military capabilities directly associated with the Arctic remain limited, if we do not count the air force dealing with Russian air forces and long-range strategic bombers.

21. Norway has always played an irreplaceable role from the NATO strategic point of view. The latest NATO military exercise, "Cold Response," took place in March 2014 in Harstad (Northern Norway), which included nearly 16,000 troops from 16 different NATO countries to train in high-intensity operations in an extremely challenging cold-weather climate. As such, it improves NATO's ability to effectively fight and survive in an Arctic environment. It is believed that following the withdrawal from ISAF mission, NATO is returning to the type of winter warfare drills that were used during the Cold War. Some of the equipment (for example, winter clothes) that was specially prepared for the Afghan mountains will also be able to be used in cold Arctic weather conditions (Pettersen, T. 2014, March 21). *Exercise Cold Response in final phase*. Barents Observer, retrieved from <http://barentsobserver.com/en/security/2014/03/exercise-cold-response-final-phase-21-03>).

22. The readiness of the Russian Navy is being checked through the military exercises. In 2011, Russia conducted large-scale military exercises with its Northern Fleet, which included the only aircraft carrier, the *Admiral Kuznetsov*; the Navy's flagship nuclear-powered heavy cruiser, the *Pyotr Veliky*; and also submarines, surface vessels, ground forces, and air forces. (Pettersen, T. 2011, September 9). *Russian navy flexing muscles in Barents Sea*. Barents Observer, retrieved from <http://barentsobserver.com/en/regions/russian-navy-flexing-muscles-barents-sea>.

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Annex 1: Military Capabilities in the Arctic

Air capabilities	
Canada ¹⁵	- the Royal Canadian Air Force operates 18 CP-140 (P-3C) anti-submarine warfare (ASW) aircraft that have the range to patrol the Arctic region from their base on the east coast of Canada - they will be replaced by 10-12 new aircraft from 2020 - 80 F/A-18 combat aircraft stationed in southeast and central Canada that are regularly deployed in the Arctic region, especially to intercept Russian bombers, and are supported by seven tanker aircraft - aircraft acquisitions in recent years, such as of C-130J and C-17 transport aircraft, have been partly for Arctic missions - Joint Uninhabited Surveillance and Target Acquisition System (JUSTAS) project for six unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) for maritime and Arctic patrol - air surveillance radars in the North Warning System, which forms part of the North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD) - <i>plans to replace the F/A-18s with 65 F-35 Joint Strike Fighters (JSFs) from 2020; 17 search-and-rescue aircraft are planned to replace older C-130 and other aircraft</i>
Denmark incl. Greenland ¹⁶	- Denmark operates three unarmed maritime patrol aircraft over the Baltic Sea and off Greenland. - <i>plans for the potential deployment of F-16 combat aircraft to Greenland</i> - in the past, Danish F-16s have used Kangerlussuaq (Søndre Strømfjord) Airport in western Greenland. The renewed use of the currently dormant Thule Air Base in the northwest of Greenland has been considered - in Thule, there is the air surveillance radar, which is operated by the North Warning System and controlled by the North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD)

Norway ¹⁷	- a large proportion of the approximately 60 F-16 combat aircraft that Norway operates are based in Bodø, the main base of the Royal Norwegian Air Force. However, in November 2011, the Norwegian chief of defence recommended the closure of the air base at Bodø by 2024 and the relocation of the combat aircraft south to Ørland - Norway has decided to buy up to 56 F-35 aircraft to replace the F-16s from around 2018. However, with their limited range and lack of tanker aircraft support, F-16 and F-35 aircraft are not much use in the Arctic area outside of Norway. The bulk of what can be seen as a real Arctic capability lies with the six P-3 long-range maritime patrol aircraft. However, these are now over 20 years old and, while they are to be modernized, no plans have yet been announced for a replacement
Russia	- Russia's air assets in the Arctic region consist mainly of the aircraft supporting the Northern Fleet or stationed in northern Russia, along with some of the aircraft based with the Pacific Fleet. Many of these do not have the range for operations in the Arctic area outside Russia, but 100 navy-operated long-range Tu-22 bomber and Tu-142 and Il-38 maritime reconnaissance aircraft also form part of the fleets - after a 15-years hiatus, in 2007, Russia recommenced the regular deployment of these reconnaissance and bomber aircraft on missions near or over the Arctic
The US ¹⁸	- the military-strategic component of the US Armed Forces is the North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD), based in Alaska, which controls the North Warning System, which operates air surveillance radars in Alaska, Canada, and Greenland. NORAD is crucial for the US's strategic security. Even though it is located in the Arctic, it focuses on the global dimension of security rather than regional or strictly Arctic-rooted security challenges - the US maintains two large air bases in Alaska: Eielson Air Force Base (AFB) near Fairbanks and Elmendorf-Richardson AFB near Anchorage

	- both bases house combat and support aircraft, including F-22 interceptors and airborne early-warning (AEW) aircraft, and are able to accommodate substantially larger forces - while the US has over 200 long-range maritime patrol aircraft, only a few US Coast Guard HC-130 aircraft, based on Kodiak Island, operate over the Bering Sea and the Arctic - the US forces also have the use of Thule AFB in the northwest of Greenland, which has a long runway. It is the most northerly US air base, but it currently houses only a large intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) detection radar and no aircraft

Sources: (Wezeman 2012; Lasserre, Le Roy, and Garon 2012)

Land capabilities	
Canada	- the Canadian Rangers, a lightly-armed paramilitary force with a patrol and reconnaissance role in Northern Canada, is trained and equipped for year-round Arctic operations. Its size is being increased from 4,100 personnel in 2008 to 5,000 by 2012, and it will receive new equipment and weapons - a special small battalion-sized (500 troops) regular army unit for Arctic operations is to be set up. Since 2008, Canadian reserve forces have included an Arctic company, based in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories (NWT), which, under the Northern Strategy, is planned to have a strength of 100 by 2019 - Since the 1950s, a small military base has been located at Alert on Ellesmere Island, Nunavut, in the extreme North of Canada, facing Greenland. To improve Arctic training, a special Arctic training base was set up at Resolute Bay, Nunavut, in 2007
Denmark incl. Greenland	- the small Frømandskorps (frogman corps) special forces unit has a partly Arctic role on Greenland. Denmark also maintains a small military patrol force on Greenland, the Slædepatrulje Sirius (sledge patrol Sirius)

Norway	- Brigade Nord (Brigade North) is the largest active unit of the Norwegian Army. It is winter-trained but is organized as a heavy mechanized unit and is equipped for operations in Norway - in November 2011, the chief of defence recommended that the brigade's 2 battalions be reduced to 1 - in August 2009, the headquarters of the Norwegian Armed Forces moved from Jåttå in the south of the country to Reitan, near Bodø, just north of the Arctic Circle, and the headquarters of the Norwegian Army is even further north, in Bardufoss
Russia ¹⁹	- ground forces include naval infantry and an army brigade on the Kola Peninsula. These are winter-trained but are organized and equipped for operations in the north of Russia, not in the more inhospitable regions of the Arctic - in March 2009, Russia announced a plan for a special military force to protect its Arctic interests. In May 2011, it was reported that Russia's first Arctic special forces brigade had been unveiled, based at Pechenga on the Kola Peninsula. According to Russia, these forces "balance the situation" with NATO forces in the Arctic. The exact status of the Russian Arctic forces is unclear
The US ²⁰	- the US has not yet announced plans for a separate command to supervise military operations in the Arctic - currently, the Northern Command (USNORTHCOM), the Pacific Command (USPACOM), and the European Command (USEUCOM) all have responsibilities in the Arctic region - the US Army Alaska (USARAK), "America's Arctic Warriors", fall under the Alaskan Command (ALCOM), which is part of USPACOM - ALCOM consists of 16,000 regular personnel and 3,700 National Guard and reserve personnel - the USARAK is made up of ordinary mechanized infantry and airborne troops and is not specifically

	earmarked for Arctic operations. It has bases near Anchorage and Fairbanks - all US Army cold weather training takes place in the Northern Warfare Training Center in Black Rapids - the 1,850-strong Alaska National Guard is the most likely army component to have Arctic tasks - some other US land forces (incl. the US Marine Corps) have specific training or equipment for potential Arctic roles

Sources: (Wezeman 2012; Lasserre, Le Roy, and Garon 2012)

Sea capabilities	
Canada	- Canada's 15 major surface warships are large enough and its four conventional submarines have enough range to operate in the Arctic Ocean - the Royal Canadian Navy currently has no ice-strengthened warships. Patrolling the Arctic is mainly done by the Canadian Coast Guard, which has five large- or medium-sized unarmed icebreakers and six small icebreakers. However, most of these can only operate in the Arctic in the summer - <i>plans for six to eight large Arctic offshore patrol vessels (OPVs) for the Navy and one large icebreaker for the Coast Guard to be operational by 2017, replacing an older ship</i> - <i>the nearest naval base is at Halifax, Nova Scotia, in the far southeast of Canada. However, the existing small Coast Guard base at Nanisivik on Baffin Island, Nunavut, is being expanded in the period 2010-2015 to a naval base with docking and supply facilities</i>
Denmark incl. Greenland	- Denmark's three frigates are able to operate in Arctic waters but are not ice-strengthened (soon to be increased to five). However, four <i>Thetis</i>-class OPV/frigates, which were commissioned in the early 1990s and designed for patrols in the North Atlantic and off Greenland, are capable of breaking ice up to 1 metre thick

	- two smaller but potentially more heavily-armed ice-strengthened <i>Knud Rasmussen</i>-class OPVs are dedicated for patrols off Greenland; they were ordered in 2004 and commissioned in 2008-2009, and a third is planned for 2017 - one ice-strengthened large patrol craft also operates from Greenland - the Royal Danish Navy has a base at Kangilinnguit (Grønnedal) in the south of Greenland
Norway ²¹	- the Royal Norwegian Navy is based mainly in Bergen, in the south - in 2010, the coast guard's headquarters was moved north, to Sortland - they had replaced its five small frigates with five much larger and more capable <i>Fridtjof Nansen</i>-class frigates by early 2011. Because of their size and equipment, the new frigates are much more able to operate in Arctic waters, as are Norway's six <i>Ula</i>-class submarines - for the first time, Norway is planning to acquire a large support ship, to be in service in 2015, which will give the frigates a substantial increase in range - Norway also operates a large "research ship" with electronic and signals intelligence equipment, which is capable of operations in thin ice. A replacement was ordered in 2010 - the Norwegian Coast Guard operates four large but lightly-armed OPVs capable of operations in icy conditions, including three with a helicopter hangar, and four other large ocean-going OPVs. None of Norway's warships or patrol ships can break ice
Russia ²²	- the Northern Fleet is the largest of the five Russian fleets, stationed at several large naval and air bases on the Kola Peninsula and along the coasts of the Barents and White Seas - the fleet includes nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs), which operate in the Arctic area (including under the ice) and are protected by surface ships

	(including Russia's sole aircraft carrier), nuclear-powered submarines, and aircraft - the flagship of the Russian Navy, the <i>Pyotr Velikiy</i>, is a nuclear-powered guided missile cruiser – ten nuclear-powered submarines with ballistic missiles - The <i>Kuznetsov</i>-class heavy aircraft carrying cruiser, the <i>Admiral Kuznetsov</i>, which was launched in 1985 - a thick icebreaking capacity with the large icebreaker, the <i>50 Let Pobedy</i> - four small Project 97 icebreakers, capable of breaking thin ice - the Border Guard Service operates three Project 97P large-armed icebreaking OPVs in the Northern Fleet area - over 20 civilian icebreakers, including several former Navy ships - Russian SSBNs have become more active and in 2009 restarted operations near or under the Arctic ice. In 2009, an SSBN launched a ballistic missile after breaking through the Arctic ice. Several older SSBNs are being modernized and new SSBNs are being built. It is likely that this larger and more active SSBN fleet will lead to an increase in surface ships and aircraft - need for escorts and patrol aircraft - while announced plans or visions that foresee several aircraft carriers and large numbers of submarines and escort and support ships are unlikely to be realized due to their high costs, a substantial increase in the Northern Fleet's escort capabilities is likely - in addition, power-projection capabilities will increase with the introduction of new amphibious ships - two <i>Mistral</i>-class amphibious assault/helicopter carriers
The US	- while not specifically adapted to ice conditions, the many US aircraft carriers, other major combat ships, and amphibious warfare ships are generally capable of operating in Northern weather conditions, but none of them are permanently or partly located in the Arctic

	- the annual large Northern Edge and Alaska Shield summer exercises included an aircraft carrier group in 2004 and 2009 - the US Navy's only surface ship specifically adapted to Arctic ice conditions is the MV <i>Susitna</i>, a small experimental icebreaking ferry/landing ship - most of the approximately 53 US nuclear attack submarines (but not the SSBNs) are known to be able to operate under the Arctic ice and break through the ice from below; they regularly transit under the Arctic ice or break through the ice and surface near the North Pole - the US Pacific Fleet has a dedicated Arctic Submarine Laboratory that is responsible for developing and maintaining the Arctic capabilities of submarines - in April 2011, two US nuclear attack submarines participated in Ice Exercise (ICEX) 2011, operating under the Arctic ice. In the same exercise, a camp was established 278 nautical kilometres north of Prudhoe Bay, Alaska - the US Coast Guard regularly deploys OPVs in or near the Arctic - the new <i>Legend</i>-class large OPVs(also known as National Security Cutter, NSC) have been designed partly to be able to operate in Arctic weather conditions better than the previous <i>Hamilton</i>-class, but they are not ice-strengthened - <i>eight are planned, the first two of which were commissioned in 2010-2011</i> - the US Coast Guard operates three large, unarmed icebreakers capable of breaking Arctic ice, which have a mainly scientific role - one of the ships is being modernized in the period 2009-2013, and one has been out of service since 2010 and is scheduled for decommissioning due to budget constraints - plans for one large icebreaker under the Coast Guard in 2013-2017

Sources: Wezeman 2012; Argumenty i fakty 2014; Lasserre, Le Roy, and Garon 2012

28

Commentary

Russian Military Activities in the Arctic: Myths & Realities

Alexander Sergunin & Valery Konyshev

The outbreak of the Ukrainian crisis has spurred new accusations of Russia being an aggressive and militarist power not only in Eastern Europe but also in the Arctic (in addition to the charges brought earlier with regard to the planting of the titanium flag on the North Pole in 2007, the resumption of naval and air patrols in the region and the military modernization programs of the Russian conventional and nuclear forces deployed in the Far North). It was expected that in the wake of the crisis, Moscow would dramatically increase its military activities and presence in the region as well as accelerate its military modernization programs. Some experts paid attention to the fact that Russia's new maritime doctrine (July 2015) has identified the Arctic (along with the North Atlantic) as priority areas for the Russian Navy.

However, these alarmist expectations were not fulfilled. First of all, there was no substantial paradigmatic shift in the Kremlin's vision of the military power's role in the Arctic. As before, Moscow's military strategies aimed at three major goals: first, to demonstrate and ascertain Russia's sovereignty over the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation (AZRF), including the exclusive economic zone and continental shelf; second, to protect its economic interests in the High North; and third, to demonstrate that Russia retains its great power status and has world-class military capabilities. In a sense, the Russian military strategies are comparable with those of other coastal states (especially those of the US and Canada).

Still, some impact of the Ukrainian crisis could be seen in the increasing number and scale of the Russian military exercises in the Arctic. For example, in March 2015, Putin ordered the inspection of the Northern Fleet for combat readiness. Some 38,000 soldiers, 3,360 vehicles, 41 naval vessels,

15 submarines and 110 aircraft were involved in the inspection. In August, more than 1,000 soldiers, 14 aircraft and 34 special military units took part in drills on the Taymyr Peninsula (northern Siberia).

However, it should be noted that the March combat readiness inspection was a response to NATO's preceding drill in Norway, which involved 5,000 troops, the largest military exercise on the NATO northern flank since 1967. As for the August exercise, according to the Northern Fleet's Commander, Admiral Vladimir Korolev, this exercise was purely defensive as it was done more than 3,000 kilometres away from the Norwegian border and was directed to protect the economic security of the AZRF (to prevent poaching, smuggling, illegal migration as well as to conduct search and rescue operations) rather than to plan any offensive moves.

So far, Russia has responded to NATO's moves with more rhetoric than action in the Arctic, notes Andreas Østhagen, an Arctic policy expert with the Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies. In contrast with the Baltic Sea region, where the NATO-Russian tensions have obviously increased over the last year, "The situation in the High North is close to normal compared to the activity of the last years," the head of the Norwegian Joint Command Headquarters, Lt. Gen. Morten Haga Lunde, believes. "This is in spite of the tense situation that has evolved between Russia and NATO."

According to official numbers from the Norwegian Joint Command Headquarters, there had been 43 scrambles and 69 identifications in the international airspace outside the coast of Norway in 2014. In 2013, there were 41 scrambles and 58 identifications, and in 2012, there were 41 scrambles and 71 identifications. The numbers are considerably lower than during the 1980s, when there could be as many as 500 to 600 identifications per year.¹

There was no dramatic increase in Russia's naval and air patrolling of the North Atlantic and Arctic in 2014-2015. Moreover, after two catastrophes with the Tu-95 strategic bombers (Summer 2015), their flights were suspended for a while.

Russia's military modernization programs in the Far North were implemented according to schedule. However, some Western military analysts tried to represent the deployment of the Pantsir-S1 short-range air defence system on the Kola Peninsula, plans to replace the S-300 long-range air defence system with a more advanced S-400 "Growler" system, tactical training for fighter jet pilots in Arctic conditions, sea trials of nuclear

submarines (most of which are designed for deployment to the Pacific Fleet), and plans to establish 16 deep-water ports, 10 search and rescue stations, 10 air defence radar stations, and 13 airfields along its Arctic periphery as evidence of Russia's growing military ambitions in the High North.

These experts tend to ignore the fact that the Soviet-time military machine has significantly degenerated in the 1990s and early 2000s, and that the Russian conventional and nuclear forces badly need modernization to effectively meet new challenges and threats.

To reorganize in a more efficient way, the Russian land forces in the Western part of the AZRF had plans to transform the motorized infantry and marine brigades located near Pechenga (the Murmansk region) to the Arctic special force unit, with soldiers trained in a special program and equipped with modern personal equipment for military operations in the Arctic. The Arctic brigade should be operational by 2016. There were also plans to create another Arctic brigade somewhere in the Arkhangelsk region. All conventional forces in the AZRF should form an Arctic Group of Forces (AGF) to be led by the joint Arctic command (to be established in 2017).

However, the Ukrainian crisis has made adjustments to Russia's military planning. While two Pechenga-based brigades were left in place, the Arctic brigade was surprisingly created ahead of schedule (in January 2015) and deployed in Alakurtti, which is close to the Finnish-Russian border. Another surprise was that given the "increased NATO military threat" in the North, President Putin has decided to accelerate the creation of the new strategic command "North," which was established in December 2014 (three years ahead of schedule). It was also announced that the second Arctic brigade will be formed in 2016 and will be stationed in the Yamal-Nenets autonomous district (east of the Ural Mountains in the Arctic Circle).

Another interesting structural change is the ongoing reorganization of the Russian Coast Guard (part of the Federal Security Service (FSS), successor of the KGB). Now the Coast Guard has a wide focus in the Arctic: in addition to the traditional protection of biological resources in the Arctic Ocean, oil and gas installations and shipping along the Northern Sea Route are among the agency's new top priorities. For this purpose, the FSS has established two new border guard commands: one in Murmansk for the western AZRF regions, and one in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky for the eastern Arctic regions.

There are plans to equip the Coast Guard in the AZRF with the brand new vessels of Project 22100. The *Okean*-class ice-going patrol ship, the *Polyarnaya Zvezda* (*Polar Star*), is currently undergoing sea trials in the Baltic Sea. Vessels of this class can break up to 31.4 inches-thick ice. They have an endurance of 60 days and a range of 12,000 nautical miles at 20 knots. They are equipped with a Ka-27 helicopter and can be supplied with Gorizont UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles).

The attention that Russia pays now to the Coast Guard is in line with what other coastal states do (especially Norway and Denmark).

To conclude, serious international experts do not see any particular alarming trends in Russia's military behaviour in the Arctic in the aftermath of the Ukrainian crisis. According to the former Commander of the US Coast Guard and current US State Department Special Representative to the Arctic, Admiral Robert J. Papp, "Everything we have seen them doing so far [i.e., Russia], is lawful, considered and deliberative. So we'll just continue monitoring it and not overreact to it." Papp noted that all countries have a responsibility to be able to provide search and rescue capabilities and navigation assistance in the area, and Russia seems to be investing in that.²

Notes

1. T. Pettersen (2014, December 19). Stable Russian Air Activity in the North. *Barents Observer*. Available from <http://barentsobserver.com/en/security/2014/12/stable-russian-air-activity-north-19-12>.
2. Radio Sweden (2015, 22 May). New Security Landscape in the Arctic. Available from <http://www.adn.com/article/20150522/new-security-landscape-arctic>.

29

Russian Air Patrols in the Arctic: Are Long-Range Bomber Patrols a Challenge to Canadian Security and Sovereignty?

Frédéric Lasserre & Pierre-Louis Têtu

Western, and especially Canadian, media reported, especially during the period of 2007-2011, a significant number of Russian air patrols in the Arctic. These patrols were often described as potential threats to Canadian security and sovereignty. However, a comparative analysis of the frequency of Russian air patrols in the Arctic and in other areas of operation attest to the rather low level of activity of the Russian Air Force. This suggests that the narrative about the would-be Russian air threat reflects either misinformation or an oriented political discourse.

The Canadian media reported, especially during the period of 2007-2011, a large number of Russian air patrols in the Arctic. The narrative of these reports, as well as of the Canadian government at the time, depicted these patrols as threats to Canadian security and to Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic. How did the level of activity of Russian bombers in the Canadian Arctic compare with other regions, and to what extent did these patrols represent a threat to Canadian sovereignty?

In 2007, Russia resumed bomber patrols in the Arctic after several years of absence following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. This resumption came at around the same time as the flag episode in 2007, when a Russian submarine planted a Russian flag right at the North Pole on the sea floor, thus triggering a storm of outraged comments from Canadian officials. The Russian government readily admitted to the apparent sharp increase in its air patrol activity, explaining that its air force needed training

just like any other country. These patrols, it argued, are routine exercises that maintain the readiness of its air force in the area.

Indeed, the resumption of Russian bomber patrols in the Arctic was paralleled by an increase of activity in other areas, notably in the North Atlantic, the Western Pacific, the Black Sea and the Baltic. Activity increased again in 2014, with the advent of the Ukrainian conflict. Yet there remained a certain degree of uncertainty as to what this Russian aggressiveness or assertiveness meant. British Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond said in December 2014 that he was concerned with “the extremely aggressive” probing of Britain’s airspace by Russian military aircraft, after a series of interceptions off the Scottish coast. Hammond had previously said that the sharp increase in such activity in recent years was because of a Kremlin military overhaul that “had been overlooked by many” (Euronews, 2015).

However, an analysis of the Canadian government’s discourse demonstrates that the rhetoric of a threat to Canadian security and sovereignty may not have been justified. The analysis of Russian air patrol patterns close to the Canadian Arctic hints at a low air activity in the Arctic, in contrast to other regions where the Russian Air Force’s activity is much more sustained.

Are these Russian air patrols in the Arctic a real threat to Canadian security and sovereignty in the region? Or is it a media fantasy, one that hastily conflated rhetoric that was triggered by the Russian flag episode with the resumption of Russian military activity, so as to forge an image of a threatening and posturing Russia? In other words, was the discourse about the threat from Russian bomber patrols warranted by the actual levels of air activity, and was this activity comparable to or higher than in other regions? An analysis of Russian patrol patterns and comparisons of Russian air patrol activity levels serve as the basis for this analysis.

Russian Air Patrols in the Arctic

In August 2007, Russia resumed long-range bomber patrols over the Arctic, and on July 14, 2008, the country announced that it would resume surface patrols of the Arctic waters with its Northern Fleet units (Huebert, 2009; Sergunin & Konyshchev, 2015). Both of these patrolling activities had been suspended following the conclusion of the Cold War. The bomber patrols were deemed controversial by some Western experts, after patrols approached Canada, Alaska and the United Kingdom (UK) as well as Norway’s central command at Bodø (Kefferpütz, 2010). Most of these

patrols were intercepted, but they often made headlines in Canada and the UK (for instance, CNN, 2008; Blanchfield, 2009; Scotsman, 2010; see Lasserre et al., 2013; Landriault, 2013).

Foreign governments, analysts and the media, have, ever since the planting of a Russian flag at the bottom of the Arctic Ocean at the North Pole in 2007, often described Russian manoeuvres, discourse and defence programs as jingoistic, if not bluntly belligerent (Lasserre et al., 2013). In the frame of this reportedly tension-ridden Arctic region, Russia published a new Arctic Strategy (2008).¹ Several analysts were prompt to underline the reportedly bellicose assertions found within this document. James Kraska reported that, “in a language reminiscent of the hand-wringing over bipolar measurements concerning the U.S.-Soviet ‘coalition of forces’ in the 1970s, Moscow’s new strategy states that Arctic resources will become the ‘critical point for the world military balance’” (Kraska, 2009: 1117). Kimberly Gordy established a link between the Russian planting of a flag at the North Pole in 2007, the sending of bomber patrols towards the Canadian Arctic (“over the Canadian Arctic”, 565 (*sic*)) and the publication of the Russian Arctic Policy as proof of Russia’s aggressive posturing and “disregard for Canadian security and environmental interests” (Gordy, 2010: 564). In February 2015, Admiral Bill Gortney, Commander of US Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) and North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD), said that Russian military aircraft have been spotted more frequently, close to US and Canadian territory in the Arctic. “They’ve been very aggressive”, he said, “aggressive in the amount of flights, not aggressive in how they fly”, without giving figures (LaGrone, 2015) (see Figures 1, 2).

In this vein, interceptions of Russian long-range bomber patrols in the Arctic have fuelled comments from academics (Tayloe, 2015; Lackenbauer & Lajeunesse, 2016) and Canadian officials from 2008 onwards, especially up to 2010 (Genest & Lasserre, 2015). As Prime Minister Harper specified in 2008, “We’re concerned about Russia’s testing of Canadian airspace and other indications, and certainly Russian actions in other parts of the world, which may indicate some desire to work outside of the international framework. And that’s obviously why we’re taking a range of measures including military measures to strengthen our sovereignty in the North” (Akin, 2008). Then, in 2009, Harper remarked that “I have expressed [...] the deep concern our government has with increasingly aggressive Russian actions around the globe and Russian intrusions into our airspace” (CBC News, 2009).

Figure 29-1: An F-15 Eagle fighter intercepting a Tu-95 bomber near Alaska.



Photo courtesy of NORAD Public Affairs: www.norad.mil/Newsroom/tabid/3170/Article/578117/norad-intercepts-russian-aircraft.aspx

Figure 29-2: A CF-18 Hornet fighter intercepting a Tu-95 bomber near the Canadian Arctic coastline.



Source: Canadian Department of National Defence, with permission.

Former Canadian Minister of Defence, Peter MacKay, hinted in 2008 that Russian bomber patrols could infringe on Canadian airspace: “‘When we see a Russian bear approaching Canadian air space, we meet them with an F-18,’ said MacKay, referring to Arctic patrol flights by Russian bombers ‘we remind them that this is Canadian air space, that this is Canadian sovereign air space, and they turn back’” (Vancouver Sun, 2008). In February 2009, the media reported that “two Russian military bombers came close to breaching northern Canadian airspace on the eve of U.S. President Barack Obama’s visit here last week, Defence Minister Peter MacKay revealed” (Chase, 2009).

Peter MacKay again talked in 2010 about Canadian fighter jets that “scrambled ” to intercept and “repel” Russian bombers before they could enter Canadian airspace (Pugliese, 2010). In 2010, after another Russian bomber patrol was intercepted by Canadian fighters, Prime Minister Harper underlined that “Thanks to the rapid response of the Canadian Forces, at no time did the Russian aircraft enter Canadian sovereign airspace”, implying that had Canadian CF-18s not intervened quickly, the Russian bombers would have violated Canadian airspace (Ibbitson, 2010). Later, Defence Minister MacKay admitted that Russian bombers did not enter Canadian airspace: “‘They were in the buffer zone’, said MacKay, stressing that although the planes did not enter Canada’s sovereign airspace, the bombers did come inside the 300 nautical mile zone that Canada claims”² (*sic*) (Lilley, 2010).

Foreign Affairs Minister Lawrence Cannon underlined that “when an issue of national importance is raised at the Arctic Council, our government does, and always will, stand up for our interests and ownership over the Arctic. This is why we react so strongly when other nations, like Russia, engage in exercises and other activities that appear to challenge our security in the North” (Cannon, 2009).

Did the Russian Patrols Represent Real Threats?

Mostly Tu-95 Bear bombers, and at times Tu-160s from Russian strategic airbases (Figure 3), came close to the Canadian Arctic, according to media articles and defence reports (U.S. Northern Command, 2015; Stadnyk, 2015). Russian bomber patrols were depicted by media reports and government declarations as challenges to Canadian sovereignty and security (Genest & Lasserre, 2015).³ Was their behaviour typical of a challenging would-be foe?

This willingness to publicize the Russian patrols in the Arctic contrasts with the Canadian government's historical practice of managing communications regarding the risk of intrusion into the Arctic area (Teeple, 2010). These incidents, true or fantasied, were typically wrapped in secrecy and a desire to not address them publicly. The identification of the nationality of the actor at the source of these actions was also to be avoided (Landriault, 2013). The contrast between the high-profile communications about Russian bomber patrols in recent years, and the secrecy surrounding the other reported cases of intrusion, suggests that there may be a specific communications strategy with respect to these declarations regarding the Russian air threat.

First, most pictures reportedly taken during the interceptions of Russian Tu-95 or Tu-160 bombers by American or Canadian fighter planes show that the Russian planes flew at high altitudes (Hickley & Williams, 2007; Baev, 2009; Lasserre et al., 2013) and were thus not trying to evade detection nor interception. Besides, they may have borne no weapons, as all of the pictures depicting interceptions by NORAD planes show the Tu-95 or Tu-160 bearing no missiles on the wing pods. However, nothing can be said about the bomb bays for both the Tu-95s and the Tu-160s, as they were kept closed.

Second, although the increased Russian air and naval activity since 2007 is impressive when compared to the long period of decay in the Russian armed forces following the collapse of the Soviet Union, it is far below the average Cold War levels (Zysk, 2011; Lasserre et al., 2013). The resumption of Arctic patrols may therefore be interpreted more in terms of the desire not to lose operational capacity and, above all, as a political tool designed to display capability, rather than the sign of a renewed aggressiveness in the Arctic (Henrotin, 2011; Zysk, 2011; Konyshchev & Sergunin, 2014; Wilson Rowe & Blakkisrud, 2014; Roberts, 2010; 2015). NORAD spokesman Lt. Desmond James explained in 2010 that “both Russia and NORAD routinely exercise their capability to operate in the North. These exercises are important to both NORAD and Russia and are not cause for alarm” (CBC News, 2010b).

Third, except for on a few occasions, Russian bombers fly unescorted by fighter planes, thus being easy targets for intercepting fighter jets from American or Canadian bases. Exceptions may occur, but rarely, as happened on September 18, 2014 (thus after the onset of the Ukrainian crisis), when American F-22s intercepted two Russian Tu-95 bombers, two refuelling

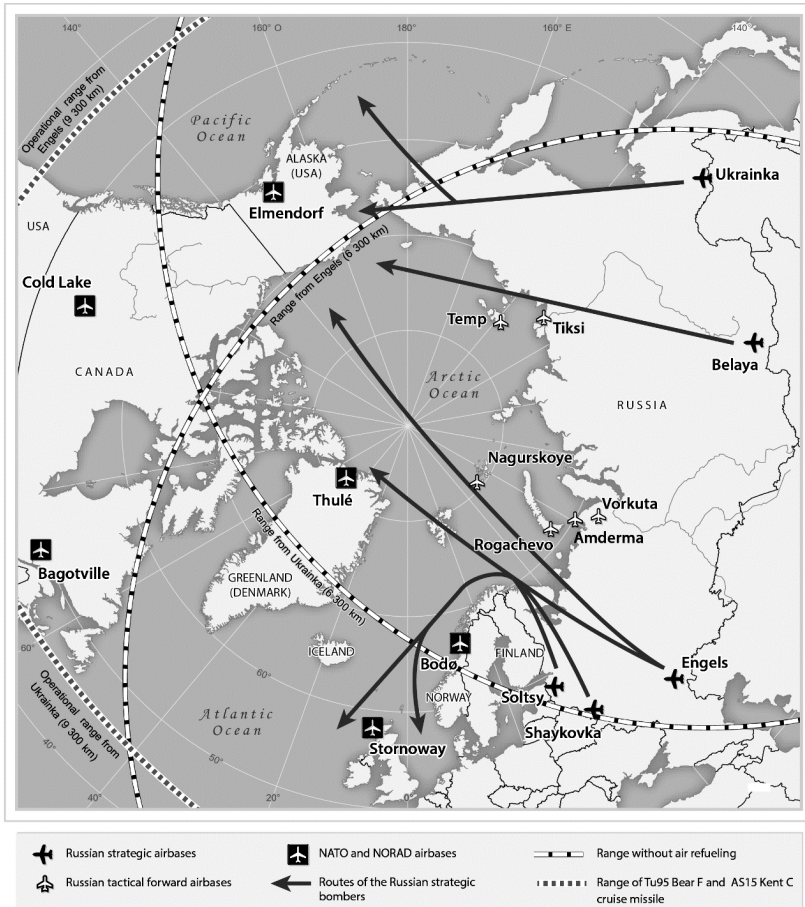


Figure 29-3: Location of Russian strategic airbases and routes of bomber patrols. *Source:* adapted from Le Roy, 2010.

tankers and two MiG-31 interceptors above the Beaufort Sea. The same day, Canadian CF-18s intercepted Tu-95 Bears 75 kilometres off Canada’s Arctic coast (CBC News, 2014).

Finally, Defence Minister MacKay’s assertions in 2008 and 2009 about Russian bombers coming close to violating Canadian airspace were questioned by US General Gene Renuart, Commander of US NORTHCOM/North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD) from 2007-2010, when he declared in February 2009 that “the Russians have conducted themselves professionally; they have maintained

compliance with the international rules of airspace sovereignty and have not entered the internal airspace of either of the countries” (Chase, 2009). It appears that the Canadian jets intercepted the Russian Tu-95 bombers 190 kilometres northeast of Tuktoyaktuk, NWT, on February 18, 2009. They had not entered Canadian airspace but did stray into a zone of international airspace under Canada’s monitoring and control (Chase, 2009). Other media reports and government declarations also underline that the Russian bombers never entered Canadian nor American airspace (Lilley, 2010; CBC News, 2010 quoting Defence Minister MacKay himself; Stadnyk, 2015; US Northern Command, 2015).

The buffer zone is an airspace where traffic is monitored; sometimes called the ADIZ (Air Defence Identification Zone), it is where air traffic is monitored for security objectives but not controlled (Figure 4). It seems that the media often confuse this buffer zone or the ADIZ with the actual sovereign airspace (US Northern Command, 2015), which extends only 12 miles beyond the coast. Russian bombers have been known to enter the Canadian or the American ADIZ, as they extend much farther offshore, or, in Europe, into the “Flight Information Region” (RAF, 2015) or the “area of interest” (Sky News, 2015). “State aircraft of sovereign nations are not required to file flight plans into the ADIZ” (Stadnyk, 2015), thus Russian bomber patrols do not breach any international law. Russia declared they often field flight plans and thus warned ahead of their coming into the vicinity of Alaska and Arctic Canada. This was, however, denied by the Canadian government (CBC News, 2009).

The 1944 Chicago Convention posits that “the contracting States recognize that every State has complete and exclusive sovereignty over the air-space above its territory” (Article 1); Article 2 adds that “For the purposes of this Convention, the territory of a State shall be deemed to be the land areas and territorial waters adjacent thereto under the sovereignty, suzerainty, protection or mandate of such State” (ICAO, 1944; Pépin, 1956) – thus customarily defined as within 12 nautical miles (nm). Despite the fact that Article 3 specifies that the Convention is applicable to civil aircraft only, no state challenged the interpretation as to what constitutes the sovereign airspace (Kish & Turns, 1995). Violating the actual airspace with military planes is a serious international offence (actually, an act of war), and it is likely that if the Russian bombers had actually done so, diplomatic language would have been much coarser.

Whereas the Russians seem to have been cautious not to violate sovereign airspace, the very fact of not filing flight plans in advance, a practice now apparently commonplace, is heavily disruptive of civilian air traffic, probably moreso in dense European areas than in the Canadian Arctic. Along with scrambling interceptors, controllers neutralize a large portion of airspace to avoid collisions (National Post, 2015; RT News, 2015). When such an operation takes place in the North Sea, or, even worse, in the English Channel, the delays to civilian flights are numerous.

A Different Pattern in Eastern Europe Since 2014

This behaviour near the Canadian and American Arctic, or the North Atlantic, is in sharp contrast to the Russian air forces' behaviour close to Japan, or in the Black or Baltic Seas, especially since the onset of the political crisis in Ukraine in March 2014. The number of intercepts in the airspace close to Japan are much more numerous (see Table 2), as are the intercepts in the European theatres of operation. In Europe, Russian patrols display a larger variety of planes, such as tactical bombers like the Su-24 Fencers or Su-25 Frogfoots, along with the strategic long-range bombers witnessed in the Arctic, but also fighter planes like the Su-27 Flankers and Su-35 Flanker-Es or the MiG-29 Fulcrum. These are either escorting the bombers or flying alone in patrols and obviously carrying weapons, and occasionally briefly violating the actual airspace of Finland, Latvia or Sweden (Siminski, 2013; Défens-Aéro, 2013; Deutsche Welle, 2014; Libération, 2014), or flying along the limit of a neighbour's airspace in a provocative way (Le Monde, 2015). Similarly, reports hint at the fact that since 2014, Russian bombers have been known to carry ordnance (Barents Observer, 2015), and Russian planes often fly with their transponders off or without flight plans (NATO, 2014; Financial Times, 2015; Huberdeau, 2015), something that was never reported about Russian bomber patrols near the North American Arctic. Besides, the different nature of the planes involved is also a clue to the different behaviour: a Su-27 fighter jet is a more effective tool to probe reactions and adopt aggressive behaviour than a slow and defenceless Tu-95 bomber.

However, media or research reports are not always clear as to whether they are talking about sovereign airspace violations, or incursions of Russian warplanes into monitored airspace. In Conley and Rohloff (2015), a long paragraph mixes reports of sovereign airspace violations, scrambles to intercept Russian warplanes and the tracking of Russian planes flying into NATO-surveyed airspace, which are three different concepts. For instance,

British media accounts mention that Russian warplanes were intercepted in 2010 within the British sovereign airspace: “Eventually the Russians *left* UK airspace and, after four hours, the Tornado crews stood down and returned to Leuchars [airbase]” (STV News, 2010). The webpage also mentions that interceptions “over British airspace” occurred 20 times in 2009, whereas in another account, a spokesperson from the British Ministry of Defence rather mentions that the “Russian military flights have never entered UK sovereign airspace without authorization” (Sky News, 2014).

The crowded airspace, and the common borders of NATO countries with Russia in Eastern Europe, provides for more opportunities for aggressive behaviour and airspace violations. For example, military traffic between mainland Russia and the Kaliningrad enclave is authorized and is common practice. It usually uses an authorized corridor in the Lithuanian airspace. Deviations from this corridor, intentional or not, are common.⁴ NATO deploys an air policing mission on a permanent basis – voluntary member states usually provide a patrol of four fighters in turns. Scrambles to intercept incoming Russian military aircrafts are frequent, and the behaviour of Russian fighter and fighter-bomber pilots is occasionally described as “aggressive”. It seems that live ammunition is sometimes carried, however with targeting radars switched off. Tension, aggressiveness and airspace violations seem to be much more common occurrences along Russia’s borders in Eastern Europe, especially since the Ukrainian crisis in 2014, than in the Arctic.

Besides, the Russian authorities assert that there has been a similar increase in NATO air activity in recent years. Russia protested over a reported sharp increase of NATO air patrols close to its borders (WSJ, 2014). “US RC-135 reconnaissance aircraft carry out flights almost daily,” said Col. Gen. Viktor Bondarev, Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Air Force. “In 2014, more than 140 RC-135 flights have taken place compared to 22 flights in 2013.” Bondarev also said that NATO surveillance flights over the Baltic Sea and the Barents Sea have grown to 8 to 12 a week, and NATO tactical flights (fighters, tactical bombers) have doubled from 2013 to about 3,000 flights (LaGrone, 2014).

Russian Warplane Patrols: A Marginal Phenomenon in the Arctic

Comparing the frequency of Russian bomber patrols approaching the North American airspace to the frequency in other airspaces such as Japan’s, Norway’s or those in Eastern Europe also helps put the phenomenon into

perspective. Of course, there is no official databank for such events, and collecting the data to make up a comparison relies on partial data, figures gathered from governmental reports, media accounts fuelled by government notices, research reports and newspaper reports. The image thus drawn should not be interpreted as constituting absolute figures, but rather as a way to compare the magnitude of Russian military planes' patrols close to different airspaces.

Regehr (2013) reminds us that "U.S. NORAD fighters were scrambled 1518 times between 1989 and 1992; 111 times in Alaska." 7.3% of these fighter scrambles were therefore in Alaska. More recent figures show a different picture for the Arctic, with rather low figures of activity, especially when compared to other regions.

We set up an analysis so as to track statistics about the occurrence of Russian air military patrols in the Canadian Arctic, and compare these figures with other areas such as Norway, the North Sea, the Baltics and the Sea of Japan. This research is exploratory as there is no unified source for such data: some governments regularly publish figures, some occasionally do; some figures are at times made public by military organizations like NORAD or NATO, and some figures are proxies built up from media occurrences when no official figure is to be found. It must thus be emphasized that figures from Tables 1 and 2 are not to be taken as absolute figures, but as orders of magnitude.

What Can be Inferred from this Data?

First, indeed there has been a sudden onset in the occurrence of Russian bomber patrols in the air zones close to Arctic Canada in 2007, after years of little activity in the wake of the collapse of the Cold War. Figures from Huebert, Viel and NORAD all underline this fact (see Table 1), and for 2014, do point to another increase in the occurrence of the phenomenon. It must be underlined that this renewed activity is not new, but a resumption of something that was routine during the Cold War.

Second, whether from the analysis of media accounts or from official reports in other areas (Table 2), it appears that the intercepts conducted in the North American Arctic are not numerous: the numbers are modest compared to the intercepts routinely performed in the Barents Sea area by the Norwegian Air Force, in the North Sea by the Royal Air Force, by the Japanese Air Force, or even generally in the Baltics or the European area. NORAD/USNORTHCOM Commander Gortney asserted in 2015 that

the figures had steeply expanded but did not give any specific numbers (LaGrone, 2015). We have found that it went from an average of five over the period 2009-2014, to ten in 2014 (implying a recalculated average of about four over the period 2009-2013). It is a significant increase, although remaining at moderate levels, and it remains to be seen how it evolves over time.

Third, the level of activity by the Russian air force is by no means comparable to the level of activity that took place during the Cold War era. In the airspace close to Lithuania, figures for 1992-1995 (Table 2) are much larger than the present levels of activity, despite the recent surge in Russian air patrols. Similarly, in the airspace around northern Norway, according to official numbers from the Norwegian Joint Command Headquarters, “there had been 43 scrambles and 69 identifications in international air space outside the coast of Norway in 2014. In 2013 there were 41 scrambles and 58 identifications, and in 2012 there were 41 scrambles and 71 identifications. The numbers are considerably lower than during the 1980s, when there could be as many as 500 to 600 identifications per year” (Sergunin, 2015); another figure puts the number of the total Norwegian scrambles at 471 in 1984 (Robertson, 1988: 131). Around Japan, global figures for scrambles during the Cold War (depicted as largely implying Soviet warplanes) stood at 798 for 1978, 783 for 1980, 929 for 1982 (*ibid.*) and 944 for 1984 (Nishihara, 1987: 163), again considerably above present-day levels. If Japan’s air force scrambled 943 times in 2014, it is not only to intercept Russian warplanes, but also those of North Korea and China (Japanese Ministry of Defense, 2015; RNZ, 2015).

Fourth, since 2014 and the onset of the Ukrainian crisis, the number of intercepts has increased significantly, but again much more so in Europe (the Baltic area, Black Sea area and to a more limited extent in the North Sea, by the Royal Air Force) than in the Arctic, where there is a definite but modest increase in activity (Table 2).

These figures highlight that the level of military activity near the North American Arctic involving Russian planes is by no means comparable to the level observed in other areas, whether it be the Sea of Japan, the Baltics, the Black Sea, the North Sea or the Barents Sea. The intercepts resumed in 2007 and increased in 2014 as a probable consequence of renewed tension because of the Ukrainian crisis, but the figures do not hint at a real pressure from the Russian air force towards the NORAD area of operations.

Observations: What Threats do These Patrols Imply?

Just as there appears to be a pattern of discourse in the Canadian media regarding the interception of Russian bomber patrols in the Arctic (Landriault, 2013; Genest & Lasserre, 2015), several media articles underlined the Russian decision to open Arctic air force bases from 2012 onwards (Barents Observer, 2013b; CASR, 2014). Canada's Conservative government banked once again on numerous bomber patrols in Summer 2014 in order to renew the idea that Canada's sovereignty was threatened in the Arctic: "We are deeply concerned, and we are determined to promote and defend the sovereignty of Canada in the Arctic," asserted then-Foreign Minister John Baird in August (RT News, 2014).

[For original tables listing the number of intercepts of Russian warplanes by NATO fighters from 1992-2014, see the original article at https://arcticyearbook.com/images/yearbook/2016/Scholarly_Papers/11.Lasserre-and-Tetu.pdf.]

The Russian airbases used for these patrols are usually former bases that were abandoned in the years following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, part of the 11 forward bases that the USSR had built in the High Arctic (Åtland, 2011). Moscow does not intend to open new bases but to repair, and make operational, airstrips from these old airbases (Air International, 2013) (Figure 3). The Russian government intended to create a stir when, in September 2012, the media reported that Russia was deploying MiG-31 squadrons to such an airfield in Novaya Zemlya (Barents Observer, 2012). However, news quickly emerged that Russia had hesitated because the permanent forward deployment of such planes was likely to be costly (Barents Observer, 2013). It is not yet clear if these bases are going to be used year-round.

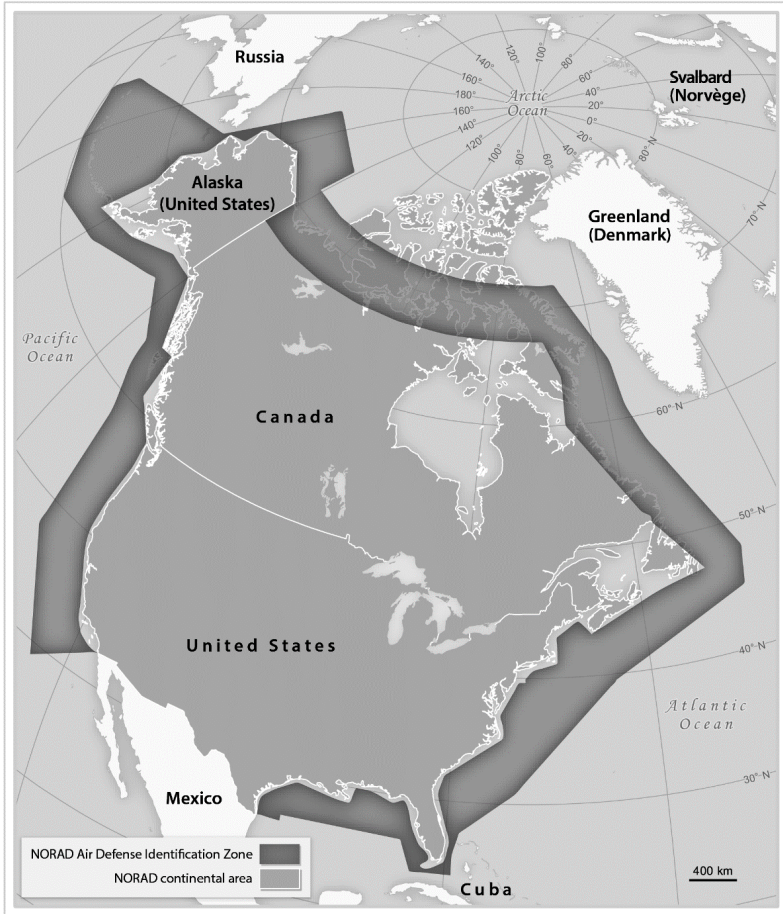
Regehr hinted in 2013 that a hidden motive of the Canadian fighter dispatches to the Arctic is to wave the flag. He quoted a Canadian Defence Department's description of an April 2006 flight of two CF-18 fighter aircraft dispatched on an Arctic patrol; an objective was for the planes to be seen by as many Northerners as possible, and the aircraft were flown over as many settlements as possible (Regehr, 2013). Dispatching powerful fighter jets to fly in Arctic areas was part of the government's narrative in defending their decision in favor of the F-35, and in promoting the general idea that the government was strong in the defence of a threatened Canadian sovereignty (Roussel & Perreault, 2009; Lasserre et al., 2013; Regehr, 2013; Genest & Lasserre, 2015), as the jets would prove to be "an extremely

effective deterrent against challenges to Canadian sovereignty” (Government of Canada, 2010). However, the Canadian ADIZ does not extend over the Canadian Arctic Archipelago (Figure 4). The official reason for this is that the Canadian ADIZ is part of the continental ADIZ, an “area encircling the continental land mass of Canada and the U.S., established to facilitate NORAD’s efforts to monitor the approaches to North America. It is primarily within this zone that the identification, location and control of [...] unauthorized aircraft are performed in the interest of national security” (Duval, 2009). The map however conveys the idea that the threat level for Canadian sovereignty is low. Indeed, there is little air surveillance in this remote part of Canada’s territory. The contrast between the light monitoring of military movements over the Canadian archipelago and the strong rhetoric of the need to quickly dispatch powerful fighter jets to defend a much-threatened Canadian sovereignty is intriguing.

Notwithstanding the energetic promises from Canada’s Conservative Prime Minister, his Foreign Minister, and his Defence Minister to stand up to Russian bombers, in 2010, the House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence underlined in its report on Canada’s Arctic sovereignty that “there is no immediate military threat to Canadian territories either in or ‘through’ the Arctic” (Parliament of Canada, 2010). In 2011, the Senate Defence Committee came to the same conclusion: “The question remains, is there a military threat to Canada in the Arctic? The consensus of witnesses was that there is not, in the sense of an imminent or even foreseeable peril” (28). The head of the Joint Task Force (North) told the Committee, “There is no conventional threat and therefore we are not arming ourselves in preparation for an attack from any country. The likelihood of an attack in the High Arctic is as likely as an attack in downtown Toronto” (Senate of Canada, 2011: 28). This analysis was confirmed in 2016 by Rear Admiral Bishop: “While the geographic and geopolitical landscape is complex and rapidly evolving, there is currently no military threat to Canada in the Arctic” (Standing Committee on National Defence, 2016).

The Russians are doing what they have done for decades, and that is flying in international airspace near the Canadian and American airspaces to show their presence, train their pilots and test North American reactions. The Canadian and American militaries also “scramble” their fighter jets, displaying Canada’s and the US’s presences, thus training their own pilots and testing response times, with a view towards not giving too much information away on their own speed of reaction (Regehr, 2015). A NORAD spokesperson confirmed in fact that while the incidence of flights

Figure 29-4: American and Canadian ADIZ under NORAD coordination



Credit: Pierre-Louis Têtu. Sources: United States: <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2003-title14-vol2/pdf/CFR-2003-title14-vol2-chapI-subchapF.pdf>; Canada: www.navcanada.ca/EN/products-and-services/Documents/DAH_Current_EN.pdf

had indeed increased, they remained “in keeping with the mission of routine training and exercises” (Kreft, 2014; Regehr, 2015), even after the 2014 Ukrainian crisis, as most of the increased air activity is taking place in Europe. For the United States, the Arctic is under US NORTHCOM’s area of responsibility, but it is not a priority (Charron, 2015). As NORAD underlined in 2010, “both Russia and NORAD routinely exercise their

capability to operate in the North. These exercises are important to both NORAD and Russia and are not cause for alarm” (CBC News, 2010b).

Attesting to the low level of threat attached to the Russian bomber patrols close to the NORAD area, a few papers even hint at the idea that the American or Canadian air forces do not even systematically scramble fighter aircrafts to intercept them. In May 2015, a media account mentioned that in 2014, “only 6 out of 10 incursions saw U.S. or Canadian aircraft intercept Moscow’s long-range attack aircraft”. In April 2015, similarly, “two Russian Tu-95 Bear H bombers flew into the U.S. ADIZ, in what was the first such incursions since the beginning of the year: pretty routine, except that no U.S. or Canadian fighter jet were launched to intercept” them (Cenciotti, 2015). CNN also mentioned that the Pentagon considered the idea of “stopping routine intercepts of Russian military aircraft flying off the coast of Alaska” (Starr, 2015).

Conclusion

Since 2007, with the resumption of Russian air and marine patrols in the Arctic, as well as the planting of a Russian flag at the North Pole, a rigorous rhetoric from the Canadian government emerged through Canada’s national media. The official message emphasized that the presence of these Russian bomber patrols in the Arctic was tantamount to a direct threat to Canadian security and sovereignty. This discourse was all the more credible since other accounts emanating from other regions, especially in Europe, also mentioned an increase in Russian air activity and recurrent airspace violations.

It turns out that actual airspace violations are extremely scarce, although their number has increased since the Ukrainian crisis in 2014. Moreover, none took place in the Arctic, but rather in the Sea of Japan or in the Baltics. Since no such violation ever occurred in Canadian airspace, the very notion that Canadian security or sovereignty could be threatened seems quite exaggerated. Besides, the behaviour of Russian planes seems much more aggressive in other areas. Finally, the sheer number of interceptions in the North American Arctic is quite small when compared to figures from other areas, especially the Black Sea, the Baltics, the Sea of Japan or even the Barents Sea. If Russia is indeed probing the air defences of its neighbours, for political or for military reasons, it is not doing so in the North American Arctic.

Notes

1. Presidential Decree, President Dmitri Medvedev, *Основы государственной политики Российской Федерации в Арктике на период до 2020 года и дальнейшую перспективу* [Fundamentals of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic in the Period up to 2020 and Beyond], September 18, 2008, www.scrf.gov.ru/documents/98.html, c. June 8, 2016.
2. Canada never claimed a 300-nautical-mile zone.
3. A few media examples: M. Blanchfield, "Harper warns Russians after two bombers intercepted", *National Post*, Feb. 29, 2009; "Back off and stay out of our airspace,' Russia", *The Star* (Toronto), Feb. 28, 2009; "Canadian jets repel Russian bombers", *Toronto Sun*, July 30, 2010. Official declarations include, for example: "We react so strongly when other countries show disrespect for our sovereignty over the Arctic" (PM Harper, *CTV News*, Aug. 10, 2007); "I have expressed [...] the deep concern our government has with increasingly aggressive Russian actions around the globe and Russian intrusions into our airspace" (PM Harper, *National Post*, Feb. 28, 2009).
4. Katarzyna Zysk, Senior Analyst and Associate Professor, Department of Norwegian Security Policy, Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies, personal communication, September 5, 2014 in Oslo; Barbro Hugaas, Assistant Director General, Department of Security Policy, Norwegian Ministry of Defence, personal communication, June 6, 2012 in Oslo.

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30

Combining Critical Security Studies in the Barents Region

Matthaios Melas

As the 2006-2012 Arctic hype has settled and we are now heading towards the second decade of the 21st century, a sober approach to Arctic security is needed. Traditional military security may never disappear from the Barents, a region that includes a border between Russia and NATO. However, environmental and societal security could keep traditional security aspects in the background, as contemporary critical security aspects are becoming more important for the prosperity of the region. By deepening and widening the security agenda, it is easier to identify who is threatened, whose security we are concerned about and who would be responsible for providing security in the Barents Region. So, in what ways could critical security studies contribute to a holistic approach to the Barents Region, concerning the environment and local population? Redefining the security of the Barents is imperative in order to pursue solutions for actual security problems instead of hunting ghosts from the past. Environmental and societal security are inherently connected in the Barents Region, and a thorough analysis of their interdependence is essential. Chain reactions that could be triggered by potential damage to the environment could have severe impacts on a population that depends heavily on traditional ways of living like fishing, gathering and herding. Moreover, environmental concerns exist within geopolitical agendas, as environmental disasters could lead to turmoil and migration. Nevertheless, international and bilateral cooperation in the area, concerning environmental protection and human prosperity, is favouring endeavours for a better future for the Barents Region.

Introduction

While examining a harsh and fragile area like the Barents Sea, which is a part of the Arctic Ocean, from a geographical perspective, it is very important to consider the environmental issues of the area. Additionally,

this environment is the home of Indigenous and other local populations whose prosperity is inherently connected with the welfare of the land and the sea of the region. Critical security studies provide a useful toolbox for the analysis of those aspects, by focusing on different referent objects like the environment and people. The environmental security of the Arctic has a twofold application. The first one concerns the protection of the region from potential endogenous sources of environmental harm like an oil spill from an extraction platform or shipping, nuclear waste, plastic waste, biodiversity loss, overfishing and the degradation of herding lands. The second one deals with the exogenous effects of global climate change in the Barents Region. The rising temperatures, which lead to the shrinking of the sea ice extent and the thawing of the permafrost, should be tackled on the global scale and not in the region under examination per se. The burning of fossil fuels does contribute negatively to climate security issues, while the impacts are often geographically displaced and diverse.

Environmental security in the Barents Region

The environment became part of the security concerns of Norway in the early 2000s. As Hossain et al. point out, “While traditional security issues, like war and conflict, may not be a source of tension in the region, non-traditional security issues – transcending national jurisdictions – often pose significant challenges for northern communities” (2017: 3). Even during the first decade of the new millennium, a prevailing concern for the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs was nuclear waste in northwest Russia. As the Ministry argued,

There exists in our immediate vicinity nuclear energy along with a great number of demobilised nuclear submarines, large stocks of spent reactor fuel and radioactive waste in solid and liquid form. There are hundreds of lighthouses along the coast of the Kola Peninsula run by inadequately secured and highly radioactive sources. We are confronted by a threat to the environment and security; it is obviously in our interests therefore to help solve the problems. (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2004)

Nuclear contamination or an oil spill in the Barents Sea could ruin its rich fishing waters and severely harm the economies of both Norway and Russia.

It is not just the physical environment that is changing, but also the ecosystem. Global warming has caused several fish species in the Barents Sea

to move further northeast at a considerable pace. It is imperative to monitor what is happening north of Svalbard. 2018 was the second-warmest year, after 2017, in the Arctic since 1900. A continuous, rapid increase in temperature has been seen in the region, greater than increases in the rest of the world (Markusson, 2018; Renner et al., 2018). There are concerns about pollution in the fragile environment of the Svalbard archipelago, as even the smallest leak of diesel is enough to kill sea birds. Furthermore, it is very difficult to take action in the event of an oil spill in the area because of the harsh environmental conditions. If the oil reaches the sea, the damage is done (Berglund, 2013).

The Arctic will continue to change until 2050, even if we manage to stabilize the increasing temperature below the 2°C threshold agreed to in the Paris Agreement. Melting sea ice, plastic waste and the loss of biodiversity are the major environmental issues in the Arctic and are a significant burden for marine, terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems. The summer sea ice volume has already been reduced by 75% from the 1970s, and by 2040, it is very likely that the Arctic Ocean will be ice-free during summer (Gillman, 2018). Along with the shrinking of sea ice, the habitats of sea-ice-dependent species are shrinking as well, with crucial effects on walruses, seals and polar bears. Recent changes in rain and snow patterns are also allowing ice to cover the vegetation (moss and lichens) and, as a result, reindeers and caribous cannot reach their food (Gillman, 2018). For people who make a living from harvesting, fishing, herding and agriculture, these changes will have devastating effects. Sadly, significant quantities of marine litter have been found in the Arctic, including microplastics. Some of them come from the Arctic, but the majority reach the Arctic through sea currents from all around the world. More research is needed to understand the true hazards of microplastics, as they are being absorbed by filter-feeding microorganisms that form the very base of the food chain (Gillman, 2018). As the Arctic sea ice retreats, more human activity, such as shipping, fishing and exploration for fossil fuels, is taking place within pristine habitats, increasing the possibility of a disastrous accident that pushes the Arctic region to the brink of a natural catastrophe.

The rate of warming in the Arctic is much faster than that for the rest of the planet, and unusual weather patterns are already developing, such as the “Beast from the East” in the UK in late February 2018 (Gabbatiss, 2018). Recent research has confirmed that temperatures in the Arctic are increasing

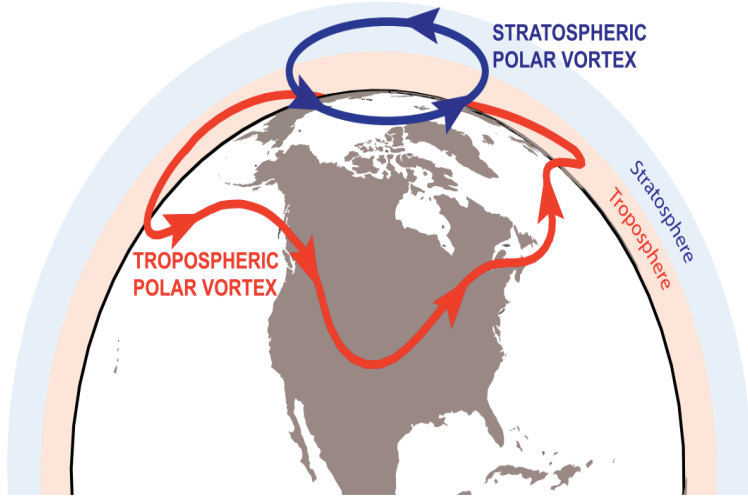


Figure 30-1: Schematic of stratospheric (blue) and tropospheric (red) polar vortices. *Source:* Waugh, Sobel, & Polvani, 2017: 38.

approximately three times faster than the global average. One of the main reasons is the loss of sea ice in the region. As Arctic sea ice melts, energy from the sun that would have been reflected is instead absorbed by the ocean. In combination with weather systems, this warming has global effects on climate. A polar vortex, a low-pressure weather system in the stratosphere over the Arctic, creates strong west-to-east winds that encircle the North Pole. Boundary winds between this polar vortex and another in the troposphere create the jet stream winds, and the position and strength of the jet stream have a big impact on mid-latitude weather. When the jet stream is strong, its fast-flowing winds provide a barrier between the cold air over the Arctic and the milder air further south. When it weakens, the jet stream slows and can develop kinks. This allows the cold Arctic air to spill out into the mid-latitudes and for warmer air to spill into the Arctic region (McSweeney, 2018).

If the updated Paris Agreement target of limiting the global rise in temperature to 1.5°C is not achieved, important fish species, such as the Atlantic cod and its Arctic relative, the Polar cod, would have less chance of survival. Moreover, their habitats could move further north, as many of these species can spawn only in very cold waters. For example, Atlantic cod currently spawn near the Lofoten archipelago, northwest of Norway. The currents take the floating eggs, and later the larvae, northwards to their ideal

living conditions in the Barents Sea (Ryan, 2019). Rising temperatures are not the only problem for the fish. The increased acidification of the oceans and seas has also been observed because as more CO₂ builds up in the atmosphere, more dissolves in the ocean. Carbon dioxide reacts with water to form carbonic acid, which acidifies the ocean. As a result, the traditional habitats of Atlantic and Polar cod around the coasts of Norway and Iceland are becoming warmer and more acidic. The consequent losses for the fishing industry could be severe, as £2 billion-worth of cod (800,000 tonnes) are caught in this area every year.

Societal security in the Barents Region

According to the Copenhagen School of thought, societal security is “the ability of a society to persist in its essential character under changing conditions and possible or actual threats” (Wæver et al., 1993: 23). Societal security considers the issues that affect the identity of a society, because if a society loses its identity, it could cease to exist. Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde (1998) argue that when the existence of a society or a societal identity is threatened, resulting in the possible loss of a communal feeling, the protection of the society’s survival and sustainability call for extraordinary measures. Giddens (1991) has argued that societal security is rooted in political sociology – it is about a relationship between community and security. The Aberystwyth School of thought has contributed to the deepening of the security agenda from the state towards community and individuals. In the Barents Region, the Indigenous communities could be the most valuable actor and contribute the most to the welfare of the Indigenous population. As has been argued by Booth, the security of the state does not always mean the security of the individual.

Human security can adequately promote societal security for the populations of the Barents Region by protecting their identities and the existence of their distinct communities. “Human security, as a concept and theoretical platform, can support different voices and perspectives” (Hoogensen Gjorv, 2014: 70). The understanding of human security overlaps with the concept of societal security, as “the ability of a society to persist under changing conditions and possible and actual threats. More specifically ... the sustainability, within acceptable conditions for evolution, of traditional patterns of language, culture, association, and religious and national identity and custom” (Hossain et al., 2017: 61). Placing the individual and the societies where they belong as referent objects, the key aspect of societal security becomes the security of every individual.

According to the regional security complex theory of Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, “since most threats travel more easily over short distances than over long ones, security interdependence is normally patterned into regionally based clusters – security complexes” (Buzan & Wæver, 2003: 4). Within a security complex, states and other actors are strongly related, such that their securities are entangled and inseparable. In the Arctic region, this idea applies to the environment and the Indigenous populations, who are spread across national borders. The work of the Arctic Council – from the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) and Arctic Human Development Report (AHDR) to the Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment (AMSA) (2009) and Arctic Search and Rescue Agreement (2011) – follows the principles of a regional security complex. Security complexes are particularly remarkable in the Arctic, as they address traditional security issues even though the primary basis for the interdependence of security issues is human security (Exner-Pirot, 2012). Sven-Roald Nystø, former president of the Norwegian Sámi Parliament, argued that the renewed securitization of the Norwegian Arctic through the government’s High North Initiative (Jensen & Skedsmo, 2010; Jensen, 2012) has produced a dynamic, with negative implications for the Sámi:

We are talking on environmental security, society security, energy security, and so on and so on. And that in itself puts much more light on the high political issues in the Arctic and excludes a lot of stakeholders in the discussion on how to put forward civility in the Arctic debate. I think we have taken a couple of steps back in the desecuritization on the Arctic, and where it ends I’m not quite sure, but one of the losers in that process are, of course, Indigenous peoples. (Greaves, 2016: 473)

When an issue or a complex set of issues is moved into high-level politics or onto the security agenda, the voices of the weaker stakeholders, who are still concerned about these issues, are usually excluded from the new policies or strategies. In the Barents Region, where human, environmental, energy and economic security are interconnected, the voices of the Indigenous population must be seriously considered. Climate change is integrated with environmental security and has many different implications. The ongoing climate change and its effects have to be controlled, while at the same time, populations have to adapt to the already observed impacts at the societal level, as it pressures Indigenous communities into certain ways of living. Consequently, climate change is a major threat to the “wellbeing of Arctic residents and their communities” (Althingi, 2011).

The life-changing threats to societal and human security in the Barents Region are related to widespread economic development, environmental protection, culture and identity. By

using human security as an analytical tool, factors that threaten the societal security of Arctic populations can be identified. In this way, human security can be used as a tool to voice the concerns, perceptions, and desires of Arctic populations. It can also be used by policy-makers and local stakeholders to decide on matters that will benefit both local Arctic populations and the region at large. (Hossain, Martín, & Petrétei, 2018: 391)

The industry of fossil fuel exploration and exploitation is associated with unethical activity that has caused environmental and human insecurities, mostly in the Global South, with the support of authoritarian or repressive regimes (Moody, 2007). In 2006, the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General on Human Rights and TNCs (transnational corporations), John Ruggie, claimed that

the extractive sector – oil, gas, and mining – utterly dominates this sample of reported abuses, with two-thirds of the total ... The extractive industries also account for most allegations of the worst abuses, up to and including complicity in crimes against humanity, typically for acts committed by public and private security forces protecting 15 company assets and property; large-scale corruption; violations of labour rights; and a broad array of abuses in relation to local communities, especially Indigenous people. (UNCHR, 2006: 25)

It has been argued that the extractive industry is one of the greatest threats to Arctic Indigenous communities, as they depend on land and natural resources. Membership in an Indigenous community depends on certain Indigenous practices. For example, reindeer herding is an important symbol of Sámi identity, and it is an exclusive right of the Sámi in Norway and Sweden. “When extractive industries hinder such traditional ways of living, the unity and societal cohesion of the Indigenous community is threatened, which in turn threatens their community security, which is the source of a unique identity” (Petrétei, 2016: 158).

An interviewed Canadian academic expert on Indigenous Arctic populations has confirmed that in Russia, Indigenous populations are viewed completely differently than how they are viewed in Scandinavia or

Canada. “They [the Russians] do not have the same ethos of protecting indigenous [people]. In Russia, to be considered indigenous, your ethnic group has to have less than 40,000 people. So, for example Yakuts and Komi are not considered indigenous. They don’t speak Russian but still they are not indigenous for the Russian government. They have some protection through the federal system but not through the Indigenous system and that is very different from Canada or Norway. Everything is more centralised, to Russia” (Canadian academic expert, 2017). However, a Russian affairs expert that I interviewed commented on the fact that there are Russian Indigenous communities with special rights in the vast Russian Arctic lands, and that their permission is needed in order to explore for gas or oil. Nevertheless, there is corruption because these communities are vulnerable. “It is easy to treat them in a nasty way. You can bribe them, they are vulnerable to alcohol, and you can find ways to make an agreement that will dis-benefit them” (Senior lecturer of human geography, 2017). This statement aligns with the report of UNCHR (the United Nations Commission on Human Rights), which showed that the Indigenous population of northeastern Russia has been mistreated for the benefit of the extractive industry.

At the same time, it has been argued that the new Russian Arctic discourse does not depict the North as a remote and hostile region that should be “conquered”, but instead indicates that the Russian state and society should treat the Arctic region as a natural and integral part of the country that should be taken care of. A more positive and attractive image of the Arctic has been developed, as it is now related to ideas of growth, prosperity and innovation. Additionally, as Sergunin argues, Russia recognizes the Arctic as a region of peace and stability, where different identities can be reconciled and harmonized (Sergunin, 2018: 54).

The concepts of human security and sustainable development have now been established within the Russian Arctic municipalities. Nevertheless, most Russian Arctic cities are not aware of the human security and sustainable development strategic documents, and the economic, ecological and social dimensions are often not harmonized with one another. The major difficulty is how to translate the words into actions, as many planned human security and sustainable development projects have not materialized. A lack of transparency in the policy planning process and a lack of cooperation within civil society institutions are the major weak points of the urban development strategies. Unfortunately, “to a large extent, the policy planning and implementation process is still of the top-down rather than

bottom-up nature” (Sergunin, 2018: 69). The better coordination of human security and sustainable development strategies is, therefore, imperative. Yet, as Sergunin argues, “despite the problems and shortcomings, the total ‘balance sheet’ of the Arctic cities’ human security and sustainable development strategies and general dynamics is rather positive. The AZRF municipalities are serious about solving numerous socio-economic and environmental problems and making these urban areas better and more comfortable places to live in” (Sergunin, 2018: 70).

It could be argued that, although Russia is behind other Arctic regions in relation to human and societal security in the Barents Region, it is trying to enhance the economic prosperity of its Arctic populations while taking into account the environmental and social dimensions of sustainable development. An important element of this process is the participation of the local communities in decision-making and the implementation of these decisions.

Growing awareness of the importance of environmental security, access to health and education, food security and Indigenous governance within the Barents Region are shaping future resource extraction. For that reason, these topics have become higher on the agendas of northern governments and peoples even from 2007 (Heininen & Nicol, 2007). The authors elaborated more on how climate, food, health and education are forming new security aspects. “The real tension is in reconciling how our understanding of how environmental conditions, like climate stability or access to resources, food and health and education services, are de facto ‘human rights’ issues and should be calculated into any consideration of the meaning of security” (Nicol & Heininen, 2013: 80). So, it is clear that critical security studies, even indirectly, is gaining more recognition within the security agenda. Environmental protection aspects and access to resources, food, health and education are now among the major security elements of the Barents’ populations.

In Norway, the costs and benefits of Arctic development have been intensively discussed, especially in relation to the Lofoten Islands. “Unlike in Canada and Greenland, in Norway there is not about Indigenous versus non-Indigenous populations but a discordance among fishermen and oil executives, green parties and other political institutions, corporate interests, such as Equinor, and regional and local governments” (Finnish Professor on Arctic politics, 2017). Deep-water oil and gas drilling have been postponed in the Lofoten-Vesterålen region because of their potential impact on cod

fisheries and sensitive spawning grounds, yet the oil industry has significant licensed areas for exploration and active offshore drilling operations in the Barents Sea.

The Canadian expert on the Arctic's Indigenous peoples that was interviewed pointed out a significant differentiation between the North American Arctic and the Barents Arctic. "The Sámi are so few compared with the populations in Canada and have been integrated for hundreds of years in their Scandinavian countries' life. They are richer, better educated and more integrated but they have less power. It is the opposite for the Canadian and Alaskan Indigenous people" (Canadian academic expert, 2017). Similarly, a senior researcher from the Arctic Institute argued that the Sámi people are very well integrated within Norwegian society. "In general, they live side-by-side with the non-natives. There are some minor problems in their societies but no major problems in general. Some who live more traditionally face some problems concerning herding fields and mining, and there are key cases of dumping mining materials in northern Norway. There are no Indigenous concerns on the oil and gas debate" (Senior researcher at the Arctic Institute, 2017).

Aili Keskitalo, President of the Sámi Parliament of Norway, has stated, "The degradation of the environment in Inuit and Saami traditional territories caused by pollution, non-sustainable natural resource extraction and climate change constitute a great threat to their traditional lifestyles and culture" (Keskitalo, 2006). It is clear that the Sámi in Norway see the natural environment and its link to Indigenous cultural practices as being at the centre of what insecurity means in their Arctic homeland (Greaves, 2016). The ongoing expansion of fossil fuel exploitation in the Barents Region is a worrying concern to the coastal Sámi, as it could have negative effects on the fishing sector (Kristoffersen & Dale, 2014).

Norway tried to eliminate the Sámi's cultural and religious distinctiveness through state policies of "Norwegianization" until the mid-20th century (Minde, 2005), but in the past 30 years, Sámi institutions have promoted linguistic and cultural communities throughout Norway, and language has become one of the most important markers of Sámi self-determination (Greaves, 2016: 471). During the Cold War, and the securitization of the Norway-Russia border, the Sámi's rights on land use were hampered as the states took security and defence decisions without considering Sámi interests, "so Sámi deliberately avoided the language of security in order to keep open their options or possibilities for resolving their

struggle for political good will” (Greaves, 2016: 473).

The two major issues for the Sámi are conflicts about land use, which affect their reindeer herding areas, and the preservation of the Sámi language and culture. Their security is defined by protecting the environment, Indigenous identity and cultural practices, and autonomy and self-determination. The establishment of institutions of self-determination in northern Norway prevents the political rights of the Sámi from being endangered. Even climate change is not a security issue per se, and it relates only to reindeer herding and other food sources. In general, the Sámi do not use securitizing language to describe hazards to their interests, and they do not want to securitize social and environmental issues, even though they use security language occasionally (Greaves, 2016).

One more crucial reason that the Sámi are not keen to securitize their interests is that security in Norway is still seen as a discourse within the authority of the state, mostly because the existing threats – including of military conflict – are from Russia. Fear of the “Russian Other” has always been present in Norway, and Russia affects many contemporary security policies of Norway (Åtland & Pedersen, 2008; Pedersen, 2009; Jensen & Skedsmo, 2010). As Jensen argues,

Everything that smacks of ‘security’ acquires a very particular status in Norwegian discourses on the High North. Discourses are wrapped in history, and here in the north, close to Russia, discursive fragments from the Cold War continue to ring like echoes from the past ... There is no more obvious place for prolonging a sense of paranoia and general insecurity than in relation to the High North, where Norway’s national identity as a tiny, vulnerable land and the image of massive Russia (‘the Russian bear’) as ‘the radical other’ are clear and easily resuscitated in the ‘collective Norwegian mind’. (Jensen, 2012: 90, 94)

The Sámi have not outlined their security concerns as security threats. Firstly, changing climate patterns do not present an existential threat to the Sámi community. Secondly, the Sámi are integrated into Norwegian society and have the full benefits of citizenship in the only social democratic petrostate¹ of the world, and there are no claims of insecurity of the Sámi from the Norwegian state. Thirdly, the importance of Russia in Norwegian security policy means that other security issues are mostly overshadowed. Also, as a researcher from the Fridtjof Nansen Institute added, “most of the Indigenous live in the Finnmark region of Norway, where they use the

territory and are not marginalised. The Hammerfest's offshore oil field [Goliat] is a very important investment, creating many jobs. The oil field [is] a regional issue as well, as it is a development for the whole population. Unlike in Russia or Alaska, there are no onshore activities, which can create conflicts with the Indigenous populations" (Senior researcher at FNI, 2017).

Last but not least, the Norwegian Ministry of Petroleum and Energy has also commented on the populations of northern Norway:

Sustainable development activities rendered enormous opportunities for employment. Local communities have made themselves relevant to these activities by supplying goods and services to oil and gas activities. So, the activities are not a threat to the population, but an opportunity for employment. Activities are bases for supplies, growing population and families. Instead of asking for challenges, ask for opportunities. Bases were built for supplying the oil and gas industry, which led to population growth and indirect employment. As a result, there are more taxi drivers, restaurants, many other jobs and, consequently, more families in the northern Norway. Before an area becomes open for oil and gas licensing/activities, the government produces impact assessments. And it is important that it is not just a certain environmental impact assessment, but it is a total impact assessment, as it also deals with socioeconomic challenges but also opportunities of activities. This is part of the thinking that was mentioned before – instead of asking for challenges, ask for opportunities. (Norwegian Ministry of Petroleum and Energy, 2017)

The Indigenous communities had to deal with abuses and injustice from the states in the past, but through international recognition, they are now more capable of securing their rights and pointing out their security concerns, which are mainly environmental and human security issues. The Norwegian side of the Barents Region has many differences from the Russian side, which create different issues in relation to the Indigenous populations. In Norway, the main disputes involve onshore concerns about mining activities and the installation of infrastructure for renewable energy rather than the oil and gas sector, which is the main sources of dispute on the Russian side. By contrast, in the Norwegian Barents Sea, there is much more exploration and exploitation than on the Russian side. In both countries, the Indigenous populations face the effects of climate change on herding and fishing activities, and the communities that depend heavily on these activities are at considerable risk.

In order to achieve greater Indigenous participation in the Arctic discourse, the agenda could be broadened to acknowledge and include the concerns of the Indigenous populations that relate to contemporary Arctic geopolitics. In that respect, power would be counterbalanced by knowledge, physical space would be replaced by identity and resilience, and people would be the referent object rather than states. For this to be achieved, organizations that represent Indigenous populations should be included in the A5² conferences and discussions and enhance their involvement in the A8³. Furthermore, the eight Arctic states should prioritize activities that would improve cooperation on Arctic aspects. For example, arguing that the exploitation of fossil fuels should be done under stricter environmental standards is less reasonable than investing in and favouring the renewable energy sector, which would suggest an honest attempt at sustainable development. Moreover, scientific knowledge of climate change and its impacts on local, regional and global scales could be enhanced by the local, traditional environmental knowledge of the Indigenous Arctic populations. In this way, regional institutions – both state and non-state actors – are very important and should be included in the discussions. Institutions such as the Arctic Council promote cooperation at the regional level on climate change, sustainable development and quality of life, highlighting that the most important elements of analysis are within the field of development rather than geopolitics. Conversant, critical and broadened discussion of northern human security is essential for the Arctic and, as a consequence, for the Barents Region (Nicol & Heininen, 2013: 84).

It is widely accepted that currently the most significant changes in the Barents Region are environmental, such as disrupted and unpredictable seasonal patterns, thinner sea ice each year and the thawing permafrost (ACIA, 2004; ACIA, 2005). These environmental changes pose a risk to those who depend on nature (fishing and herding) for their livelihoods. Besides the impacts of climate change, global and local polluters, such as plastic and nuclear waste, are threatening the region and its inhabitants. In addition, food and health insecurity and high rates of alcoholism, suicide and domestic violence reduce the quality of life and well-being of Arctic inhabitants. Hundreds of years of interactions between humans and nature have made the Arctic what it is today, and preserving this environment and ecosystem for future generations is invaluable. It is obligatory and urgent to balance economic activities with environmental preservation if we want to provide social and human security to the next generations, as the exploitation of fossil fuels is not only the major source of pollution and a

challenge to traditional uses of land, but also the main source of jobs and revenue in many Arctic regions. Though the region is connected historically with fossil fuel exploration and exploitation, more and bigger future developments of this kind could impede the security of other local communities, groups and individuals. It is vital to scrutinize the predominant societal and human security challenges of the Barents Region to obtain substantial support for the development and implementation of targeted policies (Hossain, Martín, & Petrétci, 2018).

Avoiding a securitized sustainable development

Global climate strikes held on March 15, 2019, by more than one million students and young people were a call for politicians to act fast on climate change. In April 2019, climate protests in London lasted for more than a week, with the aim of pushing the British government towards a more aggressive climate target than the existing target of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2025. It could be argued that these actions are pushing the issues of climate change and sustainable development into high politics and even onto the security agenda. In this situation, the audience is convinced by scientists and researchers that the referent objects – the Earth's climate and development that could allow the system of the planet to continue indefinitely into the future – have to be placed further up the political agenda. Consequently, the audience is trying to convince politicians to push for stricter policies on sustainable development and climate change.

Besides environmental issues, sustainable development also refers to economic and social issues. As it has been argued in the past, sustainable development does not mean environmental preservation. Development incorporates the aspects of economic improvement that are imperative for the preservation and functionality of human societies. The concept of national security has been transformed in the age of globalization, and the military security within a territorial area has been interwoven with human, economic and environmental aspects. Nevertheless, any attempt to achieve sustainability in a few countries is quite inadequate if other countries are using unsustainable practices, as the environment is global and its protection needs global agreements (Dresner, 2002). In addition, it is very difficult to prove that sustainability has been achieved. Even if we could minimize or eliminate all known unsustainable activities, it is ambitious to try to deal with activities that are only suspected to be unsustainable, and it is impossible to remove all present and future cradles of unsustainability. But ultimately, "The alternative to the pursuit of sustainability is to continue

along the present path of unsustainability, leading to disaster” (Dresner, 2002: 173).

A highly politicized approach to sustainable development could mean that the principles of sustainability – the environment, human societies and their economic prosperity – could be placed high on the political agenda and scrutinized as a system rather than independently. However, the problems and potential solutions must be developed and introduced into the political agenda by the societies that face the difficulties, thereby combining local and scientific knowledge to create a bottom-up policy approach. If the combination of sustainability awareness in high politics along with the inclusion of local societies could be achieved, the possibility of attaining sustainability would be increased.

Environmental protection must remain on the political agenda, as the securitization of sustainability issues could have adverse effects not only for the population but also the environment. A securitized sustainable development would not include local knowledge and scientific consultation would be limited. Using pretexts that something is contributing to or impeding sustainable development, governments could use the securitized sustainable development speech to justify an action, undermining local communities and neglecting the environmental needs of a region.

Conclusion

The Barents Region is not a homogenous region. Nevertheless, there are common elements that create a common, distinct societal identity. Such elements include the region’s geography and the presence of traditional communities with specific norms, customs and traditional livelihoods that are based on herding and fishing. The most important issue for Indigenous societies in the Barents Region is sustainability, as sustainability is the only way that they can continue to practice their traditional ways of living and preserve their societies. At the same time, they are enduring through the challenges of climate change and economic globalization.

The Copenhagen School of thought is useful for bringing the environmental and societal insecurity of populations in the Barents Region onto the political agenda, by broadening that agenda from military security to other forms of insecurity. The inclusion of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations in the formal decision-making institutions could be very helpful for balancing the interests of every actor in the region. Accordingly, the Aberystwyth School of thought has a substantial effect on

the analysis of the region by deepening the agenda from the state level to the community and individual level, which helps to examine the societal challenges in the Indigenous communities. It becomes clear now that the combination “...of the two schools into a larger approach paves the way for a more critical engagement with security on [the] part of the security analyst, allowing for normative – but denying infinite –conceptualisations of security” (Floyd, 2007: 336).

In this article, I outlined the contemporary environmental and societal issues within the Barents Sea and the Barents Region of Norway and Russia, and how they are inherently connected. In a region with a historically important border between NATO (Norway) and Russia, securitizing moves towards environmental or societal issues are not going to materialize because traditional security aspects would continue to exist, even in the background. Nevertheless, international and bilateral cooperation in relation to environmental protection and human prosperity in the area favours a better future for the Barents Region.

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Notes

1. Petrostate: A state whose wealth stems from the sale of fossil fuels, mainly oil.
2. A5: Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark (including Greenland and the Faroe Islands), Norway, Russia and the United States.
3. A8: Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark (including Greenland and the Faroe Islands), Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the United States.

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31

Human Security: An Alien Concept for the Russian Arctic?

Maria Goes

The discovery of oil and gas deposits in the Arctic placed the Arctic region high on the national agenda in Russia. As a result, in official documents and political statements, the Russian Arctic is mainly framed in terms of national, economic and military security, as the Arctic is positioned as a strategic source for national development. A connection between security and development remains unproblematized in the main discourse. The Russian economy in general depends on income from petroleum revenues. Some Russian regions prosper due to oil and gas extraction sites located on their territory. At the same time, the Russian Arctic, for decades, has been a place with difficult socio-economic situations due to an incoherent state policy towards the region. This creates a lot of insecurities and instabilities in daily life for people living in the Russian Arctic. Nonetheless, these insecurities are not visible in the official narrative of security and development. Therefore, this article will demonstrate how security and development are interconnected. Another question it will address is whether human security has a place in the Russian security landscape at all. These questions will be answered in several steps. First, I discuss connections articulated in the literature on development and security. With the help of a framing approach, I secondly explore how the Russian state approaches development and security in the Arctic. Third, using the case of the Murmansk region, I expose a regional understanding of development and security. In the end, I will compare and discuss regional and national perspectives.

Introduction

As temperatures increase and the ice retreats, extractive industries have the possibility to enter new and previously unavailable Arctic areas. Issues of power, security, international regimes and cooperation have become topical.

Russian Arctic policies have acquired a special interest since Russia is geographically the largest Arctic state and has the longest coastline. At the same time, Russia remains “the least known Arctic player, but the most determined” (Laruelle, 2013: xx). Russian Arctic policies are subject to discussion and can be characterized as complex and contradictory (see, for example, Wilson Rowe, 2009; Laruelle, 2013; Foxall, 2014; Klimenko, 2016; Baev, 2018). By analyzing the transformation of the Russian Arctic policy between the 1990s and 2000s, Laruelle (2013) concludes that Russia has sent mixed messages to the international community in relation to the Arctic and its policies. But what kinds of messages do the Russian Arctic regions get?

There are ongoing discussions related to the drivers underlying Russia’s Arctic policy. Two factors can be noted as affecting both Arctic policy and security in Russia. First, Arctic policy can be characterized as centralized (Laruelle, 2013). The Russian governance structure presupposes the strict subordination of regional and local authorities to the federal one. It brings uncertainty to the regions since issues of regional development, Indigenous peoples and social concerns “are not ignored, but instead must find a place within the grand design constructed by the Kremlin” (Laruelle, 2013: 6). The regions cannot decide upon oil and gas revenues since all offshore fields are defined as being of federal significance (Moe & Wilson Rowe, 2009). The security architecture is also very centralized, with the President on top and other subordinate structures such as the Security Council of the Russian Federation, the government, federal authorities, authorities of the entities of the Russian Federation and local governments situated below the President. This architecture is the result of developments in Russian security policy between 1992 and 2010. As it has been discussed elsewhere (see Goes, 2017), a transformation in the security construction – from the triad of the equal partners of “individual, society and state” in 1992 to the “state only” perspective of 2010 – took place. Second, several Arctic policies coexist; they are often poorly coordinated and depend on the interests of particular groups or persons (Wilson Rowe, 2009; Laruelle, 2013; Baev, 2018). As Baev (2018: 411) summarizes, “Russia’s interests in the Arctic are far from coherent or even complementary, and the lobby groups that pursue them – from the Northern Fleet command to oil companies and the Russian Geographical Society – are often at odds with one another, making the Kremlin the ultimate arbiter.” In this situation, regions are struggling to articulate their needs and concerns at the federal level (Goes, 2017). The existence of several policies is also detected by researchers discussing Russian

strategy in the Arctic, where two contradictory approaches are implemented simultaneously: “security first” and “cooperation first” (Laruelle, 2013; Foxall, 2014; Hønneland, 2016; Heininen, 2016). The existence of two approaches is confusing and it is not always obvious what Russia wants in relation to international cooperation and regional development. At the same time, the Russian Arctic policies are underpinned by several interests, which, according to Baev (2018), can be collected into four main groups: nuclear/strategic, geopolitical, economic/energy-related and symbolic. This division is nominal since the interests “interact in many disharmonious combinations” (Baev, 2018: 410). In relation to these interests, several crisscrossing security issues are in focus: military, energy, economic and environmental. Military capabilities are probably the most discussed issue of the Russian Arctic policies (see Baev, 2009; Konyshov & Sergunin, 2014; Klimenko, 2016). Economic/energy security is discussed by Godzimirski (2014), Mitrova (2014) and Khrushcheva and Poberezhskaya (2016). Environmental security is discussed by Pursiainen (2005), Foxall (2014) and Hønneland (2016). While several security issues are discussed, the focus is still placed on the state and inter-state relations rather than on other security actors. The issue of geopolitics remains dominant, while other security approaches like, for example, human security are less explored. In addition, Hønneland (2016: 16) points out that in general, the literature on the politics in the Arctic has been empirically oriented for several decades, and therefore less attention is given to the development of analytical approaches and theoretical frameworks.

This article addresses some gaps discussed above and has two research questions in focus. The first question is how security and development are interconnected in general and what kind of meaning these concepts have in the context of the Russian Arctic. Another question is whether human security has a place in the Russian Arctic security landscape at all. The findings of this article contribute to the fields of development studies as well as critical security studies. In both fields, there is a demand for the contextualization (regional, historical, political, institutional) of the concept (Currie-Alder et al., 2014; Hossain et al., 2016). This examination will help to clarify the meaning of the concept of development in the Russian Arctic in order to reveal the gaps between the goals of public policy and achievements in practice. When it comes to the concept of human security, in comparison with a number of writings on the Russian Arctic in general, the number of publications on Arctic security, and human security in particular, is relatively small. I use sources published in both English and

Russian in order to create a broader picture and introduce materials unknown to both sides. First, I will discuss connections articulated in the literature on development and security in order to create some analytical perspective. Then, with the help of a framing approach, I will explore how development and security are interpreted in the official federal documents on the Arctic in order to reveal how the Russian state approaches these two concepts. Third, I will explore a regional understanding of development in security. In the end, I will compare and discuss regional and national perspectives. This will contribute to a better understanding of the peculiarities of governance in Russia and the ongoing processes related to security and development.

Selecting the case of the Murmansk region: Security and development

My interest in the connection between security and development was generated by work on my PhD thesis within the framework of a research project focused on security in the Arctic (for more on the project, see Hoogensen Gjørsv et al., 2016). By 2007, the Arctic had become a territory of great research and political attention both in terms of the economic, security and environment interests of nation-states, as well as in terms of geopolitical issues. The country of my particular interest was Russia, which, as the largest Arctic state, “disappeared from the Arctic security landscape” in the 1990s due to economic and political challenges and re-emerged in the 2000s in “all Arctic debates” (Laruelle, 2013: xxi). What is more interesting is that, on the national level, within a decade (between 1997 and 2008)¹, the Russian Arctic was transformed from a subsidized client to the source of the social and economic development of the country, and became essential for national security in Russia.

The challenge was how to talk about security in a country where people were not used to talking about it, since the security sphere is “something in which ordinary citizens should not meddle” (Medvedev, 1998: 80, cited in Åtland, 2009: 8). Being Russian myself, I was aware of the general attitude to this word. It happened historically that the term “security” became connected to the term “state security”, which first appeared in 1934 with the creation of a special department for state security within the People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD). The NKVD existed in 1934–1946 and was responsible for maintaining public order and combatting crime. This organization became known as an example of the state structure violating the law and abusing its power of political control. The term “state

security” came into use in Soviet legal literature in 1936 when a new constitution (known as “Stalin’s Constitution”) replaced the first Soviet constitution from 1924. Though the term “security” was used without any particular clarification (Constitution 1936, chapter 2, section 14, paragraph 1), its origin in the NKVD and “Stalin’s Constitution” played a significant role in the term’s further application. Due to defence preparedness in light of the Cold War, the term was so highly militarized and securitized during the next several decades that it became difficult to talk about security in everyday life. The term “security” became equated with “state security” and, in turn, “state security” became almost synonymous with the term “military security” in the Russian context (Sergunin, 2012). This semantic confusion was inherited by contemporary Russia. It resulted in a situation where it is difficult to demarcate the line between different security issues (Sergunin, 2012). My first round of phone calls to potential interviewees in Russia confirmed my concerns: the word “security” was frightening people – and they were trying to find excuses for why they could not discuss this topic.

The Murmansk region in the years 2007-2012 was an interesting case. It borders on Norway and Finland and is viewed by the Russian state as a geo-strategically important area because of the ice-free sea. A large nuclear fleet is located in the ports of the Murmansk region, including icebreakers and submarines. At the same time, the Murmansk region hosts one of the biggest gas deposits – the Shtokman gas and condensate field (Government of Murmansk, n.d.), which is located on the shelf of the Barents Sea, approximately 550 kilometres away from the shore. Therefore, the Murmansk region was a territory where new trends – oil and gas development in the Russian Arctic shelf – meet traditional military-strategic requirements. But how do these trends affect the region? What do these changes mean for people?

Prior to my fieldwork in 2008-2009 in the Murmansk region, I was reviewing the literature on human security and I questioned whether human security was at all applicable in the Russian context. There is no adequate translation of “human security” into the Russian language, though there have been attempts to translate the term “human security” and to extract the main thoughts from the existing literature in English (see, for example, Noyanzina, 2010; Borisov, 2011; Bokeriya, 2017). The human security agenda was launched in 1994 as part of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with the aim of focusing on people and their lives, not just on states. The Human Development Report (HDR, 1994: 24-25) outlined the necessity for protection from a variety of threats to human

safety and welfare including economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political security issues. It did not provide readers with a clear definition of human security, but stressed that people should be able to exercise their choices freely and safely (HDR, 1994: 23). The nexus between “human security – human development – human rights”, as articulated in the HDR (1994), is defined by some researchers as a weak point: the concept of human security loses its anchoring and becomes everything and nothing (Chandler, 2008). In my case, this weak point became a strength. If human security can provide “a more comprehensive emphasis on human development, human rights and the role of non-state actors” (Hudson, 2005: 165), why can these other concepts, in turn, not provide more information about human security? I decided to use the word “development” as an entrance to my interviews. By the time I was doing my fieldwork in the Murmansk region, there were a lot of discussions in terms of “development”. These discussions were related to debates around the Shtokman gas field: how to develop it and what development would bring to the region. I decided that the word “development” would be familiar to my interviewees and could be a safe starting point for our conversations. The word “development” helped to create a sort of comfortable atmosphere for interviewees, which allowed us to move smoothly to the field of security – initially perceived by the majority of interviewees as dangerous or unwanted. Thus, my fieldwork revealed connections between security and development, but these connections should be better examined in order to answer a question: what does it mean for the Russian Arctic in general and for the Murmansk region in particular?

The oil and gas of the Russian Arctic

In 2000, the US Geological Survey presented an assessment of the worldwide undiscovered oil and gas resources (Glomsrød & Aslaksen, 2006). Though the survey had limited data and didn’t include estimates of undiscovered resources from all basin areas north of the Arctic Circle, the results of it strongly affected various communities – scientific, political, business and the general public. The cause was the statement that “25% of undiscovered petroleum resources” were located in the Arctic (Bailey, 2007). By 2002, Arctic Russia was estimated to have 45-55% of the total volume of the undiscovered oil and gas resources in the Arctic (Glomsrød & Aslaksen, 2006: 29). An assessment from 2008 showed that more than 70% of the promising or undiscovered deposits of natural gas were located in three provinces: the West Siberian Basin, the East Barents Basin and Arctic Alaska. It was also estimated that approximately 84% of the undiscovered

oil and gas was to be found offshore (CARA, 2008). The interest in the Arctic was growing. This was despite Arctic energy resources being characterized as “undiscovered” and “unproven” (Arctic Council SDWG, 2007: 7).

In 2001, Russia made a submission to the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) to establish a new border of the continental shelf, and claimed that the Lomonosov and Mendeleev Ridges were an extension of the Eurasian continent, allowing Russia to extend its Arctic maritime jurisdiction. In 2002, the CLCS replied that Russia had to submit additional scientific evidence. Among the tasks of the polar expedition *Arktika 2007*, which consisted of several stages, was to find justifications for this territorial claim. The expedition proved that the Lomonosov Ridge was linked to Russian territory and claimed that, potentially, the territory contained 10 billion tonnes of gas and oil deposits (Harding, 2007). The expedition received extensive media coverage both in Russia and abroad. Three members of the expedition were awarded the highest honorary title in Russia – “Hero of the Russian Federation”. One member was awarded the order “For the merit of the fatherland” (third class). These awards demonstrated the significance of the expedition and its discoveries for the Russian state. In September 2008, the Basics of the State Policy in the Arctic (BRFA-2020) were adopted.

Heininen (2016) points out that the increasing role of energy security is a global trend. Moreover, energy security becomes increasingly important in oil- and gas-dependent countries like Norway, the USA and Russia, since access to energy resources is related to power and geopolitical influence (Heininen, 2016: 19, 22). The first economic crisis of the years 1992-1995 in Russia demonstrated the power of economic security. The threat of economic insecurity forced the state to search for new sources of economic sustainability. The oil and gas sector was one of the few sectors of the Russian economy that was slightly affected during the first crisis and demonstrated a fast recovery when compared to other Russian industries like machine-building or metallurgy (Zubarevich, 2016). The price for oil and gas was relatively stable in the 1990s, and the export of petroleum provided a stable income, in particular for regions where the oil and gas were produced. That is why it is not surprising that the oil and gas sector became viewed by the state as a cure for economic insecurity. Kryukov (2009) points out that the decision to develop the Russian Arctic shelf was mainly based on the demand for economic security rather than energy. The Shtokman project was initiated to support the military-industrial complex of the

Murmansk and Arkhangelsk regions in a critical economic situation in the 1990s (Kryukov, 2009: 37). Thus, the oil and gas sector represents an important trend in economic development and is viewed by the Russian state as a source of economic stability in the country.

According to the Energy Strategy (ES-2030, 2009: 39), the Russian energy complex plays an important role in the economic development of the country, and oil and gas revenues contribute to national economic growth and independence. The structure of natural gas reserves in Russia is more favourable than the structure of oil reserves because of accessibility (ES-2030, 2009: 39). Nevertheless, the number of complex and hard-to-extract resources has also increased just as in the oil sector (ES-2030, 2009: 39). Thus, the expectations and prognosis of the ES-2030 (2009) relies on a high level of gas extraction and high prices in the world market, which would allow the country to expand the export of gas to new markets and continue the internal gasification of the country. The Energy Strategy (ES-2030, 2009) was formulated in 2008 under very favourable conditions for oil and gas prices on the world market (compared to 2000).² However, in 2009, the Russian energy industry was seriously affected by the global financial crisis of 2007-2008 and suffered from the decline in price and demand (Mitrova, 2014: 58). Compared to 2008, gas production was 12% lower in 2009 (Mitrova, 2014: 58). The document was created with the hope that the crisis situation on the world market would change soon. Meanwhile, Russia would manage to modernize and regain its strength. Some recovery in the industry was registered by the year 2011. Oil production was 0.8% higher and gas production increased by 2.9% in 2011 compared to 2010 (Godzimirski, 2014: 1). However, this recovery occurred while the price of petroleum started to fall. The Russian energy sector has since had to cope with lower profits, a loss of external investors and a shrunken demand for Russian gas (Mitrova, 2014: 59). Despite the changing situation of the market, oil and gas remain highly valued commodities for the Russian state in terms of economic and national security. That is why the connections between development and security should be better explored. Below, I will discuss some theoretical approaches.

Articulating cross-points between security and development

Fierke (2007: 150) claims that the concept of human security can be considered a result of the convergence of security and development studies, which reflects their joint concern about the well-being of individuals in a particular context. Though it appeared on the international political scene

in the 1990s, the concept of human security is not new, and some scholars note that it is possible to trace the intellectual origin of human security back to the 1940s (MacFarlane & Khong, 2006; Inglehart & Norris, 2012). Indeed, Rothschild (1995) brings us back to the middle of the 17th century and shows the transformation of the concept through various epochs. Rothschild (1995) and Hoogensen (2005) also point out that, in the 17th and 18th centuries, security was viewed as essential for establishing the relationship between the state and the individual, and therefore the two concepts of state and human security were interconnected. The concept of development was developed in the 18th century and initially was related to questions of poverty, equality and justice, and, lately, to economic growth (Currie-Alder, 2016). Thus, initially both concepts were related to the state and were oriented towards improving the conditions for human well-being.

Harriss (2014: 35) points out that, at least in the English language, the word development has several meanings. Among those are “growth” (including “economic growth”), “change” and “progress”. These applications of the word “development” were criticized as the field of development studies became broader and the distribution of wealth among a population within a nation-state and across the globe was discussed in relation to such variables as education, gender, health and environment. Nonetheless, the main line, as Harriss (2014) argues, lies in discussions between proponents of the state and those who prioritize the roles of the market in the economy. Those discussions brought to light the need for the contextualization of economic changes and the role these changes have in improving human well-being. A significant contribution in the field of development studies was done by Amartya Sen, who suggested a capability approach. Sen (2003: 5) argued that economic prosperity should be considered as one of the means to enriching people’s lives. The capability approach puts personal freedom and personal experience at the centre of development. At the same time, the capability approach helps evaluate the meaning of commodities or material values differently, since commodities “are only of value to us in terms of what they allow us actually to do” (Harriss, 2014: 36). The issue of personal experience and the ability of an individual to be an agent of change are matters of discussion within security studies as well.

A human security approach claims that personal experience and the ability to articulate one’s own insecurities are important to understanding security in the contemporary world. In relation to individual experience, the issue of state and non-state actors becomes important. Traditionally, states

are considered main security actors, defining the agenda of security in the international arena. But as Hoogensen et al. (2009: 2) claim, “[t]here is no particular logic that supports the claim that security can only be the purview of the state, and we must not forget that individuals and communities will always have a significant role to play in the provision of security.” It means that various actors identify insecurities differently, but it is up to the state to recognize those insecurities or to focus only on its own concerns (Hoogensen et al., 2009). Though the capability approach puts personal freedom and personal experience at the centre of development, it is possible to extrapolate its core point to any actor, from individuals to states. The capability approach underscores the options and possibilities that the economy provides for a person, group of people or state. By learning what actors value most and thus what they want to ensure the survival of in the future, we can better understand why some statements or actions take place (Hoogensen Gjorv, 2017: 38). Values create an important connection between development and security since they are an important part of choice-making: “The focus here is on the freedom that a person actually has to do this or be that – things that he or she may value doing or being” (Sen, 2009: 231, cited in Harriss, 2014: 36). Thus, actors make a choice based on their values or visions of what is important for them. Values become a bridge connecting human security and development. But while development is about what we want to change, security is about what we want to preserve.

Hoogensen Gjorv (2012: 837) argues that while examining security, it is necessary to take into consideration the practice of security (how), the context (where) and values (why). These questions will help to explore the nexus between development (a change) and security (a preservation). I will explore the practice of security and development on two levels: federal and regional. In my analysis, I will focus on the Russian Federation and the Murmansk region as main actors with their own perspectives on security and development (answering the questions “who?” and “where?”). Nonetheless, the focus of my analysis is on the question “why”: why does Russia need transformations? I will approach values as certain landmarks helping to clarify the positions of proponents and to explore the meanings attached to the concepts of security and development in the context of oil and gas development in the Russian Arctic. In the next section, I will discuss how to reveal values.

The framing approach and the scope of study: Methodological note

There are different levels of analysis: statements, policies and actions. In this article, the analysis will be conducted on the level of statements in order to obtain a more nuanced understanding of security and development in Russia. This analysis creates a background for future discussions, for example, of differences between statements and actions.

This study is based on an examination of documents published at the national (federal) and regional levels. The work with official documents provides access to how development and security were thought of from a federal as well as regional perspective, and thus to what kind of values are behind these thoughts. The Murmansk region was selected as a case study. The differences between the Arctic regions in Russia are enormous in terms of the climatic zones, density of population, economic conditions and social stability. Therefore, it is important to examine how state policy is viewed from the regions and to identify alternative interpretations of development and security. Four documents are identified as key documents in relation to activity in the Arctic on the official website of the Government of the Russian Federation (<http://government.ru/docs/>). As the main source of information, I selected the “Strategy of Development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation and Ensuring National Security until 2020” from 2014 (further, the Strategy of Development or SDAZ-2020). This document defines the main objectives, priorities and mechanisms for the implementation of the state policy in the Arctic. The SDAZ appeared as the follow-up to the “Basics of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic until 2020 and for a further perspective”, issued in 2008 (further, the Basics or BRFA-2020). Additionally, two documents on security are selected for the analysis. The BRFA-2020 is related to the “Strategy of National Security” (further, the Security Strategy or SNS-2020) of 2009. This document clarifies the terminology used in the Federal Law “On Security” (2010). At the regional level, I analyze the “Strategy of Socio-Economic Development of the Murmansk region until 2025” (2010), henceforth the Murmansk Strategy or SSEMD-2025. This document is fundamental for the regional system of governance and provides main guidelines for the management of development in the region. This document is unique since few Russian regions created their own strategy. In these conditions, when the regions are lacking control over their political and economic situation

and have limited possibilities to articulate their perspectives, this document is especially valuable.

I apply framing as an approach to this study. There are diverse theoretical and conceptual approaches to framing in different disciplines and fields of study (for more on it, see Reese et al., 2008; Borah, 2011). The theory is actively developed in relation to an analysis of mass media, though Wilson Rowe (2018: 38) traces the origins of framing in the literature on the social construction of space and applies framing to the analysis of Arctic politics in order to discover possible political actions in the region. Frames are related to the process of interpretation and their analyses help to reveal the way that issues are defined and presented to a broader public. Following Gamson and Modigliani (1989: 3), I define frames as a “central organizing idea”. A focus on a frame creates an analytical perspective, which allows for a exploration of the interpretations of development and security in various documents. Gamson and Modigliani (1989: 3) identify such tools as metaphors, examples, catchphrases, depictions and visual images. However, these linguistic marks are hard to find in official documents. Entman (1993: 54) states that the process of framing involves selection and salience as main steps, as well as the omission of potential definitions or explanations. I will discuss the federal and regional documents in a separate section. In each section, I will elaborate on the function of the document and its goal. I will discuss framings in terms of word selection, repetitions and exclusions.

There are some linguistic difficulties related to this analysis. The problem with demarcating security, military security and state security in the Russian language was discussed earlier in this article. In addition to that, the terms “security” and “safety” are both translated into Russian as “security”, and this semantic issue can be the subject of a separate study. Russian border guards, the coast guard and emergency response forces in the Arctic have a complicated structure and are divided between civil and military entities (see Klimenko, 2016). These forces are responsible for “safety”. Therefore, for the purpose of this analysis, mentions related to “safety” and “emergency response” will be allocated under the rubric of “national security”.

The framing of development and security in official documents

The Strategy of Development (SDAZ-2020, 2013) defines the main objectives, priorities and mechanisms for the implementation of the state’s policy in the Arctic. The document offers mechanisms of implementation and suggests variables for evaluation and ways of measuring social and

economic development. Development and security are already linked in the title of the document. The goal of the Strategy of Development (SDAZ-2020, 2013, Section II, item 6) is the implementation of the national interest as well as the achievement of the main goals defined in the Basics (BRFA-2020, 2008). Social and economic development is identified through risks and threats in such spheres as social, economic, science and technology, environmental management and environmental protection. The words “risks”, “threats” and “strategic” dominate in the document, which, in combination with the abundance of terms such as “national security”, “national interest” and “national priorities”, makes it difficult to separate security and development.

Notions of “national security”, “national interest”, “threats to national security” and “strategic national priorities” are not explained in the document, but they are all introduced in the Security Strategy (SNS-2020, 2009, Section I, item 6). “National security” is defined as the “protection of individuals, society and the state from internal and external threats, which allows for the provision of constitutional rights, freedoms, decent quality and standard of life of citizens, sovereignty, territorial integrity and sustainable development of the Russian Federation, the defence and security of the state” (SNS-2020, 2009, Section I, item 6). In this definition, there are two important messages. First, “national security” protects the needs of the individual, society and the state. But in general, as I discussed elsewhere (see Goes, 2017), the document strongly emphasizes the role of the state as a security provider and prioritizes traditional state values such as national defence and border protection. Second, security becomes a necessary condition for the sustainable development of the country.

The concept of “national interest” is defined as a “set of internal and external needs of the state in ensuring the security and sustainable development of the individual, society and the state” (SNS-2020, 2009, Section I, item 6). Thus, security is assigned to the state, whereas sustainable development concerns the “individual, society and the state”. This set is further clarified in the document. National interests are identified as the development of democracy and civil society; improving the competitiveness of the national economy; ensuring the inviolability of the constitutional order, territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Russian Federation; and turning the Russian Federation into a world power whose activity is aimed at maintaining strategic stability and mutually beneficial partnerships in a multipolar world (SNS-2020, 2009, Section III, item 21). National interests in the Arctic are specified in the Basics (BRFA-2020, 2008, Section II, item

I): the Arctic as a strategic resource base of the Russian Federation; the Arctic as a zone of peace and cooperation; the preservation of the unique ecological systems of the Arctic; and the usage of the Northern Sea Route.

The term “strategic national priorities” identifies “the most important areas of national security” (SNS-2020, 2009, Section I, item 6). According to the Security Strategy, these are the most important areas of security that affect three spheres: the constitutional rights and freedoms of citizens; sustainable socio-economic development; and sovereignty and territorial integrity. Thus, the concept of development is articulated as a part of the national security concept. But the connection between socio-economic development and security is exposed differently in the Basics. Thus, the goals and priorities of social and economic development are defined as the enlargement of the resource base to provide Russia with oil and gas resources, water resources and other strategic sources (BRFA-2020, 2008, Section III, item 6a). Meanwhile in the security sphere, development should be done in the direction of military, environmental, informational, science and technology, and international cooperation. It means that security and development are not the same and have different spheres and priorities.

The priorities of development are identified in three documents: the Security Strategy (SNS-2020, 2009, Section III, item 24), the Basics (BRFA-2020, 2008, Section III, item 7) and the Strategy of Development (SDAZ-2020, 2013, Section III, item 7). In the Security Strategy (SNS-2020, 2009), the priorities are identified in terms of “living standards”, “personal security”, “human capital” and “balanced consumption”. In the Basics (BRFA-2020, 2008), the priorities are identified in terms of “strategic resources”, “national security”, “defence”, “knowledge” and “technology”. The Strategy of Development (SDAZ-2020, 2013) operates by such terms as “economic development”, “social and economic development”, “sustainable development of fuel and energy complex”, “sustainable social and economic development”, “complex development”, “complex social and economic development”, and “sustainable innovative social and economic development”. Nonetheless, their application is very loose and no explanation is given as to what they mean and what the differences are between them. The document claims that the implementation of the strategy will provide a “comprehensive build-up of competitive advantages of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation in order to reinforce the position of the Russian Federation in the Arctic, strengthen international security, maintain peace and stability, as well as enhance international cooperation” (SDAZ-2020, 2013, Section V, item 32). Thus, changes are

needed for improving Russia's image in the international arena, and the state is the main value. In total, it is possible to conclude that the Strategy of Development (SDAZ-2020, 2013) is framed in terms of security with articulated connections to the state, military preparedness and border protection.

The framing of the Murmansk Strategy

The Murmansk Strategy (SSEDM-2025, 2010) is a product of the collective work of different experts – scientists, business representatives, public officials and NGOs. It was published in 2010, and thus it does not refer to the Strategy of Development (SDAZ-2020, 2013). Nonetheless, it takes into consideration other federal documents that were in power by that time. The Murmansk Strategy identifies ways and mechanisms for working with challenges, which are defined as existing risks and opportunities (SSEDM-2025, 2010: 33). The document operates by such words as “risks”, “opportunities” and “possibilities”. In several cases, headlines are accompanied by subheadings that clarify the content of chapter. For example, a headline “7. Mission (goals) and purposes of the authorities and vision of the Murmansk region” is complemented by a subheading “The region, how we see it, want it and can create it” (SSEDM-2025, 2010: 40). Another headline states, “8. Main directions of social and economic development of the Murmansk region”. A subheading clarifies, “Our action programme” (SSEDM-2025, 2010: 46). This application of pronouns and possessive pronouns demonstrates the existence of the collective “we” or actors of development. Those actors are named as the state, society, business, science and regional authorities, and the need for cooperation between them is emphasized (SSEDM-2025, 2010: 40).

Words like “human capital”, “human potential”, “mission” and “capabilities” are actively used in the text. The word “development” is applied on many occasions, including “sustainable development”, “spatial development”, “human potential development”, “social and economic development”, “urban development”, “complex development”, “social and cultural development” and “social development”. Clarification of the term “sustainable development” is given in relation to the environment: “sustainable, that is not leading to irreparable environmental consequences and not creating threats to the well-being of the next generations” (SSEDM-2025, 2010: 40). Principles of sustainable development such as the preservation of the environment, the efficient usage of resources, a sustainable settlement system, population preservation and cultural

development are thought of as main principles of development for the region (SSEDM-2025, 2010: 46). The word “priority” is also used in the Murmansk Strategy, but less intensively than in the federal documents. It was used in relation to the state, like “priorities of national interests” (SSEDM-2025, 2010: 25) or “priorities, plans and positions of federal authorities” (SSEDM-2025, 2010: 40). Mainly, it is applied in relation to environmental problems in the region. Once it was used in the document to define regional priorities. The Murmansk Strategy prioritizes “social stability, development and discovery of human potential (society and economy of capabilities) and modernization of the economy and society on the basis of innovation and knowledge” (SSEDM-2025, 2010: 46). Economic terms like “index”, “trends”, “market” and “micro-region” are widely applied in the document. The document also refers to the federal document “Concept of long-term social and economic development of the Russian Federation” (2008), which puts among its goals a high standard of human welfare, social well-being and consensus, the economics of leadership and innovations, the balance of spatial development, a globally competitive economy, economic freedom and justice, and the security of citizens and society (SSEDM-2025, 2010: 30-31). These goals would allow Russian economics to move from raw materials to an innovative, socially-oriented type of development.

The word “security” is carefully used in the Murmansk Strategy and is not dominating. Mainly, the term “environmental security” is applied. In relation to this, it is necessary to point out that the words “environment”, “ecology” and “ecosystem” frequently appear in the document. References are made to the “Strategic action plan on environmental protection of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation” (2009) and to the “Climate doctrine of the Russian Federation” (2009). Several times the word “security” is applied with the meaning of “safety”, especially in relation to transport and logistics, and emergency response. Mainly, the reference to state security is done through an articulation of the geographic location of the Murmansk region and its role in border protection. The term public security is also used in the document. The document also refers to the “Food security doctrine of the Russian Federation” (2010).

To sum up, the Murmansk Strategy (SSEDM-2025, 2010) is written in the language of economics and environment with a focus on human development and capabilities. Mostly, the document maps existing risks and identifies challenges, difficulties, opportunities and perspectives for the region.

Discussion

In the two previous sections, I analyzed the framing of “security” and “development” in official documents at the federal and regional levels. The application of three main variables – word selection, salience and silence – helped to demonstrate the specifics of the documents as well as differences in framing.

The central organizing idea (or value) of the federal documents is the state and its power and security. There is a difference between the documents written in 2008 (BRFA-2020) and in 2013 (SDAZ-2020). The framing of the document in 2008 does not have strong markers of security language, while the document from 2013 is written in terms of threats and risks and the main place belongs to national security. Even the Security Strategy (SNS-2020) from 2009, which was written with the aim of clarifying security terms and complements the law on security, has a balance between the language of security and development. It puts development for citizens on the agenda along with the state.

The Strategy of Development (SDAZ-2020, 2013) does not refer to the “Concept of a long-term social and economic development of the Russian Federation” (2008). The concept was created as a guideline for new documents, plans and indicators generated by the authorities in the field of development. The analysis of the SDAZ-2020 (2013) allows us to conclude that the strategy was written with the aim of framing the Arctic as an essential part of national security and promoting the state as the main security actor and beneficiary of development. The concept of development is presented as a part of the concept of national security. The needs and demands of other actors that are involved in the process of development are not articulated. Due to the definition of national security, it is assumed that the state represents individuals and society and thus is capable of recognizing the range of other demands in the sphere of not only security, but development as well.

This framing reveals two difficulties. The first one is related to the role of the state in the economy and security. As studies show (see Hoogensen Gjørsv, 2012; Currie-Alder et al., 2014), the state on its own is not capable of meeting the needs of different actors. For example, the Shtokman project was expected to start production in 2012, but due to economic and technical challenges, it was slowed down in 2012 and put on ice in 2015. Thus, despite all the promises given to the Murmansk region in relation to investments and economic growth, the Shtokman project never moved

forward from the planning phase. Shtokman Development AG, the company that was established in order to develop Shtokman, was abolished by Gazprom in July 2019, which put the full stop to the project (Staalesen, 2019). The talks about this giant state-controlled project created various expectations in the region and demonstrated differences in approaches. Some of the regional actors did not trust the promises given by the federal authorities and did not consider petroleum revenues as desirable for regional development (see Goes, 2017). Thus, if for the state Shtokman was a source of economic stability and national security, for some regional actors it was a source of insecurity and instability because it was state controlled.

The second difficulty is methodological in its nature. Framing development in the language of security creates some complications in extracting what is about to be changed and what values are important. The key documents on the Arctic have many connections with other legal acts, which makes it difficult to navigate between security and development. The concept of development expressed in security terms becomes superficial and less articulated because it is difficult to describe social and economic issues in the language of security.

The analysis of the Murmansk Strategy (SSEDM-2025, 2010) reveals another framing. The central organizing idea is around the human being and human capabilities. The document frames human beings as actors, who can and want to do something in the region. Human capital is presented as an object and subject of development. SSEDM-2025 (2010) is written in economic and development terms and makes direct reference to the “Concept of a long-term socio-economic development of the Russian Federation” as well as to the Basics (BRFA-2020, 2008). Even though the term “development” has strong connections to the field of environment, together with the language of economics that is applied in the document, it creates a nexus between a place where people live and where changes take place. Thus, the issue of responsibility appears on the agenda of the document. Direct reference to “national security” is omitted; nonetheless, the document provides a more nuanced picture of security. In particular, the focus on “human capital” and “human resources” places regional interpretations of development closer to Sen’s capability approach. As a result, the document reveals a human security perspective without the application of the term “human security”. People are articulated as a main value and changes are needed in order to make the region attractive for people to live in. This is particularly important when the Murmansk region has been struggling to attract a young labour force and keep the specialists

already working there. A process of out-migration started in the 1990s, and this tendency has remained a factor in the 21st century. The population has steadily declined from 1,164,600 in 1989 to 748,100 in 2019 (Murmanskstat, 2019). Overall, it is possible to conclude that the document reflects a general trend – the language of security belongs to the state and can be applied by federal authorities only. Nonetheless, the document provides an insight into how development and its related issues in the Arctic are framed. This analysis shows that development can be discussed in terms other than the language of security and that security approaches cannot be reduced to state security only.

Conclusions

In this article, I demonstrated connections between security and development in the context of the Russian Arctic. I discussed connections between these two concepts in the literature and concluded that values can be viewed as a bridge between these two concepts. With the application of a framing approach, I analyzed the federal document “Strategy of development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation and security provision until 2020” (SDAZ-2025, 2013) and the regional “Strategy of Socio-Economic Development of the Murmansk region until 2025” (SSEMD-2025, 2010). The analysis revealed that the connection between development and security exists and is even manifested in the name of the federal document. Nonetheless, this connection has some specific characteristics. The regional document is avoiding the usage of security language; meanwhile, the federal document is using security language to frame development in the Arctic.

An analysis of the connection between development and security in the Russian Arctic helps to reveal what is valued on the regional and federal levels and demonstrate the variety of visions. On the federal level, the answer to the questions “why do we need development” and “what do we want to protect” is the state. At the same time, on the regional level, the answer is human resources. The Murmansk Strategy makes people the main actors and beneficiaries of development, while acknowledging the state as the main security actor.

Overall, it is possible to conclude that there are different approaches to development and security in the Russian Arctic. Analysis of the documents issued on various levels gives a better understanding of what is going on in Russia. Regional approaches might differ from the one articulated on the

federal level. Thus, human security may not be articulated on the national agenda, but plays an important role at the regional level.

Notes

1. The “Concept of National Security of the Russian Federation” (CNS, 1997, Section 4) defined the Arctic as a crisis region in need of special state support. Meanwhile, the “Basics of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic until 2020 and for a further perspective” (BRFA-2020, 2008, Section II, item 4a) defines the Russian Arctic as a “strategic resource base” that provides the means for the socio-economic development of the country.
2. In 2008, one barrel cost 94 dollars. In 2000, it was 27 dollars per barrel (ES-2030, 2009: 3).

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32

Commentary

The Forgotten Spirit of Gorbachev

Benjamin Schaller

The Arctic, representing the shortest flight distance for strategic bombers and intercontinental missiles between the Soviet Union and North America, and with strategic nuclear submarines (SSBN) hiding deep below the Arctic ice, was a central arena in the nuclear standoff between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. The Arctic was not only home to strategic bombers, missile systems and nuclear submarines, but also to highly advanced early-warning radar and air defence systems, making the Arctic, for many years, one of the most heavily militarized regions in the world.

In a period of political détente, during the late 1980s and early 1990s, the East and West engaged in a number of initiatives of rapprochement. With the signing of important treaties, such as the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty) in 1987, both the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and the Charter of Paris in 1990, as well as the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I) in 1991, the foundation for a more cooperative and stable post-Cold War security order was laid. In 1987, during a trip to the Kola Peninsula, Mikhail Gorbachev, at the time the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, proposed to transform the Arctic into a “zone of peace”, in what later became known as the “Murmansk Initiative”. While his proposals for increased regional cooperation and cross-border people-to-people contacts found their realization in the establishment of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council in 1993 and the founding of the Arctic Council in 1996, his initiatives in the military security sphere, such as the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone (NWFZ) or restrictions on naval activities in the Arctic, never succeeded.

Today, 30 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, which marked the symbolic end of the ideological and geopolitical confrontation that had divided Europe and the world for more than 40 years, we unfortunately see

the return of great power politics to Europe and the Arctic region. The fundamentally opposing views of NATO and Russia regarding the past, present and future of the post-Cold War security order have become blatantly obvious on a number of occasions over the last couple of years. Be it through Vladimir Putin's speech at the Munich Security Conference in 2007, in which he fiercely criticized the hegemonic dominance and unilateral actions of the United States in world affairs and NATO's expansion to the East, in the Russo-Georgian War in 2008, in connection with the annexation of Crimea and the conflict in Eastern Ukraine, or through the decay of the nuclear and conventional arms control architecture that had ensured peace and stability in the world for so many years. In short, the idea of cooperative security has widely disappeared, and deterrence and the risk of a looming arms race have returned to the top of the security agenda.

These renewed tensions between East and West have also not failed to leave their mark on the otherwise rather cooperative Arctic security environment. While usually united by common economic interests and cooperation in addressing the numerous non-military security challenges of the region – for example, climate change, search and rescue or environmental protection – we today observe a growing military activity in the region, a more assertive force posture of Arctic states and an increasing suspicion regarding Russia's considerable military presence in the region. Earlier this year, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo openly attacked Russia for its military activities in the High North, including Russia's reopening of Cold War military bases as well as the deployment of military troops and hardware as “part of a pattern of aggressive Russian behaviour [that is] already leaving snow prints in the form of army boots”, and stressed that the United States will not allow the Arctic to become “a place of lawlessness”. These developments underline the growing risk of the fundamental disagreements between Russia and the West in other parts of the world spoiling the so far rather cooperative security environment in the High North. The increasing threat to the idea of the Arctic as “a zone of peace” does not – as some have previously suggested – derive from a scramble over natural resources or territorial disputes, but is clearly the result of the overall deterioration in NATO-Russia relations as Russia is increasingly challenging the existing post-Cold War security order.

A stop or reversal of this trend seems not in sight. The conventional arms control in Europe has been in a deadlock for more than ten years. The INF Treaty lies in ruins as Russia and the United States abandoned this for

security and stability, meaning that Russia and the West have openly returned to the deterrence logic that dominated the security agenda throughout the heights of the Cold War. Amid the increasingly confrontational attitudes between the East and West, one might wonder if we have forgotten the spirit of Gorbachev and the idea that security can be more than a simple zero-sum game.

In his 2018 documentary portrait “Meeting Gorbachev”, German film director Werner Herzog asks Gorbachev, who understands that his legacy of détente and nuclear disarmament is severely at risk, what he would wish to be written on his gravestone. Gorbachev, after briefly reflecting, simply replies, “We tried” (“Мы старались”). Let us make sure that his legacy in the sphere of conventional and nuclear arms control, as well as his vision of the Arctic as a “zone of peace”, does not sink into oblivion.

33

The War in Ukraine as a Critical Juncture: China, Russia, and Arctic Collaboration up to 2035

Liisa Kauppila & Sanna Kopra

The outbreak of the war in Ukraine in February 2022 marks a major watershed in Arctic politics. Declining West-Russia relations have transformative implications for the region's stability, practices of governance, and economic policies, including a potentially rapid green transition. Moreover, China's 'neutrality' in the West-Russia axis adds on to the high level of uncertainty about the future of the Arctic. Unsurprisingly, this dynamic has sparked a newfound interest in mapping the region's futures in an analytical and rigorous manner, and, consequently, spawned a growing pool of scenario analyses. Unlike most of these exercises, this article abandons the business-as-usual style of reasoning that guides the envisioning of predominantly alarming futures. Instead, it uses the futures research technique of backcasting to construct three scenarios on the continuation of the Arctic cooperation with Sino-Russian relations as the focus. More specifically, the article produces a set of alternative futures that – despite the differences in their actual content and ethos – all picture an Arctic of 2035 where at least the eight Arctic states collaborate regularly, and in which climate change mitigation and adaptation constitutes a key driver of collaboration. With this research strategy, the article seeks to contribute to the efforts to alleviate regional tensions by immersing the readers into a future world of possibilities and hope – despite our deep condemnation of Russia's war in Ukraine.

Introduction

Hardly any Arctic analyst could have imagined that the Arctic Council (AC), the key intergovernmental regional forum, would halt its work in early 2022. Although Russia's war in Ukraine has not spread to the Arctic, it nevertheless marks a major watershed in Arctic politics. Declining West-Russia relations will have transformative implications for the region's stability, governance, and economic policies, including a potentially rapid

green transition. Moreover, China's complicated status in the West-Russia axis adds to the high level of uncertainty about the future of the Arctic. Due to these reasons, there is a growing need to map the possible dynamics of the post-February 24 Arctic region, which can be seen in a newfound interest in scenario- building (e.g. Riedel et al., 2022; York, 2022). Given the dim prospects for peaceful coexistence, it is unsurprising that these scenarios offer little, if any, hope for the advocates of the global Arctic.

Yet, and despite our deep condemnation of Russia's brutal war in Ukraine, we argue that cooperation is a *necessity* in a global world. Therefore, we offer a different take and construct three scenarios for the Arctic collaboration up to 2035 with the Sino-Russo relations at the core. This way, we seek to empower Arctic stakeholders to consider different means that could enable more encompassing Arctic cooperation to continue in the future.

Although China does not possess sovereignty in the Arctic, it has emerged as one of its key stakeholders during the past decade (e.g. Bisley, Gad & Zeuthen, 2018; Kauppila & Kopra, 2021; Koivurova & Kopra, 2020). Moreover, its engagement can be anticipated to *alter* the Arctic dynamics by the mid-century (Kauppila & Kopra, 2022). Against this backdrop, and given that Russia is the largest Arctic country, it is clear that Sino-Russo relations have decisive implications for the entire region's dynamic (e.g. Kirchberger et al., 2022). Yet, until now, rigorous futures-oriented studies mapping the alternative ways in which their changing relationship might affect Arctic politics have been missing – a particularly striking gap in the literature of the post-February 24 world. By treating the outbreak of the war as a major yet different watershed in all three scenarios, we ponder, in a pluralistic manner, various directions into which the Sino-Russo relations in the Arctic may develop and that way, shape the regional collaboration within the next 13 years.

To escape the business-as-usual trap that currently colours most Arctic scenarios with realist undertones, this study utilizes a futures research technique of backcasting, which encourages imagination and anticipation of great changes clearly different from what seems probable from today's vantage point (Tuominen et al., 2014). Implicitly, backcasting thus defies the attempts to *foresee* the future and offers a 'recipe for people who hate to predict' (Robinson, 1990). By using 2035 as the endpoint of our exercise, we build scenarios that constitute medium- to long-term futures in global politics. This way, we ponder sequences of events that have a considerable

scope of time to unfold, and which are cognitively manageable for readers. In terms of data, we base this intellectual exercise on our previous Arctic research, related scenario work, and media materials.

Our argumentation proceeds as follows. Next, we introduce our five-step scenario-building methodology and theories that form the backbone of the alternative futures. Then, we review the Sino-Russian relationship in the Arctic and beyond and briefly introduce the geopolitical dynamics of today's Arctic. Next, we proceed to formulate the scenario endpoints by identifying the key elements of alternative Arctic futures in 2035. After that, we seek pathways – 'logical sequences of events' (Jantsch, 1967) – from 2035 to 2022, and present the scenarios in a narrative form. Finally, we conclude that the technique of backcasting is an empowering tool to discuss – and hopefully advance – desirable Arctic futures.

Methodological and theoretical framework

Our scenario-building approach is based on a futures research technique of *pluralistic backcasting* (Tuominen et al., 2014), which starts by defining several possible scenario endpoints and then constructs logical pathways from the future to the present. To cover cooperation-based futures only, we also drew inspiration from a specific backcasting method, *participatory backcasting from value principles*, whose very first step is to draft a set of minimum requirements that characterize all endpoints (Kauppila, 2018). This way we crafted an approach that produces a set of scenarios that all meet certain shared defining principles but which yet differ from each other in their actual content. In formulating the endpoints and bridging the gap between the future and the present, we relied on the methodological insights of our previous study (Kauppila & Kopra, 2022), in which the particular backcasting method, in turn, was inspired, *inter alia*, by Tuominen et al. (2014) and O'Neill et al. (2020).

We implemented the scenario-building process in five steps. In Step One, we identified forces of change that may shape the futures of the Arctic collaboration and the Sino-Russian relations in particular by 2035. Without these insights, it would have been impossible to formulate the scenario endpoints in Step Two and Step Three: it was necessary to understand what could plausibly take place during the timeframe of the exercise. In Step Two, we defined collaboration and the shared commitment to climate change mitigation as the guiding principles of our scenarios, and in Step Three, we used the futures table method to build three alternative hypothetical futures of 2035. In Step Four, we 'worked backwards'

(Robinson, 1990: 820) from 2035 to the present (2022) by pondering imaginary future developments that would ‘signpost’ (Bengston, Westphal & Dockry, 2020) the path from the future to the present. In Step Five, we turned the futures table and the signposts into narratives with immersive elements to facilitate ‘mental time travel’ (Cuhls, 2017).

To create a variety of scenarios for the Arctic collaboration of 2035 with a special focus on Sino- Russo relations, we relied on insights from three IR theories: realism, liberalism, and relationalism. These theories – or, rather, *families of theories* – offer coherent explanations for social change by suggesting alternative models of interaction between states. As we have suggested elsewhere (Kauppila & Kopra, 2022), together they form a nuanced and pluralistic take on global life. First, realism assumes that international politics is about struggles for (hard) power and hence the potential for conflict can never be avoided. Although diplomacy is an important tool in balancing states’ competing interests, military force is the most important asset in a system of self-help; states rely on their own capabilities, especially in terms of military resources, in their attempts to maximize their national interests. In such a system, solidarist cooperation among states is rare, if not impossible (e.g. Mearsheimer, 2001). Second, liberalism assumes that human beings are perfectible and ideas matter in world politics. Liberalism is interested in both state and non-state agency in politics and economics and believes that states can cooperate – and it is indeed in their interest to do so to resolve wicked global problems (e.g. Keohane & Nye, 2012). Third, relationalism emphasizes the significance of establishing, maintaining, and sustaining actor-to- actor relationships by, for example, managing one’s reputational profile (e.g. Kavalski, 2018). The Chinese faction of the relational school departs from inherently Eurocentric bias and collective memories of the postwar United States embedded in the mainstream IR theories (e.g. Qin, 2018), and thus offers a fruitful starting point for anticipating possible future developments with China at the core.

Building the scenarios

This section provides a step-by-step take on the process of building scenarios for the Arctic collaboration up to 2035 with a special focus on the Sino-Russo relations.

Step 1: Scanning the present: China and Russia in the Arctic and beyond

Today, three key megatrends – climate change, globalization, and power transition – make the future of the Arctic open to alternative developments

(Kauppila & Kopra, 2022). As the outbreak of Russia's war in Ukraine has sadly demonstrated, the Arctic collaboration is not isolated from global developments and tensions. Particularly, the seven other Arctic states paused their collaboration with Russia, the current chair of the AC, in early March 2022 as a form of critique of Russia's illegal military actions (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2022a). In early June 2022, however, seven Arctic states announced that they will resume the AC's important work on environmental protection and sustainable development without Russia's participation (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2022b). Moreover, Finland and Sweden applied for NATO membership in May 2022 – a clear signal of the changing security dynamics of the Arctic (e.g. Urban, 2022). As this paper elaborates on the future Arctic collaboration with a special focus on the Sino-Russo ties, this section reviews the key aspects of that relationship in the past and the present.

In the first half of the 1900s, socialist movements strengthened in Eurasia, and the Soviet Union (1922) and the People's Republic of China were established (1949). Despite the bilateral Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance (1950), the relationship between the newly founded socialist states was complicated due to Mao's distrust of Stalin, and his successor Khrushchev (Shen & Xia, 2015). In the 1950s and 1960s, the Sino-Soviet relations deteriorated due to different interpretations of Marxism-Leninism and Mao's 'manipulation' and exaggeration of these differences for domestic gains, and the two countries had political disagreements over the Korean war, the Sino-Indian border war, and the Cuban missile crisis, for instance (Li, 2012). What became known as the Sino-Soviet split continued until the 1980s, when Gorbachev sought to normalize the relationship. Yet, the Chinese were skeptical of Gorbachev's *perestroika* and *glasnost* policies, and the collapse of the Soviet Union was seen as a warning example of what could happen in China (Radchenko, 2014: 159–197).

Due to historical distrust, the relationship between China and Russia remains complicated. Driven by shared antipathy toward the West and NATO, however, they have organized bilateral naval exercises since 2012 (cf. Paul, 2019). On the one hand, Russia has welcomed China's increasing economic interests in the Russian Arctic; on the other hand, Moscow does not want to let China play a strong political role in its northern backyard (e.g. Sørensen & Kilmenko, 2017). Following Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014, however, Russia had to cope with economic sanctions that stopped Western cash flows to its Arctic energy and infrastructure projects: it

turned to the Chinese and started to emphasize its pivot to Asia (e.g. Gabuev, 2016). In 2013, China National Petroleum Corporation invested in the Novatek-run Yamal Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Project, and in 2016, China Silk Road Fund also joined the scheme (Novatek, 2020a). Since China added its vision of the Polar Silk Road (冰上丝绸之路) to Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative in 2017 (State Council of the PRC, 2017), the two countries have intensified their economic and scientific cooperation in the Arctic. For example, in 2017, Chinese companies joined the Arctic LNG 2 Project (Novatek, 2020b).

Since the late 2010s, the increasing great power rivalry between China and the United States has tightened Sino-Russo relations. In early February 2022, Vladimir Putin visited Beijing for the inauguration of the Winter Olympics and discussed a wide range of global issues with Xi Jinping. In particular, Putin and Xi released a joint statement reassuring that their strong partnership has 'no limits' and unveiled new deals on energy and wheat imports. The Arctic was also explicitly mentioned in the document, which emphasized the devotion to intensify 'practical cooperation for the sustainable development of the Arctic' (President of Russia, 2022). In contrast to the West, which very soon strongly condemned Putin's illegal invasion of Ukraine, China found it difficult to choose its side in the war, and emphasized 'objectivity' (e.g. Qin, 2022). While Putin's aggression was clearly a violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity – some of China's key foreign policy principles – China has criticized Western sanctions against Russia and Belarus (Xi, 2022). In line with China's rhetoric support for Moscow, many Chinese corporations continue their operations in Russia.

Step 2: Drafting the basic principles

In Step Two, we formulated rough frames that make our scenario endpoints/future states of 2035 different from what current business-as-usual scenarios would suggest. More specifically, we identified two conditions that all scenario endpoints should meet: 1) Arctic collaboration at least among the Arctic Eight (A8)¹ as a precondition, and 2) a shared interest and commitment to mitigate and adapt to climate change as a (pragmatic) primary driver for the collaboration.

In the spirit of the United Nations Charter, states have a general responsibility to cooperate and contribute to the solutions of common problems and to promote international peace and security, prosperity, and well-being (Perrez, 2000). Since the end of the Cold War, collaboration has

indeed constituted the key organizing element of the Arctic, and environmental protection has lied at the core of it (e.g. Exner-Pirot, 2013). As the collaboration among A8 has stopped altogether due to Russia's war in Ukraine, they currently cannot fulfill this 'responsibility' at a regional level. This state of affairs does not only increase the risk of an outbreak of military conflict in the region but also makes the dealing with essential ecological and social problems, such as those of Indigenous communities living across the Sápmi, and the reduction of black carbon, very difficult, if not impossible. Therefore, the resumption of regional forms of collaboration constitutes a necessary condition for solving the key concerns of the Arctic. Notably, the general responsibility to collaborate does not entail *how* states should act or organize their relations and, therefore, drivers of collaboration vary from scenario to scenario.

Furthermore, we pondered what could plausibly enable the resumption of collaboration among A8, and more broadly, among the key Arctic actors. Climate change mitigation seemed the most likely driver for interstate collaboration in the future Arctic, where climate change proceeds much faster than in other parts of the globe and constitutes a critical security threat, causing 'extreme consequences for Arctic communities and local ecosystems' (Landrum & Holland, 2020: 7). Since the end of the Cold War, concerns over environmental degradation have already constituted a key driver of regional cooperation in the Arctic, as the mandate of the AC illustrates: the council focuses on sustainable development and environmental protection, and excludes military matters (AC, 1996). Simply put, the Arctic community would not start from scratch in terms of elevating climate change mitigation and adaptation into a cornerstone of collaboration, which could, in turn, plausibly spread to other contexts and that way reduce the risk of war. Most importantly, this functional basis for cooperation would also appeal to authoritarian states, such as China and Russia, who have pledged to pursue carbon neutrality by 2060 (cf. Russian News Agency, 2021; Xi, 2020).

Step 3: Constructing alternative futures with a futures table method

In Step Three, we organized different elements of our scenario endpoints into coherent wholes by utilizing the futures table method. Developed from a Field Anomaly Relaxation method (e.g. Coyle, 2020), futures table is a basic matrix with variables (key uncertainties) on the vertical row and 'values' – alternative entries for variables – organized under a common denominator (here IR theory) on the horizontal row. Our futures table

builds on the matrix created by Kauppila and Kopra (2022) and elaborates on the composition of regional life in the Arctic of 2035 from political, economic, and normative perspectives (Table 1).

Variable 1: The ethos of regional life

The ethos of regional life stems directly from the core tenets of those IR theories that each scenario endpoint reflects. In a realist Arctic of 2035, *competition* and *state survival* guide state behavior, whereas in a liberal scenario, *cooperation* is the order of the day: states collaborate extensively and not only to make selfish gains benefiting their government and nation. In a relationalist Arctic of 2035, states collaborate by returning favors in the spirit of *reciprocity* – or the Chinese idea of *guanxi*.

The nature of the Sino-Russo relationship in the Arctic of 2035 varies significantly depending on what the ethos of regional life is like. In the realist scenario, the primacy of competition and state survival means that although the bilateral relationship between the two Eastern powers may be tight, it is not necessarily based on genuine trust or even true like-mindedness. Instead, their partnership seeks to promote the survival of both authoritarian states but does not bind them together to advance anything that is beyond either side's immediate national interests. In the liberalist scenario, the Sino-Russian relationship is more cooperative, and the two countries seek to institutionalize Arctic forms of collaboration. In a relationalist Arctic of 2035, the Chinese and Russian Arctic actors – and especially the leading elites of both countries – have thick interpersonal relations which they utilize to seek trade-offs in Arctic economies and governance.

Variable 2: Regional power distribution

A realist Arctic of 2035 is characterized by *bipolar regional order*: the balance of power between the West and the East Arctic, i.e. the US-led camp and Russia. Due to the shared security risks caused by climate change, however, there are no military conflicts but states are bound to manage these risks together. In a liberalist Arctic of 2035, regional power is more *evenly distributed*: in addition to the US and Russia, also smaller Arctic states are influential in regional institutions seeking to facilitate cooperation on climate change mitigation, for instance. In a relationalist Arctic of 2035, *China's role is most decisive* due to its status as the largest greenhouse gas emitter and one of the largest economies, which gives it unrivaled leverage to participate in 'games of *guanxi*' (Solomon, 1995) in global climate

politics and beyond. Yet the region itself is *multinodal*: it is a fabric of actor-to-actor networks whose nodes can be located either within or outside the geographic Arctic region (cf. Womack, 2014; Kauppila, 2022).

As for the Sino-Russian relations, the realist scenario pictures an authoritarian partnership motivated by shared antipathy against the West. Given the rather deep distrust between China and Russia, however, Moscow does not allow China to increase its political role in the Arctic. In a liberalist Arctic of 2035, regional power is distributed via institutions in which especially Russia, but potentially also China, bargain over the means and costs of climate actions. In a relationalist scenario, China's extensive leverage allows it to pave the ground for its authoritarian partner Russia's participation in Arctic governance.

Variables 3 and 4: The key value of regional life and the driver of climate change mitigation and adaptation

Each of the chosen IR theories suggests a distinct take on the key values that guide regional life: *national security* (realism), *individual liberty* (liberalism), and *value pluralism* (relationalism). These ideals explain why a shared effort to mitigate and adapt to climate change has emerged into a cornerstone of states' coexistence in each scenario. In a realist Arctic of 2035, *prevention of climate-related hazards* drives states' commitment to climate change mitigation: states realize that it is in their selfish interests to collaborate to prevent global ecological catastrophes that pose risks to national security. In a liberalist Arctic of 2035, *pursuit for human wellbeing* is a fundamental motivation for states to jointly advance climate change mitigation: it is realized that liberty of individuals is globally at stake if the effects of the climate crisis on humankind, nature, and the global markets cannot be mitigated. In a relationalist Arctic of 2035, actors advance climate change mitigation to facilitate *harmonious coexistence of civilizations*, on the condition that all states can engage in global life in a manner that manifests their individual and distinct foundational values.

As for the Sino-Russian Arctic relations, the realist key value of national security in the Arctic of 2035 implies the continuance of the business-as-usual path. In response to accelerating climate change, the Eastern powers maintain bilateral cooperation for broadly understood security reasons, especially to manage and adapt to climate-related hazards. A Sino-Russian relationship based on the liberalist value of individual liberty and the pursuit for human wellbeing, in turn, assumes that in 2035 health and social impacts of climate change are recognized in both countries. Although this

may feel unlikely from the vantage point of today, we underline that democratization is not a necessary precondition for this kind of future to unfold: environmental awareness is already growing rapidly in China (e.g. Sternfeld, 2017), especially among the middle-class that is politically the most important group in the country. In the relationalist scenario, China and Russia do not necessarily share a common normative basis but they maintain that recognition of value pluralism – and not choosing sides based on normative arguments – gives them the most room to maneuver in international affairs, including in Arctic politics.

Variables 5 and 6: Key actors and regional governance

From the viewpoint of realism, states are the key actors in international politics at a global and regional level. Therefore, in a realist Arctic of 2035 *states possessing sovereignty over waters and lands above the Arctic Circle* constitute the key actors of Arctic collaboration. Motivated by the shared interest to prevent climate-related hazards and conflicts, the A8 are compelled to establish *bilateral and minilateral agreements* to manage geoengineering projects and other necessary means to mitigate the impacts of climate change. Although non-Arctic China is not formally included in all these minilateral arrangements, the country's status as the world's biggest carbon emitter means that it is often accepted as an observer. While liberalism finds the agency of states important, it also emphasizes the role of international institutions, corporations, and non-governmental organizations in global politics. In a liberalist Arctic of 2035, thus, key actors include *states (both Arctic and non-Arctic)*, *non-governmental organizations*, and *local communities*, whose cooperation to mitigate climate change is institutionalized with the establishment of *multilateral treaties* and *intergovernmental forums*. Given the respect for liberal values, the voice of *Indigenous peoples* can be expected to be heard in those forums. Relationalism, in contrast, does not fully subscribe to the idea of Arctic/non-Arctic states, and, therefore, not only the *traditional Arctic* but also (geographically) *external actors* can be imagined to advance collaboration based on climate change mitigation at a regional context. *China's role is decisive*: given its unrivaled ability to mitigate climate change, China is powerful in those *formal and informal forums* and *actor-to-actor networks* in which Arctic affairs are debated.

As for the Sino-Russo Arctic relations, the realist scenario proposes that Russia seeks to collaborate with China whenever it is in Russia's own interests to get back up from its eastern partner: for Russia, China is either

a key Arctic stakeholder or a non-Arctic country. In a liberalist Arctic of 2035, China and Russia contribute actively to the establishment and workings of regional institutional arrangements on climate change mitigation and adaptation, but their mutual collaboration is somewhat downgraded from its golden days since the newly-elected liberal government of Russia is, again, pivoting to the West. In a relationalist Arctic of 2035, in contrast, the Sino-Russian partnership is particularly influential putting together various informal actor-to-actor networks shaping regional dynamics.

Variable 7: Regional economic policy/ideology

In the spirit of self-help, states advance *protectionism* in a realist Arctic of 2035. Given their pursuit to prevent dangerous climate change, states invest in their domestic battery industry and non-fossil energy, and compete for critical minerals needed in green technologies. In a liberalist Arctic of 2035, a *mixture of liberal and welfare capitalist* economic policies is guided by the shared commitment to mitigate climate change, and companies seek to make profits via investments in low-carbon technologies and renewables needed for the green transition. Traditional livelihoods, virtual tourism, and scientific cooperation also play an important role in the diverse regional economy. In light of the strong global role of China and the participation of an equally authoritarian Russia in the relationalist scenario, the economy of the Arctic of 2035 is shaped by a *mixture of authoritarian, welfare and liberal capitalisms*. Especially the Chinese government uses carrots and sticks to guide its companies toward green practices and to develop sustainable Arctic technologies. Although reputational gains motivate all companies to mitigate climate change, they invest extensively in Arctic shipping, exploitation of natural resources and tourism.

As for the Sino-Russo Arctic relations in 2035, the realist scenario anticipates a marriage of convenience advancing both states' economic greed: more specifically, China's interest in Russia's LNG, minerals and shipping lanes via the Northern Sea Route, and Russia's dependence on Chinese Arctic investments. At the same time, the competition over critical minerals embedded in the Arctic Ocean's seabed intensifies, which inflames traditional distrust between Beijing and Moscow. In the liberalist scenario, Chinese and Russian companies collaborate in resource extraction, on the basis of market mechanisms that support investments in green growth. In a relationalist Arctic of 2035, Chinese and Russian companies collaborate to develop green technologies for Arctic shipping, for instance. For

reputational reasons, the Chinese government allows its companies to collaborate only with those Russian companies that have a ‘green label’.

Table 1. The political, economic, and normative foundations of the Arctic of 2035

Variable	1. Realism	2. Liberalism	3. Relationalism
1) The Ethos of Regional Life	Competition, state survival	Cooperation	<i>Guanxi</i> , reciprocity
2) Regional Power Distribution	Bipolarity	Multipolarity	Multinodality, China as a global superpower
3) The Key Value	National security	Individual Liberty	Value pluralism
4) The Driver for Shared Efforts to Mitigate and Adapt to Climate Change	Prevention of climate- related hazards	Pursuit for human wellbeing	Pursuit for harmonious coexistence of civilizations
5) Key Actors	Arctic states	Arctic and non-Arctic states, non-governmental organizations, Indigenous peoples	Non-Arctic (especially Chinese) and Arctic governments, companies
6) Regional Governance	Issue-specific bilateral and minilateral contracts	Intergovernmental forums, multilateral treaties	Informal and formal forums, actor-to-actor networks
7) Regional Economic Policy/Ideology	Protectionism	Mixture of liberal capitalism and welfare capitalism	Mixture of authoritarian capitalism, welfare capitalism and liberal capitalism

Step 4: Working backwards: Identifying key changes

In Step Four, we identified key changes that make each scenario endpoint plausible. Given the scale of change – an evolution from halted

cooperation to the resumption of (all-encompassing) Arctic collaboration – suggested in our scenarios, we considered this task as the most important phase of the process.

To construct a plausible path that entails elements of the Sino-Russo relations and the Arctic dynamics in particular, we identified necessary and sufficient changes in Russia, China, and the Arctic West, that is, the US-led A7. While we found it necessary that a *leadership change in Russia* would take place in all scenarios, the content and timing of this key event varied across our alternative futures. Although radical changes shaking the status of the current political elites and factions in China were not needed, we considered it necessary to imagine chains of events that explain why China-Arctic West-relations are functional enough in 2035 – given the growing mistrust that characterizes the current dynamic.

Scenario One (Realism)

- Notable Chinese investments in the Russian Arctic
- Levying of long-lasting Western sanctions on both Russia and China
- Emergence of a widespread (health) crisis caused by melting of the Arctic
- Signing of a Ukraine peace deal with concessions made by the Russian authoritarian government
- Establishment of bi- and minilateral forums of collaboration on climate change mitigation

Scenario Two (Liberalism)

- Withdrawal of Chinese companies from Russia
- Collapse of the authoritarian regime in Russia
- Radical reversal of Ukraine policy by a liberal Russian government
- Acceleration of China's greenification and rise into a global climate leader
- Intensification of Sino-Russian collaboration in more sustainable industries
- Establishment of new multilateral Arctic forums on climate change mitigation

Scenario Three (Relationalism)

- (Non-radical) leadership change in Russia
- Gradual resuming of business collaboration through China's active mediating role
- Growing climate-consciousness of the Chinese middle-class
- China's large charm offensive campaign
- China's rise into a global climate leader

Step 5: Writing up the scenarios: Narratives

In Step Five, we formulated narratives by writing up and integrating the futures table (Step Three) and the identified necessary changes (Step Four). Since scenarios are more than sums of their parts, it is only at this stage that the plausibility of each alternative future can be evaluated. Adding a fictional component makes this task easier: by facilitating mental time travel, fictive immersion helps to forget the present reality that narrows one's cognitive ability to think beyond business-as-usual pathways.

Scenario One: Climate hazards? Not in our backyards!

The Arctic of 2035 is a theatre of fierce competition between the US-led Arctic West, Russia, and the rest of the world. Because the extreme temperatures and weather patterns make the Arctic livelihoods and operations very risky, Arctic countries have negotiated limited issue-specific bilateral and minilateral arrangements to manage geoengineering and other technology-driven efforts to hurriedly mitigate the impacts of climate change on their national security. Although an external actor in the Arctic, China – Russia's authoritarian partner, a technology superpower and the biggest carbon emitter in the world – is often invited to these negotiation tables, especially if Russia needs backup. Although more comprehensive collective mitigation strategies are rare and protectionist economic policies further limit the scope of their mutual collaboration, Arctic stakeholders seek to secure the survival of the state by investing in regional early warning systems and other means for the prevention and adaptation to climate hazards harming social stability in their respective countries. As the outbreak of an armed conflict would severely downplay these efforts, states take drastic actions to prevent the escalation of military tensions despite notable ideological clashes and tensions arising from resource extraction.

After Russia attacked Ukraine in the early 2020s, the relationship between the West, Russia, and China deteriorated sharply for many years. Due to long-term economic sanctions, the economy of Russia was close to collapse. Infuriating the West, Chinese state-owned companies made notable investments in the energy and mineral projects of the Russian Arctic to secure the supply of critical raw materials for the country's industry and military. Although the war did not spread to the Arctic, the new kind of Cold War period characterized by frequent hybrid influencing operations made all international collaboration, including the Arctic, very troublesome. While unprecedented heatwaves in both polar regions caused alarm among climate scientists, and local communities struggled with extreme weather events, governments were occupied with strengthening their military capabilities. In the late 2020s, however, a lethal virus – often called the ‘Siberia virus’ – unknown to humanity emerged from the thawing permafrost in northern Russia and tens of thousands of people died within a month. Recalling the huge economic and humanitarian losses caused by the prolonged Coronavirus pandemic in the first half of the decade, the Russian government had no choice but to make concessions to hostile operations started by their predecessors and invite their Arctic neighbors and China to discuss strict collective means to stop the emerging pandemic. After Russia signed a Ukraine peace deal and agreed to fund the reconstruction of Ukrainian society, issue-specific Arctic collaboration continued especially in the field of deep-sea mining and the reduction of black carbon. Some Western companies were also eager to resume their investments in Russia.

Scenario Two: Let humankind enjoy green prosperity and peace

Driven by a shared goal to advance human well-being in the face of a pressing climate crisis, the Arctic collaboration of 2035 is characterized by the spirit of multilateralism among the Arctic and non-Arctic states and non-governmental organizations. The willingness to mitigate climate change underpins vivid political and economic cooperation in many newly established intergovernmental forums, economic platforms, and other institutional arrangements. Local Arctic communities, and Especially Indigenous groups, enthusiastically seek to get their voices heard in public debates about desirable political and economic means to reduce emissions. As the Chinese government pursues global climate leadership as a key component of its status as a responsible great power, and the Republic of Russia's newly elected liberal majority government seeks to consolidate its relations with the rest of the world, Beijing and Moscow also actively

contribute to these discussions. Both seek to introduce their best practices to other Arctic states, with whom they have well-functioning economic relations. All in all, social norms related to climate change have instigated a global ‘we- feeling’ and shared understandings of the urgency to protect humankind from ecological crises.

While Russia’s attack on Ukraine stopped Arctic collaboration for a few years in the early 2020s, the situation started to normalize in the mid-decade with an uprising and the collapse of the authoritarian regime in Russia. A central driver for these developments was a large-scale withdrawal of Chinese companies from economic collaboration with Russia, motivated by their fear of Western sanctions and security concerns. This not only closed the door on tourism but also stopped the flow of luxury products for Russian elites. To respond to the vocal demands of elites to get back to their consumption-based lifestyles, the new government sought to normalize its international relations as quickly as possible. Therefore, they agreed to establish the International Criminal Tribunal for the Ukraine War to investigate and prosecute suspects for the genocide. Deeply concerned about the projected impacts of climate change on China’s food security and societal stability, the Chinese government intensified its active measures toward green transition and, by the end of the 2020s, sought climate leadership at a global level. In the Arctic, the Chinese companies never resumed their participation in Russian fossil energy projects but the two countries looked for opportunities in Arctic science, renewables industry, and tourism, and in the extraction of critical minerals needed for green transition. To respond to global concerns over the future of the melting Arctic, the *Global Arctic Forum* was established in the early 2030s to coordinate scientific, political, and economic efforts toward just green transition.

Scenario Three: Snow dragon’s charm offensive

The Arctic collaboration of 2035 is characterized by the strong role of China, a country with the most to offer in the games of guanxi in a world of climate crisis. It uses its economic leverage and unrivaled ability to shape the implementation of climate change mitigation efforts as a currency in its relations with all Arctic states, sometimes to secure the inclusion of its authoritarian partner Russia, the largest Arctic country whose collaboration with the West is still somewhat plagued by the disastrous wars of the 2020s. Generally, Arctic stakeholders make their foreign policy choices on regional affairs less on normative but more on functional grounds: this makes it

possible to coexist in a world of value pluralism. Although the shared interest in climate change mitigation has brought all key actors together to the same Arctic table, enabled East-West collaboration in formal and informal forums and actor-to-actor networks, and mitigated the risk of an Arctic war, clashes of values and related occasional tensions between the authoritarian and democratic states – and even among them – cannot be avoided.

After a successful but not radical leadership change in Russia in the context of the early 2020s war in Ukraine, limited business collaboration between the Arctic West and East gradually resumed. China's mediating role was crucial, as the country's companies collaborated with both sides throughout the process. Although the 'neutral' stance on Russia's war in Ukraine had deepened the damage to China's already questionable reputational profile, the country managed to prevent an outright collapse of its overseas public image in the Arctic: in the mid- and late-2020s, it carried out an unprecedented charm offensive, a massive ecotechnology campaign *Green Innovation 2030* (绿色的创新2030) targeted at small Arctic communities and developing countries, which updated China's panda diplomacy to the age of the climate crisis. Domestically, China's ever-growing middle-class became more conscious of the health, economic, and social impacts of climate change, and consequently, put pressure on the government, which soon emerged as a global leader in the war against climate change. In the early 2030s, the new-found climate leader China was able to bargain and pave the ground for its authoritarian partner Russia to return to forums of Arctic governance, which, by then, were primarily organized around climate change-related norms.

Conclusion

In a response to Russia's war in Ukraine, the seven other Arctic states have concluded their (environmental) cooperation with Russia. When peace in Ukraine will be re-established, Arctic interstate cooperation must be resumed. Otherwise, the future of the Arctic may be catastrophic given the accelerating pace of climate change, looming health security crises, and other risks whose tackling requires all-encompassing collaboration, including advancing Indigenous rights. We have anticipated three alternative sequences of events through which extensive Arctic collaboration could resume by 2035. We have focused, in particular, on the role of the Sino-Russo relations in this process since it constitutes one of its key driving forces.

To understand the potential for a regional transformation in a rigorous, analytical and pluralistic manner, we utilized a backcasting-based scenario methodology, which allows for radical changes to be imagined and their plausibility to be tested by pondering whether – and how – they could actually unfold. Although this approach can produce a wider variety of scenarios, and perhaps more optimistic ones, it is important to underline that not all *paths* leading to Arctic futures with resumed collaboration are desirable themselves: sometimes a change for the better is not possible without drastic actions, crises, and shocks that themselves are undesirable. In this exercise, especially Scenario One has highly undesirable elements.

Ultimately, this article is an effort to facilitate peaceful future coexistence in a region that has once been considered a rare international zone of peace. The future is not predetermined but something that human actions profoundly shape – even if its course seems grim and coloured with shades of gray only.

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Notes

1. Canada, Denmark via Greenland, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Russia, and the United States.

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34

Can Cooperation Be Restored?

Pavel Devyatkin

Despite the breakdown of relations between Russia and the seven other Arctic states, there is still limited room to restore cooperation today – primarily between non-state actors. As the Arctic faces a climate emergency that threatens the whole world, cooperation in research to understand the dramatic changes unfolding in the region, in environmental protection, and in joint climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts remain imperative for all involved.

In the context of the pause of the Arctic Council (AC), cooperation between non-state actors may be the most important form of cooperation now. Science and citizen diplomacy remain important. Researchers, Indigenous peoples, non-governmental organizations, and civil societies may be able to influence states to reignite intergovernmental cooperation as such non-state actors and non-aligned states pressured the superpowers during the Cold War to converge on issues of common interest – especially around climate change and environmental protection. The Cold War holds many lessons for the contemporary situation and thinking about restoring cooperation in the midst of steep political tensions.

The freezing of state-to-state cooperation: Russian reactions

We are witnessing a severing of state-to-state cooperation after Russia's military actions in Ukraine. Right up until February 24, 2022, there was effective interstate circumpolar cooperation across various institutions and frameworks. Even just the day before, on February 23, 2022, Russia's ambassador to Norway read an opening speech written by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov at the Kirkenes Conference in the Norwegian Arctic. The speech mentioned "mutual assistance and good-neighborly relations" in the Arctic and complimented the Kirkenes conference as a setting for "constructive and depoliticized discussion of the pressing issues of international cooperation" (Lavrov, 2022).

From my experience as an American scholar based in Russia during this volatile period, I believe most Russian decision makers would still be

supportive of Arctic cooperation, but government- level cooperation, such as collaboration between state funded scientists, is more difficult than ever. Some Russian decision makers are wholly pessimistic about the return of cooperation. Alexey Drobinin, director of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs' (MFA) policy planning department, said, "The period of constructive cooperation between Russia and Western countries is gone for good, regardless of the outcome of Russia's special operation in Ukraine" (TASS, 2022).

After seven of the AC states boycotted Russia's AC chairmanship in March, Nikolay Korchunov, Russia's Senior Arctic Official and Arctic Ambassador, called the pause "regrettable" and warned that it would pose "risks and challenges to soft security" (Dickie, 2022). Korchunov stressed that Arctic cooperation "should not be subject to the spill-over effect of any extra-regional events." Korchunov said, "it is of utmost importance to safeguard the project activities of the Arctic Council in order to be able to pick up where we paused and step up cooperation" (ibid).

Evidently, Russia places great importance on its position in the AC. Russian experts and diplomats have said Russia's exclusion from it is counterproductive and irrational. Russian Ambassador to the United States, Anatoly Antonov, and Minister of Natural Resources, Alexander Kozlov, have gone as far as calling it illegitimate and claiming that the boycott violates the principles of consensus given that Russia is the chair of the AC during this period (RIA Novosti, 2022). Russian and international scientists have also drawn attention to data gaps that result from cutting off Russian Arctic scientists. Arctic climate research is crucial since warming in the region is a bellwether for global climate change.

As such statements demonstrate, Arctic cooperation with Western states is important to Russia, especially in regards to its recognition as a great power. Discussions of great power status may remind many of realist theory in international relations but I would argue that the English School theory of international relations is a more accurate framework for thinking about Russia's great power ambitions in the Arctic. English School theory contends that great powers must be recognized by others in their responsibilities to maintain peace and security in international society (Kopra, 2018). Great power status, not just as it applies to Russia, depends not only on how a state views itself but on how other actors recognize a country as a responsible power. In this sense, being seen as a willing and

responsible actor in environmentalist and progressive forms of Arctic cooperation is important for Russia's claims to great power status.

Russia looking to non-Arctic states?

Instead of cooperation with the West, Russia is increasingly looking to the East and doubling down on collaboration with the U.S.' strategic competitors such as China. This trend is one of the main consequences of pausing the work of the AC and discontinuing cooperation with Russia. Korchunov has proclaimed that "it is difficult to imagine Arctic cooperation without the participation of Russia [and that] Russia remains open to cooperation, including with non-Arctic states" (Arctic.ru, 2022).

Russia's welcoming of Eastern partners to the Arctic is part of a larger global trend that has been going on for years, but it has been especially noticeable since February as Russia's diplomats engage with the states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Commonwealth of Independent States, Middle East, Turkey, India, Africa and others. In the Arctic, Russia is welcoming Chinese, Indian, and Middle Eastern companies to invest in projects previously involving Western firms. For example, after Western companies withdrew from the Russian Arctic due to sanctions, Russia's Novatek is now looking to the Emirati firm Green Energy Solutions to receive important technology to construct liquefied natural gas projects and to the Turkish company Karpowership for a floating power plant (Humpert, 2022a; 2022b).

There are increasing signs of Russia-China strategic cooperation in the Arctic. The U.S. Coast Guard unexpectedly encountered Chinese and Russian warships operating together close to Alaska in September 2022 (Nelson, 2022). A month later at the Arctic Circle Assembly, China's Special Arctic Envoy, Feng Gao, said that China would not support Norway's AC chairmanship if Russia was excluded. Feng Gao criticized the interruption of international cooperation due to geopolitical competition and confrontation (Jonassen, 2022).

The Snowflake international science stations in the Russian Arctic, which were expected to launch at the end of 2024 and become a hub for international research, now seem to be developing into another Russia-China collaboration (Ministry of Science and Education, 2022). The cancellation of U.S.-China climate change talks in the wake of Nancy Pelosi's Taiwan visit may also speed up the process of Russia-China cooperation in climate and environmental research in the Arctic.

However, it must be said that the degree to which a Russia-China partnership exists in the Arctic is still ambiguous. One of Russia's leading Arctic scientists, the president of Russia's Arctic Academy of Sciences Valery Mitko, was arrested and charged with allegedly sharing state secrets with China (Reuters, 2020). Despite the hype around the Polar Silk Road, there has been no shipping from the Chinese Overseas Shipping Company along the Northern Sea Route since February 2022 (Staalesen, 2022).

Korchunov said at the 2022 St. Petersburg International Economic Forum that since dialogue with Russia has stopped, AC member states have not proposed creating alternative cooperation formats because they see the situation as temporary and that there is an assumption "that sooner or later, the situation will be resolved and we will continue our cooperation" (Arctic.ru, 2022). This is good news as there was a fear from some experts that Russia or the seven other Arctic states would create their own new Arctic regional institutions without the other party, but this is a low possibility. We also heard an optimistic view on this from Ambassador David Balton at the Arctic Circle Assembly in October 2022, who still sees cooperation with Russia possible for a peaceful and cooperative Arctic (Breum, 2022).

Areas to restore circumpolar cooperation

If these new signs of Russia's pivot to the East are alarming, then the task is now to find the gaps in the current freeze and identify areas where scientific cooperation, track 2 diplomacy and other forms of dialogue are possible between the largest Arctic state, Russia, and the seven other Arctic countries. Non-state actors, such as researchers, will now play a particularly important role as state-level cooperation is frozen. Academic conferences that bring together researchers regardless of nationality to share insights based on a common concern for the dramatic changes unfolding in the Arctic are themselves examples of science and citizen diplomacy. Recent examples include the USC-NSF Conference on Strategic Ambition and Environmental Constraint and the Calotte Academy (USC, 2022; Calotte Academy, 2022). Though government-level science may be restricted, cooperation at the individual-level is still manageable but laden with obstacles such as visa restrictions and closed consulates.

What specific areas are there for cooperation today? Special attention can be paid to the synergies that exist between the National Science Foundation's Navigating the New Arctic agenda and the Russian AC

chairmanship agenda. Both programs mention knowledge coproduction with Indigenous peoples as well as and scientific and cultural exchanges with Indigenous knowledge holders (NSF, 2021; Arctic Council, 2021). Research communities should prioritize working with Indigenous knowledge holders, not least because of their unique circumpolar organizations that go beyond national borders and could be an avenue for scientific cooperation at the international, people-to-people level.

At the end of February 2022, the Russian Section of the Saami Council said “now, more than ever, the Sami people in Russia need international support to continue cooperation between the Sami of the four countries” (Sámiráđđi, 2022a). Nonetheless, some Indigenous representative organizations such as the Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia, and the Far East (RAIPON) came out strongly in support of Vladimir Putin’s actions in Ukraine (RAIPON, 2022). The Kola Saami Association signed onto RAIPON’s letter of support and the Saami Council paused cooperation with its Russian member organizations in April (Sámiráđđi, 2022b). Consequently, cooperation between government-backed Indigenous peoples’ organizations will remain a challenge.

In seeking opportunities for international cooperation during these political tensions, one can look to the Bering Strait – a region of historically successful cooperation supported by the State Department and Russian MFA and of longstanding shared cultural heritage between Alaska and Chukotka. Collaborations with a cultural aspect may be less likely to face national security concerns. For example, peace activist Cynthia Lazaroff is organizing a Bering Strait Festival to connect residents and Indigenous peoples of Alaska and Chukotka in a cultural diplomacy project that could incorporate scientific cooperation and knowledge coproduction (Lazaroff, 2021).

The U.S. and Russia have also maintained maritime safety cooperation in the Bering Strait since February. This collaboration concerns the areas of search and rescue, oil spill response, law enforcement and fisheries management. However, joint Coast Guard exercises are on pause (Rosen, 2022). Similarly, Norway paused nuclear safety cooperation with Russia, but maintains contact channels, emergency preparedness and information sharing (Digges, 2022). This shows that there are some critical areas of cooperation that can be maintained.

Non-state actors and lessons from the Cold War

These concerns about maritime and nuclear safety can be extended even further to climate change and environmental security cooperation. If this is not currently feasible, then the states may be pressured by civil society, Arctic residents and non-governmental organizations – as they have been in the past. In the nineties, such non-state actors influenced national authorities to the urgency of nuclear safety in the Arctic. During the Cold War, the political struggle between the

U.S. and USSR created an atmosphere where the environment was another battlefield of ideological competition; virtuous ecological achievements were highlighted to show one socio-political system's advantages over the other. International concerns from non-aligned countries over environmental degradation played a major role in pressuring the superpowers to demonstrate their system's environmentalist superiority as well as develop mutually advantageous forms of cooperation (Devyatkin, 2022).

Arctic residents, Indigenous peoples, scholars, civil societies and NGOs also became concerned with environmental protection after experiencing air and water pollution that largely originated from lower latitudes. Indeed, cooperation between Indigenous peoples' organizations, sub-national governments, environmental NGOs and the scientific community was a key trend that caused a paradigm shift from military tension to political stability in the Arctic (Heininen, 2022). This history of external pressure on states presents a lesson to us today. However, today, these groups operate under more difficult political conditions such as restrictions on Russian organizations from working with foreign partners and restraining foreign agent laws.

Such external pressure provided the context for a number of Arctic science diplomacy agreements signed by U.S. and USSR administrations. These included the 1972 Nixon-Brezhnev Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Environmental Protection, which named the "Arctic and sub-Arctic ecological systems" as focus areas for the "exchange of scientists... exchange of scientific and technical information... [and] joint development and implementation of programs." Another example was the 1973 Agreement on the Conservation of Polar Bears – a deliberate effort at using science to build confidence during détente. Environmental groups had competing visions on the appropriate management of wildlife, but mutual

concern was pressing enough that the multilateral treaty was concluded (Devyatkin, 2022).

The 1986 and 1988 Reagan-Gorbachev summits in Reykjavik and Moscow respectively facilitated high-level discussion of ecological concerns. The joint statement from the 1988 Moscow summit reaffirmed the leaders' "support for expanded bilateral and regional contacts and... increased scientific and environmental cooperation." Such diplomacy for science produced a joint research report titled "Prospects for Future Climate" in 1990. This work helped alert scientists to rising temperatures and changing weather in high latitudes (ibid). The valuable findings it produced arguably would not have been achieved had the research been conducted unilaterally. Though we are living under different political conditions to those of the Cold War, it is noteworthy that such agreements were able to be implemented under high political tensions.

As the Cold War came to an end, relations between scientists proved to be a significant source of trust-building that spilled over into the political and military spheres in the form of arms reduction talks. U.S.-Soviet/Russia tensions eased and scientific cooperation gradually entered more sensitive fields such as oceanography and natural resources. In this way, it makes sense to start thinking and planning for the post-Ukraine conflict period when the West and Russia may be able to restore cooperation at the state-to-state level too.

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35

Can the Arctic Remain a Region of International Cooperation in the Context of the Ukrainian Crisis?

Valery Konyshchev

Russia's special military operation¹ in Ukraine has radically changed an international discourse on the prospects of cooperation and security in Arctic region. In contrast with the post-Cold war understanding of the Arctic as a region of peace and cooperation, today one can observe a clear shift to confrontation between the West and Russia. There is no obvious answer if it is possible to return to an atmosphere of cooperation in the Arctic while military conflict in Ukraine is unpredictable in scale, duration, and consequences. Based on the global significance of the Arctic and historical cooperative experience it seems that is still possible to keep cooperation in the less politicized area – scientific cooperation (Arctic science diplomacy).

Introduction

Strategic documents regulating Russia's Arctic policy place emphasis on social and economic priorities. This is because the Arctic Zone of Russian Federation (AZRF) became a resource base for development from a long term perspective. Today the AZRF provides about 70% of gas and 17% of oil. Russia focuses on international cooperation in the Arctic in all areas and has never demonstrated an intention to resolve regional disputes by military instruments (shelf expansion, maritime borders, cooperation in Svalbard and in the sea areas).

Russia's Special Military Operation (SMO) in Ukraine which started in February 24, 2022 has dramatically changed the political landscape. On the one hand, the Western states are consolidated in condemning the SMO and trying to stop conflict by imposing sanctions on Russia. On the other hand,

¹ The editors of the Arctic Yearbook disagree with the characterization of the invasion of Ukraine as a 'special military operation', however have retained the author's original wording in this commentary.

the military activity seems dragged for an unpredictable period, and it undermines international cooperation in some areas which are not directly related to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Stakeholders of the Arctic policy are faced with questions that have no obvious answers: can the Arctic remain a zone of international cooperation? Should all states interested in the Arctic development prevent the conflict's spill-over effect in the Arctic region or should they put pressure on Russia and stop cooperation in the Arctic?

Proponents of the cooperative approach point to the Cold War experience when cooperation between the USSR and the West was possible in certain areas and continued regardless of numerous conflicts between them. This means that existing conflicts don't exclude partial cooperation. Those who support confrontation with Russia in all dimensions and regions, including the Arctic, believe that sanctions finally will force Russia to change its political regime and stop the SMO.

Sanctions against Russia

Several waves of Western sanctions were imposed to restrain escalation and to stop hostilities in Ukraine. In the economic dimension, the largest western companies like *BP*, *Shell*, French *Total Energies* and Norwegian *Equinor* withdrew from *Novatec*, *Rosneft* and *Gazprom* joint projects in the Arctic Zone of Russian Federation including *Yamal LNG*, *Arctic LNG-2*, *Vostok-oil*, *Sakhalin LNG- 2*, and *Kharyaga oilfield*. Swiss-Dutch *Vitol* refused the trading of Russian oil and gas products by the end of 2022 and stopped investment in future projects while some of the companies continue ongoing contracts. Canadian *Kinross Gold* sold its assets in *Kupol* mine and *Udinsk* project in gold mining at half price. Finnish corporation *Fennovoima* broke its contract on building a nuclear station in Hanhikivi, and Korean *Daewoo Shipbuilding & Marine Engineering* cancelled its contract on LNG- carriers for *Yamal-LNG*, and so on. While some companies like *Bomesc Offshore Engineering*, *Mitsui*, *JOGMEG*, *Arctech Helsinki Shipyard*, and *Daewoo Shipbuilding & Marine Engineering* try to continue cooperation with Russia, they are under powerful political pressure. India and China do not rush to buy former western assets because of the threat of U.S. sanctions.

In the military dimension, Russia faces growing risks. NATO allies increased the number of exercises and are trying to improve anti-submarine facilities on the line of Greenland-Iceland- United Kingdom (*GIUK*). Albeit NATO intensified its activity in the Arctic not only because of the

Ukrainian war, but also in reaction to climate change and the rise of global competition for Arctic resources. Another trouble for the Russian military comes from the program “Freedom of Navigation Operations” (*FONOP*). The logic of *FONOP* is clear: the United States can use military operations to assert its interpretation of international law including “innocent passage” in territorial waters and free access to Exclusive Economic Zones of littoral states. Demonstrations of access and presence of U.S. and NATO forces through naval and aerial operations will create high risks of unforeseen incidents. Possible joining of Finland and Sweden to NATO will change dramatically the strategic environment in the Arctic and Baltic regions because the alliance receives about one- day military deployment in territories of these states, including strike capabilities. Russia definitely will respond by military build-up, but nobody knows how. One should keep in mind that Russia is more sensitive to military threats compared to any littoral Arctic state because of the imbalance between Russia and NATO. From a military perspective, the situation in the Arctic looks more and more like a “vicious circle” with increasing probability of an arms race.

Political sanctions resulted in the boycott of all official events under Russia’s chairmanship of the Arctic Council (2021-2023). In the working groups, most of the programs with membership of Russia were frozen. While some western experts spoke out against the collapse of scientific cooperation, others discuss how to isolate or even exclude Russia from the Arctic Council. Additionally, the U.S. promises sanctions against any company that considers to start, or to continue cooperation with Russia in the Arctic.

The results of the sanctions had a strong negative impact on the further development of the AZRF. Russia is forced to rebuild funding and to look for new partners, which is extremely difficult to do. But the sanctions did not affect Russia’s policy in the Ukrainian conflict because it depends on the other factors. In this sense, Western sanctions in the Arctic have not brought the necessary effect. The reverse side of the coin is that all participants who had to leave joint Arctic projects lost prospective assets in Russia. Not all agree that these losses are compatible with the Ukrainian problems which have no ties with the Arctic policy. Some experts see the Ukrainian crisis “spill- over” effect in the Arctic as a part of a great game in the energy sector of Europe where the U.S. gets Russia out.

Return to cooperation with Russia is still possible?

The above obstacles raise the question of whether cooperation with Russia in the Arctic is possible in the new geopolitical reality?

The answer “no” opens the door for the total escalation in the spirit of the Cold War but with higher risks of nuclear disaster. The threshold for the use of nuclear weapons was lowered after the U.S. and Russia withdrew from agreements like the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, the Treaty on the Open Skies. Perspectives of “spill- over” effects of the Ukrainian crisis in the Arctic, expansion of NATO responsibility in the Far North, and a lack of regulations on tactical nuclear weapons will contribute to the loss of control on the strategic environment in Eastern Europe, the Baltic and finally in the Arctic region.

The answer “yes” demands a definition of the forms, conditions, legal and institutional frameworks to renew international cooperation in the Arctic. Considering the over-politicized perception of Russian foreign policy as well as the unpredictable scope, scale and duration of war in Ukraine, it seems appropriate for the Arctic stakeholders to confirm if the Arctic remains a zone of peace and cooperation in spite of problems in other regions. This point may be put in the agenda of the coming Norwegian chairmanship of the Arctic Council for 2023-2025.

The way to keep the Arctic a peaceful and cooperative zone

What can be the first step to return to cooperation with Russia in the Arctic? The key link might become Arctic science diplomacy as a less politicized area of interactions between states. The other forms of cooperation will return later, after at least relative stabilization of Russian-Western relations.

In this view, the Agreement in Enhancing Arctic Scientific Cooperation (2017) offers a good start for opportunities but its implementation was stopped in 2022. Looking to the future, this document can be a powerful driver for scientific cooperation between Arctic and non-Arctic states because it assumes a removal of various barriers to international collaborations, including visa delays, difficulties in carrying equipment and samples across national borders, and restrictions on access to data. Additionally the Agreement stimulates international cooperation in education, training, and a combination of traditional and local knowledges with modern scientific methods. Even today foreign scientists try to continue interactions with Russian colleagues, informally neglecting

modern political tensions because many international projects can't be cancelled without complete failure of research.

The most powerful impulse to renew scientific cooperation can be global climate change, resulting in unpredictable and often negative consequences: variations of ice dynamic in polar seas, melting permafrost, far going climate changes in the other regions of the planet, degradation of Arctic flora and fauna, and a decrease of living conditions for Indigenous peoples. The consequences of climate change apply to all states of the planet regardless of the final resolution of Ukrainian crisis. In a political sense, the Arctic science diplomacy maintained "bridges" for dialogue during the Cold war and this experience should not be forgotten.

The other directions of global importance comprise legal issues like implementation of the Polar Code, completion of the ratification processes on delimitation of the Bering Sea, delimitation of the maritime space in the Chukchi Sea beyond the 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone, and a resolution of Russia's territorial disputes with Canada and Denmark regarding the Arctic extended continental shelf (the Lomonosov ridge and Mendeleev elevation).

A lot of economic and infrastructure projects are of high significance for all Arctic stakeholders: cooperation in search and rescue missions, maintaining sustainable communication and monitoring systems in the Arctic, improvement of port infrastructure on the Northern Sea Route, international transit, development of transport hubs in Murmansk and Kamchatka, railroads, development of gas & oil production and processing projects, and the exchange of shipbuilding technologies.

As for security issues, the idea to start negotiations to establish a nuclear-free zone in some parts of the Arctic looks promising. Measures of military confidence in the Arctic were discussed many times since the Cold War ended. Taking into account specific features of the Arctic region, the confidence measures should cover all domains: air, land, and sea. Discussing confidence measures may start in the form of bilateral consultation between Russia and Norway, Russia and the U.S., and Russia and Finland (in the case of NATO-membership). To set spatial and temporal limitations on specific military activity seems to be the most urgent topic. For example, spatial limits may be established in Bear Gap located to the south from Svalbard and GIUK Gap located between Iceland and United Kingdom.

In the institutional dimension, many experts express pessimism about the effectiveness of international organization including Arctic Council. Even more sophisticated is a question about regional security institutions. Different plans on how to exclude Russia from the Arctic are discussed: from reform of the Arctic Council up to the creation of a new organization without Russia. Not specifying how realistic these plans are, the next steps to cooperation look more feasible in a bilateral format rather than a multilateral one.

To conclude, the view of world policy through the lens of the Ukrainian war looks at least narrowed as the Arctic has global significance without reference to how the war will end.

36

Russian Media Coverage of Arctic Issues: Changes Since the Invasion of Ukraine

Mathieu Landriault

Russian media coverage of Arctic issues has substantially changed since February 2022: it is now more inward-looking, referring less frequently to other countries. More importantly, the region is now predominantly framed as embroiled in both a race and a struggle, with other nations vying to steal Russian Arctic territories and access. This change occurred while Russian press agencies also operated a shift in coverage on Svalbard, by rarely referring to Norwegian presence or control over the territory. These three changes mark departures from Russian media coverage of the Arctic before the mass invasion of Ukraine.

Introduction

The Arctic region has been unequivocally impacted by the Russia-Ukraine war. Relations between the West and Russia remain strained, with only a limited resumption of cooperation through the Arctic Council. As questions arise about resuming cooperation (is it desirable? If so, when, or how?), it seems relevant to look at how the Arctic region is portrayed in Russian discourses. The Observatory on Politics and Security in the Arctic (OPSA) brought together a team to analyze how the Arctic was described in Russian press agencies (Sputnik and TASS) from 2020 to the summer 2022 (Landriault et al., June 2022). This research aimed at analyzing Russian press agencies so as to gather intelligence on the types of stories and framing used in Russia to refer to the region. By focusing on English-language articles, we have gathered a sample of Arctic frames that Russia intended to promote to an international audience.

Although analyses extended to the summer of 2022, little movement was noticed in how Russia referred to the Arctic region after the invasion. This analysis was updated (albeit only looking at TASS) so as to highlight whether

differences can be observed between how it was described before the invasion or in the immediate aftermath of the invasion and how it was portrayed during the first 5 months of 2024 (January 2024 to May 27 2024). Three key differences emerged, providing further empirical evidence of how Arctic relations have been impacted by global developments.

Emergence of a classic: the Arctic struggle/race frame

Two popular perceptions about the Arctic region have dominated headlines in popular media outlets since at least the early 2000s: the Arctic race and Arctic struggle perceptions. The former presents an unstoppable dash by both state and non-state actors to exploit Arctic resources and claim a piece of the region: this “race” is characterized by a feeling of urgency, as actors jockey for a position to hopefully seize a slice of the Arctic. This first frame is often presented alongside the second one: this is referred to as the Arctic race/struggle frame. In this view, this “race” will be dominated by competition and confrontation. The Arctic region is then presented as an arena of conflict. These pessimistic accounts were not solely observed in media outlets: they have been relayed at times by decision-makers. For example, former Prime Minister of Canada, Stephen Harper, promoted these frames in the second half of the 2000s when he insisted that Canada should “use it or lose it”, while referring to Canada’s Arctic sovereignty.

Before February 2022, mentions of the Arctic in Russian press agencies predominantly presented the Arctic region as one of peace and stability. Cooperation and partnerships dominated coverage, especially in relation to its commercial and scientific dimensions (Landriault et al., February 2022). After February 2022, Russian officials were also quick to promote these reassuring assessments but with caveats. For example, in October 2022, the commander of Russia’s Northern Fleet, Admiral Alexander Moiseyev, asserted that there was a “relative stability and absence of real challenges and threats to regional security in the Arctic” but that “the military-political situation in the region at the present stage is characterized by growing negative trends” (TASS, October 21, 2022). At the same time (October–November 2022), Russian users and allies on social media (Telegram, Twitter) were disseminating the idea that the U.S. was backing Ukraine in a nefarious plot to defeat Russia and to grab Russian Arctic resources and sea routes.

Upon analyzing articles published during the first 5 months of 2024, the tone has emerged as much darker and less ambivalent than Moiseyev’s

previous assessment: the Arctic race/struggle is front and center and presented as obvious to readers, a position usually asserted by quoting Russian experts. First, the Arctic struggle is presented as natural, intemporal by TASS: “The Arctic has always been a zone of tense confrontation between various countries” (TASS, March 14 2024). In another instance, the proverbial Arctic pie is mentioned: “the interest in the Arctic is growing, all countries are trying to set foot, not to be late, when the pie is already cut” (TASS, March 4 2024). The Arctic race frame, as observed in other outlets, is mostly sketched as a race for resources: “Why has everyone rushed there? Arctic is a store of resources. Oil and gas, bio resources, ores, rare earth metals - lots of everything” (TASS, March 4, 2024).

In a classic victimization move, this confrontation is brought about by somebody else. Here, the United States is presented as the party responsible for this state of affairs, casting the region as a “possible future battlefield” (TASS, March 19 2024) or the “main arena for future confrontation” (TASS, March 7 2024). Giving intentions to the US dabbles in conspiracy theories as this posture is presented as solely “to benefit its defense-industrial complex” (TASS, March 19 2024) or that the war in Ukraine was just a pretext for the US to expand NATO in the North with the additions of Sweden and Finland (TASS, March 7 2024).

The language of the “special military operation” and the Arctic

The special vocabulary developed by the Kremlin as part of their war in Ukraine spilled over into how Arctic issues are addressed. Mentions of “anti-Russian” sanctions and the references to friendly and unfriendly countries were widespread in these articles.

The militarization of discourses was also commonplace as every Arctic development is explained through a military prism. In all cases, either the US or the West is presented using terms that are offensive in nature, while Russia portrays itself as a victim defending its interests against Western countries plotting to steal Arctic resources and territories. For example, the West is framed as holding a “traditional desire - to take away from everyone and divide among themselves. The Americans are all right (sic) with creativity. They have both grand conceptions to cover up their actions, and pirate-like approach: to rob everything that can be robbed” (TASS, February 15 2024). In yet another article, TASS reporters claim that “The US and its allies are driven by the desire to embroil Russia into a geopolitical confrontation, aimed at preventing Russia from obtaining leadership

positions in polar regions, and to ensure unhindered access to resources and transportation routes in the region” (TASS, May 17 2024).

Military language is predominant in these assessments. For example, Arctic geopolitics in general is described as a “war for resources, northern transport routes, territories, influence and so on” (TASS, March 7 2024). The focus on environmental threats that could emerge from the Russian Arctic is also couched as an aggression on Russia. A TASS article reacted to an article published in *The Guardian*: the British newspaper had reported that dangerous pathogens could surface from the Russian Arctic as a result of permafrost thaw. TASS then promptly proceeded to interview a Russian expert framing *The Guardian*’ article as an “attempt to interfere with this country’s internal affairs”, highlighting that this was part of a broader struggle: “From a political point of view, we are currently fighting for the Arctic shelf and the Northern Sea Route. Therefore, as part of this struggle, they come up with all sorts of stories to take control of something or to limit someone” (TASS, January 26 2024).

These articles constitute a fascinating account as to how Western sanctions actively impact the Russian Arctic. On the one hand, Russian Northern communities have faced negative consequences from these sanctions, such as importing duties slapped on Russian goods, increased costs for Russian companies to reorient to new exporting markets, reduced demand on Russian LNG, barred access to Western laboratories to study artifacts and fossils, and lower numbers of tourists travelling the Russian Arctic. On the other hand, TASS has stressed that sanctions did not yield any significant impact on Russia and sanctions were actually beneficial, forcing the country to find alternatives and generating “potential for the further growth of exports” (TASS, January 17 2024). The abstract and often general nature of the latter claims can however be contrasted with the very specific ways in which Russian Arctic communities are negatively impacted: the former seems to outweigh the latter.

The evolution of the war in Ukraine and of Arctic relations can be reflected in the countries mentioned and the topics raised in these different articles. One can observe a diversity of countries mentioned as Russia attempts to divert its Arctic relations away from Western countries. Although the United States is still the most often mentioned country in these accounts, mentions of Arctic partnerships with India and China are more numerous than before the invasion. Further, unlikely countries are also involved: initiatives including Mongolia, Indonesia, Myanmar and Vietnam are

presented to readers so as to illustrate how Russia can strike collaboration agreements with new partners. In some instances, TASS went on to unveil the relevance of these new partnerships to readers: “It is obvious to us what a strong Arctic program China has got. India, in terms of the Himalayas, is interested in developing the “three poles” concept, in comprehensive studies of perennially frozen soils. Arab countries show interest in developing logistics routes” (TASS, February 13 2024). Western countries on the other hand were mostly mentioned in the context of sanctions or NATO and framed as obstacles or challenges to Russia. Overall, most stories did not reference any country other than Russia: about 66% of articles only referred to developments within Russia without mentioning the outside world. This last feature points towards Russian press agencies being more inward-looking than they were before the invasion, in the case of the Arctic anyway. However, a more problematic discursive shift can be observed on the issue of Svalbard.

A problematic discursive shift on Svalbard

The full-scale invasion of Ukraine did not immediately spur a change of tone in relation to Svalbard. Instead, subsequent sanctions highlighted this turning point, especially the inspection of a Russian cargo transiting through Norway before being sent to Svalbard. This event unfolded in late June 2022 and was resolved on July 6, with Norway agreeing to let the cargo go through after inspecting it.

By analyzing articles published by TASS on Svalbard from 2019 to May 2024, a rather significant difference in how Svalbard (or Spitsbergen) is described before and after this incident can be observed. Before this episode, Norwegian sovereignty and presence in Svalbard was often mentioned and at times emphasized. The territory was referred to as “Norway’s Svalbard”, “The Norwegian polar archipelago of Spitsbergen”, and it was hinted that Svalbard “is in Norway”. In more political stories, reports emphasized that Russia never questioned Norwegian sovereignty over Svalbard. In total, before the June/July 2022 incident, 63% of TASS articles mentioning Svalbard acknowledged or recognized Norwegian sovereignty or presence in Svalbard. This number dropped to 53% for articles published between the 2022 inspection event and the rest of 2022, and to 21% for articles published from January 2023 to May 2024.

In articles published after 2023, the quasi-absence of mentions of Norwegian sovereignty or presence gave the impression that Norway was

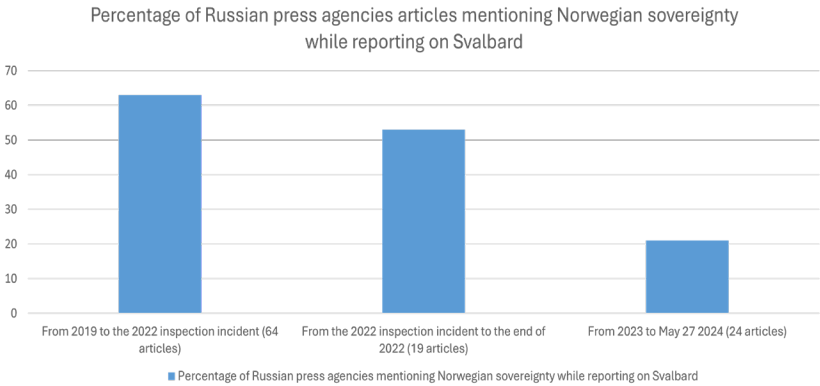


Figure 36-1. Mentions of Norwegian sovereignty when reporting on Svalbard in Russian press agencies.

absent from the territory, with only Russia laying down plans and investing in the archipelago. At other times, articles were ambiguous about Norwegian presence, pointing that the “Spitsbergen Archipelago is located on the border between Russia and Norway” and that settlements inhabited by Russians in Svalbard are “in the Russian territory” (TASS, April 9 2024). This development must be monitored to figure out whether it is temporary or a sign of a more permanent shift in Russian rhetoric towards Norway.

Conclusion

The following briefing note aimed at providing evidence as to how Arctic discourses have recently shifted in Russia. TASS coverage is markedly influenced by the war in Ukraine and the subsequent sanctions: the Arctic region is not exceptional or isolated from these developments. More importantly, the most significant shift is in the support and promotion by Russia of the Arctic race/ struggle frame. This logic of confrontation is well established in TASS and usually supported by both the press agency and experts quoted in the articles. It is not presented as a possibility but as fact, a reality: one against which Russia and Arctic states must prepare and react accordingly. It is difficult to envision cooperation between Arctic states emerging from this dark assessment of Arctic geopolitics; something to keep in mind as we assess the likelihood of reestablishing full circumpolar cooperation between the 8 Arctic states.

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Afterword

The New Russian Arctic

Alexander Pelyasov

2022, the year that Russia launched its “special military operation,” has marked a new starting point for the development of the Russian Arctic - and about ten articles in this special volume of the *Arctic Yearbook* are specifically devoted to these new realities. As the International Arctic Forum "The Arctic: Territory of Dialogue" held in Murmansk in March 2025 showed, these new realities can be named in the following eleven points:

1. The new role of the Rosatom state corporation in the modern development of the Russian Arctic
2. The rise of the importance of the Marine Board and its chairman N. Patrushev in the comprehensive development of the Russian Arctic, taking into account the current geopolitical, economic, social and scientific-technological challenges.
3. Expansion of the Arctic zone at the expense of the internal northern territories of Russia and their proclamation (along with other border areas) as geostrategic territories in the new Strategy for Spatial Development of Russia until 2030 (and with a perspective until 2036), adopted in December 2024.
4. Raising the status of 16 core cities (urban agglomerations) located along the sea façade of the Russian Arctic, for which master plans were developed in 2024, in the near future it is necessary to detail the projects for their implementation.
5. Search for new, alternative foreign, sources of investment for projects in the Russian Arctic, through domestic sources and investments of friendly Asian countries.
6. Launching the process of experimentation in the field of mobile compact energy sources and unmanned transport in various regions of the Russian Arctic
7. Imperatives of technological sovereignty and independence in the mining and manufacturing industries of the Russian Arctic, Arctic shipbuilding,

Pelyasov

stimulating import substitution processes within Russian resource corporations operating in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation.

8. New forms of interaction with Chinese partners in the transit and infrastructure development of the Northern Sea Route.
9. New challenges and opportunities associated with the election of D. Trump as President of the United States for projects for the development of the Russian Arctic.
10. Sanctions "radiation" of the European Union, the USA, Great Britain, Canada in the largest Arctic projects for the extraction of oil, natural gas and liquefied natural gas and the terrorist attack of the Western countries on the transit northern gas flows "Yamal-Europe".
11. Increased military presence, primarily in the island Russian Arctic, with modern technological equipment for this presence.

Let us dwell on each of these points in more detail.

First. I have repeatedly had to write about the fact that super-organizations - special super-structures endowed with special state powers, which simultaneously carry out the functions of colonization, economic and social development, geopolitical control of the distant borders of the Motherland - are a characteristic feature of the Russian North and the Arctic. Over the long history of development, these structures had different names, but always acted as the state's viceroy in the matter of resource development and settlement of the distant land outskirts of the country. There is no doubt that the modern super-organization in the development of the Russian Arctic is now the state corporation Rosatom, which has received from the President of the Russian Federation uniquely broad powers for transport (a series of new-generation nuclear icebreakers) and energy (floating and land-based mini- and micro-NPPs) development and resource development of critically important rare earth and polymetallic deposits of the Russian Arctic (primarily Kolmozerskoye - lithium - in the Murmansk region and Pavlovsk on Novaya Zemlya). The most important issues of equipping the Northern Sea Route, transport and energy modernization of the Arctic zone and its anchor projects are now in the hands of the state corporation Rosatom, which is a key actor in the strategic development of the Arctic and the Northern Sea Route (the resolution of current issues of socio-economic life support is in the hands of the Governors of the Arctic territories and the federal Ministry for the Development of the Far East and the Arctic).

Second. The Murmansk Conference of March 2025 clearly showed that, along with Rosatom, an important strategic player in conceptualizing and

equipping the development of the Russian Arctic in broad state interests is today the Marine Collegium under the Government of the Russian Federation, which acts as an integrator in strengthening the maritime facade of the Russian Arctic and developing the Northern Sea Route, a conductor of the implementation of priority areas outlined in strategic and conceptual documents at the federal level adopted for the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation in recent years. The authority and breadth of vision of its leader are designed to ensure the coordination of broad state and private corporate interests and the balancing of geopolitical, economic, and social tasks for the development of the Arctic zone of Russia.

Third. In the Russian Federation, there is a tendency to strengthen border territories by expanding them geographically by connecting them to internal territories of Russia with the declaration of a new list of territories as geostrategic. This tendency was clearly demonstrated by the Strategy for Spatial Development of Russia until 2030, adopted in December 2024 - the composition of the geostrategic Arctic territories of Russia includes many non-coastal northern territories, the composition of the geostrategic Far Eastern territories includes the Trans-Baikal (formerly Siberian) territories. By establishing a new institution of geostrategic territories in the Arctic zone, Russia is forced to respond to the unfriendly actions of its Arctic neighbors, which have now all entered the NATO military bloc.

Fourth. The year 2024 was marked by the development of master plans for all the supporting (staple) cities of the Russian Arctic. The objective of this task was to propose breakthrough projects in the sphere of urban industry, urban development and the social sphere, which will increase the attractiveness of the Arctic "support zones" for residents of non-Arctic Russia and the population of the Arctic territories themselves - that is, in the conditions of the continuing outflow of population from the North and the Arctic, they will become nuclei of crystallization and outposts of state presence and participation in the modern socio-economic development of the Russian Arctic. We are talking about long-term work, calculated for many years, on the modernization of the Arctic urban coastal facade. In 2005 and in subsequent years, further activities are planned to work with the Arctic "support zones".

Fifth. In recent years, there has been an intense search for new, internal and external, sources of investment in projects and the social sphere of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation. The directions of this search were reflected in several reports at the Murmansk Arctic Conference "The Arctic - Territory of Dialogue". Firstly, it is proposed to actively attract funds from the population and use the potential of the domestic stock market to finance projects and events in the

Russian Arctic, including using the unprecedentedly preferential conditions associated with the declaration of the entire Arctic zone of Russia as a territory of preferential regimes for investors. Secondly, we are talking about the creation of a new special fund for Arctic infrastructure investments. Thirdly, targeted work is being carried out with potential investors from Asian countries to participate in large new Arctic projects.

Sixth. The Russian Arctic is actually becoming a giant platform for a variety of experiments to test models of mobile modular energy sources, including nuclear, wind, and solar. The common feature of these sources is that they violate the previous logic of placing large national economic complexes in the North. Previously, stationary large energy sources were pulled up to already formed regional inter-industry complexes, within which multi-kilometer power transmission lines were laid. Now, small, compact and mobile power sources will be “freely” placed in places where there is a temporary need for electricity, for example, for the development of non-ferrous metal deposits on a rotational basis, and then, as the project is completed, they can be relocated to a new location. Similar schemes of variable multiple solutions are being discussed to ensure cargo and passenger mobility in the Arctic territories due to a line of drones designed for different volumes and needs. A number of Arctic governors, for example, from the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug and the Sakha Republic (Yakutia), have already expressed their desire to host drone ports for the deployment of various unmanned aerial vehicles.

Seventh. The theme of technological sovereignty permeates all federal Arctic documents of recent times. We are talking about the construction of new shipyards for the production of reinforced ice-class vessels, about orders for oil and gas equipment, an alternative to sanctioned imported ones, which were supplied for Russian Arctic projects until 2022. Often, the proposed Russian analogues are still inferior in their technical or environmental characteristics to foreign analogues, but they play a vital role in the revival of Russian engineering schools in the field of Arctic mining, manufacturing and Arctic shipbuilding.

Eighth. In recent years, the Arctic port of Arkhangelsk has become the final point for Chinese transit cargo from Shanghai, Qingdao, Tianjin, and other eastern ports of China. We are talking about a gradual but steady “warming up” of the Northern Sea Route by Chinese business and its transit cargo from Asia to Europe. The volumes of these cargoes are still absolutely incomparable with the cargoes generated by Arctic projects, but in the future we can expect a significant increase due to the inclusion of new participants from the Asian business community and new vessels.

Ninth. The election of Donald Trump as the President of the United States means a violation of all previously established rules of the game, and in the global Arctic this has already been specifically demonstrated in claims to Greenland's natural assets, the desire to ensure freedom of navigation for American ships in the Canadian Northwest Passage and the Russian Northern Sea Route. For the Russian Arctic, the fact that D. Trump has become the President of the United States means both risks and opportunities, but in any case, an increase in uncertainty induced from outside. In an attempt to understand D. Trump's Arctic policy, it is appropriate to turn to his predecessor, also a successful entrepreneur and the richest man in the state of Alaska, twice governor of this state, Secretary of the Interior in the President Nixon Administration and founder of the legendary Northern Forum - Walter Hickle. His second term as governor from 1990 to 1994 was marked by the bold formation of new institutions for the state of Alaska, successful interaction with global business regarding the oil spill in the Gulf of Alaska, unrealized megaprojects for the construction of a year-round highway from Fairbanks to the North Slope of Alaska, various events to launch, in defiance of environmental movements, new resource projects that dynamize the economic development of the state of Alaska. One can see in these initiatives analogies that allow us to better understand the role of D. Trump in the global Arctic and specifically in his possible proposals and projects for the Russian Arctic.

Tenth. Numerous sanctions imposed by Western countries against flagship projects in the Russian Arctic and the terrorist attack that led to the destruction of the Yamal-Europe transit gas flows have become unprecedented in world history and have made it absolutely impossible to return to the soft period of socio-cultural cooperation between Russia and the Western Arctic countries in the 1990s-2000s in the coming years and even decades. Of course, they have resulted in a shift in the timing of new projects, changes in oil and gas supply schemes, and a reduction in the volume of production and transportation of pipeline gas. But they have also intensified the search for an alternative of Western partners in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. In the extreme, analogues of the Arctic Council, the University of the Arctic, Arctic Frontiers, Arctic Circle, and so on may be created. But as a long-term participant and eyewitness to the activities of these structures, previously focused on partnership and cooperation in the global Arctic, I certainly would not like to see such an "extreme" scenario implemented. The best future would be a continued cooling with the preservation of the existing and previously proven effective global institutions of cooperation of the Arctic countries. To a large extent, the choice of such a "soft" scenario will depend on the degree of independence of the governments of Sweden, Norway, Finland, Iceland, Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands

from the dictates of the European Union and NATO, of which most of them are members.

Eleventh, the last but not the least. The growing military presence of Russia on the Arctic islands and in the traditional flank territories of the Arctic zone - in the Murmansk region and the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug - is inevitably and objectively forced by the confrontational behavior of Western partners, including during numerous military exercises in the Arctic. We will be talking not only about the numerical increase in military personnel, but also about the technical modernization of weapons, land and sea-based. My generation lived the first few decades of life in conditions of such continuous military confrontation between the USSR and NATO countries in the Arctic. Therefore, the return to such a scenario is not an anomaly, but only reproduces, hopefully not at a higher level of military potential and threats, the previous practice. Apparently, it will remain a reality until the middle of the 21st century, when, according to the forecast of I. Wallerstein, the complete reformatting of the previous country structure of the world and the decline of the USA as the hegemon of the previous world order will be completed.

If we generalize the described trends, their integral characteristic will be the gradually emerging image of a new Russian Arctic – more technologically advanced and sovereign, but at the same time deprived of those colors of diversity that were provided by interesting and productive socio-cultural cooperation and business partnership with European countries in many structures of circumpolar cooperation and in many areas. Therefore, the new Russian Arctic will inevitably differ from both the Soviet (secret and closed) Arctic and the “partner” Russian Arctic of the 1990-2000s. In the age of the emerging multipolar world, the Russian Arctic will rather be focused on solving Russia’s own internal problems than on an active search for international partners and alliances.

Новая российская Арктика (Russian version)

Недавний 2022 год начала специальной военной операции России стал абсолютно новой точкой отсчета для развития российской Арктики - и около десяти статей данного выпуска Arctic Yearbook специально посвящены этим новым реалиям. Как показал прошедший в Мурманске в марте 2025 года Международный Арктический Форум «Арктика – территория диалога», эти новые реалии можно свести к следующим одиннадцати моментам:

1. Новая роль государственной корпорации «Росатом» в современном развитии российской Арктики

2. Возвышение значения Морской коллегии и ее председателя Н. Патрушева в комплексном развитии российской Арктики, с учетом текущих геополитических, экономических, социальных и научно-технологических вызовов.
 3. Расширение состава Арктической зоны за счет внутренних северных территорий России и провозглашение их (наряду с другими приграничными) геостратегическими территориями в новой Стратегии пространственного развития России и до 2030 года (и с перспективой до 2036 года), принятой в декабре 2024 года.
 4. Возвышение статуса 16 опорных городов (городских агломераций), расположенных по морскому фасаду российской Арктики, по которым в 2024 году были разработаны мастер-планы, в ближайшее время предстоит детализировать проекты их реализации.
 5. Поиск новых, альтернативных иностранным, источников инвестирования для проектов российской Арктики, за счет внутренних источников и инвестиций дружественных стран Азии.
 6. Запуск процесса экспериментирования в сфере мобильных компактных источников энергии и беспилотного транспорта в различных регионах российской Арктики
 7. Императивы технологического суверенитета и независимости в добывающей и обрабатывающей промышленности российской Арктики, арктическом судостроении, стимулирование процессов импортозамещения внутри российских ресурсных корпораций, работающих в Арктической зоне Российской Федерации.
 8. Новые формы взаимодействия с китайскими партнерами в транзитном и инфраструктурном развитии Северного морского пути.
 9. Новые вызовы и возможности, которые связаны с избранием Д. Трампа Президентом США, для проектов развития российской Арктики.
 10. Санкционная «радиация» Европейского Союза, США, Великобритании, Канады в крупнейших арктических проектах добычи нефти, природного газа и сжиженного природного газа и террористическая атака западных стран на транзитные северные потоки газа «Ямал-Европа».
 11. Увеличение военного присутствия прежде всего в островной российской Арктике с современным технологическим оснащением этого присутствия.
- Остановимся на каждом из этих моментов более подробно.

Первое. Мне неоднократно приходилось писать о том, что суперорганизации – особые, наделенные специальными государственными полномочиями, суперструктуры, которые одновременно осуществляют функции хозяйственного освоения, экономического и социального развития, геополитического контроля дальних рубежей Родины, - это характерная особенность российского Севера и Арктики. За длительную историю освоения эти структуры имели разное название, но всегда выступали наместником государства в деле ресурсного освоения и заселения дальних сухопутных окраин страны. Несомненно, что современной суперорганизацией в деле освоения российской Арктики теперь выступает государственная корпорация «Росатом», получившая от Президента РФ уникально обширные полномочия на транспортное (серия атомных ледоколов нового поколения) и энергетическое (плавающее и сухопутные мини- и микро-АЭС) обустройство и ресурсное освоение критически важных редкоземельных и полиметаллических месторождений российской Арктики (прежде всего Колмозерское - лития - в Мурманской области и Павловского на Новой Земле). Важнейшие вопросы оснащения Северного морского пути, транспортной и энергетической модернизации Арктической зоны и ее якорных проектов теперь находятся в руках государственной корпорации Росатом, которая выступает ключевым актором стратегического развития Арктики и Северного морского пути (решение текущих вопросов социально-экономического жизнеобеспечения в руках Губернаторов арктических территорий и федерального Министерства по развитию Дальнего Востока и Арктики).

Второе. Мурманская конференция марта 2025 года отчетливо показала, что наряду с Росатомом важным стратегическим игроком в концептуализации и оснащении развития российской Арктики в широких государственных интересах выступает сегодня Морская коллегия при Правительстве РФ, которая выступает интегратором в деле укрепления морского фасада российской Арктики и развития Северного морского пути, проводником реализации приоритетных направлений, обозначенных в стратегических и концептуальных документах федерального уровня, принятых по Арктической зоне РФ в последние годы. Авторитет и широта видения ее руководителя призваны обеспечить увязку широких государственных и частных корпоративных интересов и балансировку геополитических, экономических, социальных задач развития Арктической зоны России.

Третье. В Российской Федерации имеет место тенденция укрепления приграничных территорий путем их географического расширения за счет подключения к ним внутренних территорий

России с объявлением нового списка территорий геостратегическими. Эту тенденцию отчетливо продемонстрировала принятая в декабре 2024 года Стратегия пространственного развития России до 2030 года – состав геостратегических арктических территорий России включает многие неприморские северные территории, состав геостратегических дальневосточных территорий включает забайкальские (ранее сибирские) территории. Учреждая новый институт геостратегических территорий в Арктической зоне, Россия вынужденно отвечает на недружественные действия своих арктических соседей, которые теперь все вошли в военный блок НАТО.

Четвертое. 2024 год прошел под знаком разработки мастер-планов для всех опорных городов российской Арктики. Целью этой задачи было предложить прорывные проекты в сфере городской промышленности, благоустройства городской среды и социальной сфере, которые повысят привлекательность арктических «опорников» для жителей неарктической России и населения самих арктических территорий – то есть в условиях продолжающегося оттока населения с Севера и Арктики станут ядрами кристаллизации и форпостами государственного присутствия и участия в современном социально-экономическом развитии российской Арктики. Речь идет о долговременной, рассчитанной на многие годы, работы по модернизации арктического городского приморского фасада. В 2005 и в последующих годах запланированы дальнейшие мероприятия по работе с арктическими «опорниками».

Пятое. В последние годы идет напряженный поиск новых, внутренних и внешних, источников инвестирования в проекты и социальную сферу Арктической зоны РФ. Направления этого поиска были отражены в нескольких докладах на Мурманской арктической конференции «Арктика – территория диалога». Во-первых, предлагается активно привлекать средства населения и задействовать потенциал внутреннего фондового рынка для финансирования проектов и мероприятий в российской Арктике, используя в том числе беспрецедентно льготные условия, связанные с объявлением всей Арктической зоны России территорией преференциальных режимов для инвесторов. Во-вторых, речь идет о создании нового специального фонда арктических инфраструктурных инвестиций. В-третьих, ведется целевая работа с потенциальными инвесторами из азиатских стран для участия в крупных новых арктических проектах.

Шестое. Российская Арктика фактически становится гигантской площадкой для самых разных экспериментов по апробации моделей мобильных модульных источников энергогенерации, в том числе атомных, ветровых, солнечных. Общая особенность этих источников в том, что они нарушают прежнюю логику размещения крупных

народнохозяйственных комплексов на Севере. Раньше стационарные крупные источники энергии подтягивались к уже сформированным районным межотраслевым комплексам, внутри которых прокладывались многокилометровые линии электропередач. Теперь же, малые, компактные и мобильные источники генерации «свободно» будут размещаться в местах возникновения временной потребности в электроэнергии, например, для отработки месторождений цветных металлов вахтовым способом, а потом по мере завершения проекта, способны передислоцироваться на новое место.

Аналогичные схемы вариативных многочисленных решений обсуждаются для обеспечения грузовой и пассажирской мобильности в арктических территориях за счет линейки рассчитанных на разные объемы и потребности дронов. Ряд арктических губернаторов, например, из ЯНАО и Республики Саха (Якутия) уже заявили о своем желании разместить у себя дронопорты дислокации различных беспилотных летательных аппаратов.

Седьмое. Тематика технологического суверенитета пронизывает все федеральные арктические документы последнего времени. Речь идет о закладке новых верфей для выпуска судов усиленного ледового класса, о заказах нефтегазового оборудования, альтернативного подсанкционным импортным, которые до 2022 года поставлялись для проектов российской Арктики. Часто предлагаемые российские аналоги пока уступают по своим техническим или экологическим характеристикам зарубежным аналогам, но они выполняют важнейшую роль возрождения российских инженерных школ в области арктической добывающей, обрабатывающей промышленности и арктического судостроения.

Восьмое. В последние годы арктический порт Архангельск стал завершающим пунктом для китайских транзитных грузов из Шанхая, Циндао, Тяньцзиня, других восточных портов Китая. Речь идет о постепенном, но неуклонном, разогреве Северного морского пути китайским бизнесом и его транзитными грузами из Азии в Европу. Объемы этих грузов пока абсолютно несопоставимы с грузами, генерируемыми арктическими проектами, однако в будущем можно ожидать их существенного увеличения за счет подключения новых участников из среды азиатского бизнеса и новых судов.

Девятое. Избрание Дональда Трампа Президентом США означает нарушение всех установленных ранее правил игры и в глобальной Арктике это уже конкретно проявилось в претензиях на природные активы Гренландии, стремлении обеспечить американских судам свободу навигации в канадском Северо-Западном проходе и российском Северном морском пути. Для российской Арктики факт

прихода Д. Трампа в Президенты США означает как риски, так и возможности, но в любом случае – нарастание неопределенности, индуцированной извне. В попытке понять арктическую политику Д.Трампа целесообразно обратиться к его предшественнику, тоже успешному предпринимателю и самому богатому человеку штата Аляска, дважды губернатора этого штата, министра внутренних ресурсов в Администрации Р. Никсона и основателя легендарного Северного Форума – Уолтеру Хиклу. Его второй срок губернаторства 1990-1994 годы ознаменовался смелым формированием новых институтов для штата Аляска, успешным взаимодействием с глобальным бизнесом по поводу разлива нефти в заливе Аляски, нереализованными мегапроектами строительства круглогодичной автомобильной дороги от Фербенкса до северного склона Аляски, различными мероприятиями по запуску, вопреки природоохранным движениям, новых ресурсных проектов, динамизирующих экономическое развитие штата Аляска. Можно увидеть в этих инициативах аналогии, позволяющие нам лучше понять роль Д. Трампа в глобальной Арктике и конкретно в его возможных предложениях и проектах для российской Арктики.

Десятое. Многочисленные санкции западных стран против флагманских проектов российской Арктики и террористическая атака, которая привела к разрушению транзитных газовых потоков «Ямал-Европа» стали беспрецедентными в мировой истории и сделали абсолютно невозможным возвращение в мягкий период социокультурного сотрудничества России и стран западной Арктики 1990-х-нулевых годов на горизонте ближайших лет и даже десятилетий. Конечно, они имели своим результатом сдвиг новых проектов по срокам, изменения схем поставок нефти и газа, уменьшение объемов добычи и транспортировки трубопроводного газа. Но также они интенсифицировали поиск альтернативы западным партнером в Азии, Африке и Латинской Америке. В пределе могут быть созданы аналоги Арктическому совету, Университету Арктика, Arctic Frontiers, Arctic Circle и так далее. Но мне как многолетнему участнику и очевидцу деятельности этих структур, ранее сориентированных на партнерство и кооперацию в глобальной Арктике, реализации такого «предельного» сценария, конечно бы не хотелось. Лучшим будущим было бы сохраняющееся охлаждение с сохранением действующих и ранее доказавших свою эффективность глобальных институтов кооперации арктических стран. В значительной степени выбор такого «мягкого» сценария будет зависеть от степени независимости правительств Швеции, Норвегии, Финляндии, Исландии, Дании, Гренландии и Фарерских островов от диктата Европейского Союза и НАТО, в которые они в большинстве своем входят.

Одиннадцатое, последнее по списку, но не по значению. Нарастающее военное присутствие России на арктических островах и в традиционных фланговых территориях Арктической зоны – в Мурманской области и Чукотском автономном округе неизбежно и объективно вынуждено конфронтационным поведением западных партнеров, в том числе при проведении многочисленных военных учений в Арктике. Речь будет идти не только о численном наращивании военного персонала, но и о технической модернизации средств вооружения, сухопутного и морского базирования. Мое поколение прожило несколько первых десятилетий жизни в условиях такой непрерывной военной конфронтации между СССР и странами НАТО в Арктике. Поэтому возвращение к такому сценарию не является аномалией, а лишь воспроизводит, будем надеяться, не на более высоком уровне военных потенциалов и угроз, прежнюю практику. Видимо, она останется реальностью вплоть до середины 21 века, когда по прогнозу И. Валлерстайна, завершится полное переформатирование прежнего странового устройства мира и закат США как гегемона прежнего мирового порядка.

Если обобщать описанные тенденции, то их интегральной характеристикой станет постепенно возникающий облик новой российской Арктики – более технологически продвинутой и суверенной, но одновременно лишенной тех красок разнообразия, которые обеспечивало интересное и продуктивное социокультурное сотрудничество и бизнес-партнерство с европейскими странами во многих структурах циркумполярного сотрудничества и по многим направлениям. Поэтому новая российская Арктика будет неизбежно отличаться и от советской (секретной и закрытой) Арктики, и от «партнерской» российской Арктики 1990—2000-х годов. В век возникающего многополярного мира российская Арктика будет скорее сконцентрирована на решении внутренних проблем самой России, чем на активном поиске международных партнеров и союзов.

THE RUSSIAN ARCTIC IN THE 2010s AND 2020s

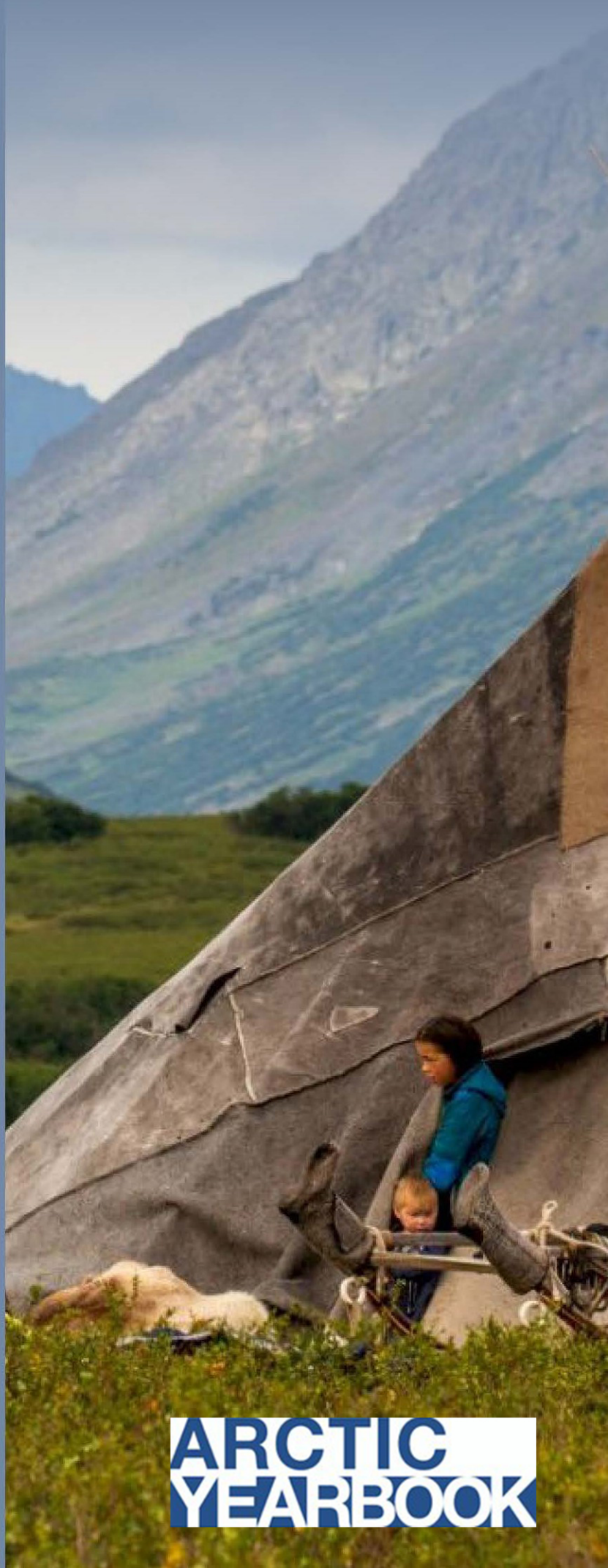
SELECTED ARTICLES FROM
THE ARCTIC YEARBOOK

In the current state of world disorder dominated by great power rivalries, hot and proxy wars, militarization, and ecological catastrophe, it is critically important to view environmental and world politics holistically. To do so, open access to relevant information is required all over the world. This includes understanding a globalized Arctic that includes Russia – a state that makes up around half of the entire region – due to its high geostrategic and ecological importance.

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