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Mastering the Arctic?

Political Culture and colonialism in the Russian Far North

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Abstract

In conversations about colonialism in the Arctic, Russia is usually excluded as a case. The objective of this dissertation is to include it. Similar to the other Arctic states (excluding Iceland), Russia has a colonialist past. This volume asserts that it also has a colonialist present and presents a case study of colonialism in the Russian Arctic through four peer-reviewed articles and a discussion. From an inductive and iterative process that began with the observation that Moscow is encouraging its citizens to move to the Arctic, the research questions of this dissertation solidified into (1) Why is Moscow attempting to (re)colonize its Arctic region? (2) How can we understand the relationship between the Russian state and its Arctic regions and residents? and (3) What are the foundations of this relationship and how entrenched are they? The results of investigating these questions are that colonialism is, indeed, happening currently in the Russian Arctic, in the forms of internal and resource colonialism, although the practice has been neutralized by calling it "development." Arctic residents are less likely to receive the benefits and more likely to suffer the negative consequences of state policies. However, while Arctic residents, particularly Indigenous groups, are most vulnerable to these negative effects, they use the mechanisms available to them to bolster their everyday security. Furthermore, Moscow's current internal and resource colonialist practices are not novel; they are the continuation of *long durée* colonialist practices from the imperial and Soviet eras. The continuity across three different eras has its roots in Russia's political culture, which has been, and still is, conducive to authoritarianism. This has allowed the state (in whichever manifestation) to assert top-down control over the land and people, with little regard for potential negative effects of state policies. While these colonialist practices have been occurring for economic reasons, they have also been motivated by security concerns, namely, to reduce Moscow's perception that the northernmost tier of its territory is vulnerable to external threats. I call this practice "colonialism as security." The concepts that guided this investigation are political culture and colonialism. Each of the articles utilizes different combinations of these core concepts and focusses on different time periods. The research in this volume is based on a variety of sources ranging from official policy documents and speeches to newspaper articles, to historical texts, to interviews with local residents, all employing a hermeneutical methodology from a standpoint of "wondering as a research attitude" (Lobo-Guerrero 2013). The conclusions reached from this process were based on critical discourse analysis, thematic analysis, and comparative historical analysis, all of which serve to provide a thick explanation of the situation in the Russian Arctic. This transdisciplinary work, although grounded in comparative political science, is relevant to those interested in Russian and Arctic studies, as well as security studies.

Acknowledgements

Serendipity. At the beginning of each academic year, I challenged my students to incorporate this word into their research papers. Why? Partly to inject a bit of fun into an otherwise serious, and oftentimes frustrating, process; partly because it is my favorite word in the English language; and partly because I feel it is the perfect descriptor for how we all—myself included—found our paths to and at UiT. It is a beautiful word that means something fantastic; the dictionary defines it as “an aptitude for making desirable discoveries by accident” or “good fortune.” But I have my own definition for it—the coincidental coming together of forces towards a fortunate or positive outcome. And my PhD career at UiT was made serendipitous through the collaboration, guidance, and friendship of a lot of people.

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1 Introduction

In an era where terms like “postcolonial” and “decolonial” exist—and the latter has become the latest trend in academia—it is easy to assume that colonialism should be studied in the past tense. However, this dissertation argues that colonialism remains an ongoing practice and can be found in places that are not traditionally associated with the concept. Here, I look to the Russian Arctic—and specifically the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation—as a standout case of contemporary colonialism. The starting point of this project was the observation that the current Russian government, under Vladimir Putin, has been actively trying to encourage people to (re)colonize[1] its Arctic region. An increasing amount of scholarship recently has been exploring and exposing processes of internal colonialization (Turner 2018; Trafford 2020). The purpose of this dissertation has been to explore to what degree this effort has and can be characterized as colonization, and why.

During the Soviet period, the Russian Arctic experienced a massive influx of people from across the Union. When the Soviet Union collapsed, the region quickly became “overpopulated” (Heleniak 1999, 157) as industries ill-suited for a market economy shuttered their operations and workers quickly found themselves unemployed. This spurred a mass exodus of workers to their social support networks “back home.” During the 1990s, the state had even *paid* for people to leave parts of the region (Luzin et al. 1994, Nuykina 2011). So, the news that Putin’s regime wanted people to move (back) to the region seemed counter-intuitive for a variety of reasons.

First, the costs of subsidizing populations in these regions of extreme climate and distance are still heavy and the employment opportunities have not grown sufficiently to necessitate another influx of people, so did the government want to subsidize a new wave of (re)colonization? If so, why? Second, given that Russia is vulnerable to some of the greatest negative effects of climate change—especially permafrost melt, which can critically damage existing infrastructure (Badina 2021)—

[1] This term refers to both the intentions to re-populate existing Arctic urban areas, such as Murmansk, Arkhangelsk, etc., as well as breaking ground on new locations, such as those included in the “Hectare in the Arctic” program, which was the topic of Article D.

was the idea of bringing more people to such an environment even advisable? Third, scholars and journalists alike have noted that this current focus on Russian Arctic development relies heavily on Soviet-era imagery and glory, to the point that it seems the government wishes to continue the Soviet way of development (Grajewski 2017, Lagutina 2021). Yet, conditions are different now, especially economically. Under the Soviet command-and-control economic system, the plans determined in Moscow were implemented regardless of the actual cost. In the current market economy, the benefits of (re-)populating the Arctic would have to outweigh the costs, but what would such benefits be? The development of hydrocarbon extraction is one, but is it sufficient to justify the extensive creation of new laws, entirely new federal ministries, and intensive economic investment as the Russian state[2] has been doing?

Fourth, an often-neglected facet is that there are numerous groups of Indigenous peoples across the Russian Arctic,[3] many of whom continue to lead traditional livelihoods, who were demographically marginalized during the Soviet era, and who may have well-founded apprehensions about a new wave of colonization. How would their communities, livelihoods, and futures be affected by a new wave of colonization? Finally, and most fundamentally, is it even possible for a country to colonize territory already within its own sovereign boundaries? Together, these reasons led me to think that such a large-scale plan had to be motivated by more than just capital. Why else would a government make such a massive investment? In 1939, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill famously stated that Russia "is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma," as some of the logics by which it operates can befuddle outsiders. To me, this was another such befuddling instance…but one of which I intended to make sense.

The research process for this entire dissertation was inductive and iterative. I did not start with any formal research questions or hypotheses, just a desire to make

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[2] For the purposes of this dissertation, when I refer to the "Russian state," I mean the center of formal power which, in line with the historical trajectory outlined below, was located first in Novgorod (1137-1478), then shifted to Moscow (1478-1703), then St. Petersburg (1703-1918), then back to Moscow (1918-present). The terms "Russian state" and "center of power" will be used interchangeably throughout this document.

[3] Section II (f) of 2020 presidential decree № 645 titled, *Strategy for Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation and Provision of National Security for the Period up to 2035* officially recognizes that "nineteen Indigenous minority groups reside in the Arctic zone" (Davis and Holland 2023).

sense out of a befuddling mystery. It began with, as Lobo-Guerrero (2013) calls it, "wondering as a research attitude" (25), which:

> "implies the need to react to surprises and capitalize on them…[surprises] constitute opportunities to challenge established truths by resorting to creative tactics to make sense of meaning that does not seem logical. These tactics inevitably lead to reading beyond disciplines, official narratives and authorized and authoritative texts. They demand from the researcher the capacity to weave networks of knowledge in the process of linking apparently disparate pieces of evidence into a coherent narrative for which an understanding is sought" (27).

Emerging from this process of wondering were the following research questions. The first and most pressing question was, (RQ1) Why is Moscow attempting to (re)colonize its Arctic region? Two broader questions that emerged from the immediate question were, (RQ2) How can we understand the relationship between the Russian state and its Arctic regions and residents? and (RQ3) What are the foundations of this relationship and how entrenched are they?

Although my research is based in the discipline of political science (especially comparative politics), finding insights into my initial mystery necessitated delving into multiple other disciplines including history, geography, anthropology, and political economy. What I came to understand is that Moscow's motivation for (re)colonizing its Far North stems from a combination of the need for economic security (revenue generation), state-ontological security (assertions of sovereignty), and a desire for status (Russia as a Great Power). Russia's status as a "unique civilization and a Great Power" vis-à-vis the international community has historical roots that extend back to the imperial era and, as this thesis argues, represents a psychocultural narrative in Russian political culture. This statement contains the two core concepts that are evident in the articles within this dissertation. They are defined in detail in article A and are *political culture* and *colonialism.* While quite disparate, I see them as intertwined in the case of Russia's Arctic over the *long durée.* By *long durée* I mean a period of more than three hundred years that encompasses three different political systems – the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union, and the current Russian Federation.

The state's relationship with its Arctic regions is a subject that has been examineded by other scholars, particularly Marlene Laruelle (2014). However, what

distinguishes this dissertation is the assertion that Moscow's current outlook and actions in its Arctic region constitute colonialism, an argument that was introduced in Articles A, C, and D, and will be expanded upon in section 5.2.

This dissertation is based on the multiple literatures of political culture and colonialism and, supplementally, to a lesser degree, security studies. Locationally, it is most immediately relevant to the interdisciplinary fields of Russian studies and Arctic studies. Theoretically, it is based in constructivism. It touches upon many contemporary academic debates, including whether colonialism is still occurring, the analytical value of broadening security perspectives, and authoritarian politics, states' relations with Indigenous peoples.

1.1 Results: Articles

The results of this inductive and iterative PhD project are the four academic articles that are listed in chronological order here. They are summarized in chapter 3 and the original articles are included at the end of this summary article.

1) Hodgson, Kara K. and Gunhild Hoogensen Gjørv. "'Colonialism as Security': Using a comprehensive security analysis to understand colonialist practices of security in the Russian Arctic." *Arctic Review on Law and Politics*. [submitted]

2) Stammler, Florian, Kara K. Hodgson, and Aytalina Ivanova. "Human Security, Extractive Industries and Indigenous Communities in the Russian North." In *Routledge Handbook of Arctic Security*, edited by Gunhild Hoogensen Gjørv and Horatio Godfrey Sam-Aggrey; 377-391. London and New York: Routledge, 2020.

3) Hodgson, Kara K. "Russia's Colonial Legacy in the Sakha Heartland." *In The Arctic Institute Colonialism Series 2022*, edited by Jen Evans. Washington D.C.: The Arctic Institute, November 15, 2022. https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/russias-colonial-legacy-sakha-heartland/ [online].

4) Hodgson, Kara K. And Marc Lanteigne. "Homesteading in the Arctic: The Logic Behind, and Prospects for, Russia's 'Hectare in the Arctic' Program." *Arctic Yearbook* (2022): 1-14. https://arcticyearbook.com/images/yearbook/2022/Scholarly-Papers/12A_AY2022_Hodgson_Lanteigne.pdf

The rest of this summary article is laid out as follows: Chapter 2 provides background information for the case at hand, which is the Russian Arctic. Chapter 3 provides summaries of the articles included in this study. Chapter 4 discusses the

methodology that informed my research process and the methods that were utilized in each article. Chapter 5 expands upon on the concepts that are central to this project, which were touched upon in Article A. Chapter 6 provides a discussion of how the four articles are related within the case at hand as well as my answers to my research questions. Finally, Chapter 7 provides concluding remarks and some thoughts on future possibilities for research.

2 The Russian Arctic

This chapter is designed to provide the reader with an introduction to the Russian Arctic. It is divided into two sub-sections. The first will orient the reader to the various ways in which ethnic Russians have conceived of the region and their relations to it. It will also provide basic definitions of what I mean throughout the dissertation when I refer to "Russian" and "Russian Arctic." The second section will provide a profile of the region's physical and political geography, demographic profile, and current socio-economic indicators (as of December 31, 2022).

2.1 "Russian"

In the Russian language, the word "Russian" is divisible into two different meanings. The first is an ethnic designation - *russkiy* (русский) – that is used when referring to the language or ethno-cultural identity ("Russkiy" n.d.). The second is a civic designation - *rossiyskiy* (российский) – which refers to the state or governmental sphere, as well as the legal status of all citizens of the Russian Federation, regardless of their ethnic identity ("Rossiyskiy" n.d.). When necessary, they will be referred to throughout as either "ethnic Russian" or "civic Russian."

The Russian Federation is a multi-ethnic country. Depending on how one chooses to count, it contains between 145 to 190 different ethnic groups (FSSS 2010). However, the politically and culturally dominant ethnic group upon which the civic Russian state has always been based is that of the ethnic Russians, sometimes also called Great Russians. Taking inspiration from a modified version of Armstrong's (1965) definition, ethnic Russians are those who are an

> "inhabitant, or the descendant of an inhabitant, of the states of Novgorod [or] Muscovy…exclud[ing] the Indigenous inhabitants of the north; although one must bear in mind that intermarriage between Russians and [Indigenous peoples] was frequent…[t]his study is concerned with the penetration into the north of a group which is not necessarily an ethnic unity, but which has a culture sharply differentiated from that of the [Indigenous peoples]" (xi).

"Ethnic Russian" also includes those whose history is represented in Russia's conventional historical narrative as told in, for example, history textbooks (both in

Russia and internationally).[4] This is the group that has occupied the area of Central Russia,[5] the territory that "represents the internal historical core of the former empire" (Podvintsev et al. 2016, 11; translation mine).[6] In line with this conventional historical narrative, the Russian state began in the southerly European location of Kievan Rus' in the ninth century, then migrated eastward and northward. The seats of power also migrated, first to the town of Vladimir and then to Moscow, with the grand princes slowly consolidating power and gaining territory to the point where, by the seventeenth century, it had become a modern empire, which was toppled by revolution in 1917, then re-emerged as the Soviet Union, which lasted until it collapsed in 1991, and is now called the Russian Federation. The Russian Federation lost much of the territory it had gained to the west and south during the imperial and Soviet areas, but it still retained its historical core and the territory to the north and east of that. This conventional historical narrative is the latest iteration of a psychocultural narrative relating to, what President Putin has repeatedly referred to as, Russia's "thousand-year history" (see Article A).

As this dissertation employs a cross-temporal analysis, period-specific terminology is important. Thus when referring to the territorial state/country, the terms will be used interchangeably according to their historical period, thus "Russian Empire" or "Imperial Russia" for the period from 1689 to 1917; "USSR," or "Soviet Union" for the period from 1917 to 1991 (however, if specificity is required, "Soviet Russia" will be used to refer specifically to the territory contained within the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic); and "Russia" and "Russian Federation" for the current state.

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[4] This official narrative is also taught to students in university-level Russian history courses. The following are the textbooks that I was taught from as a university student: Evtuhov et al. 2004, Moss 1997a and 1997b, Riasanovsky 2000, and The Cambridge History of Russia Volumes 1-3 (Lieven 2008, Perrie 2008, Suny 2008).

[5] Central Russia is here defined as the 18 subjects that constitute the current Central Federal District of Russia (including Moscow), which roughly correspond to the areas that constituted the historical "heartland" or "core" of Russia. This is also where the bulk of Russia's population have historically and contemporarily lived.

[6] Original Russian text: "*Определение «центральная», вполне очевидно, связано с тем, что данная территория* представляет собой внутренне историческое ядро бывшей империи" (11; emphasis added).

2.2 "Russian Arctic"

In the Russian language, there are a variety of terms used to describe the northerly portions of Russia: the Russian North, the Far North, "Far North and equivalent territories," simply "the North," Polar Arctic, Arctic zone, etc. Before the late twentieth century, "Arctic" was a term reserved for "military, nature protection issues, and marine activities" (Stammler-Gossman 2011, 98), specifically in the Arctic Ocean and surrounding waters and islands. "North," on the other hand, tended to refer to land-based territory. Various scholars have noted that this designation was of a socio-economic, more than a physical-geographical nature (Lagutina 2019; Lukin 2016).

According to Podvintsev et al. (2016), there are a variety of further sub-divisions when referring to different areas of Russia's north. First, there is the division between *krayniy sever* (крайний север) and *dal'niy sever* (дальний север). During Soviet times, the idea of *krayniy sever* (literally, high or extreme north)[7] became synonymous with harsh living and working conditions. The category of "Far North and territories equivalent to it" (Крайний Север и приравненных к ним местностей / *Krayniy Sever i priravnennykh k nim mestnosti*) was created for determining the level of benefits that workers could expect by relocating to such "inhospitable" and "peripheral" areas of the country; this category is still in use today. As Map 1 shows, this category geographically encompassed a sizeable majority of the territory of Soviet Russia (now, the Russian Federation). Then there is *dal'niy sever* (literally, far away north), which includes the northern areas of Siberia and the Far East. During Soviet times, it was "associated mainly with places of detention" (19; translation mine[8]) as many gulag camps[9] were located in these areas. There is also a division in public consciousness between the civic Russian North (российский север / *rossiyskiy sever*)

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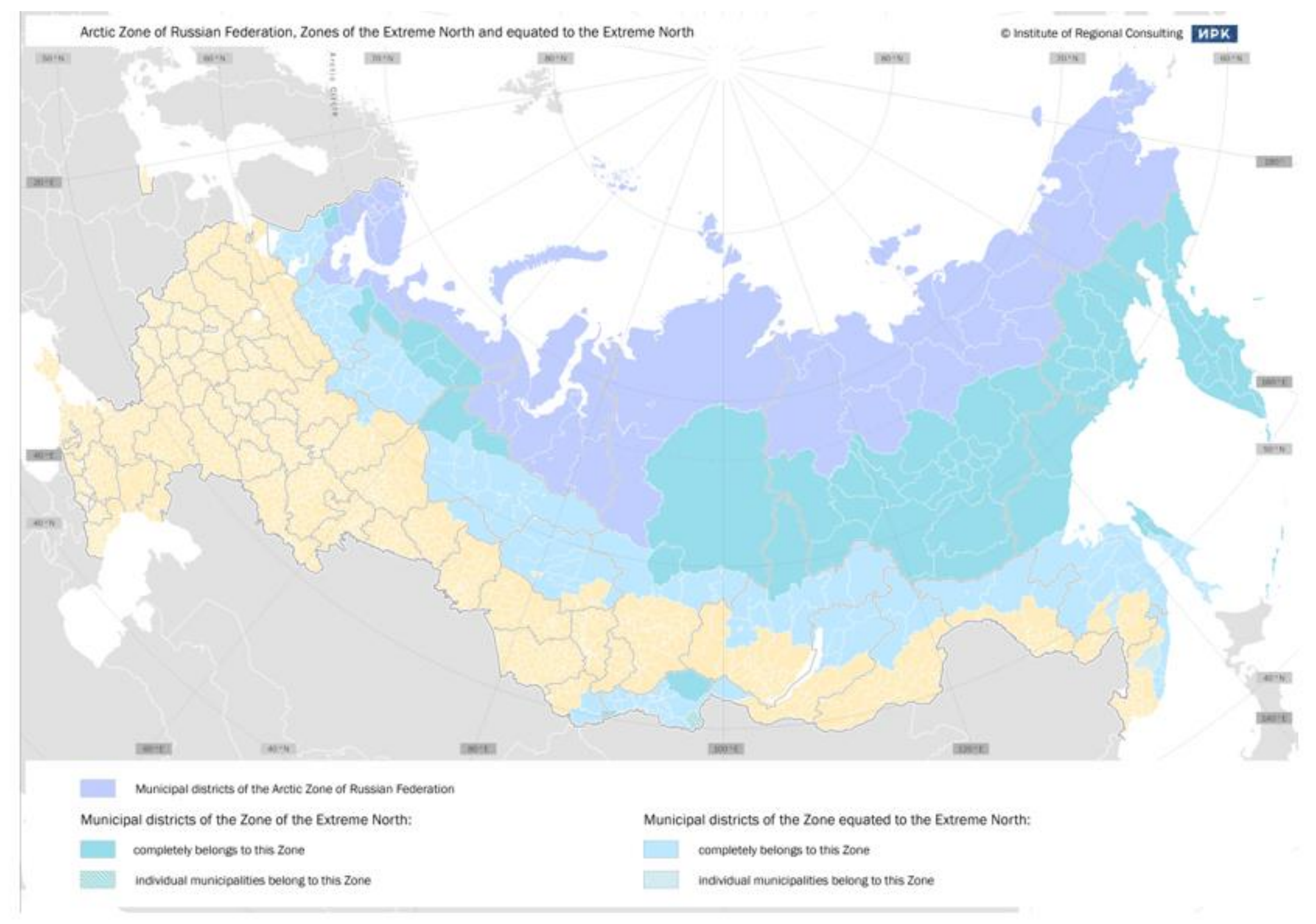
[7] Eklund et al. (2019) note that "krayniy sever" is delimited to "the 'European North' (historically known as 'the Russian North) in the northwest" (202).

[8] Original Russian text: "*ассоциировалось в основном с местами заключения*"

[9] Sometimes also spelled as GULag, it is an abbreviation of *Glavnoye Upravleniye Lagerei*, meaning the Main Administration of (Corrective Labor) Camps. It was notorious during the Stalinist era for the extent of its operations as well as the inhumane conditions endured by those sentenced to forced labor. It will be discussed in greater detail in Section 6.3.



Map 1: All of the municipalities colored in blue, teal, and purple are included within the category of "Far (Extreme) North and territories equivalent to it." Note that more of Russia's entire sovereign territory falls within this designation than outside of it. Source: ANO "IRK".

and the ethno-cultural Russian North (русский север / *russkiy sever*). Podvintsev et al. contend that, "on the mental map of Russia, these regions not only do not coincide, but only partially intersect and mainly by their periphery" (20; translation mine[10]). The former is used when discussing natural-physical and socio-economic topics; the latter concerns its historical and ethno-cultural characteristics. Finally, there is the concept of *zapolyar'ye* (заполярье, literally, "beyond the polar [circle])," or "polar (north/Arctic)." While not an official term, it is a popular expression from the Soviet era that referred generally to everything above the Arctic Circle (Eklund et al. 2019). Podvintsev et al. (2016) state that, even in the present day, *zapolyar'ye* continues to have "predominantly positive connotations - heroic-patriotic…and romantic-nostalgic…[g]eographically, the term *zapolyar'ye* was tied mainly to three territories - the Murmansk region, Vorkuta and the Norilsk region" (21-2; translation mine[11]).

While fully appreciating the variety and specificity of terms available to discuss this northernmost region, such categorization is unwarranted here. Therefore, unless specificity is necessary, for the sake of readability, the Russian Arctic will be treated as a single "macro-region" or region and the terms "Far North" and "(Russian) Arctic" will be used interchangeably.

As will be explained in detail below, certain parts of the Russian Arctic have been colonized longer than others and thus it is possible to speak of different groups of Russian Arctic inhabitants. For the sake of clarity, I delineate two groups: Indigenous peoples and colonizers. "Indigenous peoples" refers to the large and small Indigenous groups of the Russian Arctic region, such as the Sámi, Veps, Karelians, Nenets,

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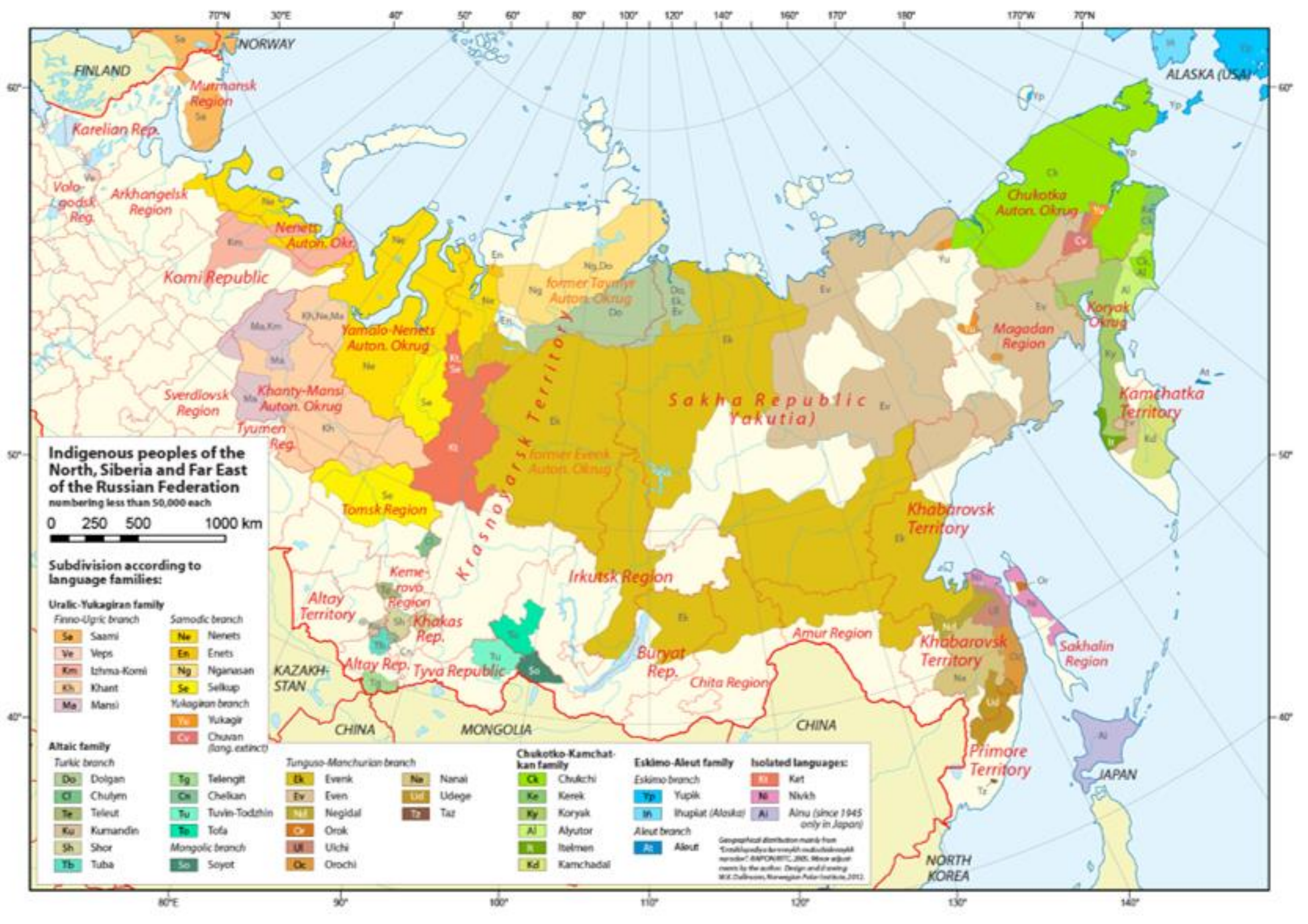
[10] Original Russian text: *"И то, и другое накладывает свой особый (не совпадающий один с другим) отпечаток на менталитет населения данных регионов, а также обуславливает их внешнее восприятие. Однако на ментальной карте России эти регионы не только не совпадают, но пересекаются лишь частично и в основном своей периферией."*

[11] Original Russian text: *"преимущественно позитивные коннотации – героико-патриотические…и романтико-ностальгические…Географически термин «Заполярье» привязан преимущественно к трем территориям – Мурманской области, Воркуте и региону Норильска."*



Map 2: Of those groups officially listed as "Indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia, and Far East of the Russian Federation," at least 11 are located in the Russian Arctic region. Source: APECS.

Khanty, Chukchi, Sakha, etc.[12] Map 2 shows an expanded list of those who can be considered as "Indigenous" in Russia. Within the colonizer category, I further delineate between "old-timer" settlers and migrant-settlers or *priyezhiye* (приежие).

"Old-timer" settlers are those Slavic/Russian groups that settled in the Arctic during the pre-imperial and imperial periods, including Pomors (see section 6.1), Old Believer sects, and descendants of the Cossacks, peasants, trappers, and traders. I employ the term *priyezhiye*, or "incomer," to refer to a migrant-settler who relocated to the Arctic during the Soviet era, in search of economic opportunities. Such migrants may or may not have intended to stay, but have nonetheless settled in the region, where they remain to the current period. Although not a voluntary relocation, I also include gulag settlers who stayed in this final category. Some authors even refer to *priyezhiye* as "immigrants" (Armstrong 1965, Stammler-Gossman 2011).

The terminology that people utilize when discussing a topic influences, and impacts, the way they perceive reality. The Russian Arctic offers some textbook examples to underlie this fact. Despite the Arctic macro-region being fully integrated into the state structures of the Russian Federation, it is still perceived as an external space in mainstream Russian discourse, or as Bykova (2021) calls it,

> "*ne nash* (not ours)…[which] likely stems from Russian perceptions of and attitudes towards Siberia, which, like the Arctic, was simultaneously seen as a land of opportunity but also a land of darkness populated by uncivilized hordes. Both Siberia and the Arctic (whose boundaries are not clearly demarcated and tend to overlap) have historically been viewed as vital to Russia's nationhood…but they have also been treated as backwards and unruly due to the sparsely populated landscape, the

[12] For historical reasons, Russia has a particular way of defining which groups can be considered as Indigenous (what it calls "small-numbered peoples"). A federal register of those officially recognized as such was created in 2000; for the full list, see Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation of March 24, 2000 N 255 "On the Unified List of the Emergence of Indigenous Peoples of the Russian Federation" (with amendments and additions), https://base.garant.ru/181870/ [in Russian]. Peoples with larger numbers, such as the Sakha or the Komi, were not considered as Indigenous, in the international understanding, but rather as "titular nationalities." I, however, prefer to adhere to international principles, specifically, Article 1 of the International Labor Organization's Convention 169 which defines *Indigenous* as "peoples in independent countries who are regarded as Indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonisation or the establishment of present state boundaries and who, irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions" (https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C169). It is important to note that neither the USSR nor the Russian Federation have signed onto Convention 169.

'savage' wilderness, and the populations of Indigenous peoples who live there" (para. 6).

The most readily available example of this is the metaphorical term *materik* (материк), meaning "mainland" (sometimes also referred to as "the Big Land" - большая земля / *bol'shaya zemlya*). Since Soviet times, these terms have been popularly used by *priyezhiye* to refer to Central Russia (Eklund et al. 2019), invoked in juxtaposition to the "continental island[s of single-industry towns that scattered the Russian Arctic], surrounded by a sea of tundra" (Dahlin 2021, 2). As outlined in Articles A and C, one of the elements of colonialism is the transfer of people to an "external" land, even if that which is perceived of as "external" is within a state's legally recognized boundaries. The symbolism behind these popular references – which are still currently used - is that, despite Russian identity being "northern," the people themselves do not use language that frames their own identities as linked to the Arctic regions of their own country.

Terms like *materik* and *priezzhiye*, however are popular terms that originated organically through the experiences of migrants. The Soviet/Russian state, on the other hand, engaged in full-blown propaganda campaigns that made no illusions as to its mentality regarding the Arctic. Verbs like "conquer," "tame," "master," and "control" have all been – and continue to be – used in reference to human endeavors in the Russian Arctic. As Baev (2013) notes, "The discourse of 'conquering' and 'owning' the High North is organic to the Russian state identity" (489). Of particular interest is the implicit bias built into the Russian language itself in this regard. The term most commonly used when describing Russia's plans for its Arctic is *osvoyeniye Arktiki* (освоение Арктики). During Soviet times, the word *osvoyeniye* was translated to mean "mastery" or "conquest." In current Russian practice, the same word has been sanitized to mean "development" or "opening." However, the word itself is revealing as, literally translated, it means "the process of making something one's own," thereby implying a process of appropriation, absorption, or assimilation. Be it mastery, conquest, appropriation, absorption, or assimilation, all of these interpretations imply a uni-directional power relationship wherein one entity is subjugated by another (in this case, the Arctic region is subjugated by the Russian state, based in the "southerly"

region of Moscow) and is made to conform to the designs of the more powerful latter entity.[13] Indigenous scholar Galina Belolyubskaya (2021) notes that, "*Osvoenie* involves proprietary relations, and in the eyes of the state, it legitimizes the right to own land" (3). In this lies another element of colonialism, as outlined in Articles A and C, which is the concept of *terra nullius* and the perception of land as property.

2.2.1 The Legal "Russian Arctic"

The first attempt to define the boundaries of Russia's Arctic came in 1926, when the new Soviet government decreed that all lands and islands within the east-west Russian boundaries of the Arctic Ocean, up to the North Pole, were Soviet territory.[14] This decree has served as the historical basis for all Soviet, later Russian, legislation on the topic. Although no direct mention of control over the marine-based areas (including the ice packs and seabeds) up to the North Pole was made, it was nevertheless implied because the Soviets' claim was based on the sectoral principle (also called sector theory), which the Oxford Dictionary of Law defines as:

> "A proposed basis for national claims to sovereignty over both the Arctic and Antarctica. The sector theory delineates a meridian line from the pole to the farthest extremity of the contiguous state's land mass. All territory within that sector is thereupon purported to be under the sovereignty of the claimant state" (Law and Martin 2014).

In this definition, "territory" does not specify whether it is land-based or marine-based. Sector theory was designed to replace the operating principle of the time for claiming space, namely trifecta of discover-notify-effectively occupy. For land-based interests, Timtchenko (1997) writes that scientists coined this new principle to avoid the "effective occupation" criterion in such extreme climatic conditions. Regarding marine-based interests, Sharp (2019) remarks, it was impossible for states to "occupy" the Arctic Ocean.

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[13] This explanation is an amalgamation of the explanation provided by the following sources on the terms *osvoyeniye* and *osvoyeniye Arktiki*; see Belolyubskaya 2021, Hønneland 2013, Sunderland 2004, and Tichotsky 2000.

[14] Decree of 15 April 1926 "On the declaration of the territory of the USSR of the lands and islands located in the Arctic Ocean," https://docs.cntd.ru/document/901761796 [in Russian].

However, sector theory was never universally recognized as legitimate. Cavell (2018) notes that Canada, the United Kingdom and the USSR were proponents of this theory, but the United States and Norway were not. Nevertheless, the Soviet Union relied on it as a *de facto* principle of legitimate possession, as did its successor state, the Russian Federation, until the latter ratified the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in 1997.[15] By ratifying UNCLOS, the Russian Federation agreed to abide by the Convention's rules delimiting sovereign rights for coastal states to a maximum of 350 nautical miles from the territorial baseline.[16] In doing so, one Russian scholar and proponent of sector theory claims that Russia unwittingly, unknowingly, or on purpose forewent any claim of perceived sovereignty over 1.7 million km² of marine territory that the USSR had decreed to be part of its sector (Lukin 2014).

In 1998, well after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the new regime made a second attempt to define the boundaries of the Russian Arctic (Lukin 2014) but was ultimately not successful in encompassing all of the desired marine and terrestrial areas until they were fully articulated in the 2008 policy document titled, "Basics of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic for the Period Until 2020 and Beyond."[17]

The term "Arctic" has, in recent years, become increasingly used to describe a particular, bounded area of the Russian Federation that includes both land and marine territory. The epitomal example of this is the designation of the "Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation" (AZRF; see Article A). In 2014, President Putin issued a decree[18] that formalized the boundaries of the AZRF. It noted the marine areas included in this zone, but more importantly, it gave a detailed definition of the land territories that

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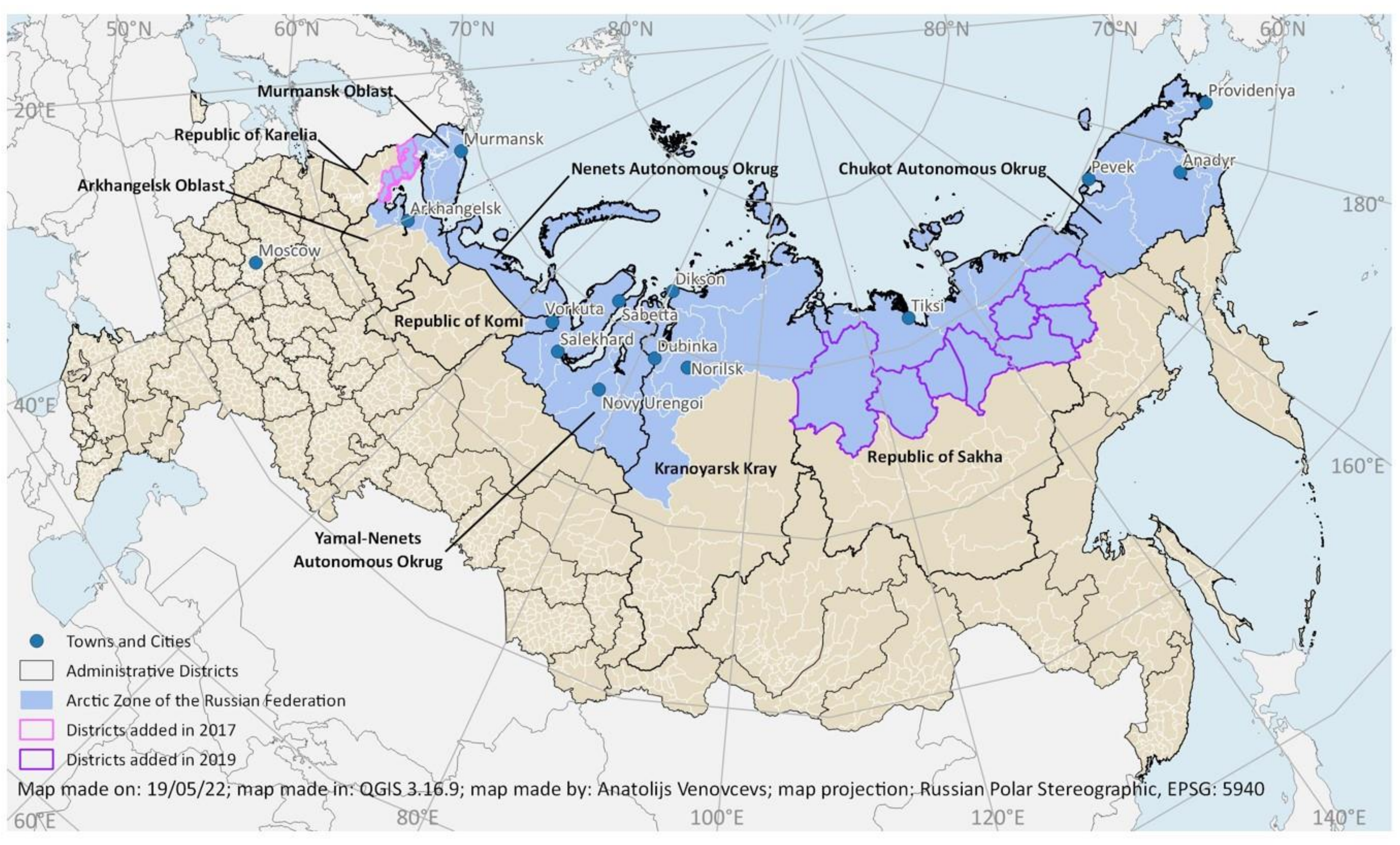
[15] The Soviet Union signed, but did not ratify, UNCLOS in 1982. Only after 15 years of negotiations, did the Russian successor state finally agree to ratify it.

[16] United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/UNCLOS-TOC.htm

[17] "Basics of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic for the Period until 2020 and Beyond," http://government.ru/info/18359/ [in Russian].

[18] Presidential Decree of 2 May 2014 No. 296 "On land territories of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation." http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/38377 [in Russian].



Map 3: The Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation. The Arctic Zone covers an area of approximately 4.9 million km,^{2} which amounts to almost 29% of the total territory of the Russian Federation.

were to be included in this zone. This decree was updated again in 2017[19], 2019,[20] and 2020[21] to include additional municipalities. As of March 2020, the AZRF is defined as follows:

> "land territories defined by the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation issued on 2 May 2014 No. 296 "On Land Territories of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation," as well as the internal waters adjacent to these territories, territorial sea, exclusive economic zone, and continental shelf of the Russian Federation" (Section I, Article 3(b))[22]

As Map 3 shows, the AZRF encompasses 1) in whole, the four federal subjects of Murmansk oblast', Nenets Autonomous Okrug, Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, and Chukotka Autonomous Okrug; 2) in part, 27 municipalities in five additional subjects (west-to-east: Republic of Karelia, Arkhangelsk oblast, Komi Republic, Krasnoyarsk krai, and the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)).

This is the first instance in the history of Russian legislation where Russia's highest-latitude land and marine territories are fully articulated in one definition. This move began a reversal of the long-standing conceptual division between "Arctic" (referring to the ocean) and "North" (referring to land).

The articles in this dissertation are predominantly concerned with areas contained within the AZRF, but Articles B and C extend the scope to include the entirety of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia). The inclusion of this Republic is reflective of the evolution of this dissertation project, which originally was intended to focus exclusively on the Republic, but evolved over time to include the AZRF. However, its inclusion can still be validated with the knowledge that its northernmost municipalities are within the AZRF and the Republic as a whole is considered within

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[19] Presidential Decree of 27 June 2017 No. 287 "On Introducing Amendments to Presidential Decree of 2 May 2014 No. 296 'On land territories of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation.'" http://static.kremlin.ru/media/acts/files/0001201706270043.pdf [in Russian].

[20] Presidential Decree of 13 May 2019 № 220 "On Introducing Amendments to Presidential Decree of 2 May 2014 No. 296 'On land territories of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation.'" http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/44231 [in Russian].

[21] Federal Law No. 193 "On state support for entrepreneurship in the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation" of 13 July 2020. http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_357078/ [in Russian].

[22] Presidential decree of 5 March 2020 No. 164, "On the Foundations of State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic for the Period Until 2035," http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/45255 [in Russian]. An English translation can be found on the website of the Russian Maritime Studies Institute at https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/rmsi_research/5.

the “Extreme North” zone (see Map 1). Throughout the rest of this summary article, “Russian Arctic” and “Russian Far North” will refer exclusively to the territory contained within the AZRF. Notably this excludes much of the more southerly latitude areas of Siberia and the Far East, which are commonly included; this is done for the sake of manageability.

2.3 Characteristics of the Russian Arctic

Geographically, Russia has the largest amount of sovereign authority in the Arctic. The Russian Federation has the longest border on the Arctic Ocean – 24,140 km (“Russia” n.d.). The Russian Arctic contains over 240 protected nature areas, including the world’s third largest nature preserve—the Great Arctic State Nature Reserve—which was established in 1993, and encompasses 41,692 square kilometers (“Gosudarstvenniy” n.d.). The sheer vastness of area contained in the Russian Arctic makes transportation and communication between places all the more important, but the climate and terrain make it all the more difficult. Throughout the history of Russia’s possession of its Arctic territory, the main transportation routes have been the four large river systems that empty into the Arctic Ocean from more southerly locations in Russia. As can be seen in Map 4, they are, from west to east, the Ob’ River and the Yenisey River, both of which empty into the Kara Sea; the Lena River, which empties into the Laptev Sea, and the Kolyma River, which empties into the East Siberian Sea. Given the difficulties of establishing roads or train routes over such a vast territory, these rivers have proven to be important transportation and communication links for Russia throughout its history and continue to do so currently.

Historically, Russia can trace its claims of ownership of the European part its Arctic back to the twelfth century and, of its Asian part, to the seventeenth century (Armstrong 1965; Hønneland 2013; Lajus 2011; Martin 1988). In terms of political geography, the Russian Federation is subdivided into seven federal districts and 84 sub-national administrative units called “subjects.”[23] Four of Russia’s seven federal districts (North-Western, Ural, Siberian, Far Eastern) and thirteen of Russia’s 84

[23] If the reader should wish to include the disputed territories of North Ossetia, Abkhazia, Crimea, Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia as a subjects, then the Russian Federation would have more subjects.

Map 4: Physical map of the Russian Arctic. Map made on: 19/04/23; map made in QGIS 3.16.9; map made by: Anatolijs Venovcevs; map projection: Russian Polar Stereographic, EPSG: 5940.

federal subjects are fully or partially located in the Arctic (see Map 3). Russia also dominates the Arctic demographically. During the Soviet era, there was a massive influx of *priyezhiye*. By 1989, approximately 5.5 million Soviet citizens had moved (or were moved) to the Russian Arctic[24] and, although *priyezhiye* came from all ends of the Union, the demographically dominant group of incomers always remained ethnic Russians, followed by sizeable representations of Ukrainians and Belarusians.[25] Despite the massive outmigration after the USSR's collapse, it still boasts the largest Arctic population, and in particular, the largest urban Arctic population in the pan-Arctic region.[26] Table 1 shows that in the AZRF alone, in 2022, just under 2.6 million people call the Russian Arctic "home." In fact, the five largest cities in the pan-Arctic regions are all in Russia – Arkhangelsk, Murmansk, Novy Urengoy, Norilsk, and Vorkuta respectively.

Economically, raw materials have provided the backbone of the Russian Arctic's contribution to the national economy. As will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6, historically, the fur trade is what initially brought Russians to the region. During the Soviet era, a treasure trove of natural resources, especially hydrocarbons, but also minerals, were discovered and have been exploited up to the present.[27] The current economy of the Far North is dominated by natural resource extraction, which constitutes 60% of the regional economy. For the sake of comparison, the region's second largest economic sector—construction—constitutes only 7%. The Arctic produces 70% of the country's oil and 90% of its natural gas, with the Yamalo-Nenets

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[24] This number includes only those areas currently included in the AZRF. However, the number is approximate because information was provided for the oblast' level, not by municipality, which can be deceiving. For example, only three municipalities from the Republic of Karelia are considered AZRF, but the population statistic represents the whole republic. Total number courtesy of Heleniak (1999). Attempts to access the original All-Union Census of 1989 were unsuccessful.

[25] As will be discussed in greater detail in Section 6.3.1, during the Soviet era, a nationalities policy was implemented, one feature of which was that each Soviet citizen's nationality was written in their passport. While problematic in a variety of ways, it made counting the members of each national group easier. For more on this, see Martin (2000) and Shearer (2004).

[26] Here, I use "pan-Arctic" to refer to those countries with territory extending above the Arctic Circle, specifically Canada, Denmark/Greenland, Finland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the U.S.

[27] A popularly referenced statistic is that the Arctic provides anywhere between 10-20% of Russia's GDP. However, I searched extensively for the source of this statistic through many different documents that referenced it and never found where this number came from.

Subject	Municipality	2022 Population
Murmansk oblast	all	724,452
	(city of Murmansk)	279,064
Nenets Autonomous Okrug	all	44,540
Chukotskiy Autonomous Okrug	all	50,040
Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug	All	552,117
	(city of Novy Urengoy)	118,667
Republic of Karelia	Belomorsk municipality	14,693
	Kaleval national municipality	6283
	Kem municipality	13,551
	Kostomushka urban district	30,220
	Louhi municipality	10,265
	Segezh municipality	34,287
	Republic total	109,299
Republic of Komi	Inta urban district	25,786
	Usinsk urban district	42,381
	Ust-Tsilemskiy	10,848
	Vorkuta municipality	71,279
	Republic total	150,294
Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)	Albyy ulus	3844
	Allaikhov ulus	2656
	Anabar national (Dolgano-Evenki) ulus	3631
	Bulun ulus	8543
	Eveno-Bytantai national region	2900
	Mom ulus	3991
	Nizhnekolym ulus	4149
	Olenek Evenki national region	4324
	Srednekolym ulus	7163
	Ust-Yan ulus	6968
	Verkhnekolym ulus	3890
	Verkhoyan ulus	10,906
	Zhigan national Evenki region	4153
	Republic total	67,118
Krasnoyarski krai	Evenkiy municipal villages	7523
	Norilsk urban district	184,645
	Taymyr Dolgano-Nenets municipality	31,272
	Turukhan municipality	14,954
	Krai total	238,394
Arkhangelsk oblast	Arkhangelsk urban district	349,190
	Leshukon municipality	5693
	Mezen municipality	7964
	Novaya Zemlya urban district	3672
	Novodvinsk urban district	36,832
	Onezh municipality	27,705
	Pinezh municipality	19,946
	Primore municipality	24,938
	Severodvinsk urban district	180,668
	Oblast total	656,608
TOTAL	**2,592,862**	

Table 1. Population of the areas contained within the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation as of January 1, 2022. Source: FSSS 2022. Table compiled by author.

Autonomous Okrug serving as the hydrocarbon “power center” (Glomsrød et al. 2020, 88).

Militarily, the Arctic has long been of strategic importance to Moscow. During the early Imperial era, Russia’s most viable way of accessing the high seas was via the White and Barents Seas. During the Soviet era, the Arctic became heavily militarized and the Northern Fleet of the navy was headquartered on the Kola Peninsula, close to neighboring Norway. In the 2010s, Russia began modernizing its military capabilities in the Arctic. According to Sergunin (2020), modernization of Russia’s Arctic military capabilities includes: the renewal of its strategic nuclear submarine fleet, the reorganization of ground troops and the creation of two new Arctic brigades, the creation of two new Arctic coast defense divisions, the renovation of Soviet-era airfields and military bases, the creation of thirteen new airfields, an air-force test range, ten radar sites, and the strengthening of border guard stations.

In sum, Russia has the largest amount of Arctic territory as well as the largest population in the pan-Arctic region. The Russian state, in its various manifestations, can claim jurisdiction over the European Arctic back for approximately 850 years and over the Asian Arctic for a little over 350 years. And, in the eyes of the state, the value of this macro-region lies primarily in the economic and military security that it can provide for the whole country.

3 The Articles

The English poet John Donne famously wrote that "No man is an island" (Donne 2007). By this, he meant that no person operates in isolation. This is especially true in social science research. As such, I have deliberately chosen to lead, but co-author, the majority of my articles in an academic environment that prizes often sole authorship.[28] My choice to do so is rooted in the belief that "two heads are better than one" – that the content of the publications and their scholastic merit are only enhanced by collaboration with other authors. By combining our areas of expertise, we have produced works that provide a greater level of detail and make better connections between discrete theories, concepts, and/or examples than what could have been authored in isolation.

The articles in this chapter are listed in an order that makes the most logical sense for the reader's progression through this summary article; that is, they are not listed in the chronological order in which they were produced. Article A is actually chronologically last and therefore builds and expands on concepts that were tried out in articles B, C, and D.

3.1 Article A. "'Colonialism as Security': Using a comprehensive security analysis to understand colonialist practices of security in the Russian Arctic."

My contributions to this co-authored article included providing introductions to concepts of political culture, internal colonialism, and resource colonialism, as well as psychocultural narrative of "Russia as a unique civilization and Great Power" and the context of Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation; collecting and analyzing the Russian empirical data; analyzing the AZRF situation using the comprehensive security framework; and formatting the article. My co-author, Gunhild Hoogensen Gjørv, provided the literature review on key security studies literature as well as the section describing the comprehensive security analytical framework.

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[28] Confirmation of weight of scholarly contribution is provided for each co-authored article, demonstrating in accordance with UiT article-based dissertation regulations, that I have contributed 50% or more scholarly context to each text. Please see: https://uit.no/phd-en#v-pills-669539

This article represented an “experiment in conceptualization” (Mitzen 2006) involving the concepts of political culture, security, and colonialism. Our purpose was to see if including the concept of political culture into a comprehensive security analytical framework would make it “more reflective of the complex reality of a given context” (1). We began by defining the method of comprehensive security analysis as one that “takes into consideration the multiple sectors and levels through which multiple actors seek security in a given context” (4), to which we then added the concept of political culture as a structural link between the national (state) and local (individual) levels and actors. Our rationale for including political culture was that “it helps us understand which values are informing or influencing security perceptions from the human to societal to state level” (6), and we chose to elicit political culture values interpretively elicited through psychocultural narratives. A psychocultural narrative is a widely shared communal, historical, normative, and emotionally powerful story “in which deeply ingrained assumptions about political reality are packaged” (7). We chose to focus on the psychocultural narrative of “Russia as a unique civilization and a Great Power” because it is a state-driven psychocultural narrative that is being invoked by the current Russian government to reinforce a political culture orientation toward authoritarianism, which has a long legacy in Russian history.

We then tested our enhanced framework on a case study of “colonialism as security” in the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation (AZRF). For us, this context highlights a consistency in Moscow’s colonialist practices “both beyond its borders (i.e., Ukraine) and within its borders [i.e., the AZRF]. However, the latter does not receive as much attention as the former” (1-2). We investigated two specific types of “colonialism as security” in the AZRF: internal colonialism, which we saw as happening through overt and bureaucratic means, and resource colonialism, which we saw disguised as “sustainable development.”

Since a comprehensive security framework requires multiple actors and multiple sectors, we included three sets of actors in the AZRF context—the state, industry (primarily extractive companies), and Arctic residents, along with four security sectors—state, economic, environmental, and human. Our analysis revealed that, while

the security situation in the AZRF is, indeed, complex, both the federal government and industry have had greater success in securing their values through resource colonialism. However, while internal colonialism may have been viable in the past, industry and residents have more opportunities to contest and/or resist government efforts in this regard.

3.2 Article B. "Human Security, Extractive Industries and Indigenous Communities in the Russian North."

This book chapter was co-authored between myself and two anthropologists, Florian Stammler and Aytalina Ivanova. They provided the in-depth firsthand experience with the communities portrayed in the text. My contribution was to analyze their descriptions and categorize them based on the themes that emerged, then to connect the themes to the concept of human security.

This chapter described the tensions caused by the competing security priorities of "incomer" (see *priyezhiye,* Section 2.2) communities to the Far North and Indigenous communities. The people in "incomer" communities have colonized the Far North from more southerly locations of the former USSR, and now from Russia. They migrated in search of economic benefits to be had from extractive industries (EI). Indigenous communities, many of whom continue to practice traditional ways of life, were present in the Far North prior to the Soviet-era development of extractive industries and, therefore, many see the presence of "incomer" communities as a threat to their ways of life. The basic question we sought to answer was, "in what ways are Russia's Indigenous peoples not only experiencing everyday human insecurity, but also producing human security for themselves?" (379). An important goal that all three co-authors agreed upon at the outset of our collaboration was that we did not want to perpetuate the narrative that Indigenous peoples are passive victims of EI exploitation. While it is true that Indigenous communities have been disproportionally negatively affected by EI exploitation around the globe, they have also utilized the degree of agency available to them to mitigate their circumstances; as we noted, "even in a political environment that favours industrial development over Indigenous rights, individuals, and groups still manage to carve out niches of security for their communities" (379).

Through the analysis of two case studies, we found three measurable categories of threats—demographic marginalization, environmental pollution, and disruptions to traditional ways of life, as well as one less-measurable threat—physical and cultural alienation. The two case studies involved the experiences of three Indigenous groups in two administrative units of the Russian Federation. The first case involved the Nenets of the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug (YNAO). The second case involved the Sakha and Evenki peoples of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), or RSY. We also found three patterns of response to these threats—collectively creating regional-level laws, locally arranging benefit-sharing agreements with industries, and individual adaptation. Although all of the responses have their own precariousness, they are evidence of Indigenous agency to create niches of security.

The key concept for analysis was human security from a "bottom up" perspective, meaning "a focus on the everyday security of everyday people and communities" (380) as they themselves experience and describe it. Although the human security concept articulates seven different areas of (in)security, this chapter focused on only two – economic and community. Our conclusion was that "only when the cumulative nature of these [four categories of] threats is taken into considerations…can a more accurate picture about the influence of extractive industries on the lives and cultures of Russia's Northern ethnic groups be provided" (381).

This chapter focused most explicitly on the core concept of colonialism. Implicitly, it speaks to the Soviet/Russian authoritarian political culture that has consistently overruled local and Indigenous considerations in favor of industry.

3.3 Article C. "Russia's Colonial Legacy in the Sakha Heartland."

This article was part of a series on Arctic Colonialism, published by the Arctic Institute at the Center for Circumpolar Security Studies. I was the sole author of this piece.

It provided a historical case study of how, during the Russian imperial and Soviet periods, the Russian state colonized the area now known as the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) and subjugated one of its Indigenous groups, the Sakha. The purpose of this

article was to fill two gaps in scholarship. The first was to highlight colonialism in Russia in an Arctic context, since Russia is often left out of discussions about colonialism and colonial legacies in pan-Arctic comparisons for Indigenous groups in Arctic countries. The second was to contribute scholarship that looked inside Russia proper, as most research on the topic of Russian colonialism has largely been focused on the territories and peoples that have achieved independence from Russia (Ukraine and Ukrainians, Kazakhstan and Kazakhs, etc.). As stated in the article, "Rarely is the concept of colonialism applied to areas and peoples that were subjugated to the Russian state during the imperial and Soviet eras *and* which remain within the present-day Russian Federation" (para. 2, emphasis in original).

I outlined my definition of colonialism, which consists of five fundamental elements: the invocation of concept of *terra nullius,* the transfer of people to an "external" and "empty" land, a situation of economic dependency on the metropole, a hierarchical system of ordering that ranks the colonizer as superior to the colonized, and discourses of civilization and modernization to legitimize the assimilation of conquered peoples into something acceptable to the colonial oppressors. Next, I provided the three types of colonialism and colonization that were relevant to the case in question. They were imperialist colonialism for the Imperial era, internal colonialism for the Soviet era, and resource colonialism, which was present during both eras.

Applying these parameters to the case of the Sakha and their ancestral homeland, I described how, during the imperial era, the Russian state proclaimed this place and its people for the tsar. It then locked them into a tribute system of collecting furs for the royal treasury, as fur was the resource that enabled colonialism to endure for centuries throughout most of Russian territory. During the nineteenth century, the Sakha were subjected to Russification campaigns for the sake of "civilizing" them and elevating their status in the eyes of Russians. The Soviet era, despite being a different political system with a drastically different ideology from the imperial one, replicated much of the same colonial practices as its predecessor, only much more intensively and under different names. Once the valuable natural resources of gold and diamonds were discovered, the Soviet state resettled tens of thousands of citizens at a time to the

region, creating literal colonies of workers from "the mainland." This resulted in the demographic marginalization the titular Sakha in their home territory. The Sakha were subjected to Russification during this era as well, through revisionist retellings of how they came to be a population within Russia.

The core concept of colonialism is explicit in this article, which provides an in-depth examination of how the Russian state's campaigns affected one specific Indigenous group in one specific area. It was while writing this article that the concept of political culture could be useful for providing the context within which continuity of authoritarian and colonial norms persisted despite the ruptures between the imperial and Soviet regimes.

3.4 Article D. "Homesteading in the Arctic: The Logic Behind, and Prospects for, Russia's 'Hectare in the Arctic' Program"

This was a co-authored article interpreted the motivations behind a seemingly illogical program launched by the Russian federal government in 2021 called "Hectare in the Arctic." My contributions included collecting and analyzing the Russian news sources that discussed the project as well as framing the issue through the perspective of Foucault's "Security, Territory, Population" analytical triad. My co-author, Marc Lanteigne, provided the expertise on China.

Our guiding question was "why is the Russian government seeking to colonize its northernmost periphery?" (1-2) and our argument was that Moscow felt compelled to undertake this project as a reactionary response to increasing interest by China in Russia's Arctic region, which Moscow perceives as a threat to its sovereignty and security. Russia's Arctic region holds two major resources that it is currently developing – vast hydrocarbon resources and the set of sea lanes known as the Northern Sea Route (NSR). Due to the region's importance for Russia's economic and energy security, the "Far North has come to be officially viewed as the key to the country's future wealth, status, and prosperity" (2). It also means that there is heightened sensitivity to potential threats that could disrupt Moscow's plans for its exploitation or cause it to lose control of the territory altogether. Perceived *external* threats include the longstanding fear of NATO military domination, external actors

who consider the NSR as international (not Russian national) waters, and a potential "race for resources" as sea ice melt renders the Arctic Ocean more accessible. The greatest perceived *internal* threat is demographic decline in the region. One of the solutions that Moscow proposed to counter all of these threats was the "Hectare in the Arctic" homesteading program, which is intended to incentivize current Arctic residents to remain as well as encourage other citizens to move to the region.

We utilized Foucault's "Security, Territory, Population" analytical triad to explain the state's motivations. From Moscow's perspective, "security" involves embracing a neoliberal understanding of security through attempts to devolve the state's burden of responsibility onto the private enterprises and individuals citizens. To this end, it is encouraging individualized and privatized "frontier" entrepreneurship and settlement. "Territory" involves attempting to colonize its Arctic territory in order to assert its sovereignty via effective occupation, despite the fact that no other country has issued a challenge to Russia's sovereignty there. Finally, "population" is treated as a quantitative issue through Moscow's singular focus on demographics.

We also discussed how the Russian public has responded the initiative so far, which is unenthusiastically. As of publication, "less than 0.001% of the population has chosen to participate" (7), meaning that there is a clear disconnect between what the government wants and what the people want. However, the Hectare program is new and thus it is too early to formulate conclusions.

In this article, the concept of colonialism (colonization) is explicitly referenced. Russia's authoritarian political culture is implicitly connected through Moscow's use of a top-down solution that "demonstrates the government's intense desire to control its Arctic territory and population, primarily for the benefit of an international audience, as well as its tone-deafness to the needs of Arctic residents" (8).

4 Methodology and Methods

All of the articles in this dissertation, as well as this summary article, have two facets in common. The first is that they are all connected under the umbrella of a case study on the Russian Arctic. In the pan-Arctic context, Russia is an outlier in one major respect – its authoritarian past and present. Each of the Arctic states (excluding Iceland) has Indigenous peoples and a colonial legacy; each has natural resources that it is trying to exploit. What is different with Russia is the manner in which the state and Russian society have approached these two subjects. This is what made it a fascinating case to study. Ultimately, this dissertation attempts to provide a thick explanation for the Russian Arctic as an outlier case. "Thick explanation," borrowing Alexander's (2000) definition, is:

> "a problem-driven approach that explains behavior and events rather than building a model for prediction, [therefore] thick explanation does not require positive proof. Instead, a researcher attempts to persuade and convince on the basis of certain rules of evidence while being more accepting of empathetic understandings, especially concerning cross-cultural analysis" (10-11).

The second is that all the articles in this dissertation, as well as this summary article, have utilized a hermeneutic methodology, which involves "the art and study of the theory and practice of meaning, understanding, and interpretation" (Kutsyuruba & McWatters, 218). Hermeneutics involves the interpretation of the language, history, and culture that contextualize written texts. According to Kinsella (2006), there are at least five benefits of a hermeneutic approach: it seeks understanding, rather than explanation; it acknowledges the situated location of interpretation; it recognizes the role of language and historicity in interpretation; it views inquiry as a conversation rather than an authoritative answer; it allows researchers to be comfortable with ambiguity. If, as Ödman & Kerdeman (1999) say, the purpose of hermeneutics is "to increase understanding as regards other cultures, groups, individuals, conditions, and lifestyles, present as well as past" (186), then it is in this spirit that hermeneutics is applied throughout this dissertation.

4.1 Qualitative Triangulation

Each of the articles employed different methods that were suited to the topic under discussion. Article A consisted of two parts. The first was theoretical in nature and an example of what security scholar Jennifer Mitzen (2006) has called "an exercise of conceptualization," meaning that our purpose was to make sure our analytical framework was theoretically coherent, that it "account[ed] logically for important phenomena, and [fit] with existing theory" (344). The second part involved testing our conceptualization on a case study of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation. For this section, we relied on scholarly texts as well as policy documents, official speeches, and news articles. We used critical discourse analysis (CDA) to interpret the narrative of "Russia as a unique civilization and a Great Power," as well as, to a lesser degree, the usage of the term "sustainable development" as legitimizing mechanisms for what we saw as colonialist practices in the Russian Arctic. Norman Fairclough, perhaps the most well-known founder of the CDA method, describes it as bringing:

> "a particular focus on discourse and on relations between discourse and other social elements (power relations, ideologies, institutions, social identities, and so forth)…It is normative critique in that does not simply describe existing realities but also evaluates them, assesses the extent to which they match up to various values, which are taken (more or less contentiously) to be fundamental for just or decent societies…It is explanatory critique in that it does not simply describe existing realities but seeks to explain them, for instance by showing them to be effects of structures or mechanisms or forces that the analyst postulates and whose reality s/he seeks to test out" (Fairclough 2012, 9).

Using CDA allowed us to triangulate the data from multiple perspectives in order to substantiate our interpretations of the meanings of the texts.

The data for Article B were collected by my co-authors during their fieldwork in the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug and the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia). Their fieldnotes are based on both observation and interviews with locals. The chosen data analysis method for this chapter was thematic analysis, as our purpose was to systematically identify, categorize, and articulate the patterns (themes) that we found in the data (Braun and Clarke 2012). We sought to understand what Indigenous communities defined as sources of human (in)security in their own words, and actions they took to enhance their security. Thus, this was a case of "listening to the data" to

see what themes emerged from my co-authors' own observations and their interviews with others.

Article C, being historical, required collecting both primary documents and secondary scholarly texts to provide contextual information. Data sources included official policy and legislative documents, speeches by politicians and other relevant authorities, media articles, statistical publications, such as censuses, and scholarly works. The scholarship came from both "Western" (defined here as any scholar who writes in English and writes from outside the territorial borders of Russia) and Russian sources. To the degree possible, I utilized Russian sources; however, Russian scholarship operates in a different manner from Western scholarship (Gel'man 2015) and tends to rely on quantitative and descriptive details. Oftentimes, much of the historical and political information pertinent to my topic were left out of official and Russian scholarly texts. Therefore, many of my sources come from Western scholarly sources that apply a more qualitative and analytical approach. Although this article concerns one geographical region, it is nevertheless comparative as it involved a within-case cross-temporal analysis (Mahoney and Villegas 2009) of two separate historical eras to articulate the changes, and more importantly, the continuities in the way the Indigenous Sakha were subordinated by the ethno-culturally and politically dominant Russians.

Article D was a concept-guided case study (Ndame 2023), the aim of which was to offer a plausible explanation for, or at least offer insight on, the logic behind the Russian government's "Hectare in the Arctic" program. The analysis was structured by Foucault's "Security, Territory, Population" conceptual framework. Data for this were all collected through resources available online. They included visiting government websites for foundational information, newspaper articles from national and regional sources, and speeches made by politicians. The data collection period coincided with the February 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, which meant that access to Russian governmental websites, such as the "Hectare" program site, became unavailable as a consequence of Russia's post-invasion increase in control over media. While much primary data had already been collected, any supplemental data, such as

the number of applicants (which changed over the period of writing) were found in news articles.

4.2 Positionality and Reflexivity

I fully acknowledge that my knowledge is partial and situated (Harraway 1988). This dissertation is the outcome of research that, by necessity, was conducted from afar, due to Russia's restrictive policies against collaboration with foreign researchers (both before and after Russia's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine) as well as the travel restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic. Thankfully, we live in the era of electronic data repositories, from which I was able to acquire primary and secondary material from both Western and Russian sources. With these constraints in mind, I have tried to be as reflexive as possible throughout the research process, from articulating and contending with my assumptions about the subject matter to deliberately seeking viewpoints and arguments that contradicted my own. I do not view my research as a final product or an ultimate answer. Rather, I hope that it will be the beginning of a conversation that, as mentioned in Article C, has been largely overlooked in contemporary scholarship about the ongoing role that colonialism and colonization are playing—in the Russian Arctic as well as in other situations.

When a written work deals with the concept of colonialism, the author must also be cognizant of her own position in the colonial matrix of power (Quijano 2007). One of the ethical questions that I have worked with throughout this dissertation process is, how can a I, a non-Indigenous Euro-American woman, respectfully include the experiences of Indigenous peoples in my research without replicating a colonialist structure of dismissing, "speaking for," exoticizing, or victimizing Indigenous peoples?

The concept of *terra nullius* is still in use when reading about how the Arctic is considered a barren hostile wilderness. It surprised me how many sources have "whitewashed" Indigenous people out of the histories of the Russian Arctic (i.e., Armstrong 1965; Josephson 2014). However, it remains a reality that Indigenous people have been living in the Arctic for hundreds of years, if not longer; the Arctic was not unoccupied when the Russians or other Europeans "discovered" it. It is also a

reality that Russian and Soviet colonialism has had drastic adverse effects on Indigenous peoples in the region. Although the predominant focus of this dissertation is more on the concept and on broad historical patterns, Indigenous peoples are an important part of the story of colonialism in the Russian Arctic. I seek to be respectful and inclusive of this fact.

As far as I have been able to ascertain, there are no contextually specific guidelines for writing about Indigenous peoples in Russia, by the government, scholars, or Indigenous associations. Therefore, I have adopted advice and principles from Western scholars. Many scholars agree that the first step any non-Indigenous scholar should take is to critically reflect on one's own privilege, point of view, and intentions (Ardill 2012; Olsen 2018). A second step is to be sensitive to language and terminology. One of the most basic ways to show respect is to call individual Indigenous groups by their ethnonyms, such as Nenets or Sakha, instead of the names assigned to them by their colonizers (Samoyed or Yakut). The Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada's quick reference guide advises against using the possessive form. For example, instead of saying "Russia's Indigenous people," use the phrase "Indigenous people in Russia" because the country does not own the people ("12 Ways" n.d.). I have adopted this phrasing throughout the thesis. A third step is to "go to the source" and, to the extent possible, I have relied on literature from Indigenous scholars themselves.

Ultimately, this work seeks to strike a balance between including Indigenous peoples in the history and present of the Russian Arctic without reproducing colonialist discourses that "speak for" Indigenous peoples or omitting them from the scope of consideration.

5 Concepts

In this chapter, I expand more fully on the concepts that are integral to this thesis but, due to word limitations, were unfairly brief in the articles. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the starting point for this dissertation was the observation that something was occurring in the Russian Arctic that, to me, looked like a modern form of colonialism. As a comparative political scientist, the concept that seemed well-suited to help understand and explain this observation was political culture. I also observed that it seemed as though colonialism was being practiced not just for economic gain (although that is an important aspect of it), but also for a sense of security that the Russian state could have through control of its northernmost territory. So, my tasks have been twofold. First, I sought to apply political culture a security analysis. Second, I sought to substantiate the political culture component of the security analysis with what we coined in Article A as, "colonialism as security." This chapter proceeds as follows: the first section will be devoted to expanding upon the main guiding concept—political culture. Then I will provide greater contextual detail about the concept of colonialism as it has been practiced to enhance security in the Russian Arctic.

5.1 Political Culture

In Article A, I applied an interpretivist understanding of political culture (PC). There are actually two main branches of PC research—the interpretivist branch and the positivist branch, the latter of which is by far dominantly applied in scholarship. Stephen Welch (2013a), one of the most prominent contemporary scholars in this research program, has categorized them as the Geertzian approach and Almondian approach, respectively. Thus, the approach that was employed in Article A is the non-dominant one. Therefore, it could be helpful to say a little bit about the dominant Almondian approach and to provide insight into why I chose to forego it in favor of the less prominent one.

At its core, PC is an application of the broader concept of culture to the specific setting of the political realm. In other words, it provides the necessary insights into the narratives, values, and practices that inform the relationship between people and their

political systems. However, before discussing *political* culture, the more general term *culture* must first be clarified. Humans are social beings and as such, we form bonds of solidarity with other members of our group. These bonds are reinforced through culture. There is no consensus on what culture is, what it consists of, or where its boundaries are. Faulkner et al. (2006) conducted a systematic review of over 300 definitions for culture across a variety of social science and humanities disciplines. They concluded that there is actually a "dis-census" (27) on defining culture because each is "contextual and discursive and…[can] be contested by those with different viewpoints" (63). With this in mind, I take inspiration from Canadian political scientist, Nelson Wiseman's (2008), thoughts on culture:

> "Culture is something like the air we breathe. It is all around us and in us. We take it for granted. Culture changes slowly. Stable and enduring, it is more like climate than like weather…Culture does not come and go, as does fashion. It is cross-generational: we inherit it from our forebears, teach it to our children, and transmit it to future generations. We are shaken into awareness of our culture's nuances when we visit another culture…Culture enables us to see and make sense of our physical and social situations.
>
> "Culture is an abstraction…It, however, cannot be explored solely on a theoretical plane, for it refers to real and specific groups, societies, or nations. Culture is a group activity, a shared experience. No person alone constitutes a culture, but one is socialized by and absorbed into a culture" (13-14).

Wiseman further touches on a number of crucial characteristics of culture – its enduring (but not petrified) nature, its intersubjective relational aspects, its dual tangible and intangible nature, and its ability to render our world understandable. These characteristics have been discussed by a number of political culture researchers. Regarding its enduring (but not petrified) nature, Ronald Inglehart (2006) noted that culture is transmitted intergenerationally through socialization, thereby ensuring general cultural continuity. Most cultural changes tend to occur primarily through intergenerational population replacement. One generation's firsthand experiences are the next generation's secondhand histories, which can be supplemented or replaced by the latter's own firsthand experiences. Regarding its intersubjective relational aspects, Marc Howard Ross (2009) stated that he views culture as both a subjective and

intersubjective phenomenon that “marks what people experience as a distinctive way of life characterized in the subjective we-feelings of cultural group members (and outsiders) and expressed through specific behaviors (customs and rituals) – both sacred and profane – that mark the daily, yearly, and life cycle rhythms of its members” (138). Regarding its dual tangible and intangible nature, Richard W. Wilson (2000) offered the framework provided by the anthropological tradition, where culture understood as "the collective meanings that groups create, share, and symbolically express" (249). Regarding its ability to render our world understandable, Lichterman and Cefaï (2006) observed that culture performs the function of “structur[ing] the way actors create their strategies, perceive their field of action, define their identities and solidarities" (2). Due to the “dis-census” regarding culture, I have chosen to amalgamate others’ definitions of culture into a working one as a background to my discussion on political culture. For the purposes of this dissertation, I define *culture* as a set of common understandings about the world, transmitted intergenerationally in a given society through such media as myths, symbols, traditions, belief systems, customs, norms, language, rituals, behaviors, etc.

One of the perennial critiques of the concept of culture is that it serves to essentialize, or stereotype, groups of people. Phillips (2010) observes that, while some level of abstraction is necessary in order to theorize and analyze the social world (here, specifically, a “culture” and, later, a “political culture”), essentializing groups “covers a multitude of possible sins” (49) from totalization (*all* members of Group X do Y), to naturalizing and reifying that which was socially constructed, to grouping for political expediency (the working class, etc.), to “policing” those who think or behave differently from the essentialized expectation. My starting point is an emphatic acknowledgement that culture is a *social* phenomenon. It is learned. It is not biological, fixed, primordial, or essential. Culture is not destiny. It is not inevitable that a person will embody, practice or perpetuate cultural beliefs, values, or practices by virtue of their socialization in a particular cultural setting. I agree with Bernardi (1977), who claims that individuals assimilate, appropriate, and experiment with different values and behaviors during their socialization process. They then accept or

reject (however consciously or subconsciously) specific ones, making each person a "living interpreter" of their culture (76).

All the same, one's culture(s) exerts a powerful force. In our world of nation-states, it is possible to say that a political culture exists in each one at a macro, or national/state, level. A national political culture has its own established canon of common institutions, norms/rules/etiquette, practices, procedures/processes, standards, beliefs/values, and understandings about that nation/state's past and present. The concept of political culture attempts to illuminate the relationship between the role of the political system (i.e., the balance between state and individual responsibilities) and the role of the citizen toward/within the political system (i.e., how active or passive should a citizen be in political affairs). More importantly, it seeks to understand why and how these roles and this relationship came to be. In the broadest possible understanding, it is concerned with the culture of politics in different societies.

5.1.1 The Almondian Approach

PC emerged as an academic school of thought in the mid-twentieth century and was embraced by multiple social science disciplines. In political science, this school finds its home in the sub-field of comparative politics. It is most often juxtaposed against materialist, rational choice, and institutionalist schools of thought on issues of continuity and change in political systems. Gabriel Almond is popularly considered as the founder of PC as an empirical political science research program.[29] Almond and fellow political scientist, Sidney Verba, set out to better understand which cultural facets made democracies flourish. The result of this was their canonical 1963 classic, *The Civic Culture*. They defined political culture as "specifically political…attitudes toward the political system and its various parts, and attitudes toward the role of the self in the system" (Almond and Verba 1963, 13). That the word "attitude" appears twice in this definition is no coincidence. Almond and Verba specifically focused (or limited) their research on individuals' attitudes, because they believed attitudes to be the measurable element of PC and therefore objective and scientific.

[29] This section only provides highlights in the history and evolution of PC. For a more complete treatment of its evolution in academia (particularly in the US), see Gendzel (1997), Formisano (2001), and Wiarda (2014).

At the time of PC's advent, there already existed a branch of political philosophy called "national character studies." National character studies attempted to describe the differences between nations based on the mindsets of the people (i.e., what made a Russian different from an American, or a Nigerian, etc.). They tended to be based on impressionistic accounts, primarily written by journalists, and came to be disregarded in academia as little more than "neo-Freudian interpretations of culture [that] were imaginative and often frivolous" (Gendzel 1997, 226-7). They were oftentimes nationalist and racialist, glorifying one's own national character while vilifying another's (Lawson 2006). However, they were impactful – national character studies had the notoriety of being the basis for which Nazi Germany validated its efforts to exterminate selective minority populations (Wiarda 2014). The experience of World War II inspired scholars to reject the impressionistic, stereotyping, and non-empirical nature of national character studies in favor of what they perceived to be the more objective and scientific method provided by behavioralism (Lawson 2006).

With this history in mind, Almond and Verba intentionally distinguished their project from national character studies by making the research design empirical. Almond and Verba believed that insights into people's values and attitudes could be extracted directly from them in the form of surveys. Thus, their conclusions were based on first-person accounts by individual citizens in their target countries. They sought to understand the psychological and behavioral dimensions of how ordinary citizens relate to/with their political system. They specifically sought out attitudes that made democracies flourish. The general thesis that Almond and Verba advanced in *The Civic Culture* was that societies could be divided into three different types of political cultures: parochial, subject, and participant. In parochial cultures, citizens are essentially apolitical, passive, and inactive in political matters. In subject cultures, they are uninvolved in politics but are supportive of the government; and in participant cultures, citizens are active and loyal to their government. This final category, the participant culture, was seen as optimal for sustaining democracy within a state.[30]

[30] Subsequent research in the 1990s and 2000s has advanced the idea of additional citizen types, including the "critical citizen" and the "stealth citizen." Denk & Christensen (2016) provide a helpful summary of these types.

Despite their attempts at objectivity, Almond and Verba, and by extension the entire PC enterprise, were still criticized as too ideological (Skinner 1973) due to the preoccupation with Western-style liberal democracies as an ideal type. Almondian PC research launched during the period of de-colonization in Africa and Asia. This was also a time when modernization and congruence theories[31] were prominent. Part of the motivation for discovering what caused *democratic* stability was to encourage the exportation of such features to the emerging nations, in the hope of deterring them from embracing Soviet-style communism. Post-Soviet Russian scholar, Olga Malinova (2007), has even called it "cultural imperialism" (51). Verba himself admitted in a 2015 retrospective essay that this criticism had some merit (Verba 2015).

Due to criticism and changes in academic trends, PC fell out of fashion for almost two decades, but the late 1980s saw a "renaissance" of political culture research (Inglehart 1988). Welch (2013b) notes that, even if they do not explicitly use the PC term, several contemporary research programs have emerged as a result of the first generation of Almondian PC research. He highlights Robert Putnam's (2000) study of social capital and, probably the best-known example, Ronald Inglehart's World Values Survey (WVS) scheme. Launched in 1981, WVS is a survey instrument that sought to test modernization and congruence theories by asking people from a wide range of countries about their values. Over the past forty years, WVS has evolved into a formalized organization, complete with a secretariat, that "seeks to help scientists and policy makers understand changes in the beliefs, values and motivations of people throughout the world" ("Who We Are" n.d.). Inglehart has been credited with leading in "the globalization of political research" (Verba 2015, 1085). Indeed, in the latest round of surveys, eighty countries participated.

The renaissance of PC also reignited criticisms against it, particularly regarding the limitations of the survey method and PC's overall explanatory value. The first

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[31] Modernization theory "predicts that as societies become richer, more educated, and economically more modernized, their political institutions should also experience a particular path—become more democratic, respect civil and human rights more, and develop several other societal features we commonly associate with Western democracies" (Acemoglu and Robinson 2022, 324). This theory assumed an ultimate end goal for developing societies, which was that they would eventually evolve into (congruence) Western liberal democratic, capitalist societies.

strain of criticism has been directed toward the survey method. The Almondian approach to PC attempts to bridge the micro-, or individual, level of analysis with the macro-, or national level by aggregating empirical data, collected from large numbers of individuals, to make assessments about a polity's values and orientations. However, critiques of the survey method, such as that by Seligson (2002), remind us that such studies can be committing a logical fallacy by assuming that that which is true at the micro level must also be true at the macro level. In other words, surveys were attempting to reduce a whole to the sum of its parts. From a different angle, Ross (2009) notes that individual-level survey data are "subjective, but not intersubjective" (139) and are unhelpful in the pursuit of understanding or explanation because individuals' answers are not analyzed within the context in which they were made, a qualitative and potentially intangible factor that remains unaddressed from the survey data themselves. A third critique is that surveys might be measuring opinions, not values. Values are presumed to be more enduring whereas opinions reflect more ephemeral views of current events (Gendzel 1997).

The second strain of criticism is couched in the great debate on causation – what causes a country's political system to be the way it is? What explains its continuity? How can changes to the system be explained? The original wave of PC proponents held that culture was the independent variable - i.e., a society's culture is what causes its political institutions and structures to manifest in the forms that they do. Critics, especially those in Marxist, structuralist and institutionalist camps, contended that it could only ever be a dependent variable because cultures do not exist separately from the institutional context in which they evolve (Street 1994). Those PC scholars who have chosen to engage in this debate have offered various responses to this criticism. For example, in their 1989 follow-up volume, *The Civic Culture Revisited*, Almond and Verba allowed that PC can be both an independent and a dependent variable, depending on what is being explained. Other scholars, such as Wiarda (2014), believe that causes can be multiple and therefore culture is one of the multi-causal factors explaining politics. Still other scholars, such as Thompson et al. (2009), argue in favor of mutual constitution and reinforcement—culturally-embedded values affect behaviors and behaviors confirm values. "Causality, in other words, runs

both ways. Each, therefore, has to be seen as the cause of the other" (Thompson et al. 2009, 3). This debate has not been settled in the intervening decades (Fuchs 2007).

Oppositely, there are those who have eschewed the notion that PC needs to *explain* anything. This group follows what Welch (2013a) has called the "Geertzian" approach.

5.1.2 The Geertzian Approach

In Article A, this was referred to as simply the interpretivist approach. The "Geertzian" approach is named for the anthropologist Clifford Geertz and his interpretivist approach to research. A smaller, but still significant, number of political culture researchers have embraced the Geertzian approach out of a conviction that the psychological-behavioral focus of the Almondian option is too individualistic and too ahistoric to fully capture the "culture" part of political culture. This approach follows a hermeneutic logic that focuses on context and intelligibility. As noted in Article A, Geertzian researchers have contended that PC is fundamentally a social and collective phenomenon that is historically rooted. The goal is to find meaning and understanding in different cultures, as opposed to explanation or causation. It was a particularly popular approach with scholars researching Communist societies, since the survey method was not a viable option beyond the Iron Curtain. Robert Tucker, a researcher of Communist PCs, suggested that political scientists might better view "politics as a form of culture, and politics as an activity related to the larger culture of a society" (1973, 182), rather than, as the Almondian tradition would have it, a distinctly separate field of inquiry from the more general concept of culture.

Geertzian PC scholars focus on the intersubjective aspects of culture (the relations between/amongst members in a collective) rather than the subjective (individually held beliefs and values). For example, Ross (2009) views culture as *meaning and meaning-making*. He states that

> "Culture is important to the study of politics because it provides a framework for organizing people's daily worlds, locating the self and others in them, making sense of the actions and interpreting the motives of others, for grounding an analysis of interests, for linking identities to political action, and for predisposing people and groups toward some actions and away from others. Culture does these things by organizing meanings and meaning-making, defining social and political identity,

structuring collective actions, and imposing a normative order on politics and social life" (134).

Other scholars, such as Street (1994), prefer to view PC as a form of *moral discourse*, which is embedded in "a set of 'resources'" (101) such as symbols, myths, and images that enable people to make sense of the world around him. Kidwell (2009) also sees political culture as a discourse but adds a Foucauldian dimension by suggesting that it is a function of governmentality. By this, he means that political culture is a discursive practice that consists of two components: the production of political knowledge and the legal regulation of performances of political action.

The most prominent critique of the Geertzian approach is that it takes an anti-explanation stance, which does not allow for discussions of causation. Nevertheless, issues of causation remain, even if scholars do not wish to address them. Welch (2013b) posits that "it is hard to see what sense could be made of the idea that 'man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun' unless both the spinning and the suspension are understood as causal relations and as imposing causal constraint" (112). Such criticisms inspired a post-Geertzian approach, which allows for both interpretations and understanding, as well as addressing issues of causation and explanation. Wedeen (2002) bases this type of approach on "A concept of culture defined from the perspective of political science, but informed by the debates in *critical* anthropology" (714; emphasis added). One example of an applied "post-Geertzian" cultural approach to politics comes from James Alexander's (2000) study on PC in post-communist Russia. He chose to employ the qualitative ethnographic methods of participant observation and interviews for his data collection. However, diverging from a strict Geertzian anti-explanation approach, Alexander chose instead to analyze his data with the use of "thick explanation," a method that was described in the introductory section of Chapter 4 and which will be employed in Chapter 6.

5.1.3 Political Culture Research in post-Soviet Russia

One of the outstanding issues for both the Almondian and Geertzian approaches is that, while PC might help explain cultural continuity (raising concerns about essentialism), it has yet to provide a sufficient explanation for cultural change. Partly this can be ascribed to the fact that, barring exogenous shocks, "political culture

changes slowly, usually requiring two, three, or more generations" (Wiarda 2014, 2). Ross (2009) posits that, in general, researchers tend to already understand that culture is dynamic and that a certain expectation of change is built into the concept of culture when it is understood as intersubjective. Acemoglu and Robinson (2022) offer another possible solution: cultural configurations, which are cultural attributes (common understandings on, for example, the role of hierarchy, gender roles, and the higher ideals such as honor), that can be mixed and matched, "each with different meanings for individuals and societies and each providing justifications for distinct political arrangements and social hierarchies" (325). Particular cultural configurations emerge and are reinforced by political elites and institutions. Change occurs through the large-scale, sustained efforts of what they call "cultural entrepreneurs," as well as intense struggles over whether or not the proposed changes will be accepted by society.

The collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s reignited the continuity-versus-change debate. PC researchers were eager to use the now-independent countries as a "living laboratory" for testing political cultural change – that is, observing and explaining how (or whether) states were able to transition from authoritarian to democratic political cultures (see for example Alexander 2000, Carnaghan 2007a, Carnaghan 2007b, Breustedt and Stark 2015, Burkhanov and Collins 2019, Kirbiš 2013). Here, too, the continuity-versus-change debate remains ongoing as the "living laboratory" has entered its second post-Soviet generation. In Russia, specifically, after the Soviet Union collapsed, Western scholars were eager to conduct first-person PC research with ordinary Russians in Russia to understand how they were experiencing the transition. Their research began from an idealistic assumption that "Russia, rid of communism, would take a firm pro-Western course: democratizing its political system, granting its citizens unassailable civil rights, and rejoining the international community" (Pipes 2004, 9). New scholarship (Alexander 2000, Carnaghan 2007a, Puuronen et al. 2000, Wyman 1994, Zimmerman 1995) revealed that many Russians still preferred authoritarianism both due to lack of experience with democracy (Carnaghan 2007b) and because, to their minds, authoritarianism brought order—something ordinary Russians desperately wanted during the turbulent 1990s (Alexander 2000, Carnaghan 2007a). By 2005, it was becoming evident that the "firm

pro-Western course" was not emerging as anticipated and Western interest in Russian PC began to decline. It was virtually non-existent by 2010 (one exception being Hahn and Logvinenko 2008).

However, Russian scholars remained interested and have continued to write about continuity and changes in Russia's political culture. In Chapter 4, I briefly noted that Russian intellectual and academic traditions differ from Western ones. This proved problematic when I was assessing the value of post-Soviet Russian scholarship on PC as many of the articles consisted solely of impressionistic musings (see, for example, Kozhemyakov 2018). Malinova (2007) has also observed this tendency – "Indeed, many works by Russian political scientists on this topic are…inherently speculative in nature, not prone to scientific verification, and so on" (39). She claims this penchant has roots in the imperial Russian intellectual tradition, which was more historical-philosophical in nature. Thankfully, there were still several empirical and/or analytical articles by contemporary Russian scholars. The main theme of these writings has tended to focus on whether Russia can become a democratic country (see, for example, Gaber et al. 2019, Malinova 2007). Farukshin (2016) provided a survey of Russian scholarship on Russian PC and concluded that, "Most Russian authors believe that in its current form, the country's dominant political culture acts as a brake on the path of the democratic reorganization of society" (5). By the country's "dominant political culture," he referred to the characteristics that have been traditionally associated with Russian political culture—collectivism and Orthodoxy (Zimin 2013), authoritarianism (Farukshin 2016; Zemtsov 2019), paternalism (Farukshin 2016, Zimin 2013), and political passivity (Farukshin 2016). It seems that, whereas the Western literature is quick to distance itself from essentializing claims about Russians' orientations regarding democracy and authoritarianism, Russian authors seem more settled to the idea of Russian authoritarianism (Zimin 2013, Gaber et al. 2019). However, some have corroborated Carhaghan's (2007b) observation that the preference is more likely due to a lack of experience with democratic practices than due to a fatalistic sense that Russia is "eternally authoritarian" (Zemtsov 2019).

Because "culture" and "political culture" can be such unwieldy and fuzzy umbrella concepts, many researchers have chosen to study particular sub-dimensions

of political culture, as opposed to "political culture, writ large". Almondian scholars have limited their work to focusing on people's political values. However, there are many other sub-dimensions that have been explored, including research on political narratives (McLaughlin et al. 2019), political socialization, such as patriotic education (Koesel 2020), political attitudes about leaders and leadership (Ivanova et al. 2020), the role of political support (Breustedt and Stark 2015, Nikolayenko 2011), and political behaviors, ranging from voting in elections to protesting to writing complaint letters (Lussier 2011).

5.1.4 Advantages of the Geertzian Approach for This Project

A logical question at this point is, if the Almondian approach is so clearly dominant and there is so much data available from which to extrapolate, why choose the Geertzian approach instead? At the beginning of the data collection process, I chose to be ecumenical and sought data from both Almondian and Geertzian perspectives. The political situation in Russia prevented me from being able to conduct firsthand research with Russian people—be it Almondian-style surveys or Geertzian-style interviews or participant observation. So, I needed to rely on publicly available data. The most accessible Almondian-style sources were those of the World Values Survey, the Levada Analytical Center, and Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VTsIOM). I knew that the latter two organizations are both public opinion centers, not political culture research operations. However, I wanted to cast a wide net and realized that these two could offer supplementary data. Rather quickly in the data analysis of survey responses, I began to appreciate some of the criticisms of the survey method. I found the results to offer only nominal value. They informed me *that* Russians thought (or claimed to think) a certain way about a question, but they did not provide insight on *why* they thought that way or what influences were involved in the process. Moreover, throughout the process of reviewing scholarly literature of those who had been able to conduct surveys in Russia, I have found validation for the criticism regarding an embedded bias in Almondian PC about assessing countries' political cultures based on how close or far they are from the values of Western-style liberal democracies. This trend was evident in both Western and Russian scholarship.

The Geertzian approach begins from the epistemological standpoint that political culture is an historically rooted collective phenomenon. Approaching Russian PC from such an interpretivist perspective allowed me to cast off the Almondian ideological baggage of "othering" Russia—using Western-style liberal democracies as the standard by which to judge Russia's "potential" for democracy—and just focus on understanding the culture of politics in Russia "as Russia," and how it evolved to its current form. The literature I reviewed from the Geertzian-style authors provided in-depth interpretations of *why* and *how* authoritarianism came to have such staying power in Russian PC. Political culture is so indicative of the national majority's relationship toward political systems and processes that it is taken for granted as "natural." As we pointed out in Article A, the authoritarian tradition in Russia has been naturalized through various processes over time, encapsulated and perpetuated in, among other ways, psychocultural narratives. While it is true that Russia has historically had—and currently has—an authoritarian state formation that generally aligns with a socially constructed authoritarian political culture, it is not because Russians are destined or doomed to be eternally authoritarian. Rather, as the literature showed, it has more to do with the general population's lack of prolonged experience with democratic norms or practices which, reiterating Wiarda (2014), require two to three generations in order to "stick." This can be ascribed to a lack of political will by elites to serve as "cultural entrepreneurs" (Acemoglu and Robinson 2022) in sustaining a long-term political cultural shift.

PC has been the guiding concept throughout my entire PhD career. In Article A, PC was explicitly investigated as a tool for security analysis; we chose to focus on the role that psychocultural narratives can play in steering PC and focused on the specific narrative of "Russia as a unique civilization and a Great Power." While it only appears explicitly in Article A, PC is what ties all the empirical and historical observations of Articles B, C, and D together, however in these articles the role of PC is implicit. It functions as the foundation for other concepts used in the different analyses. We stated in Article A that "[t]he Russian state has been enabled by a political culture that embodies authoritarianism, imperialism, and colonialism" (2). In articles B, C, and D, this was demonstrated by detailing how the imperial, Soviet, and current state

formations have commanded and controlled, from Moscow/St. Petersburg, what it has considered to be the needs of the country, be it macroeconomic gain or ideological fulfillment. This has often come at the expense of the needs and wants of Far Northern residents, especially Indigenous peoples.

Article C also highlighted a psychocultural narrative that the Soviet leadership utilized—that of the “Friendship of Peoples.” Articles B and D focused on particular PC norms and practices that have been perpetuated as typically Russian (see previous section). Article B focused on the state’s paternalistic tendencies towards Russia’s Indigenous peoples and Article D focused on the top-down declaratory nature of state-sponsored practices, which we considered as “tone-deafness to the needs of its Arctic residents” (8). All three articles touched on the tradition of centralizing power.

In sum, the concept of political culture, despite its outstanding issues and critiques, remains a viable school of thought in contemporary comparative political science. The Almondian paradigm has become canonical and globalized, while the Geertzian paradigm has injected a form of interdisciplinary innovation to the field by adding anthropological methods to research. While there is nominal value to be gained through Almondian-style research, there is historical and interpretive value to be gained through Geertzian-style research.

5.2 Colonialism

In this section, I expand on the concept of colonialism, which was a central concept to Articles A, C, and D. The Russian context for colonialism deviates significantly from the Western context. Therefore, it is beneficial for the purposes of this dissertation that I provide an extensive examination of this topic here. This will establish the basis for the central argument of the following chapter, which is that colonialist logics have become embedded within Russian political culture, which have subsequently informed and validated the Russian state’s colonialist practices, and the reason for embracing these practices has been for the preservation of Russian state security. The term that I created for this in Article A is “colonialism as security.”

5.2.1 The concept of colonialism

Much of the English-language scholarship that claims to take a "global" perspective on colonialism and colonization usually focuses on one specific type of colonialism—settler colonialism—as it was enacted specifically by Western European countries in their overseas colonies in the Americas, Asia, and Africa from the sixteenth through mid-twentieth centuries (see, for example, Cooper 2005; Ferro 1997; Manjapra, 2020; Osterhammel 2005).[32] This type of colonialism has had an undeniable global impact that should not be undermined. However, there are three foci that dominate in this "global" perspective to the exclusion of other practices of colonialism. The first is the exclusive focus on *settler* colonialism. The second is the exclusive focus on *Western/European* practices of colonialism, and the third is the exclusive focus on *overseas* colonialism. These colonialist assumptions about colonialism, as it were, require unpacking.

When the term *colonialism* is brought up in English-language scholarship, it is frequently referring to one "distinct mode of domination" (Veracini 2017, 2) – that of *settler colonialism.* This was the form that colonization took, for example, in the Americas, Australia, and New Zealand. A contemporary scholar of settler colonialism, Lorenzo Veracini, defines it as "a system…where an exogenous collective aims to locally and permanently replace Indigenous ones…they are part of a collective and sovereign displacement that moves to stay, that moves to establish a permanent homeland by way of displacement" (4). Premised on an aspiration to extinguish the aboriginal inhabitants, either literally or at least as a distinct ethnocultural community, settlers who colonize seek to impose their cultural values and practices onto their new environment (Schorkowitz 2019). Settler colonialism often, but not always, involved claiming vast amounts of land for agricultural purposes. However, focusing exclusively on settler colonialism comes at the expense of recognizing the variety of forms that colonialism can take, three of which were examined in articles A and C, and

[32] Ferro is an outlier as he does include Russia in his comparative analysis. However, he, as do almost all who write about Russian colonialism, focuses exclusively on eighteenth and nineteenth century conquests of the Caucasus and Central Asia.

will be more extensively examined below (continental imperialist colonialism, internal colonialism, and resource colonialism).

Next, the exclusive focus on the colonialist endeavors of Western/European countries frequently neglects consideration of colonialist empires in different parts of the world that operated under different conditions and patterns, but also had a significant impact on the current world order. Although this dissertation restricts itself to modern colonialism, defined as beginning with the European so-called "Age of Discovery" in the fifteenth century and distinguished from ancient colonialism (for example, the Roman Empire), Western European polities were not the only actors in modern colonialism, as evidenced by the Ottoman Empire and Qing China (Schorkowitz 2019), and, as I illustrate with this case study, the Russian Empire. Finally, the exclusive focus on overseas, or maritime, colonialism prevents recognition (or perhaps serves to plausibly deny the existence) of overland colonialism. This could be conceived of as a variation of the "saltwater fallacy"[33] insofar as colonialism, from a Western perspective, is considered as an activity that takes place on a different continent, where there needs to be an ocean separating the mother country from the colony. These universalised assumptions about colonialism are evident even at the United Nations (UN) level. The UN has a Special Committee on Decolonization—of which the Russian Federation is a member—that is dedicated to helping non-self-governing territories in different areas of the world transition into self-governing ones. It currently lists 17 territories with this status. All of the territories are islands (except for Western Sahara) that were colonized by the United Kingdom, the United States, France, or New Zealand ("Non-Self-Governing Territories" 2022). By such logic, the scope under consideration in this dissertation (the AZRF), as well as the experiences of the "old timer" settlers, *priyezhiye,* and Indigenous peoples in the Russian Far North (see Section 2.2), could not be considered as colonialism since it is contiguous with

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[33] The "saltwater fallacy" was coined in twentieth-century British political circles as a doctrine of "plausible deniability" of imperialism. It proclaimed that "to control territory from which you are separated by salt water is wrong; otherwise it is all right" (Dunnett 1983, 421). In other words, that the word "imperialism" can only apply when a country makes a formal claim to territory overseas. The implication is that capitalist economic exploitation and/or informal control over a territory was okay, so long as the territory in question is contiguous with the mother country.

the “mother country.” In reality, colonialism has occurred in a variety of different ways, by a variety of different actors, including in the AZRF.

I utilize Osterhammel’s (2005) basic definitions for differentiating the fundamental terminology. When I refer to *colonization*, I mean "a *process* of territorial acquisition " (4; emphasis in original) as well as the *process* of asserting dominance over any people occupying that territory. When I refer to *colonialism*, I mean a “*system* of domination" (4; emphasis in original) that is based simultaneously upon the *practice* of control over, and exploitation of, the peoples and resources within a colonized territory and the *dependence* of the colonized territory on the “mother country.” Or, as I define it in Article C, “the *in situ* practice of dominating and controlling ‘external’ lands and people, on behalf of the center” (para. 4).[34] In Article C, I outlined five necessary elements for a modern-era migration experience to qualify as colonialism (Khomyakov, 2020). The first two involve the practice of colonization itself, through the transfer of people to “external”[35] lands and the dependence of the colonies on the metropole, a.k.a., the center of power. The remaining three elements involve what Osterhammel (2005) calls the “spirit of colonialism” (16). They are the concepts of *terra nullius* (empty land), hierarchical ordering based in tribal/racial/ethnic terms, and discourses of civilization and modernization. The transfer of people via the occupation of “external” or peripheral land was enabled by the concept of *terra nullius*. Despite the fact that most colonized territory was actually already inhabited by people at the time of penetration, *terra nullius* denoted whether or not the land was being used specifically for what Europeans considered as productive purposes. Traditionally, scholars have focused on the conversion of wild lands into agricultural sites. However, that which was “productive” also included the exercise of control over natural resources and trade routes. Colonialism is, at its root, an economic endeavor intended to uphold the economic security of the state. States sponsored

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[34] See Section 2.2 regarding Russians’ conceptualizations of the Eurasian Arctic region as an external “island,” or “nye nash” in the national imaginary.

[35] In Article A, we specified that “the word *external* is put in quotation marks because it can mean both 1) those lands that are beyond the legally recognized boundaries of a state, or those lands that are not internal, or 2) those land that are within a state’s legally recognized boundaries but are peripheral—both geographically and conceptually—from the center of power. In the case of the AZRF, the second understanding applies” (22, ftn. 46).

colonial missions as an investment in the center's own wealth generation, and thus, colonies remained dependent on the metropole.

The final two elements can be considered as two sides of the same coin: hierarchical ordering based in tribal/racial/ethnic terms and discourses of civilization and modernization. Colonialism involves a hierarchical relationship of "domination and value based on the belief that the subjugated people are inferior to the colonizers" (Cheng, 2008, 318). This self-awarded sense of superiority provided the necessary justification for colonizers to subject the colonized to "civilizing missions" which meant either destroying the cultural, social, and economic foundations of Indigenous societies, then replacing them with the ways of the colonizer's society or permitting specific Indigenous cultural expressions that would not threaten the dominance of the colonizer's ways.

In the following sections, I will discuss the three types of colonialism that I have identified in the historical and contemporary Russian Arctic, which are connected over the *long durée*. It began with imperialist colonization that, in turn, became internal colonialism, which enabled resource colonialism.

5.2.2 Imperialist colonialism

It is important to note at the start of this section that imperialism and colonialism are two separate policies, even though they are often employed together. I defined colonialism above and here define imperialism as "a system of power…envisioned from the center of expanding [states] and differentially operationalized in colonized spaces throughout the world" (Morrissey, 2014, 17). Colonization can occur without imperialism. However, beginning with the so-called Age of Discovery in Europe, modern-era imperialism and colonialism were increasingly employed together.

There are two broad types of imperialist colonialism: maritime and continental. *Maritime* applies to the imperialist colonial endeavours undertaken by states like Britain, France, and Spain, which involved traveling overseas to colonies on continents distinctly separate from the mother country. Oftentimes, any Indigenous groups encountered were either exterminated or assimilated as settlers moved in to appropriate their lands. This is the type that has been assumed to be universal by

"global" colonialism scholars. *Continental,* which can also go under the labels of "frontier" or "border" colonisation (Osterhammel, 2005), applies to cases such as the Russian and Ottoman empires, where expansion is land-based and there is no obvious divider, such as an ocean, between the metropole and the colony. Power relations under continental imperialist colonialism also tended to manifest differently than in its maritime counterpart. As Dittmar Schorkowitz, scholar of comparative colonialism, explains, it began with

> "conquest of new territories as 'colonies of rule' only later to be penetrated by settlers of the empire's major group and dominant culture…For the colonized this makes a difference [as] they are spared much of the horrors of settler colonialism and, though undergoing significant assimilation, survived as ethno-cultural entities" (2019, 33).

I apply the continental imperialist colonialism concept to the Imperial era, which began with Peter the Great (Peter I, reign 1689-1725). It was he who renamed the medieval state of Muscovy as the "*Rossiyskaya imperiya*" and himself its "*imperator*" (Becker 2000). It was also he who relocated the center of power from Moscow to St. Petersburg.

5.2.3 Internal colonialism

This type of colonialism was addressed in Articles A and C. The concept emerged in civil rights circles in the US during the 1960s (Hicks 2004).[36] However, according to Peter Calvert (2001), a political scientist who studied colonialism and development in Latin America, the term has four "rather different" meanings: a) "physical conquest within, not across, political boundaries" – a major proponent of this understanding was Vladimir Lenin, in his writings on Russian Empire, as encapsulated in *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*; b) "colonization of 'unoccupied' lands within [a state's] own national territory" – sometimes referred to as "development" (such as in the case of Brazil in the 1960s-70s), this can also refer to dominance of one race over another (as in the case of Hitler's Lebensraum policy); c)

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[36] This section is interested in the application of the term specifically in Russian and Arctic contexts. I recommend Hick's article to any reader interested in a wider treatment of the concept as it includes an impressive literature review on the origins, evolution, and various trajectories of meaning behind the term "internal colonialism."

"within a single set of political institutions and a unitary market, a periphery [which] could be subjected to an inferior economic status by a dominant core;" and d) "the process by which large parts of many…[states]…are still in effect being colonized by their own ruling elite" (51-52). Of these four different meanings, I utilized understandings (b) and (c) in Article C to approach internal colonization in the Sakha heartland during the Soviet era. In Article A, I focused on meaning (b) and will continue focusing on it in this summary article, I will further explore understanding (b)—the colonization of "unoccupied" lands within a state's own national territory—in the extended scope of the Russian Arctic and apply it to both the Soviet and contemporary periods.

Here, I deviate from the dominant branch of scholarship on internal colonialism and Russia, as the concept has most often employed using the fourth meaning. Also called "self-colonization," it has a long pedigree of reference by Russian and Western scholars about Russian history. One of the most famous nineteenth-century Russian historians, Vasiliy Kliuchevskiy (1908), wrote that, "the history of Russia is the history of a country that colonizes itself" (24).[37] Contemporary historian Alexander Etkind (2015) explained that this sentiment described "the process in which Russia was created by a process that it also performed" (166). He also used this understanding to assess the relationship of Russia's imperial elite towards the (ethnic) Russian peasantry (Etkind 2011) and sociologist Alvin W. Gouldner (1977) applied to the Stalin era. With regard to this application of the concept, I echo the critique of Georgian-born scholar of postcolonial literature and theory, Tamar Koplatadze. She notes that it is "extreme to declare that Russia's typical colonial endeavors were directed inside rather than outside…[and] it risks promoting the image of Russia as a benign colonizer, harsh on itself but benevolent towards, and even beneficial for, its…colonies" (2019, 475). Indeed, the choice to focus the discussion of internal colonialism on different classes within ethnic Russian society has distracted from examination of the internal colonial relations between the Russian state and multiple

[37] Although the original Russian script is pre-revolutionary, the contemporary Russian reads, "*История России есть история страны, которая колонизируется.*"

non-Russian ethnicities that eventually came to be absorbed within its boundaries. So, although this meaning is the one most invoked when discussing Russia, I have not employed it in this way because my focus is on the hierarchical relations between the Russian state and the non-Russian ethnicities in an "unoccupied" region of the country, not elite Russian-peasant Russian relations.

5.2.4 Resource colonialism

Resource colonialism was addressed in Articles A, B,[38] and C. Gritsenko (2018) defines resource colonialism as "economically driven discourses, programs and policies that promote extractive activity on the periphery and are administratively backed up by an ideology from the center concerned with expansion of state power" (172). Parson & Ray (2018), referencing Canadian First Nations' experiences, define it as "the theft and appropriation of land belonging to Indigenous peoples in order to access natural resources" (69). Each of these definitions reflects different, yet I argue equally necessary, components that I incorporate into my definition, which is that *resource colonialism* refers to the practice of establishing one or more extractive operations in a location peripheral to a center of power—usually, but not always, on the ancestral lands of Indigenous peoples—with two resulting effects. The first is that it expands state power and control over both the location and the extractive operation(s). The second is that the "symbolic and material benefits continu[e] to flow to already empowered (and usually distant) hands and local peoples continu[e] to bear disproportionate environmental and social burdens" (Willow 2016, 3).

5.2.5 Colonialism as a practice of security

While colonialism has most often been studied from either a political economic lens or post-/decolonial theoretical perspectives, it has, to a significantly lesser degree, been studied through a security lens. The goal of both Article A and the following chapter of this summary article is to explore this undertheorized aspect of colonialism.

[38] Although the term "resource colonialism" was not used in Article B, the description of threats to Indigenous peoples' lives offers evidence of its effects.

In general, security "is a matter of the *social* provision of living conditions, not a simple matter of natural happenings immediately impacting people" (Dalby 2013, 22; emphasis added). In other words, it is a social systemic issue insofar as it involves collective groups and it involves an organized, oftentimes institutionalized, structure. There are three basic dimensions of security: the identification of threats to one's security, the practices one does to reduce or alleviate threats, and the practices one does to maximize the security of one's living conditions. In academia, the concept of security continues to be "contested" (Buzan 1991). In international relations and security studies, *security* has traditionally been associated with the security of the state and, often, has focused on the military capabilities of states. Thus states, with a monopoly of force, are often able to dominate the debate about what and for whom security is. However, since at least the 1980s, perspectives on security have broadened and deepened to cover relevant areas beyond military capabilities and levels both above and below the state. Constructivist, poststructuralist, postcolonialist, feminist, environmental, and human (see Article B) perspectives on security have abounded, with foci on local, regional, and global levels. In article A and in the context of this dissertation, *security* is simply understood as the preservation, or the securing, of a value or set of values that have been determined by an actor who has the power to express what those values are. That actor may or may not have the power to act towards protecting those values, and one actor's set of values may conflict with another actors.

This dissertation demonstrates how colonialism has been used over time to maximize the security of the Russian state. In this case the term, "colonialism as security" refers to a perception by the center of power in Russia—Moscow and, historically, St. Petersburg—that the disproportionate ratio of land to people in the Arctic region has made it vulnerable to external threats, particularly potential claims to land or attempts at penetration by European states. The solution that the center of power has sought is to bolster its control (security) over this landmass by colonizing it with Russian citizens, often but not exclusively, ethnic Russians.

5.3 Summary

This chapter was dedicated to expanding each of the core concepts integral to my argument in this dissertation. After demonstrating knowledge of the dominant branch of political culture, I explained my choice for utilizing the non-dominant understanding—which is because the interpretive approach allows a deeper understanding of why and how Russian political culture came to exist in its current form. In the section dedicated to colonialism, I challenged three universalized assumptions about the concept's operationalization and then defined the three types that are relevant to this dissertation—continental imperialist colonialism, internal colonialism, and resource colonialism. In the next chapter, I will discuss how they are interconnected, and playing out in the AZRF.

6 “Colonialism as Security” in the Russian Arctic

In this chapter, I expand on the role of colonialism as a part of Russian political culture, which was also addressed to a lesser degree in Articles A and C. My primary argument is that the notion of “colonialism as security” evolved into a value of Russian political culture due to the state’s historical experiences in the Russian Arctic. Herein, I employ the method of thick explanation (see Chapter 4) to “persuade and convince” the reader based on “certain rules of evidence while being more accepting of empathetic understandings, especially concerning cross-cultural analysis” (Alexander 2000, 10-11). To this end, I highlight key moments in Russian history in the Eurasian Arctic, focusing on three key sets of actors: the Russian state, Arctic Indigenous peoples, and Russian settlers—both “old timers” and *priyezhiye* (see Section 2.2). Finally, I outline the long durée process of how the practice of “colonialism as security” evolved over time in the Russian Arctic to become a political cultural value. Throughout, I strive to “decenter” the position of privilege afforded to the conventional Russian historical narrative of “expansion” and “development” (see Section 2.1) in order to highlight the Arctic region and people, where and for whom the state’s actions could be perceived as “invasion” and “colonialism.”

In general, scholarship about colonialism and Russia has tended in one of two directions. The bulk of scholarship has focused on colonialism during the Imperial era, which existed from 1689 to 1917 (Werth 2000; Breyfogle et al. 2007); a smaller amount has focused on colonialism during the Soviet era (Gouldner 1977; Khalid 2006). For either era, research has been centered on those regions that once were considered part of the Empire and/or the Soviet Union, but that are now independent countries – such as the Baltic (Annus, 2012; Mettam and Williams 1998) and Central Asian states (Loring 2014; Morrison 2016). As stated in Article C and at the beginning of this summary article, there is still a gap in scholarship on Russian colonialism, namely, that the concept tends to not be applied to “areas and peoples that were subjugated to the Russian state during the imperial and Soviet eras *and* which remain within the present-day Russian Federation” (para. 2, emphasis in original). In Article C, I sought to partially fill that gap with my case study on Russian colonization of the Sakha heartland and, in Article A, with my case study of the AZRF. In this section, I

will continue in the vein of Article A's focus on the territories and peoples inside the boundaries of the AZRF and expand upon the *long durée* by including earlier eras and greater description of the practice I call "colonialism as security."

6.1 Pre-Imperial, pre-modern colonization

As noted in Section 2.3, Russia has made claims of "ownership" of the northeastern part of the European Arctic back to the twelfth century and, of the Asian part, to the seventeenth century. This section will provide a description of the pre-modern colonization that took place in the centuries leading up to imperialist colonialism. It does not fulfill the criteria to be considered as modern colonialism, but it provides context for how Russian claims of ownership over this region came to be.

Russian possession of the European Arctic began with the medieval Russian principality of Novgorod (997-1478 CE). Although early historical records of Russian expansion northward are patchy, scholars generally agree that, as early as 1137, Novgorod claimed territory of today's Russian north extending to the White Sea region (Armstrong 1965; Martin 1988). Along the way, many Indigenous groups were encountered, including Karelians, Komi, Khanty, and Sámi (see Map 2). At first, the Novgorodian state was primarily interested in exercising control over trade routes and subjugating Indigenous people for the purpose of collecting furs for its lucrative fur trade; it was less interested in populating these areas with Slavic settlers. By the eleventh century, Novgorod had subjugated the Komi (Forsyth 1992). To the east of the Komi lands lived the Khanty, who according to Wiget and Balalieva (2011), are estimated to have lived in that area since at least 500 CE. By the time Novgorodians made initial contact with the Khanty, the latter had developed fur trade networks of their own, via the Ob-Irtysh river system, which allowed them to trade with Central Asia. Nonetheless, after a major military campaign against the Khanty, they were subjugated to Novgorod by the end of the twelfth century (Martin 1988). Whereas Novgorod was able to conquer peoples at longer distances from its center rather early, its closer neighbors, the Karelians, managed to maintain their opposition until the middle of the fourteenth century. A main cause for opposition was Novgorod's attempt to impose Christianity on them (Martin 1988). Ultimately, though, the Karelians were

overwhelmed and "pacified" (Lajus 2011, 166). By the mid-fourteenth century, the Novgorodian state had managed to subjugate all of the Indigenous groups to its north (a number of whom no longer exist) and to the east as far as the Ural Mountains.

Colonization of the European Arctic by Russians came approximately at the end of the thirteenth century, when settlers began to permanently occupy areas in the White Sea region (Lajus 2011; Hønneland 2013). The major driving forces of this migration were "the 3 Fs" (Lajus 2011, 165): fish, fur, and forests. These settlers did not require much in the way of land both because the region was not ideally suited for agriculture and because livelihoods in the White Sea area were centered around fishing and the hunting of marine animals. By the fifteenth century, permanent Russian settlements had spread up into the Kola Peninsula as well and those settlers became a distinct Russian sub-ethnic group known as the Pomors, who provided fish and other marine-based products to central Russia in exchange for grain (Lajus 2011).

However, fur was the main product gathered for export to European markets. A variety of Novgoradian people were involved in the expansion of the fur trade: hunters and trappers, military troops, state administrators, and even small numbers of peasants (Armstrong 1965). And where these groups created settlements, monasteries followed. In the early fifteenth century, two monasteries were founded in the White Sea region. In 1419, the Mikhailo-Arkhangelskiy Monastery was built in present-day Arkhangelsk. In 1436, the famous Solovetsky Monastery was established on an island in the White Sea. Monasteries, like military forts, also served the profane purpose of functioning as administrative hubs for the state. In addition to serving as tax collectors (Lajus 2011), Armstrong (1965) states that,

> "they were centres for activity of the most diverse kinds: not only religion and education, but agriculture, animal husbandry, ship-building, fisheries, mining, trade, and even defence…[m]onasteries tended, therefore, to be focal points in the settlement process. This was no accident, for the settlement function was emphasized in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries…as the reason why remote monasteries were founded" (89).

Furthermore, monasteries served as a medium of colonization through the proselytization of the local Indigenous populations, spreading and embedding the value systems of the dominant Novgorodian center. One of the many negative

consequences of monastery colonization was the steady appropriation of Indigenous lands, as happened to the Sámi people on the Kola Peninsula between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, resulting in their relocation and concentration in smaller areas farther north (Lajus 2011).

When the Russian principality of Novgorod was defeated by the Russian principality of Muscovy in 1478, "ownership" of its territory—including the Kola Peninsula, the White Sea region, Komi and Khanty areas—came under Muscovite control. During the 1533–1584 reign of Ivan the Terrible (who was also the first monarch to be crowned as tsar), the Russian state began active expansion north, east, and south from Moscow. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Cossacks acted as emissaries of the Russian state, sweeping the Eurasian landmass in search of lands to claim, and conquering all Indigenous groups they met along the way. The Cossacks were groups of freemen that formed "self-governing military communities" ("Cossack" 2023). They aligned themselves with the Russian state and provided both private security and exploration services to the tsars during their conquest of the Asian Arctic, Siberia, and the Far East. Upon contact with local Indigenous populations, the Cossacks' assignment was to subjugate them to the "the sovereign's exalted hand" (Slezkine 1994). Despite displays of resistance ranging from uprisings to mass suicides to the mass destruction of furs, all were eventually subjugated to Russian power. Subjugation meant that "these tribes recognized the [tsar] as their suzerain, accepted his right to appoint their local rulers, sent contingents to his army, and paid tribute in [furs] to his treasury" (Martin 1988, 39). In exchange for these duties, their communities and cultures were allowed to remain relatively the same as before contact. Nonetheless, their lives changed after, and as a result of, this "alien yoke" (Forsyth 1992, 154). The process of subjugation was often brutal as common tactics for breaking the will of Indigenous groups involved destroying their homes, equipment, and stores of food. Moreover, the demands of collecting fur for tribute were highly disruptive to a subsistence lifestyle as "the best polar foxes lay far north of the reindeer migration routes; the taiga sable took many fishermen away from their rivers; and the settled sea hunters had to exchange much of their catch for the furs brought by their inland 'friends'" (Slezkine 1994a, 26).

Muscovy was also actively involved in the fur trade, and it needed access to European markets. Its primary access routes came in the form of the vast network of rivers that crisscrossed the European and Asian continents. However, landlocked Moscow had precious little access to open waters. It would not be until the imperial era (1689-1917) that Russia would succeed in obtaining ports on the Baltic and Black Seas. Until then, the most readily available maritime routes were in the north, via the Barents and White Seas (see Map 4). By the end of the pre-imperial era, international trade between Muscovy and European countries, via Arctic routes, was flourishing and Russians had founded a handful of towns across the breadth of the Russian Far North—Arkhangelsk was established in 1584, Obdorsk (today Salekhard) in 1595, Nizhnekolymsk in 1644, and Dudinka in 1667 (see Map 3). In at least one case, Russians had also seized control over an existing Indigenous settlement to establish a Russian town, as was the case in the 1593 founding of Berezov on the Khanty settlement of Sugmut vash (Armstrong 1965).

However, already by the seventeenth century, Moscow perceived that its Arctic area was vulnerable to external threats. The fate of the trading town of Mangazeya illustrates the consequences of this perception. Built in an area between the Ob' and Yenisey Rivers in 1601, Mangazeya was a Siberian outpost from where multiple types of valuable furs, ivory from mammoths and walruses, and goods from farther south in Asia were traded with Europeans. This direct trade largely circumvented state control by Moscow, resulting in the loss of potential tax revenue. The tsar felt threatened, not only by the loss of income but also by the possibility of cooptation of Siberia via Mangazeya or even armed invasion by European countries seeking new colonies (Armstrong 1965, Zubkov 2019). So, in 1619, he prohibited international trade there and, by 1690, Mangazeya ceased to exist (Bobrick 2014, 50-51).

In sum, this era saw the subjugation of northern Indigenous people and low-intensity colonization by Russians. This was a pre-modern form that lacked the "spirit of colonialism" elements necessary for modern-era colonialism. However, it provided the foundation for the modern form of imperialist colonialism that followed.

6.2 Colonialism and security during the Imperial era (1689-1917)

By the time Peter I (Peter the Great) ascended the throne in 1689, the Russian state had already claimed ownership over Arctic territory extending from the Kola Peninsula in the west to the Chukotka Peninsula in the east, spanning much of the European continent and all of the northeastern Asian continent (see Map 4).[39] This vast expanse of land incentivized St. Petersburg to operate differently from other European powers. Because the imperial territory beyond Central Russia (i.e., the Far North, Siberia, and the Far East) was sparsely populated, it made better economic sense to incorporate the subjugated peoples into the system and extract tribute from them than to exterminate them (Kivelson 2007). During the first two centuries of rule, the logic of continental colonialism meant that, so long as the colonized Indigenous groups paid their fur tribute, they were largely allowed to remain intact as ethno-cultural entities. However, the "pacified" Indigenous peoples were not considered as subjects of the empire. Rather, they were "aliens" (инородцы / *inorodtsy*), which literally meant "those from a different genus"[40] (Sokolovski 2000).

Intellectual trends and technological developments of the nineteenth century changed the state's outlook on, and its approach to, its northernmost tier. Intellectual trends affected the way the Indigenous peoples in the empire were perceived. Russian elites had begun to embrace European intellectual trends about modernization. One of its discourses was the concept of social evolution, or the idea that nations, like individuals, developed—or evolved—in stages (see, for example, the works of Vasiliy Tatishchev n.d.). This discourse became institutionalized as official imperial policy with the 1822 Statute of Alien Administration in Siberia.[41] For the first time, all *inorodtsy* were legally codified and hierarchically ordered based on their level of

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[39] I use the standard geographic feature of the Ural Mountains as the dividing line between the European and Asian continents.

[40] The genus name for humans is *homo,* and various species within this genus are *homo sapiens, homo neanderthalensis,* etc. So, to say that Indigenous peoples were from a different genus meant that they were not acknowledged as human. For those with an interest in linguistics and post-structural interpretations regarding inherent bias in language: "Translating *ino* as 'other' and *rod* as 'genus,' *inorodets* [sing.; pl. *inorodtsy*] serves as one signifier for 'race' in that both of these terms are understood to denote 'a structural relationship for the articulation and management of human differences" (McReynolds 2022, 106).

[41] Statute of Alien Administration of 22 July 1822. *Russian Academy of Sciences.* Last accessed February 28, 2023. http://old.iea.ras.ru/topic/law/law/law-r22071822.htm [in Russian]

social evolution, as perceived particularly by Graf Mikhail Speranskiy, who wrote the Statute (often nicknamed the Speranksiy Code). This law divided *inorodtsy* into three levels: settled, nomadic, and "wandering or foraging." All of the Indigenous groups within the Russian Arctic were categorized as one of the latter two, except for the Chukchi in the far northeast, whom the Empire never fully managed to subjugate; they were given their own special status. By the mid-nineteenth century, Russian elites were discussing the European intellectual discourse of civilization, which coalesced in a search for solutions to the Empire's "alien problem"—or how Russians could "civilize" the Indigenous populations to "progress" in their social evolution. A "civilizing mission" was launched to assimilate, or Russify, non-ethnic Russians. The starting point was formal conversion to Orthodoxy (Slezkine 1994).

In Article C, I wrote about the Russian imperialist colonization of the Sakha heartland, which was considered as a resource colony. "Because the soil was largely unconducive to agriculture, the land was made productive through the collection of furs" (para. 10). The same is also true for the Far Northern imperial provinces of Arkhangelsk (with the exception of the port town of Arkhangelsk), Tobolsk, and Yenisey, as their major contribution to the treasury was their tribute of furs. By the end of the imperial era, the Russian Arctic was predominantly considered as a resource colony for fur and the region's native inhabitants were considered as "aliens."

Technological developments of the nineteenth century intensified the state's perceptions of Arctic vulnerability. The commercialization of fishing and the industrialization of whaling in Europe and North America, led to the increasing encroachment of foreign ships in the Arctic waters and on islands Russia considered to be its own. Feeling threatened by the presence of British and Norwegian fishermen in the Barents and White Sea regions, St. Petersburg responded with its first attempts at overt "colonialism as security." It sought to colonize the Murman coast along the north side of the Kola peninsula (Lajus 2011; Luzin et al. 1994). The government encouraged Russians to settle the area by offering them incentives such as exemption from taxation and military conscription (Lagutina 2021). This is an early example of Schorkowitz's (2019) observation that continental colonialism can transition into internal colonialism "as the core state incorporates surrounding territories. Because of

their expansion into contiguous territory, the continental empires usually develop forms of internal colonialism, unlike their maritime counterparts" (36).

One particular source of international contention between Norway and Russia was the status of the island of Novaya Zemlya (see Map 4). Hunters from both countries used the island as hunting grounds. The Pomors had used it since the sixteenth century, so Russia considered the island to be its sovereign territory. However, Norwegian hunters considered only the southern half of the island to be Russian territory and the northern half to be neutral. The Norwegians continued to hunt on this half unconditionally for about a half century, until the Norwegian government was compelled by Russia to intervene and confirm Russian sovereignty over the whole island (Nielsen 1995). Despite the threat being removed, In the late 1870s, the governor of the Arkhangelsk Province attempted to bolster Russian sovereignty by encouraging the colonization of Novaya Zemlya. A small group of Indigenous Nenets were "volunteered" to be the island's Russian inhabitants (Engelhardt 1899) and serve as "human flagpoles."[42] But it was not enough to relocate these Indigenous Nenets families for the crown's good; an Orthodox priest was sent with them to convert them into "'useful Russian citizens'" (Nielsen 1995, 11).

Technological developments also reinvigorated interest in discovering a northeastern passage between Europe and Asia. Several western European countries launched a variety of state-sponsored and international expeditions. However, Russia was not actively involved in these endeavors (Johannessen et al. 2007). The Empire's neglect of its Arctic sea routes became apparent during the 1904-5 Russo-Japanese War. McCannon (1998) provides a vivid description of the problem:

> "[Russian] forces were hopelessly overextended. Since the government had never taken the pains to develop a useable sea-lane along the Arctic coast, the only means it had to transport troops and supplies over the more than 4,000 miles that separated St. Petersburg from Vladivostok was the horribly overburdened Trans-Siberian Railway. Even worse, when [the] Baltic fleet was called upon to reinforce the battered Pacific navy, it was forced—by the lack of a suitable waterway in the Arctic—to sail literally halfway around the world just to reach the war. When [the] exhausted

[42] This term was initially used by Peter Jull (1994) in reference to the Canadian government's twentieth-century relocation of Inuit to the extreme High Arctic for the purpose of bolstering Canadian sovereignty. However, it transfers nicely to this context, as well.

> armada finally steamed into the Straits of Tsushima in May 1905, it was annihilated in what proved to be the last major action of the war—and perhaps the most humiliating defeat in naval history" (18-19)

It took an embarrassment of this magnitude to compel Russian leaders turn their gaze to the Arctic as an important geostrategic military corridor. Finally, the state announced plans to develop of a viable Northern Sea Route (NSR)—a maritime transportation corridor that covered the 5,000-kilometer distance from the White Sea to Vladivostok (near Korea) via the Arctic Ocean. Such a route would "allow Russia to deploy her naval resources between four potential battlegrounds in the north, Far East, Baltic, and Black Seas without their transit past potentially hostile powers and through dangerous choke points such as the Dardanelles" (Hill 2007, 367). The NSR's potential was reinforced during World War I. When access to the Baltic and Black Seas became restricted, the Barents and White Sea regions re-emerged as areas of significance and served as an important lifeline for war supplies from fellow Allied Powers (Wright 2017).

In 1917, the Bolshevik party began an armed insurrection in St. Petersburg to overthrow the tsar and end autocratic rule in Russia. Upon seizing power, two concurrent events followed. The first was that the new Bolshevik leadership took Russia out of World War I. The second was that the seizure of power sparked a five-year-long civil war in which the Soviet Red Army fought primarily against the monarchist White Army for control over Russia. The Allied powers hoped to bring Russia back into the war and intervened in the Russian Civil War, on the side of the White Army, from 1918 to 1919. The western Russian Arctic, particularly the towns and ports of Murmansk and Arkhangelsk, played a significant role during this period. In March of 1918, the Bolsheviks gave Britain permission to station ground troops at Murmansk in an effort to protect Allied resources from falling into the hands of Germany (Hill 2007). Both Murmansk and Arkhangelsk were decidedly anti-Bolshevik for the majority of the Russian Civil War. By July, Arkhangelsk became the "centre of anti-Bolshevik activity" (Goldin 2000, 70) and the approximately 43-44,000 Allied soldiers took control of the port town for the Whites until September 1919, when they evacuated after it became apparent that the Red Army was winning the Civil War. For the ultimately successful Bolsheviks, the impact of Allied occupation

was that it served only to reinforce their apprehension about foreign interference on the country's northern flank; as Goldin (2000) notes, "Without the Allied intervention, the anti-Bolshevik struggle in the North could not have taken the form of a civil war" (71). This experience strengthened the Soviets' commitment to defending its northern territory.

6.3 Colonialism and security during the Soviet era (1917-1991)

Although internal colonialism and resource colonialism are intertwined in the story of the Soviet Arctic, this section will primarily focus on the former and the legacy of the latter will be expanded upon in the section on the contemporary era. Here I will focus on three different actors: Indigenous peoples, *priyezhiye,* and the state. Although interconnected, the perspectives and experiences of internal colonialism amongst these actors were different, each in its own way.

6.3.1 Colonialism, (in)security, and Indigenous peoples

When the Bolsheviks took over, they imposed a Marxist ideology that differed in many ways from those of the Russian Empire, but it retained the important continuity feature of colonialist hierarchical ordering based on nationality; this was encapsulated in the Stalinist approach to the nationalities question. The Russian tsar oversaw a multiethnic empire, of which the majority of ethnic groups had been annexed by conquest, not by merged by choice. When the Bolsheviks took power, they knew that "the nationality question"—or the question of how to manage multiple disparate ethnic groups under one government, many of which had justified historical grievances against Russia and Russians – could thwart their infant state at the outset. The solution to this problem, as devised primarily by Joseph Stalin in 1923, was the Soviet nationalities policy. This policy held that "the Soviet state would maximally support those 'forms' of nationhood that did not conflict with a unitary central state" (Martin 2001, 9-10). There were two guiding principles for its design: ethnofederalism and social evolution theory. The first, ethnofederalism, was the policy that legally designated administrative-territorial units to each ethnic group. Within the boundaries of their own units, each group would be granted varying degrees of self-government and would be permitted to express exactly three forms of national

identity: the group's national language would be co-official with Russian (which was the *lingua franca*), each group's cultural identity would be supported by the party, and a national elite—an *intelligentsia*[43]—was to be trained to lead its people's development. The rationale behind these concessions was that socialism would be more quickly understood in one's own native language and as taught by one's own native people, which "would make Soviet power seem indigenous rather than an external Russian imperial imposition" (Martin 2001, 12).

The degree of autonomy that each group was granted within its unit was determined by the second guiding principle, that of the Marxist theory of social evolution. Similar to Tatishchev's and Speranskiy's theories on modernization, but with a Marxist twist, this theory held that ethnic groups progressed linearly from a primitive stage of not having any sort of national consciousness, through one of national consciousness, to finally evolve beyond nationalism into socialism. The Bolsheviks decided to fast-track the nationhood phase by automatically granting nationalities all of the trappings of nationhood through the ethnofederal structure. Reminiscent of the hierarchical ordering in the Speranskiy Code, his theory divided groups into three hierarchical categories– tribes, nationalities, and nations – based on their social evolutionary stage. Nations (i.e., Russians, Ukrainians, Georgians) were considered the most developed and therefore were granted their own Union republics. Nationalities (i.e., Tatars, Yakuts) were in the middle of development and could be trusted to administer their own autonomous republics within Union republics. Tribes (i.e., Sámi, Nenets), being lowest on the scale, were considered to be too backward to handle much self-government and therefore were granted smaller autonomous *okrugs* with fewer rights.[44] These ethnofederal divisions also created new terms for the latter

[43] During the tsarist era, this term was used to designate a person with a higher degree of education who was also interested in promoting Enlightenment-style ideas about progress and the human condition. During the Soviet period, Stalin expanded the category into an entire class with a variety of adjectives to denote each member's area of expertise. "Ethnic or national" intelligentsia were "responsible for the development of the titular language, literature, culture, history, and traditions" (Shcherbak and Sych 2017, 312). The intelligentsia are still considered a vital social category in Russia today.

[44] There are a multitude of names for the different administrative units of the Soviet Union and Russian Federation. In each state formation, there are *oblasts, krais,* and *okrugs.* An *oblast* is roughly equivalent to a province; there is also *krai*—a historical designation that, during the Imperial era, designated a vast territory on the periphery, but today is effectively synonymous with *oblast.* An *okrug* is a district, which has less autonomy

two. Nationalities were now to be considered as "titular nationalities" and tribes were relabeled as "small peoples of the North."[45]

In this way, the Bolsheviks intentionally depoliticized and strictly regulated such contentious nationalistic issues as (non-Russian) language and culture "through an ostentatious show of respect for the national identities of the non-Russians," (Martin 2001, 13), because they realized how it could benefit their end goal of creating a socialist world order. At the time, the Soviet nationalities policy and accompanying ethnofederalist structure were considered to be progressive and a sign of Bolshevik good faith towards limited and conditional autonomy. The biggest advantage was that, unlike the tsarist government, national languages and cultures were officially encouraged and developed by the Soviet state, and the Indigenous peoples in the Soviet Arctic now had their own legally designated administrative-territorial units. However, the actual amount of control over their lives and territories was minimal in comparison to the amount of centralized power wielded by the unitary state in Moscow, especially considering that only "superficial expressions" (Prina 2018, 1240) of ethnic identity were permitted and only within the within the prescribed ethnofederal territory (Kagedan 1990). Moreover, such boundaries only solidified political, geographical, and social difference, thereby reifying those national differences that the Bolsheviks hoped to overcome. As historian Marc Beissinger (2006) notes, because the divisions were created from the seat of power in Moscow, they could "just as easily be understood as a form of foreign domination, as the attempt to enforce cultural or racial difference…" (302). Collier and Collier (2001) consider maneuvers like this as *state incorporation,* or a strategy wherein states construct new institutions for a grouping of people. It is most often employed when states deal with groups demanding changes to the status quo (i.e., labor unions or minority groups), for the express purpose of depoliticizing their agendas and controlling their actions. Robinson and Kassam, scholars studying the Kola Sámi,

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than republics, *krais,* or *oblasts*. A helpful source for understanding the difference in Russian administrative-territorial terms is Shklayanoy (2012).

[45] The term has been updated to "small-numbered peoples of the North, Siberia, and Far East," but for the purposes of this dissertation, they will continue to be called Indigenous peoples.

considered it as a form of partial assimilation that "reflect[ed] a willed effort to undermine Indigenous cultures, yet nominally preserve them through political and economic dependence, so as to permanently show the weakness of the Indigenous culture in contrast to the European" (1998, 90).

One of the ways in which Indigenous peoples were rapidly made aware of their subordinate standing vis-à-vis Moscow was the Stalinist policy of collectivization.[46] This policy was met with resistance by Soviet citizens of all ethnicities, including the Arctic Indigenous peoples. Reindeer herding communities, such as the Sámi and Nenets, were forced to collectivize their privately-owned migratory herds into state-owned collective pastures, in the style of domesticated cattle. Those who resisted were imprisoned, exiled, or killed (Robinson and Kassam 1998; Golovnev and Osherenko 1999). This also resulted in the sedentarization of the herders, and their traditional occupation was incorporated in a manner than made sense to Marxist ideology. As noted in Article B, "local reindeer herders became state employees whose job was to provide local meat for company workers" (386), with "company workers" being the *priyezhiye* in monotowns. One of the great benefits to the state from collectivizing groups like the Sámi and Nenets reindeer herders was that the mineral-rich lands over which the reindeer migrated were then freed up for industrial exploitation.

After consolidation came Russification. Although the Soviets had designed a nationalities policy that legally guaranteed language rights for all non-Russian ethnicities, Kotljarchuk (2012) notes that, in 1938, Sámi schools and Sámi-language textbooks were replaced with Russian ones, a *de facto* policy that endured until Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms in the late 1980s. So, for approximately half a century, Sámi children were denied education in their native language(s). Golovnev & Osherenko (1999) note that the Nenets experienced similar collectivization and Russification campaigns by the Soviet government in the 1930s. However, in 1934, a sizeable number of Nenets chose to resist these intrusions by launching a *mandalada*,

[46] Collectivization was a policy introduced by Joseph Stalin during the first Five-Year Plan in 1928. This policy involved the surrender of privately-owned land and agricultural resources to the Soviet state, which would then combine all those resources, including labor, into a communal enterprise that would be centrally administered by Moscow. In colonialist terms, the colony (collectivized farm) was systemically designed to remain dependent on the metropole (Moscow).

the Nenets word for a war assemblage. They opposed “all measures undertaken by Soviet authorities in the 1930s…because the latter's each and every action, point by point, ran counter to Nenets custom and tradition” (85). This act of defiance ended with the arrest of seven leaders and the disheartened disbursal of resisters.

According to Gorter-Gronvik and Suprun (2000), a second Nenets *mandalada* occurred during World War II in 1943. At the start of the war, the western “small peoples of the North” (Sámi, Nenets, Komi) were mobilized to serve in Reindeer Brigades. However, the structure of their inclusion revealed the distrust between the Russian commanders and Indigenous conscripts. The commanders sought to divide conscripts into the smallest possible groups and would not allow communication between those groups. “The Russians also threatened to shoot reindeer men if they ran away or did not listen” (130). Herders were also ordered to deliver certain amounts of their herds to the Arctic front of the war on the Kola Peninsula, as transport or as food. By 1943, there had been heavy losses of reindeer at the front and many herders did not want to sacrifice more of their herds. As many as one hundred Nenets took part in this *mandalada,* refusing to turn over their reindeer and going to the tundra with them. They were soon found and were either shot, taken prisoner, or sent to the gulag.

The post-World War II, post-Stalin years saw an additional wave of “resettlement” of Indigenous peoples, from the 1950s through the 1970s, as collective farms were consolidated into ever larger and more centralized state farms, which served to further compound Indigenous peoples’ alienation from their ancestral lands (Bartels and Bartels 1995; Afanasyeva 2018). As mentioned in Section 2.2, terminology influences and impacts the way people perceive reality. Terms like “resettlement” reflect the desire by state actors to sanitize their policies and actions. In this case, it conceals the fact that the moves made by Indigenous were not voluntary; they were forced. By the late Soviet era, the collective toll of colonialist policies was dire. As described in Article B, in addition to forced sedentarization, they had been compelled to learn the dominant language (Russian) at the expense of their mother tongues; Indigenous children had been sent to boarding schools to be educated in “proper” ways; Indigenous peoples had been politically marginalized by the demographically and culturally dominant group; and finally, the compounding effects

of psychological and socio-communal traumas had resulted in high rates of alcoholism, abuse, and mortality rates. Overall, the experiences of many Indigenous groups of the Soviet era lent themselves more to insecurity than to security, particularly in the various dimensions of human security, as outlined in Article B.

6.3.2 Internal colonization by *priyezhiye*

As categorized in Section 2.2, there were three broad groups of *priyezhiye* to the Soviet Far North—military personnel, gulag prisoners, and workers who voluntarily relocated for economic benefits, predominantly from the extractive industries. Here I focus on the latter two groups. In Article C, I stated that internal colonization during the Soviet era "was given a variety of different names, such as the 'involuntary resettlement' of prisoners to gulag camps…and the 'Northern Benefits' voluntary resettlement programs" (para. 1). Here, too, what the state called "resettlement," would more accurately be considered as internal colonialism.

The Soviet Union strove for economic autarky so that it could de-couple itself from the capitalist world economy and, in many ways, it was well positioned to do so as the mineral resources within its boundaries were plentiful. The biggest problem was that the industries were undeveloped because the resources were located primarily in the remote and sparsely populated areas of the Far North, Siberia, and the Far East. A massive transfer of labor from the heavily populated European parts of the Union to these areas was needed. Government-sponsored campaigns to entice people to move voluntarily proved insufficient to meet labor demands. So, the state began to "import" involuntary labor provided by the Soviet corrective labor, or gulag, system (Reisser 2017). Gulag camps constitute one of the more easily identifiable forms of colonialism – the penal colony, a state-sponsored closed system of people who have been involuntarily transferred to an "empty" peripheral area, the purpose of which is to maximally exploit both labor and resources for the benefit of the state while also minimizing the risk to populations of exposure to "undesireables." Applebaum (2003) wrote that gulag camps were like "a country within a country" (xvi).

Gulag camps sprang up in several locations throughout the Soviet Arctic. On the Kola Peninsula alone, the population increased fourteen-fold in a fourteen-year period (1926-1940) due to the influx of "deportees" and political prisoners (Luzin et

al. 1994). Several gulag camps evolved into single-industry towns, known as "monotowns" (моногорода / *monogoroda*), similar in meaning to "company town." Laruelle and Hohmann (2017) define a monotown as "a town with one or more companies functioning as a single production unit which employs over 25% of the active working population, accounts for more than 50% of overall industrial production and for over 20% of all municipal taxes and revenues" (306). On Kola, the towns of Kirovsk (1929) and Apatity (1930) were founded to facilitate apatite mining, while Monchegorsk (1937) was created to facilitate nickel mining. Approximately 10,000 prisoners were involved in the creation of the Monchegorsk nickel mine and plant (Luzin et al. 1994). In other parts of the Far North, gulag-turned-monotowns included Igarka, which was founded in 1929 to facilitate the lumber industry; Vorkuta, established in 1932 to develop the coal industry; and perhaps the most tenacious of them all – Norilsk, which was founded as the Norillag gulag in 1935 to develop the nickel industry.[47] In the early 1950s, 88% of the town's population consisted of convicts (Laruelle and Hohmann 2017). In addition to being single industry, the monotowns were often self-contained, in terms of isolation from other monotowns and/or even from the local environment surrounding them.

A new wave of internal colonization occurred in the 1970s when giant hydrocarbon fields were discovered in the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Oblast (YaNAO). However, by this time, the gulag system of forced labor had been largely dismantled, so leaders initiated a program to incentivize voluntary relocation called "Northern Benefits," (северные льготы / *severnye l'goty*) which promised, among other perks, relocation grants, free housing, tax breaks, extra holidays, and early retirement (Heleniak 2019). This system also gave rise to the metaphors of *materik* and islands (see Section 2.2). Towns established during the imperial era, such as Salekhard, were expanded. Entire new monotowns, like Novy Urengoy (1975), were established to accommodate workers needed in these areas.

[47] The most well-known – and notorious – of the Gulag camps were located in the Far Eastern Kolyma region, with its capital in Magadan. However, this area lies beyond the geographical scope of coverage for this dissertation, as outlined in Section 2.2.1.

The overall demographic shifts were significant. By 1989, approximately 5.5 million Soviet citizens had moved (or were moved) to the region and, although Soviet-era *priyezhiye* came from all ends of the Union, the demographically dominant group always remained ethnic Russians.[48] As noted in Articles B and C, the influx of *priyezhiye* to these areas, many of which were ethnic autonomous areas, resulted in a demographic displacement of Indigenous peoples in their own "homelands." For example, until hydrocarbons were discovered in YaNAO, the population was less than 50,000, of which half were Indigenous (Povdvintsev et al. 2016). Since the 1960s gas boom, the population has increased more than 11 times, to over 550,000 in 2022 (see Table 1 in Section 2.3), of whom now less than one-seventeenth are Nenets (see Article B). By the end of the Soviet era, internal colonialism had a remarkable impact on transforming the demographic profile and the environmental landscape of the Russian Arctic.

6.3.3 The state, colonialism, and (in)security

Until World War II, state-sponsored practices of colonization served primarily macroeconomic ends. As mentioned above, the Soviet state aimed for autarky and rapid industrialization was a key policy toward achieving it. However, the experience of World War II reminded the central leadership just how important the Arctic region was for state security. On land, many of the country's factories needed to be relocated away from the war's front lines. Monotowns such as Vorkuta and Norilsk became vital for the country's coal and nickel supplies, where they solidified into the primary location for their respective industries until the Union's collapse. As Reisser (2017) states, "the strategic lessons learned in World War II demonstrated that further industrial development in remote regions would provide greater survivability in the case of another European land war" (6-7). By sea, similar to the World War I experience, the northern routes along the Barents, White, and Bering Seas became the most accessible maritime routes to and from the Soviet Union. One of the more significant activities to take place in Arctic waters was the Lend-Lease Program, wherein the Allied powers of Britain and the United States provided military aid to the

[48] See footnote 25.

Soviets to bolster their fight against the Germans. On the western side, Britain led a total of 811 ships on a series of sea-based convoys from English ports to Murmansk and Arkhangelsk, delivering “some 4 million tons of war stores, including some 5,000 tanks and more than 8,000 aircraft” (Wragg 2005, xiii). On the eastern side, the U.S. supplied the USSR with a total of 14,798 combat aircraft via the Alaska-Siberia air route (Dolitsky 2016). However, despite the USSR’s need of supplies and its choice to participate in the program, the Soviet central leadership remained extremely suspicious of its fellow Allies and kept strict control over foreign personnel while they were in the Soviet Arctic (Hill 2007).

Finally, and most enduringly, was the role the Soviet Arctic played during the Cold War. The Cold War saw to the heavy militarization of the pan-Arctic region as the two superpowers—the US and the USSR—provided a real-life example of the classic security dilemma (Jervis 1978). From approximately the 1950s to the late 1980s, the Kremlin invested heavily in enhancing its presence and capabilities in the Far North, including the creation of military bases on High Arctic islands (Kikkert & Lackenbauer 2020). The Northern Fleet of the Soviet Navy, based on the Kola Peninsula, received a continuous increase in personnel and hardware (Luzin et al. 1994). Also, extensive nuclear testing was conducted on the High Arctic island of Novaya Zemlya (more detail below, in Section 6.4.2).

In 1987, Mikhail Gorbachev delivered a speech in Murmansk, calling on all of the Arctic countries (the Soviet Union included) to consider the Arctic region as a Zone of Peace, meaning that he wanted to establish in the region "a nuclear-weapons-free zone in Northern Europe, restricting naval activities in Arctic seas, and developing transborder cooperation in resource use development, scientific exploration, Indigenous people's affairs, environmental protection and marine transport" (Palosaari and Tynkkynen 2015, 88). This speech marked “the beginning of a new era in the Arctic” (Åtland 2008, 305). However, Kikkert & Lackenbauer (2020) remind us that the Barents Sea and Kola Peninsula were excluded from the calls to demilitarize, “so that he could safeguard the home of Russia’s Northern Fleet” (497).

Overall, the Soviet state’s experience in the Arctic evolved from being colonialism and security (as two separate policy spheres) to “colonialism as security.”

Although the original intention behind internal colonization of the Far North was for the state's macroeconomic security (autarky), its wartime experiences helped it to realize that colonized spaces, especially deep in the Eurasian Arctic, enhanced both the country's macroeconomic and state security. The militarization of the Russian Arctic provided Moscow with a sense of state-military security via deterrence, but in the global perspective, made the world more insecure.

6.4 "Colonialism as security" in the contemporary Russian Arctic (since 1991)

During the current era, and especially since Vladimir Putin assumed office, the threads of continuity between Soviet policies and current policies are noticeable. However, whereas during the Soviet era, it was a process of learning that colonialism bolstered state security, it now seems that the lesson has been internalized and practice has matured into "colonialism as security," particularly in current state policies to internally (re)colonize the AZRF. As noted in the previous section, here the legacy of Soviet resource colonialism will be addressed and connected to current endeavors of resource colonialism.

6.4.1 Internal (re)colonization

There are currently two major trajectories of internal colonialism in the AZRF. The first is overt attempts at internal colonialism and the second is bureaucratic attempts at internal colonialism. Because this is a period that is still in progress, this portion will only highlight some of the maneuvers taken by Moscow that could be interpreted such. What remains inconclusive presently, is whether or not the current government's attempts at internal colonization will be successful.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the central government was unable to maintain the pre-disintegration levels of subsidization for its heavily populated Arctic urban areas. Many of the monotown industries experienced disruptions or even a halting of operations, which resulted in high levels of unemployment that, in turn, instigated a massive outmigration of *priyezhiye* from the country's Far Northern "islands" (monotowns) back toward the "*materik*" (Central Russia). As an example, Chukotka has experienced an outmigration of 75% of its population since the 1990s

(Heleniak 2019). In places, the federal government implemented voluntary resettlement programs to encourage northern pensioners to move back toward central and southern Russia, for the sake of reducing subsidy commitments (Luzin et al. 1994; Nuykina 2011). The Yamalo-Nenets and Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrugs, two regions where the profitable hydrocarbon industries were still running strongly, were the only two regions to experience an influx of population (Heleniak 2010, Korovkin and Sinitsa 2021).

In fact, in the early contemporary era, an easing of "colonialist practices" could be observed. The exodus of *priyezhiye* during the 1990s had the effect of lessening the demographic disparity for Indigenous peoples in their areas. The loosening of state control opened a window of opportunity for Indigenous peoples with transnational ties, such as the Sámi and Chukchi to re-establish contact with their outside relatives. Indigenous activism inside Russia flourished. A prominent example of this is the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON). From 1994 to 2012, RAIPON was a robust organization, well established in the international community (particularly in the Arctic Council and United Nations Economic and Social Council; see "Association" 2021). It advocated for Indigenous rights vis-à-vis the Russian federal government. Oftentimes, this manifested in criticisms of the government's insincere, incomplete, or non- implementation of state policies regarding the rights of Indigenous peoples. These clashes occurred most frequently around issues of Indigenous land rights in areas of natural resource development.

At the same time, massive outmigration, high mortality rates, and low birth rates throughout the 1990s and early 2000s resulted in a demographic crisis for the Russian Arctic (Heleniak 2019). In general, the young and better educated tend to be more mobile and these were the sectors of the population that left the Far North in search of better opportunities, leaving behind those societal groups that generally require more government spending, namely, the less mobile, less educated, and the elderly. In an effort to reverse this, Moscow has in recent years been actively trying to "recolonize" its Arctic periphery (Kinossian 2017). One of its campaigns has been the

"Hectare in the Arctic" program, which was the case study presented in Article D.[49] As stated in Article A, this is a form of both literal and figurative homesteading. However, there is an ongoing dilemma between Moscow's and local Arctic municipalities' desire for permanent settlement of people in the Arctic and the economic practicalities of more mobile shift workers in areas of natural resource exploitation, which is more cost effective for industries (Sukhankin et al. 2021). Residents in the Nenets AO have noted that oil companies discriminate against local Arctic residents in hiring, preferring to hire non-local people to avoid paying climate allowances (Zorin and Kamenskikh 2021). Moreover, concerns have been raised about the lack of personal investment that shift workers have towards the environment and local communities surrounding work sites "as it is not their native land and is considered only a temporary residence" (Korovkin and Sinitsa 2021, 10). In her interviews with extractive industry workers, Novikova (2016) provided substantiation for this concern, noting that some workers bragged about "going hunting on Indigenous territory as though it were something heroic" (106-107), as opposed to an action that is both illegal and against company policies.

The other trajectory for contemporary internal colonialism is bureaucratic in form. As mentioned in Article A, the federal state is engaging in a "colonization of nature" through its establishment of the Russian Arctic National Park in 2009. In addition to this is the practice of federal mergers. In 1998, the Russian Federation had 89 subjects, ten of which were autonomous okrugs (AO).[50] When Putin came to power in 2000, his government began the effort to de-federalize power from the subjects (administrative units) and re-centralize power in Moscow. One of his tactics was to merge AOs—particularly those with significant natural resources—with a "poorer Russian one" (Heleniak 2010, 89). This maneuver had three detrimental effects for Indigenous peoples' administrative power in the country. First, mergers entailed a demotion of status for AOs from subjects to "municipal and/or special administrative units with special legislative guarantees" (Okunev 2020). This meant that AOs

[49] This is the daughter program of the "Far Eastern Hectare" program that was mentioned in Article C.

[50] Similar to the Soviet structure, an "autonomous okrug" in the Russian Federation designates an ethnofederal unit that serves as the national homeland for a "small-numbered people," such as the Nenets, Khanty, etc.

Map 5. Map of the Russian Federation showing the federal subjects already merged, the federal subjects that will be merged, and the federal subjects whose fusion is under discussion. Dotted lines show (future) merged subjects, which where/will be merged with others, as of January 1, 2008. Source: Fremantleboy.

effectively sacrificed part of their autonomy in exchange for funding and infrastructure concessions. “Often the loss of a territorial homeland is the beginning of a process of eventual assimilation” (Heleniak 2010, 89). As of 2023, six of the ten AOs have been merged with other subjects. Only four autonomous okrugs remain: the Yamalo-Nenets AO, the Khanty-Mansiyskiy AO, the Chukotka AO, and the Nenets AO. Second, beyond the fact that Indigenous peoples in Russia do not have collective rights to land (as do many of their counterparts in other Arctic countries and in line with international principles), the merger of their ethnically designated AOs with other regions has served to dilute their demographic parity as well as their voting power. Third, control over natural resources is also an issue in these mergers. With the merger of Taymyr AO and the Evenki AO to Krasnoyarsk krai,[51] the latter gained access to the formers’ oil, coal, and gold reserves. In 2020, an attempt was made to merge the Nenets AO and Arkhangelsk oblast, but NAO residents voiced strong opposition and voted it down. Zorin and Kamenskikh (2021) noted that merger question has been postponed for now, but it has not removed from the agenda completely and will likely come up again. If the Nenets AO were to merge with Arkhangelsk oblast, the latter would have greater access to revenues from the former’s oil exploitation. While mergers could be justified by the fact that 89 subjects are an unwieldy amount to contain within one federation, it is concerning that many of the mergers have involved taking a degree of autonomy away from the country’s Indigenous populations. Moreover, Russia’s annexation of Georgian and Ukrainian territories, and subsequent inclusion of them as new subjects, runs counter to the logic of minimizing the number of subjects. Thus, in addition to the merging of territories, classic authoritarian and colonialist maneuvers are also being employed to marginalize Indigenous voices.

With the exception of the Arctic Hectare program, which is an overt attempt to physically occupy “unoccupied” lands, internal colonialism in the contemporary era appears to be playing out in a more bureaucratic form, as mergers. All the same, they represent a state-sponsored campaign to marginalize the power and agency of Indigenous peoples in the region. While it is too early to assess the situation, the fact

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[51] See footnote 44.

that the AH program seems to not be performing as well as intended, combined with the successful stoppage of the NAO-Arkhangelsk merger, these may be signs that there are limits to the state's authoritarian power and colonial practices in the Arctic.

6.4.2 Resource colonialism as a legacy

This form of colonialism has been evident across all three periods - the imperial, Soviet, and contemporary waves. During the Imperial era, resource colonialism largely took place above ground since furs were the coveted resource. During the Soviet and contemporary eras, the desired resources—hydrocarbons and minerals—have been below ground. Here, I will expand upon the latter two eras. In Article C, I mentioned that gold and diamonds were the primary resources around which colonialism in the Sakha heartland revolved. In the larger AZRF region, the valuable resources are nickel, copper, apatite, and hydrocarbons.

In the previous section, I described the patterns of transferring *priyezhiye* to the "external" and "unoccupied" areas of the Far North for the purpose of exploiting the region's natural resources. This resulted in massive amounts of large-scale environmental damage throughout the entire former USSR (Gare 2002; Henry and Douhovnikoff 2008; Josephson 2007; Peterson 1993). In Article B, I mentioned that the Soviets considered environmental degradation to apply only to the capitalist world, so "Soviet officials disregarded environmental considerations for individual development programs" (382). Here, I will describe the impact of all these developments on the environment. In the Arctic, specifically, negative externalities caused by Soviet resource colonization resulted in air, soil, water, and even nuclear contamination. On the Kola Peninsula, air pollution, particularly in the form of sulfur dioxide emissions from processing plants, resulted in "a complete destruction of all flora and fauna in the area surrounding the large enterprises" (Luzin, et al. 1994), especially in Monchegorsk and Nikel'. Farther east, Norilsk became notorious for its extremely poor air quality. Peterson (1993) provides an almost poetic description of its destructive effects—"On most days, a sickly yellow-grey pall of sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, phenol, and chlorine from the region's light metal smelters settles over the region. One can literally taste the sulfur in the air. [It] has poisoned local lakes and scorched the fragile tundra" (213). The Arctic's soil and

water became contaminated by heavy metals in and around Monchegorsk on Kola Peninsula (Kozlov and Barcan 2000). In the 1950s, Novaya Zemlya was designated as a nuclear test site (Lukin 2017, Serebryanny 1997). By the end of the Cold War, a total of 90 atmospheric tests and 41 underground tests had been conducted, including that of the Tsar Bomba, "the most powerful nuclear bomb ever exploded" (Kikkert & Lackenbauer 2020, 497). Nuclear waste was simply dumped into the Arctic Ocean. Nyman (2002) reports that, in total,

> "six nuclear reactors containing fuel, a nuclear icebreaker shielding assembly containing fuel, and 10 nuclear reactors without fuel [were discarded] into the fjords of Novaya Zemlya and the Kara Sea…from 1959-1992, the former Soviet Union and Russia disposed of over 17,000 containers of liquid and solid radioactive waste into the Barents and Kara Seas of the Arctic Ocean" (47).

The extent of the waste and environmental degradation only came to light after the collapse of the Soviet Union and its successor, the Russian Federation, inherited the environmental devastation.

As I wrote in Article B, the Russian Federation also inherited the Soviet mentality about the Arctic. The concept of *terra nullius* continues to be relevant in contemporary Russian discourse about the Arctic, especially in the extractive industry communities, where the prevailing narrative is that that the Russian North was built by the Soviets. Sentiments like this, combined with frequent references by government officials and scholars to the economic potential of its untapped wealth in natural resources, negate the fact that Far Northern lands have been—and continue to be—occupied by Indigenous people. When Indigenous people are factored in, they tend to be viewed as a nuisance. This is evident in Article B, where I noted that some current authority figures want to continue sedentarizing nomadic reindeer herders because "[s]ettling them in villages gives the state and industry the ability to claim the formerly pastoral lands and the possibility to boost their reputations by launching welfare programs for the former nomads" (383).

Article A analyzed how, despite current extraction projects being labeled as "sustainable development," the sum of their actions more can more accurately be

considered as standard brown development.[52] To be fair, the post-Soviet era has seen moves toward greater environmental and social accountability from the extractive industries, but they are far from meeting any baseline standards to be considered "sustainable." Highly disruptive environmental pollution and damage have remained a regular feature in the Arctic. In Article B, I stated that commonly reported pollution includes, "oil spills, leftover materials and rubbish during the construction period, chemical contamination of water, tailings of mining operations, air pollution from dust, and flaring from processing plants" (382). Oil spills have been persistent sources of pollution that continue to disrupt ecosystems over the long term. In 2020, the largest spill in Russia's history occurred. An oil tank reservoir owned by Nornickel (the successor company to the Soviet-era Norilsk Combine) collapsed and spilled more than 21,000 tons of diesel fuel on the Taymyr tundra. The company neglected to report the spill for two days and delayed notifying the public for one week. Only once President Putin expressed dissatisfaction was the incident taken seriously (Staalesen 2020). The federal government fined Nornickel for $2 billion for the disaster and Nornickel was made to conduct cleanup operations (Henry 2022). The company proclaimed operations to be completed in 2022, but an independent environmentalist exposed a contaminated area that had been overlooked, which Nornickel has promised to remediate over the next six years (Zhilin 2022).

Two themes regarding social accountability have also emerged from scholarship on the impact that natural resource exploitation in the AZRF has had on Indigenous peoples' lives. The first is that there exists an implementation gap with regard to Russian laws (Sulyandziga and Berezhkov 2017, Tulaeva et al. 2019) and the policies of hydrocarbon corporations operating in the Far North (Novikova 2016). Russian federal legislation is comprehensive in its protections for Indigenous peoples. Unfortunately, it serves predominantly as a "paper tiger"[53] since the will to enforce the legislation, particularly vis-à-vis economic development, is lacking. The second is

[52] Brown development, also called brown growth, designates an approach to economic growth that considers only the economic perspective. It is most often used in juxtaposition with the term green growth, which includes economic, social and environmental perspectives; these are the three pillars of sustainable development (Khodaparast et al. 2020).

[53] "Paper tiger" is a colloquialism referring to something that appears threatening but is actually weak.

that, although the global governance concepts of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and benefit-sharing have been introduced to Russian industries, they are not carried out in the "spirit" in which they were originally intended. CSR, broadly defined, is the concept that "businesses have a responsibility to contribute to economic outcomes that meet societal expectations" (Beal 2014, 2). As I noted in Article B, Soviet-era companies practiced a form of CSR, as they were "were responsible for all social matters of the population in the area of their operations" (386). Many of the habits learned from this experience were carried over into the contemporary era, especially forms of paternalism, "wherein state-controlled industries deliver charity and social benefits in a top-down manner onto a recipient community that has little to no opportunity to participate in the decision-making process" (387). "Benefit sharing" in Russia is a one type of CSR activity that demonstrates this paternalistic attitude. The concept "highlights the need to share the benefits arising from utilization of human and nonhuman resources with the parties who provide access to those resources" (Tysiachniouk et al. 2018, 559). In Article B, I noted that, "The original intent behind benefit-sharing agreements was to increase local participation in the decision-making processes for industrial development" (387). However, in Russia, local participation remains an alien concept and "sharing" has predominantly come in the form of *ex post facto* compensation for damages to the land, which, as I observed in Article B, diverts the focus from preventing possible damages.

As noted in Article A, a feature of Putin's re-centralization of power has been to ensure that the majority of taxes from the extractive industries go to the federal budget so that the country's subjects (administrative units) remain financially dependent on the center (Kinossian 2017). This was a reaction to attempts in the 1990s at greater fiscal—and political—autonomy from some of the regions that were well-endowed with natural resources. These attempts were interpreted as moves toward secession. Although this was the case in some republics, like Chechnya, republics like Sakha (Yakutia), which sought only greater autonomy but did not wish

to secede, were branded with the label.[54] Compounding the regional- and municipal-level fiscal constraints in the AZRF is that fact that the large extractive industries, like Gazprom, Rosneft, Lukoil, and Norilsk Nickel are headquartered, and pay their taxes, in the major federal cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg (Gritsenko and Efimova 2020). One of the negative effects of the majority of tax revenue flowing to the center is that it leaves local markets underdeveloped. This results in a sizeable portion of people's income being spent outside of the Arctic, which further exacerbates the underdevelopment of local economies (see also Koshkin 2020). Overall, this centralized economic development structure marginalizes the people and exploits revenues in areas like the Russian Arctic. This type of economic dependency is an important practice of security for a metropole, as people and places that are dependent on the center for funds and supplies are less likely to be disruptive or make attempts for greater autonomy.

With the establishment of the AZRF as a special economic zone where the priority is on economic development at the expense of the environmental and social pillars of sustainable development, it is logical to expect continued negative effects on the environment and continued marginalization of Indigenous communities.

6.5 Summary

At the beginning, I stated that I see three types of colonialism present Russian Arctic, which are connected over the *long durée*: imperialist, internal, and resource. While the emphasis has been on the modern era, here defined as the imperial era to the present (1689-2023), the roots of Russian colonization of the Eurasian Far North extend back to the pre-modern era, with the claiming of the European northeast for Novgorod as early as 1137 and the Asian north during the seventeenth century. Although the physical colonization of territory was low intensity during the pre-imperial and imperial eras (in keeping with the understanding of continental

[54] This was a subject of lively debate in the 1990s and 2000s. Specifically in the case of the Rebpublic of Sakha (Yakutia)—which is the only republic of relevance to this dissertation--Western scholars seem to agree that the republic was did not want to secede the Russian Federation. Those interested in the topic are encouraged to review the works of Argounova-Low 2004; Balzer and Vinokurova 1996; Cruikshank and Argounova 2000; Giuliano 2006; Hicks 2011; and Khazanov 1995.

colonialism), Russians still settled in the region, establishing outposts and cities such as Arkhangelsk and Murmansk. Indigenous peoples were subjugated to the Russian tsar and the made to pay tribute (a practice which lasted until the fall of the Empire). Over the centuries, Indigenous peoples were increasingly subjected to ethnocultural colonialist policies of Russification, particularly conversion to Orthodoxy, culminating in the 1822 Speranskiy Statute that legally categorized ethnic Russians as superior and Indigenous groups as inferior. Although colonialism and security remained largely exclusive categories throughout these eras, the state still periodically took measures to assert its sovereignty over the territory, when it felt threatened by the actions of other European countries.

State-based colonialist practices continued under the Soviet regime and intensified drastically as leaders sought to transform both the population and landscape through collectivization and industrialization. During this era, colonialism was practiced internally; the USSR possessed legal jurisdiction over the territory but saw the space as "unoccupied" nature and therefore in need of Soviet "mastery" to exploit resources for the country's goals. Multiple new towns (monotowns) were established throughout the Arctic to extract these resources and millions of *priyezhiye* relocated from all corners of the country to the Arctic for this purpose, thereby creating a severe demographic disparity between *priyezhiye* and Indigenous inhabitants. Indigenous citizens were subjected to colonialist practices such as sedentarization and Russification via education. Internal colonialism was intimately linked with resource colonialism. The Soviet central leadership controlled all territory and industries, allowing all the materiel and revenue to be accumulated in the center (Moscow) and redistributed according to Moscow's logic. Due to Soviet ideology, no attention was paid to the potential negative environmental externalities of exploitation of natural resources, which nevertheless still occurred and caused massive destruction of the local environments. It was also during this period that the center of power in Moscow realized the benefit to state security that colonization could provide and, as argued above, the mindset shifted from seeing security and colonialism as two separate policy sectors into one of "colonialism as security."

When the Soviet Union collapsed, its successor, the Russian Federation continued Soviet-style practices of internal and resource colonialism, now as practices of "colonialism as security." Despite the costs of subsidizing large Arctic urban populations, Moscow still perceives the need to sustain large populations in the macro-region and has initiated programs such as the "Hectare in the Arctic" and the "Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation" in attempts to either get *priyezhiye* to stay, or to encourage a new wave of *priyezhiye* to relocate and homestead in the Far North.

One of the ways in which Indigenous people are still being rendered inferior to the center is through the merger of their legally designated homelands (in the form of autonomous okrugs) with "poorer Russian" regions, a maneuver that dilutes their demographic parity, voting power, and control over okrug-level revenue. The state still controls the major extractive industries, but now it is as a shareholder, and the majority of tax revenues still go to the center, thanks to Putin's intentional recentralization of power. Despite integrating into the global economy and adopting global governance mechanisms such as corporate social responsibility (at least on paper), the negative environmental and social effects are still occurring in Arctic communities, which is both a product and symptom of underdevelopment. All of these patterns over time support my conclusion that colonialism is the appropriate term for the nature of development in the Russian Arctic.

7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I will connect the summary article and each of the four articles to the research project's questions and overall objective, which was to understand why the government wanted to (re)colonize the Arctic region of Russia. I will conclude with some contemplation about the current research climate on this topic and future possible opportunities.

The first research question is *Why is Moscow attempting to (re)colonize its Arctic region*? The answer, based on my investigations, is three-fold. First, there is a need for revenue generation. Moscow has chosen to prioritize extractive industry development to fulfill this need. This was addressed in Articles A and B, and expanded upon in Section 6.4.2. Second, there is a perceived need to secure this economic development through military means (Article D). Third, there is a desire for status and the security that comes from "developing" the Arctic as a resource base (Article A and D). In Article D, I discussed the internal and external threat perceptions that motivate the "Hectare in the Arctic" campaign. The external threat perceptions came from the perennial fear of NATO military domination in the pan-Arctic region as well as China interest in Russia's Arctic region. The Russian Arctic is currently considered as "the key to the country's future wealth, status, and prosperity" (2) and Moscow is acutely sensitive to and perceived challenges its sovereignty and security in the region. The internal threat perceptions derive from the region's demographic decline because of post-Soviet outmigration. As was discussed in Article A, Moscow's logic is that more bodies on the ground provide a sense of security and control over the territory, making it less vulnerable to penetration by external forces. At present, the state's attempts at internal (re)colonization of its Arctic does not seem to be as effective in practice as it did on paper. To date, attempts to get people to either stay in, or relocate to, the Far North have been, by and large, unsuccessful, as demonstrated by the continued demographic decline and lukewarm reception to initiatives such as the Arctic Hectare program (Article D). However, as noted in Article D, the program has only recently begun. This can also be said about the overall investment in the AZRF. The policy is valid until 2035, which is still over a decade away.

The second research question is *How can we understand the relationship between the Russian state and its Arctic regions and residents*? The answer to this question, simply put, is that it is a colonial relationship. The Russian state, with its capital in Moscow (and historically, St. Petersburg), serves as the metropole, a.k.a., the center of power. The far flung “islands” of Arctic settlements are the colonies. Each of the articles addressed this relationship to varying degrees. Article A explained how the values that underscore this colonial relationship have been packaged and transmitted through psychocultural narratives. Articles B and C focus on the historical aspects of the colonial relationship, particularly as it affected the Indigenous peoples in the Russian Arctic, which was predominantly negative. Article D illustrates how this relationship in the contemporary context, with an emphasis on internal colonization via homesteading. This colonial relationship was also thickly explained in Chapter 6 of this summary article, with the specification of which types of colonialism were present during different periods of time. During the imperial era, the relationship was based on continental imperialist colonialism as well as resource colonialism. During the Soviet and contemporary eras, it has based on internal colonialism and resource colonialism. However, in the contemporary context, while resource colonialism remains popular (although disguised as “sustainable development”), there seems to be less desire by the population at large for internal colonialism.

The third research question is *What are the foundations of this relationship and how entrenched are they*? Article C traces the relationship as it evolved in the specific context of the Sakha heartland. Article D provided evidence of the level of this relationship’s entrenchment as Moscow seems to be reverting to a familiar historical path to serve its own state-centered purposes. Article C traces the relationship as it evolved in the specific context of the Sakha heartland. Article A discussed how entrenched the logics and practices of this relationship are, by illuminating the structure upon which this relationship is built, which is Russia’s political culture. Much of this summary article has been devoted to highlighting some of the key moments that serve as the foundations of this historically rooted relationship, the centerpiece being Russia’s historical path to development via authoritarian state formations, which have been reinforced over time through Russia’s political culture.

When I began this PhD project in 2018, I was often met with polite boredom by those with whom I shared the overview of my project. Ever since Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, however, people now seem interested in hearing about Russian colonization of its Arctic. Since the course of previous events cannot be undone, I have chosen to harness this recent interest in my topic and I hope that this dissertation can contribute to the beginning of a conversation about the ongoing role that colonialism and colonization have played and continue to play in the world. It might seem self-evident that a conversation of this nature would naturally attract historians (and most likely spark many controversial conversations amongst historians of Russia), but it is also relevant to political scientists and security scholars especially those who consider colonialism as a thing of the past. When it is discussed at all, it is framed in terms of colonial "legacies" – leftover symptoms of an obsolete era. One of the main goals of this dissertation was to share the knowledge that colonial practices are a *contemporary* issue with far-reaching consequences. I also hope that the material in this dissertation sparks conversation amongst scholars of Arctic politics, where much research has been conducted on indigenous peoples' struggles for self-determination and land rights. For the most part, Russia is either treated separately from all other circumpolar countries or not addressed at all, but it deserves to be included in the discussion.

There is still a need for much more research on this topic, especially from inside of Russia. It is dismaying that the current climate in Russia is hostile toward inquisitiveness from Russian and international researchers alike about the events and concepts explored within this dissertation. Studying Russian domestic politics is not just about authoritarianism, but also adherence to policies which could and should be termed as colonialism. Although all research is always partial and situated, theorizing and analyzing colonialism and political culture about Russia from *inside* Russia would certainly enable more nuanced understandings about each concept individually and all of them together. No doubt Communist-era scholars had the same lamentation as I am expressing here…and their opportunity structures changed massively in the 1990s. If I can be allowed one more hope, it is that the current closed and paranoid system in Russia will change again soon.

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Appendix

Author Contribution Statement for Article A

Required enclosure when requesting that a thesis be considered for a doctoral degree

Declaration describing the independent research contribution of the candidate

In addition to the thesis, there should for each article constituting the thesis be enclosed a declaration describing the independent research contribution of the candidate (problem formulation, method, data collection, analysis, interpretation, writing etc.).

For each article the declaration should be filled in and signed by the candidate, then circulated to the other co-authors for signatures.

Article no:

Authors: Kara K. Hodgson and Gunhild Hoogensen Gjørv

Title: "Colonialism as Security": Using a comprehensive security analysis to understand colonialist practices of security in the Russian Arctic

The independent contribution of the candidate:

The candidate (Kara K. Hodgson) contributed the majority of effort to the article and is considered lead author. The division of labour can be estimated as 70% for Kara K. Hodgson, and 30% for Gunhild Hoogensen Gjørv. Kara K. Hodgson contributed the following to this article:

- Introduction to concepts of political culture, internal colonialism, and resource colonialism, as well as "Russia as a unique civilization and Great Power" narrative and the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation sections
- collecting and analyzing the Russian empirical data
- analyzing the issue with the comprehensive security framework
- editing and formatting the article

.... Signature of the candidate Name (bold letters): **Kara K. Hodgson**	.... Signature of co-author 1 Name (bold letters): **Gunhild Hoogensen Gjørv**
Any Comments:	

Author Contribution Statement for Article B

Required enclosure when requesting that a thesis be considered for a doctoral degree

Declaration describing the independent research contribution of the candidate

In addition to the thesis, there should for each article constituting the thesis be enclosed a declaration describing the independent research contribution of the candidate (problem formulation, method, data collection, analysis, interpretation, writing etc.).

For each article the declaration should be filled in and signed by the candidate, then circulated to the other co-authors for signatures.

Article no:

Authors: Florian Stammler, Aytalina Ivanova, and Kara K. Hodgson

Title: Human Security, Extractive Industries and Indigenous Communities in the Russian North

---

The candidate (Kara K. Hodgson) contributed the following to this article:

- Conceptual development of human security in the context of contributions from Stammler's and Ivanova's fieldwork;
- analyze and categorize the patterns evident in the fieldwork descriptions, designing four (4) themes of insecurity faced by Russian indigenous groups, along with three (3) strategies for creating everyday security;
- editing and formatting of the article.

In all Kara K. Hodgson's contribution amounted to a minimum of 50% of the overall work done for the article.

.... Signature of the candidate Name (bold letters): **Kara K. Hodgson**	.... Signature of co-author 1 Name (bold letters): **Florian Stammler**
Any Comments:	.... Signature of co-author 2 Name (bold letters): **Aytalina Ivanova**

Author Contribution Statement for Article D

Required enclosure when requesting that a thesis be considered for a doctoral degree

Declaration describing the independent research contribution of the candidate

In addition to the thesis, there should for each article constituting the thesis be enclosed a declaration describing the independent research contribution of the candidate (problem formulation, method, data collection, analysis, interpretation, writing etc.).

For each article the declaration should be filled in and signed by the candidate, then circulated to the other co-authors for signatures.

Article no:

Authors: Kara K. Hodgson and Marc Lanteigne

Title: Homesteading in the Arctic: The Logic Behind, and Prospects for, Russia's "Hectare in the Arctic" Program

---

The independent contribution of the candidate:

The candidate (Kara K. Hodgson) contributed the following to this article:

- collecting and analyzing the Russian news sources that were discussed the project
- framing and analyzing the issue through the perspective of Foucault's "Security, Territory, Population" analytical triad
- editing and formatting the article

……………………………… Signature of the candidate Name (bold letters): **Kara K. Hodgson**	……………………………… Signature of co-author 1 Name (bold letters): **Marc Lanteigne**
Any Comments:	

"Colonialism as Security": Using a comprehensive security analysis to understand colonialist practices of security in the Russian Arctic

Submitted to *Arctic Review on Law and Politics*

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Abstract: This article is an exercise of conceptualization involving the concepts of political culture, security, and colonialism. By creating a comprehensive security analytical framework, we investigate whether this combination makes security analyses more reflective of the complex reality of a given context. We test this new conceptualization on the case of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation. We interpret political culture through psychocultural narratives—in this case, that of "Russia as a unique civilization and Great Power." The security actors under examination are the Russian state, extractive industries, and Arctic residents. The security sectors we consider are state/political, economic, environmental, and human. The security practice we explore is that of colonialism, which we see as occurring in the Russian Arctic. Thus, we make the case that particular psychocultural narratives enable colonialism, not just for economic reasons, but also for security reasons. We call this practice "colonialism as security."

Keywords: comprehensive security, political culture, colonialism, Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation

With global political and scholarly attention focused upon Russian revanchism and its actions with respect to Ukraine, less attention is being paid to the roots of Russia's actions, including relevant practices of security within Russia itself. Sarotte noted, in her analysis of the end of the Cold War, that political actors at that time already predicted that the cooperative Russia emerging from the ashes of the Soviet Union would last no more than a couple of generations.[1] In his account of the fall of the Soviet Union, Zubok identified moments in Russian history, reflective of its political culture, that played the ultimate role in the USSR's downfall.[2] Such reflections suggest that internal processes in Russia, over time, have been instrumental to the ways in which security has been understood and operationalized. While Russia makes claims on Ukraine in the name of security, it is useful to ask: is this action an exception?

We argue that Russia's actions reflect longer history of the internal processes in Russian political culture that permeate and reinforce similar claims to security, observing a consistency between Moscow's actions both beyond its borders (i.e., Ukraine) and within its

borders. However, the latter does not receive as much attention as the former. This article provides a case study of the Russian state's relationship with its Arctic,[3] a relationship that we argue can and should be characterized as colonial. Why single out the Arctic? First, this region, like Ukraine, has been claimed to play a central role in Russia's self-image, economy, and security.[4] Second, the region is perceived as largely "unoccupied"—an empty frozen frontier with an abundance of natural resources that, if extracted, could provide economic gain and macroeconomic security. Third, there are the unreconciled legacy effects at play within Russian society of the Soviet Union as both a military superpower and as a "conqueror" of the north.

We believe that Russia's political culture plays an essential role in structuring the state's perceptions about its security, so we seek to explore the explanatory possibilities that the political culture concept can offer to security analyses. We see Moscow's actions in the Russian Far North as part of a broader narrative so deeply rooted, it is part of its political culture. Therefore, we wish to investigate these reflections further, to see both how practices of colonialism and patterns of (in)security have materialized within the Russian state. Using an interpretive approach to political culture, we seek to show, specifically, how psychocultural narratives transmit values that, in turn, inform security practices within its borders. The Russian state has been enabled by a political culture that embodies authoritarianism, imperialism, and colonialism. It reinforces these themes through the strategic use of psychocultural narratives that have been dispersed through, and further perpetuated by, the general population, over time, about its own history and place in the world. We focus on one specific psychocultural narrative, that of "Russia as a unique civilization and a Great Power," and how its deployment has helped to perpetuate a new generation of internal and resource colonialism practices within Russia. We refer to this practice as "colonialism as security." We use one specific geographic area of Russia—its Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation (AZRF)—as our case to illustrate three things. First, a focus on the AZRF highlights a less well-known example of "colonialism as security" practices that have been conducted over time by the various Russian state formations. The "unique civilization and Great Power" narrative informs Moscow's decisions to exploit its AZRF region to maximize profits and revenue from natural resource extraction *and* to project superiority in the circumpolar Arctic. Second, this case illustrates how practices of colonialism have fostered, and been reinforced by, a political culture that affects the actors

in this security constellation—the state, industrial sectors, and the general population.[5] Finally, the AZRF case shows the negative impacts of this narrative and practice through environmental destruction and the repression of Indigenous peoples.

In this article we use a comprehensive security framework that interrogates the interactions between different security actors and sectors, informed by the values embedded in a political culture structure. We show how different constellations of actors and sectors contribute to practices that serve Russian security, focusing on the practice of colonialism in the AZRF. We introduce the concept of political culture to security analyses, arguing that political culture provides the structural linkage between state and individual through the transmission of the psychocultural narratives that inform security. In our case, we focus on the psychocultural narrative of "Russia as a unique civilization and a Great power." We thus engage in an "exercise of conceptualization"[6] by exploring the ways in which political culture can assist us with analyzing certain security practices that have implications for the relationship between individuals and the states in which they live. We further test our ideas by providing a unique analysis of security practices within Russia. Through a comprehensive security analysis, we can trace trajectories of security perceptions from state to individual, as well as between various state formations over time, that are essential to understanding the interactions of power relations between security perceptions in a given context. We introduce colonialism as a security practice within a state that, through political culture, reinforces psychocultural security narratives from the state to the individual.

This article proceeds as follows: first we introduce the comprehensive security analysis framework, followed by an explanation of the concepts of political culture and colonialism as we intend to apply them. Then we explain the roles that political culture, understood as a security structure, and colonialism, as a security practice, play in understanding security perceptions in Russia. We then argue that the practice of colonialism has long been instrumental to state perceptions of security but has required a certain level of "buy in" within society to ensure the efficacy of colonialist practices as contributing to the overall security of the state. Thereafter we present the case of state-dominated practices of colonialism within the AZRF and analyze them as practices of "colonialism as security" that are dependent upon synergies with the Russian citizenry. We conclude that these synergies of security, identified through a comprehensive security analysis, are instrumental to

illuminating the ways in which Russia—inwardly and outwardly—projects its security perceptions, as well as its practices towards achieving security predictability.

Comprehensive security analysis

A comprehensive security analysis takes into account the multiple sectors and levels in/through which multiple actors seek security in a given context. It also takes into consideration the structures that frames these interactions. A comprehensive security analysis thus acknowledges that state-based security perceptions rarely emerge in a vacuum and instead influence, and are influenced by, other security actors and sectors. Ideally, the security perspectives across actors and sectors would coalesce and work in concert towards a broader, holistic approach to security.[7] A comprehensive security analysis demonstrates however that there are often conflicts or trade-offs that complicate our understanding of security in a given context.

We approach the concept of security with the recognition that security means *different things* to *different people* in *different situations*.[8] By "different things" we mean *values,*[9] which are reflected by *sectors* of security, i.e., state and/or political, military, environmental, energy, cyber and information, human, and individual sectors. Different sectors reflect the different values as the priority that is to be secured. "Different people" refers to different *actors;* multiple players at multiple levels are involved in defining and operationalizing security, such as the state and military, local communities, business, non-governmental organizations, etc. Recognizing the multiplicity of actors exposes which actor(s) decide(s) the priorities as well as who is included and excluded in decision-making processes. Lastly the "different situations" refers to *contexts* - where the context in which a security practice takes place has much to say about which actors and sectors are the most relevant, and which have the power to decide what security means in a given situation. From this, we conclude that security needs to be analyzed from a multi-actor and multi-sector perspective,[10] which allows us to investigate the political processes of ensuring security by asking "how, for whom, and by whom security is produced, exposing the values and contexts behind the practices of security."[11]

Ideally, security perceptions between actors and levels would be in sync, where all relevant actors share a common sense of which value(s) must be secured. In reality, there

are often disconnects, exclusions and trade-offs. A "clash" of security perceptions can occur between or within states. More traditional approaches to security have prioritized the former (interstate conflict) but the latter is equally important. The internal stability of a state says a lot about its capacity to withstand external threats from, for example, the destabilizing efforts of hybrid threats that attack the civilian or domestic domain.[12] By examining different levels of security perspectives, we see that individuals, societies, and states are continuously interacting in the pursuit of securing of their values. Because different security perceptions do not always align, these interactions have the potential to increase security for some, while potentially decreasing security for others. For example, state security can be at odds with human security—a state's decision to go to war at the expense of the lives of individual human beings, or engaging in economic extractive activities that can harm the environment or people's health, or overriding the security perceptions and interests of minorities or Indigenous peoples.[13] At the same time, individuals may fully support war to protect the state even if it means sacrificing lives; they may support extractive industries because it provides economic and energy security for both themselves as well as the state; or they may perceive the security of the dominant group (settler or majority populations) as requiring the exclusion of a minority group or Indigenous peoples. We examine how both state and non-state actors contest, comply with, avoid, or complement the state security agenda through economic, environmental and human security sectors.

By combining the perspectives, needs, and wants of multiple actors and multiple sectors, we gain more information and clarity about a given security context and uncover the areas where perceptions and values either coalesce into a cooperative design, or conflict and compete. While highlighting these different perspectives, it is important to remember that *recognition* of the interactions between different security perspectives does not imply the ability to *reconcile* them. Rather, it illustrates the difficulty and contestation inherent in attempts to reconcile differing security needs and wants, and who has the power to dominate the security narrative.

Political culture as a tool for security analysis

We argue that political culture plays an important role in developing and transferring

security narratives between people and the state. *Political culture* is an application of the broader concept of culture to the specific setting of the political realm. In the broadest possible understanding, it is concerned with the culture of politics in different societies. Often, the term political culture is associated with one particular approach to it—that which was popularized by Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba in the mid-twentieth century through their survey-based project to understand what makes democracies flourish.[14] However, there are multiple approaches to studying political culture and, in this article, we use an interpretivist approach.[15] Researchers utilizing the interpretive approach understand political cultures as historically rooted. However, they are not fixed or predetermined; they are dynamic social and collective phenomena that usually evolve over generations. The goal, then, is to find meaning and understanding in different political cultures. Thus, interpretivist researchers focus on the intersubjective aspects of meaning-making[16] or moral discourse[17] that inform the relationship between a state and its citizens. To this end, narratives serve as an intersubjective medium for transferring those political culture values that legitimize practices between citizens and their political systems.

Political culture is an important component of a comprehensive security analysis because it helps us understand which values are informing or influencing security perceptions from the human to societal to state level. In democratic states, values are regularly contested and debated. The ability to debate over a society's values is, in itself, a political culture value for democratic countries. In authoritarian states, values are often transmitted in a top-down manner by the leaders to the populace at large. One of the ways values are transmitted is through narratives. However even authoritarian states require some sort of «buy-in» from the people; this involves a process where the people accept and, ideally, internalize the values that the state is transmitting to them. Although political culture research has most commonly been conducted on and in democratic countries, it is just as relevant for authoritarian contexts. Scholar of authoritarianism, Jos D. Meloen, found that authoritarian political cultures create conditions that are favorable for authoritarian state structures and institutions.[18] In particular, a traditional family structure and hierarchical power relations were key to fostering an authoritarian political culture. Works

on authoritarian political cultures in East[19] and Southeast Asia[20] have raised interesting questions pertaining to universalized assumptions that citizens want democracy. Zhang notes that "a political system is most stable, functional, and effective when its political structure and political culture are congruent with each other."[21] An authoritarian political culture operates on different assumptions but is as equally relevant as the democratic counterpart.

One way to gain insight into authoritarian political cultures is to focus on state-driven narratives, as it is via narratives that political elites steer the culture of politics and, more broadly, society's relationship with its political system and processes. One could argue that this amounts to nothing more than state propaganda, but we argue that propaganda is revelatory in this regard, as it highlights deeply rooted values in a country's political culture that political elites seek to either change or reinforce. One can identify these deeply rooted values by analyzing the narratives that elites call upon in times of instability or uncertainty.[22] Combining insights from Patterson and Monroe,[23] Ross,[24] and Hønneland,[25] we understand a narrative as a story that constructs meaning for a subjective group's reality. For large groups such as a state's citizenry, a narrative can become psychocultural, involving "interpretations of the world which are widely shared among people in a culture, and which are transmitted through psychological processes."[26] A psychocultural narrative is one of the ways in which deeply ingrained assumptions about political reality are packaged. It is *communal* and *historical* insofar as it shapes a sequence of events (that may or may not be otherwise connected) into a coherent discourse to explain a group's history. It is *normative* insofar as the stories told have heroes, villains, and a moral to be learned. Finally, it is *emotionally powerful* due to its ability to create "we"-group feelings. Ross advises that the level of truth in narratives is less important than the feelings they evoke.[27] Especially during times of insecurity, stress, and anxiety, narratives help to comfort people and reassert a feeling of control. Thus, through their invocation of past collective triumphs over adversity, their framing of power, and their notions of inclusion (heroes) and exclusion (villains), psychocultural narratives can reinforce culturally based expectations about political leadership and support. In this way, they can become tools for states to mobilize political

support and action for contemporary needs through citizens' "buy in" into the state's perceptions of security. Such reinforcement loops demonstrate the importance of the role of society and individuals as part of the support apparatus of an authoritarian political system.

Below, we examine one particular state-driven psychocultural narrative—that of Russia as unique civilization and a Great Power.[28] In this case, the state-driven narrative is also a psychocultural narrative since it contains notions about Russian society and political culture that have persisted through the imperial and Soviet eras of Russia's history. This particular narrative serves to reinforce authoritarian traditions in Russian political culture (i.e., strict hierarchical power relations, as exemplified in Vladimir Putin's "vertical of power"[29]). Part of this narrative focuses on the idea of Russia's "1000-year history," the continuity of which has persisted despite ruptures in its political systems, as a result of the evolution of its political culture.

Russia as a unique civilization and a Great Power

The narrative that "Russia is a unique civilization and a Great Power" is a statement of identity, the main facet of which is that Russia belongs in the world order not just as a country but as a civilization. Turoma and Mjør consider this statement to be "a conceptual foundation for the recreation of a post-Soviet national, imperial, and geopolitical identity."[30] This dual-natured narrative serves both as a psychocultural narrative for the Russian citizenry and as a state-driven security narrative for the state. Its components are historically rooted. The "unique civilization" narrative originated in nineteenth-century debates among Russian intellectuals about whether Russia belonged to European civilization or whether it constituted a distinctly Eurasian one.[31] The "great power" narrative refers to Russia's recent Soviet history. The loss of superpower status after the collapse of the Soviet Union was a source of collective humiliation for the new Russian Federation.[32] When Vladimir Putin became president, he announced his goal to resurrect Russia's great power status—in his words, "to return Russia to its place among the prosperous, developed, strong and respected nations."[33]

The Russian Federation's most recent foreign policy document[34] provides valuable

descriptions of the components of this narrative. What makes Russia a "unique civilization" is depicted in point 4 as:

> "More than a thousand years of independent statehood, the cultural heritage of the preceding era, deep historical ties with the traditional European culture and other Eurasian cultures, and the ability to ensure harmonious coexistence of different peoples…on one common territory, which has been developed over many centuries, determine Russia's special position as a unique country-civilization…"

Point 5 of the foreign policy document offers insight into why Russia should be considered a "Great Power":

> "Russia's place in the world is determined by its significant resources in all areas of living, its status of a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council…one of the two largest nuclear powers, and the successor (continuing legal personality) of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Russia, taking into account its decisive contribution to the victory in World War II and its active role in shaping the contemporary system of international relations and eliminating the global system of colonialism, is one of the sovereign centres of global development performing a historically unique mission aimed at maintaining global balance of power and building a multipolar international system…"

The thread that connects these two components is Russia's "1000-year history." This refers to the conventional historical narrative that the Russian state began in Kievan Rus' in the ninth century, then migrated eastward and northward, with the Russian princes slowly consolidating power and gaining territory until, by the seventeenth century, it had become a modern empire. There was a revolution in 1917 that resulted in the Soviet Union, which lasted until 1991[35] and is now called the Russian Federation. Invoking a millennium of history connects the current Russian Federation to the historical glories of its preceding state formations, including the fourteenth century overthrow of the Mongol yoke, the 1612 defeat of the Polish intervention, the Russian Empire's nineteenth-century triumph over Napoleon and the twentieth-century defeat of Nazi Germany. Thus, today's Moscow can symbolically inherit the glories of its "great power" predecessors. A main feature (or political culture value) of what makes Russian civilization unique is its perceived need of a strong state/leader. Moulioukova and Kanet note the pattern of "strong state/leader" persistence:

> "In pre-revolutionary times, the strong state manifested itself in Russia through an autocratic monarchy. In Soviet times, it was replaced by an equally

strong Single Party state with a strong monopoly of power. In contemporary Russia, this notion has been constructed into a unique definition of sovereign democracy…”.[36]

The repetition of such a narrative (the need for a strong state/leader) over generations serves to naturalize an orientation toward authoritarianism that was, in reality, socially constructed, to the point where, "Russians perceive a strong leader as an important element of great power status."[37]

Since 2012, Putin's regime has taken a conservative turn and the Kremlin-approved values of "patriotism, morality and national culture"[38] have been transmitted throughout Russian society. Although worded differently, this trifecta of values harkens back to the imperial-era doctrine of "Orthodoxy, autocracy, nationality,"[39] thus connecting contemporary values with historically rooted ones. Patriotism is couched in romantic notions of devotion to Russia and a willingness to defend it, but Laruelle claims that it actually means that "citizens are invited to work at dealing with the problems of their country without…criticising the functioning of the state structure."[40] Morality involves respecting "traditional" (Orthodox) values such as heteronormative and pro-natal family structures and "respect for the elderly and *the hierarchy* …".[41] National culture has involved the rewriting of history texts to glorify the heroic parts of Russia's past and downplay its darker moments, as well as increasing the role of the Russian Orthodox church in public life. Laruelle considers this value as "self-glorification of an a-temporal and Russian culture superior to that of Western Europe."[42]

In sum, "Russia is a unique civilization and a Great Power" contains all the elements of a psychocultural narrative. It is communal—it applies to all Russian citizens. It is historical—it extends back a millennium in time. It is normative—Russians are "heroes" and foreigners who try to conquer Russia are the "villains," and its moral is that Russia requires a strong leader who can ensure the county's Great Power status. It is emotionally powerful—it reminds Russian citizens of reasons to be proud of their country's history; it can provide comfort to those who experienced anxiety as a result of the post-Soviet transition. Indeed, it has proved effective with the population. Hale and Laruelle's survey research found that 92% of Russian respondents believe that Russia is, not just a country, but a civilization; the largest portion (35%) believed that Russia is its own unique civilization, different from either European or Asian civilizations (subjectively defined).[43]

However, the perpetuation of this narrative, particularly with its statements about the "harmonious coexistence of different peoples" and Russia's active role in "eliminating the global system of colonialism" comes at the expense of honest conversation about the role colonialism has played during the "millennium" of Russian history.

Colonialism as a practice of security

One of the most common practices of security is the use of military might to defend the state.[44] With the narrowing of the security concept as "national" security in the 1940s,[45] military might has often been considered the sole practice of security. Over time however it has been increasingly clear that security has depended upon a wide range of practices, i.e., macro and microeconomic measures, environmental protection measures, and cybersecurity enhancement measures. Many of these practices are enacted by different actors, both at the state and non-state levels. Colonialism is one of those practices of security which, to date, has been under-theorized as such. In this case, it serves a role in creating and reinforcing state-based security through a combination of psychocultural narratives and hierarchically designed structural inequalities that suppress dissent and create economic dependencies.

The psychocultural narrative of "Russia as a unique civilization and a Great Power," has been invoked to justify both imperialist ambitions and practices of colonialism. The concepts of imperialism and colonialism are often conflated, but they are not synonymous. They are separate state-based policies that often occur together. Imperialism provides the structure and ideological foundation for control of "external"[46] lands, looking outward from the center. Colonialism involves the *in-situ* practice of dominating and controlling "external" lands and people, on behalf of the center.[47] Our focus is on colonialism, and, in our case, the center is in Moscow and the "external" land being colonized is the Russian Arctic.

Colonialism comes in a variety of different forms and is called by even more names. Here, we focus on two overlapping forms of colonialism: internal colonialism and resource colonialism. The term *internal colonialism* here means the "colonization of 'unoccupied' lands within [a state's] own national territory."[48] This practice has often been neutralized and normalized as "development" to disguise resulting inequalities between peoples or between people and the state.[49] *Resource colonialism* is an often invoked but seldom defined term to connote the practice of establishing one or more extractive operations in a

location peripheral to a center of power, with two resulting effects. The first is that it expands state power and control over both the location and the extractive operation(s).[50] The second is that the "symbolic and material benefits continu[e] to flow to already empowered (and usually distant) hands and local peoples continu[e] to bear disproportionate environmental and social burdens."[51] It, too, is often called "development." These neutralizing patterns in language, in narratives, are essential for "buy in." Colonial practices justify expansionist designs by the state and require buy-in from a critical mass of the population to have the most effect. Narratives play an essential role in garnering "buy in"—think of nineteenth-century narratives about "manifest destiny" and the "civilizing mission." Since, in authoritarian states, dissent is suppressed, it is difficult to assess "buy in" based on explicit speech acts that would articulate security perspective or concerns. However, because actions speak louder than words, one way of determining "buy in" is through the number of people who uproot and colonize "external" spaces, and how inequalities increase for those who have been colonized. We want to explore the role of colonialism because it can be exercised within the state to strengthen a state's perception of control over a territory. We call this practice "colonialism as security."

Below, we will outline the ways in which internal and resource colonialism have been occurring in Russia's AZRF to bolster assertions of sovereignty and state security. "Russia as a unique civilization and a Great Power" can illustrate how the state practices colonialism as a mechanism of security and also how it disguises it as "sustainable development" in order to get "buy in" from the population.

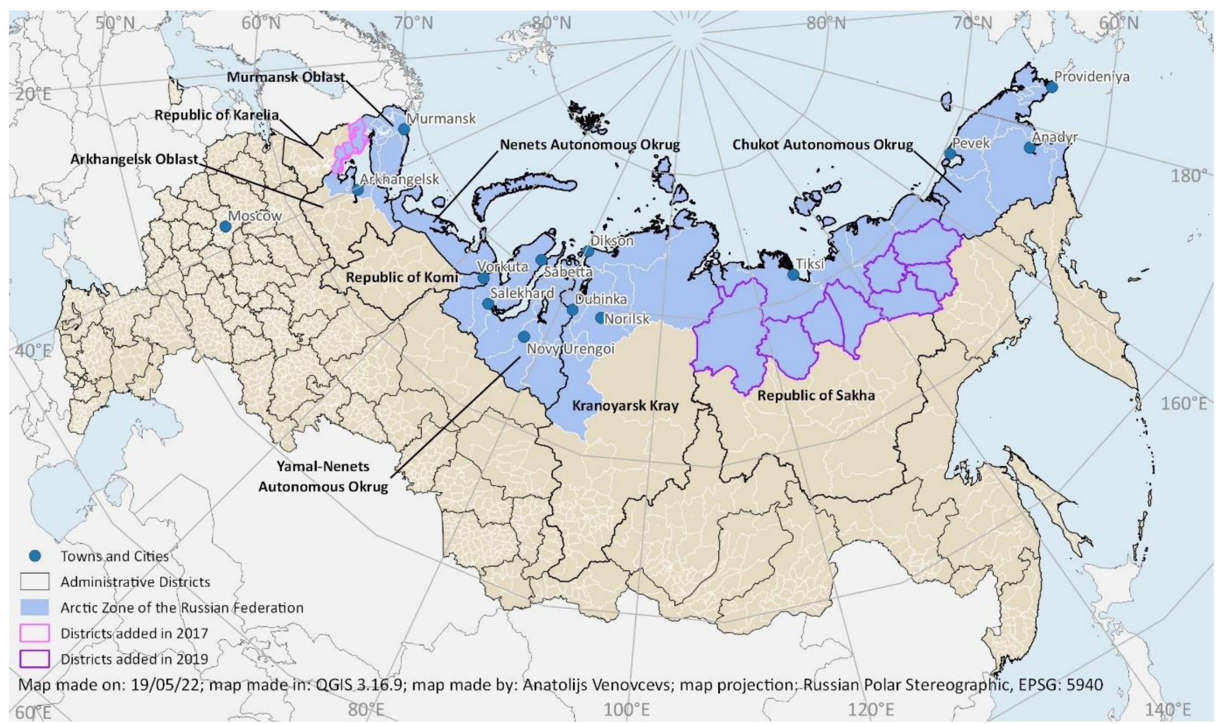
The Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation

The Arctic became a focal area at the beginning of the Soviet era. The narrative during the 1930s was *osvoyeniye severa,* or "mastery of the north," because the mentality was that the Arctic needed to be "conquered" and "mastered" so its resources could be harnessed to build socialism.[52] Stalinist-era industrialization policies created many single-industry towns in the macro-region, centered around the extraction and processing of a single natural resource. By the end of the Soviet era, millions of people from across the entire Soviet Union had colonized the area that is now called the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation (AZRF). After the collapse of the Soviet Union, many of the industries in these

Arctic monotowns stopped production. Unemployment, combined with halted federal subsidies to Arctic settlements, led to massive outmigration as laborers returned to their familial roots in more southerly regions.[53]

During the 1990s, the Arctic receded from the spotlight, but the region's importance is being reasserted in the twenty-first century. In 2008, the Russian government published its first Arctic policy,[54] in which it declared that its Far Northern region is of national interest as a strategic resource base, which could provide economic security for the entire country. The Arctic has instrumental value for the state in two distinct sectors. First, it is a region where economic opportunities lie in the form of natural resource exploitation, especially hydrocarbons. Second, it is a readily available region for Russia to attempt to regain its desired status as a great power.[55]

The 2020 Arctic policy document[56] stated that the top challenges of assimilating the Arctic Zone into the societal, technological, economic, and infrastructural network of Central Russia (aka, "development") are population decline; insufficient information, transportation, and communication infrastructures; and the slow pace of natural resource exploration and of developing equipment and technologies suitable to extracting it under Arctic conditions. Scholars have also noted the obstacles of creating "comfortable" living conditions for those "resettling" from southerly locations and establishing corporate social responsibility.[57] One large-scale transformation project intended to address these challenges was the creation of a special economic zone, the AZRF. Its purpose is to promote development in Russia's Far North.[58] Within the AZRF's boundaries (see Map 1), any companies or individual investors that register as residents are eligible for economic incentives such as tax concessions and administrative privileges.[59]



Map 1: All of the municipalities colored in purple are included within the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation.

The Russian Arctic has come to represent salvation for the unique Russian civilization. According to Laruelle, the Arctic has come to be seen as "a crucial element in the revival of Russia's great power status…[and]…rightful compensation for the hegemony lost with the disappearance of the Soviet Union."[60] More recently, Khrushcheva and Poberezhskaya have stated that Moscow is also trying to frame Russia as an "Arctic Great Power"[61] due to the amount of Arctic territory that Russia possesses as well as its renewed interest in modernizing its Arctic military presence. Moscow sees its Arctic region as vulnerable to external threats both from NATO as well as China.[62] Part of its response has been to modernize its military capabilities and reassert its military presence and part has been to increase its civilian presence.[63]

Internal colonialism as to bolster state security

Russia's experience with colonizing its Arctic has a long history, beginning in the seventeenth century. The Russian state expanded northward and eastward from Moscow, claiming land for the tsar. Along the way, any Indigenous tribes encountered were subjugated and made to pay tribute in furs.[64] By the time of the Soviet era, physical conquest of "external" Arctic lands and peoples was largely completed, and colonization

turned internal. As mentioned above, during Stalin's reign, the Russian Far North's "'unoccupied' lands"[65] were colonized by millions of laborers who created entire towns in order to extract the region's valuable natural resources. The outmigration after the USSR's collapse caused a demographic crisis that Putin's regime is attempting to reverse.

There are at least two ways that the current Russian government is seeking to internally colonize its AZRF. The first is through the territorialization of the state's presence by creating nature conservation areas. This includes the establishment of the world's third largest nature preserve, Great Arctic State Nature Reserve, located on the Taimyr Peninsula, and the creation of the Russian Arctic National Park. The latter was specifically intended to demonstrate to the world that Russia still "effectively occupies" this region.[66] This is a maneuver known as the "colonization of nature."[67] The second is through the creation of new "occupied" areas is through programs like "Hectare in the Arctic," launched in 2021.[68] Under this program, any Russian citizen can receive a one-hectare plot of land in the Arctic, so long as they have a plan to develop it. The program hopes to convince Arctic residents to stay and to incentivize citizens in other regions to move north. This amounts to homesteading in both a literal and metaphorical sense. As Kinnvall states, "The very category of 'home' as a bearer of *security* can be found in its ability to link together a material environment with a deeply emotional set of meanings relating to permanence and continuity…Homesteading as a strategy means making and shaping a *political* space for oneself."[69] By encouraging people to literally homestead in the Arctic, the government is also hoping citizens will figuratively homestead the Arctic as a decidedly Russian political space, invulnerable to penetration or influence from external actors perceived as threatening.

Sustainable development? Or resource colonialism in disguise?

"Sustainable development" is the narrative that has been used to sell AZRF development. Despite this buzzword appearing liberally in official policy documents and scholarly publications,[70] the overwhelming emphasis of AZRF development is *economic*—at the expense of sustainable development's environmental and social pillars—and specifically development of extractive industries, from which it is assumed social development will follow. For example, Middleton notes that the 2020 law outlining state support for AZRF

investment devotes most of its attention to economic benefits, while only making non-compulsory recommendations to companies that they should deal fairly with Indigenous peoples and makes no provisions whatsoever regarding environmental responsibility.[71] Labelling it as sustainable on paper has masked the reality of development to date, which has been the standard brown development (which only considers economic aspects) that can be critiqued as resource colonialism. The major development projects to date have been in the extractive industries—liquified natural gas (Yamal LNG and Yamal LNG-2 projects), traditional natural gas (Gazprom's Bovonenkovo megaproject), and oil extraction and processing (Rosneft's Vostok Oil project)—or infrastructure projects to facilitate transport of resources to markets (i.e., ports for the Northern Sea Route, gas pipelines, railroads).

Two effects of resource colonialism are that the state gains power and control over development and that the benefits are accrued elsewhere while the burdens are felt locally. To the first point, the Russian state has controlling interest in hydrocarbon development as the majority shareholder in two of the three largest Russian hydrocarbon companies operating in this region—Gazprom and Rosneft. In 2019, the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Region (YNAR) alone was the source of "81.7% of Russia's natural gas and 10.3% of oil and condensate."[72] To the second point, the benefits—in this case, tax revenues—from the extractive industries go to the Russian federal budget; they do not stay in the regions. This is by design. During his first two terms in office, Putin recentralized the budgetary system so the regions became more dependent on the federal government.[73] Moreover, the major hydrocarbon corporations are headquartered and pay their taxes in major federal cities.[74] Because most of the tax revenue goes to the center, local markets in the Arctic region are underdeveloped. This leads to people spending their income elsewhere, which further undermines local economies.[75]

In addition to underdeveloped markets, localities are burdened by environmental pollution and damage, in particular, oil spills.[76] In fact, the largest oil spill in Russia's history occurred only on the Taymyr tundra recently, in 2020.[77] Overall, the exploitative nature of such an economic development structure perpetuates underinvestment in areas like the Russian Arctic, ostensibly to benefit the entire country, but predominantly the core areas of Central Russia. For Moscow, this type of economic dependency is a form of security against potential movements toward greater regional autonomy. Given that the disintegration of the Soviet Union could have also resulted in the breakup of the Russian Federation, this idea

lends credence to Putin's anxieties, not only about Russia's place in the world, but also about its very ability to remain intact as a single, unified state. Colonization is one way of ensuring that those loyal to the state can be found in both the contentious/restless areas within a state (i.e., Chechnya) as well as the farthest reaches of the state's control, such as the Arctic.

With regard to social accountability, a growing body of scholarship has described the impact that natural resource exploitation in the AZRF has had on Indigenous peoples' lives. Although the global governance concepts of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and benefit-sharing have been introduced to Russian extractive industries, they do not fulfill the concept's original intention of including local populations in decision-making and sharing equitable benefits from hydrocarbon extraction. Rather, they have been utilized predominantly in the form of *ex post facto* compensation for damages to the land used by pastoralists.[78]

Political culture, examined here through the psychocultural narrative of "Russia as a unique civilization and a Great Power", depicts the values that legitimize Arctic internal and resource colonialism as a source of security. This narrative provides a level of psychocultural security to a population that experienced the trauma of the Soviet Union's collapse, but more than that, it contextualizes current state practices as legitimate by connecting them with both past glories and a sense of purpose moving forward. If a critical mass of Russian citizens "buys in" to this narrative, they are also more likely to "buy in" to developing the AZRF as a remedy to restore both economic security (tax revenues) and status. A 2017 survey by the Russian news agency, Regnum, found that 76% of Russians surveyed support Arctic development.[79]

It helps that the location of this development is taking place in a region that is considered "far away" and "unfamiliar" by a majority of the population and that the development itself has been packaged as "sustainable," lending it a positive connotation.[80] But, in reality, "development" is equal to resource colonialism in the AZRF because it is occurring around natural resource extraction and transportation, and those who live in the Arctic territories are vulnerable to both disrupted environments, sometimes even livelihoods, and underdevelopment of local markets, while revenues are funneled outside the region.

Application of a multi-actor security framework to the AZRF

The Russian state is the dominant actor in this security constellation. Its primary sectors of interest in the AZRF region are macroeconomic security and the assertion of state sovereignty through military and "effective occupation" practices (homesteading, "colonization of nature"), and its values are best encapsulated in the psychocultural narrative of "Russia as a unique civilization and a Great Power." The ways in which it is practicing security in this region are through internal colonialism and resource colonialism. The second most dominant actor in this constellation is industry, specifically the natural resource extractive enterprises and attendant construction companies. Their sector of interest is economic security. To much lesser degrees, they are also involved in environmental and societal security. Their primary values are the maximization of profit and the minimalization of obstacles to profit. The way these actors practice security is through resource colonialism. The third actor in this constellation is the people, specifically those who live within the territorial boundaries of the AZRF. This includes both settler populations, primarily in urban centers, and Indigenous groups. Their sector of interest is primarily human security (herein are included the dimensions of economic, environmental, food, and community security). Their values are various but tend to all fall under the umbrella of securing "the good life" for themselves and their communities to the greatest possible extent. Their practices of security in the AZRF are through participation or non-participation resource and/or internal colonialism. People want security in their jobs and livelihoods. For many, this security comes in the form of jobs in the extractive industries. For others, though, especially Indigenous groups that engage in traditional livelihoods, extractive industries are a threat to their security because of the environmental damage that can be—and has been—done to the land.

Power differentials between the three actors (state, extractive industries, and Arctic residents) are significantly disproportionate. The state has, by far, the most power as it can enforce compliance on both the industries and the people. However, industry buy-in is necessary if the state wants to realize its goals in the Arctic. The agency of Russian citizens is limited. However, in some aspects of life, they still have options. For example, with regard to the "Hectare in the Arctic" program, they can choose whether or not to participate, and the overwhelming majority have chosen not to—less than 0.001% of the Russian population is participating.[81]

Areas of cooperation or convergence of security perceptions/practices are as follows. State control in the largest extractive industries leads to an alignment of goals for maximizing profit from extraction and therefore, the state has enacted business-friendly policies, such as the creation of the AZRF. Between the state and Arctic residents, areas of mutual security assurance come from socio-economic development policies. Between industries and Arctic residents, economic security comes from job opportunities in the field and CSR programs, like benefit-sharing agreements.

Areas of potential conflict between security actors are as follows. Between the state and extractive industries, the latter tend to benefit from market stability and thus have lost much in the way of technology sharing and revenue as a result of sanctions since 2014.[82] Moreover, whereas the state may want to (re)colonize Arctic towns and cities, companies have found a shift-work model more economically efficient. Shift workers can be flown in from anywhere, thus undermining government-sponsored attempts at encouraging people to settle in the Arctic. Arctic communities and residents have many sectors for contestation against both the Russian state and extractive industries. Since the Arctic has been framed as a *national* priority, perceived national-level needs and wants have been prioritized over regional needs and wants. The focus on extractive industry development at the expense of other economic sectors has led to a lack of diversity in job opportunities for northern residents, thereby compelling people to look for jobs outside of the AZRF and further undermining attempts to get people to stay in the region. But perhaps the most personalized areas of contestation are the those of state suppression of dissent and, particularly for Indigenous peoples, a colonial legacy that appears to only be resurging at the moment. Between Arctic residents and industries, conflicts arise particularly around the topic of land use. Natural resource extraction and processing is dirty and environmental pollution and destruction of local areas is a negative externality that affects local areas the most. The lack of substantive communication between industries and residents only exacerbates the dilemma.

Conclusion

In this article, we conducted and exercise in conceptualization to create a comprehensive security analysis framework by combining the perceived security needs and practices of multiple actors and sectors, within the structure determined by political culture

(as interpreted through psychocultural narratives). We tested this framework with a case study of the AZRF, examining how the psychocultural narrative of "Russia as a unique civilization and Great Power" has informed state security, which has resulted in practices of internal and resource colonialism to legitimize top-down authoritarian state-centric security practices within the population. We have found that, overall, Moscow's attempts at "colonialism as security" in the AZRF have seen mixed results. In terms of internal colonization, campaigns such as the "Hectare in the Arctic" have not provided enough incentive to keep people or encourage newcomers to the region.[83] The state has had better results at colonizing nature through the establishment of two large-scale nature conservation areas, though. Moscow has had better luck with resource colonialism, thanks both to the abundance of natural resources and the business-friendly policies that have sufficiently incentivized corporations to launch operations in the AZRF.

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Russia’s Colonial Legacy in the Sakha Heartland

By Kara K. Hodgson

ARTICLE

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Article, Colonialism Series 2022, Indigenous Rights and Issues, Law and Governance, Russia, Society and Culture

A former Russian diamond mine in Mirny, Yakutia. Photo: **Staselnik**

Indigenous peoples have inhabited the Arctic since time immemorial, establishing rich regional cultures and governance systems long before the introduction of modern borders. The Arctic Institute’s 2022 Colonialism Series explores the colonial histories of Arctic nations and the still-evolving

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Russia is often sidelined in discussions of colonialism in the Arctic, most often due to a lack of linguistic and/or physical access. However, Russia also has a colonial legacy, with many parallels to colonialism in other Arctic contexts, for which it deserves to be included in the conversation. Since the sixteenth century, the Russian state has been trying to secure a(n ethnically) Russian presence across the Eurasian landmass. The first period of expansion occurred during the Russian Empire[1)] as an imperialist colonialist endeavor.[2)] The second period occurred during the Soviet era. The central leadership began a new wave of colonialism within the borders of the USSR, in the form of internal colonization. This wave of colonization had a variety of different names: "collectivization," the "involuntary resettlement" of prisoners to gulag camps, Stalin's "population transfer" of non-ethnic Russian groups near borderlands and repopulation of those areas with "loyal" ethnic Russians,[3)] and the "Northern Benefits" voluntary resettlement programs.[4)]

This article illustrates how the Russian state's colonization campaigns manifested toward one specific ethnic group, the Sakha, in one specific place – Yakutia/YASSR.[5)] Although the Sakha and Yakutian experience of colonialism is not unique compared to others colonized by the Russian state, it has attracted less attention. Most scholarship about Russian colonialism has been centered on former Imperial/Soviet regions that are now independent countries.[6)] Rarely is the concept of colonialism applied to areas and peoples that were subjugated to the Russian state during the imperial and Soviet eras *and* which remain within the present-day Russian Federation. This article seeks to fill that gap.

Colonialism

History schoolbooks tend to portray colonization as a nation's organic expansion, due to places becoming crowded and people needing more room to live.[7)] In actuality, colonization is an intentionally designed state-based practice

that is enabled by a colonialist mentality. There are at least five fundamental elements of a colonial project.[8)]

1. The transfer of people via the occupation of "external" land, which was enabled by
2. the concept of *terra nullius* (empty land), which denoted whether or not the land was being used specifically for what Europeans considered a productive purpose (agriculture), not whether people inhabited that space. Thus, (semi-)nomadic hunter-gatherer/pastoral societies were irrelevant to the discussion of occupation.[9)]

States have always sponsored colonial endeavors as an investment in their own wealth generation, thus

3. colonies remained dependent on the metropole.

Colonizers typically instituted a superior-colonizer/inferior-colonized relationship through

4. hierarchical ordering based in racial/ethnic terms, with Europeans ranked superior, and
5. discourses of civilization and modernization, i.e., a "civilizing mission" to educate local populations in European ways.

As will be demonstrated below, these five elements were evident in the case of the Sakha and Yakutia/YASSR during both the Imperial and Soviet eras. More specifically, they experienced at least three different, yet overlapping, forms of colonialism.

Imperialist Colonialism. Imperialism and colonialism are discrete state-based policies that often occur together. Imperialism provides the structure and ideological foundation for control of "external" lands, looking outward from the center. Colonialism is the *in situ* practice of dominating and controlling "external" lands and people, on behalf of the center.[10)] Unlike the *maritime* type undertaken by Britain, France, and Spain, which involved traveling overseas to colonies on

separate continents, Russia engaged in *continental* imperialist colonialism. This involved land-based expansion with no obvious geographical divider between the metropole and colonies. Colonizer-colonized relations under continental imperialist colonialism were indirect in the beginning stages, which allowed the colonized to survive as ethno-cultural entities, even though they underwent significant assimilation.[11)] I consider the Russian Imperial period to be an era of continental imperial colonialism.

Internal Colonialism. The term itself is contentious as it has a variety of different meanings. I apply the termwhen discussing the Soviet era to refer to "colonization of 'unoccupied' lands within [a state's] own national territory;…[and colonization] within a single set of political institutions and a unitary market, a periphery [which] could be subjected to an inferior economic status by a dominant core."[12)]

Resource Colonialism. This refers to the practice of establishing natural resource extractive operations in a location peripheral to a center of power, with two resultant effects. First, it expands state power and control over both the location and the extractive operation(s).[13)] Second, the "symbolic and material benefits… flow to already empowered (and usually distant) hands and local peoples…bear disproportionate environmental and social burdens."[14)] I argue that this form of colonialism was evident in Yakutia/YASSR across both the imperial and Soviet periods.

Form	Imperial Wave	Soviet Wave
imperialist colonialism	X	
internal colonialism		X
resource colonialism	X	X

Table 1. The different types of colonialism experienced by the Sakha in Yakutia/YASSR during the two eras under consideration.

Colonialism in Russia

Alexander Morrison, an historian of Russian colonialism, has commented that Russia suffers from a "colonial allergy,"[15] meaning that suggesting Russia had colonies was—and still is—usually met with denial. One historical reason why the tsarist government shied away from labelling its colonies as colonies was that it violated the autocratic principle of "the singleness of power," thereby denying any potential consideration of decentralization for fear of loss of absolute power.[16] Although the official Russian terms were – and still are – "migrant" or "resettler," the colloquial term of "incomer" (*priyezhiye*) is a more revealing description for those people transferred from the core to the periphery.

The imperial era

Moscow began its territorial expansion to the north and east in the mid-sixteenth century in the pursuit of fur, which was both a product for export and an internal form of currency.[17] The tsar sent military representatives (Cossacks) out to claim ownership of fur-rich territory that eventually extended across Asia and the Pacific Ocean. Along the way, any indigenous peoples they encountered were subjugated to the "sovereign's exalted hand"[18] and made to pay fur as tribute. During the first two centuries of rule, Moscow ordered Russian colonizers to leave the indigenous groups alone, so long as they paid their tribute. The logic was that the tsar needed working bodies to maximize its treasury revenues, so non-Russians were incorporated into the revenue system rather than exterminated.

Cossacks reached the Sakha heartland (near present-day Yakutsk) in 1632. At first contact, the Russians encountered a distinct and self-governing society of approximately 35-40 sub-groups, some with as many as 2000-5000 members,[19] engaging in pastoral livelihoods.[20] When the local Sakha were informed that they were now the tsar's subjects, they staged a number of uprisings between 1630 and 1642, until the last uprising was violently suppressed. The Sakha submitted to Russian rule, and the Yakutia parish was established, named thusly because the Russians called the Sakha people "Yakuts."[21]

Until the mid-nineteenth century, Yakutia was a resource colony. Because the soil was largely unconducive to agriculture, the land was made productive through the collection of furs. Overall numbers of *priyezhiye* to the region, mostly fur traders and trappers, were small during this time.[22] Many *priyezhiye* integrated Sakha language and culture into their daily existence, and intermarriage was common.

The practice of indirect rule, and thus Russian-Sakha relations, changed in the nineteenth century due to three developments. First, in 1822, the Imperial government passed the Statute of Alien Administration in Siberia (aka, the Speranksii Code). This Statute codified and hierarchically ordered crown subjects into two categories: "natural inhabitants" (Russians) and "aliens" (indigenous Siberians). Aliens were further sub-divided into three categories: settled, nomadic, or "wandering-or-foraging." The Sakha were categorized as nomadic aliens, which solidified their "Other" status; no Sakha person could ever become a "natural inhabitant," should they wish to. Second, Russian intellectuals embraced the larger European trends of nationalism and populism. These ideologies inspired a Russian version of the "civilising mission" or a sense of moral responsibility to do something about Siberia's "alien problem." The solution, as they saw it, was Russification:

> "…the practical work of saving and civilizing…Education and Christianization—gradual, sensitive, and based on the natives' languages and experiences…all of these things were…something that civilization owed the aboriginal Siberians…"[23]

Finally, the amount and type of *priyezhiye* to Yakutia changed. Around mid-century, banishment to Siberia became a common punishment for criminals and the politically undesirable. Exiled political revolutionaries brought their ideas, i.e., self-government and autonomy, with them to Yakutia. Some were employed as private teachers for the children of Sakha elites and helped to create a Sakha intelligentsia. The revolutionary ideas of the political exiles and Sakha

intelligentsia ripened into fruition at the beginning of the twentieth century, when the latter established a number of organizations to raise ethnic-Sakha consciousness.[24)]

Then came World War I, the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, and a five-year-long civil war across the new Soviet Union. Life for the Sakha changed drastically, but Russian colonialism continued – in a different disguise.

The Soviet era

When the Yakut Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (YASSR) was established in 1922, the Sakha received a higher degree of "emancipation" than they had had under the tsar. To gain support from the non-ethnic Russian peoples, the Bolsheviks devised a system of ethnofederalism, or administrative units that served as officially recognized national homelands for each group. Three forms of ethnic expression were permitted within each "homeland": their mother tongue was co-official with Russian, the Party would train an ethno-national elite to lead its people's development, and it would support their cultural identity.[25)] The type of unit awarded was based on a Marxist-modernist theory of social evolution which, like the Speranskii Code, codified peoples into three hierarchical categories – tribes, nationalities, and nations – based on a "continuum of backward to advanced."[26)]

The Bolsheviks determined that the Sakha had evolved to the "nationality" stage, so YASSR was established as a sub-unit of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (RSFSR). Ethnic Russians were determined by the Bolsheviks to have advanced to the highest level of social evolution: the nation. At the time, this setup was considered to be progressive and a sign of Bolshevik good faith towards limited and conditional autonomy. However, hindsight allows us to see that such a top-down approach could "just as easily be understood as a form of foreign domination"[27)] because the solidification of boundaries—political, geographical, and social—reinforced ethnic difference and because the government controlled which ethnic expressions were allowed.

Within one decade of socialist rule, the narrative changed from emancipation back toward Russification. Emblematic of this switch was the introduction of the "Friendship of Peoples" (FoP) narrative. The Soviet leadership created FoP to inspire patriotism for the multi-national Soviet state by revising Imperial Russia's historical record in two mutually reinforcing ways. First, it used terminology that implied that non-Russian ethnic groups chose to join the Empire, as opposed to being violently annexed through conquest. FoP revised the seventeenth-century conquest of the Sakha as a "voluntary incorporation" with Russia, and the tsar's military representatives were "pathfinders, [who] knocked on the doors of the distant country of the forest pastoralists."[28)] Second, it emphasized the "positive" outcomes of subjugation, such as Russian military protection from other would-be conquerors.[29)] In Yakutia, Russians were credited with introducing agriculture to the Sakha, as well as formal education and a written language.

Sakha culture also suffered when, contrary to the leadership's declaration, expressions of their indigenous culture were quickly relabeled as "bourgeois nationalism" and liquidated. In 1928, at least 500 Sakha were killed in a mass-scale repression campaign, including some of the early Sakha Bolshevik leaders.[30)]

Internal and resource colonialism in YASSR is demonstrated by the waves of *priyezhiye* who arrived to colonize the republic's "unoccupied" lands in pursuit of natural resource exploitation. In 1923, gold was discovered in the south of YASSR. By 1925, no fewer than 13,000 *priyezhiye* flooded in, two-thirds of whom were ethnic Russian.[31)] Yet, the supply of voluntary labor was insufficient to meet the state's demands. Moscow deemed gold production as a national priority since the new country needed revenue to pay off foreign debts and to industrialize. So it "imported" involuntary labor from the Soviet corrective labor, or gulag, system. Although exact numbers are unknown, in a 22-year period, there were approximately 100 camps, prisons, and colonies in YASSR and at least 50,250 prisoners were imported.[32)] All but one of the gulag camps engaged in mining operations, particularly gold. Between the gold rush and gulag, YASSR's total population expanded significantly. By the 1959 census,

ethnic Sakha accounted for only half of the republic's population, down from 80% in 1926, a reduction of approximately 10% per decade.[33)]

The second wave of *priyezhiye* came in pursuit of diamonds. Multiple rich diamond pipes were discovered in southwestern YASSR in the 1950s, spawning the creation of an entire diamond industry. Gem-quality stones were a valuable source of hard-currency revenue on the international market, an unambiguously capitalistic activity which was "downplayed for ideological reasons."[34)] The profits of their sale accrued to the federal reserve because diamonds "meant wealth not for an individual but for the state…they were to be mined and sold to acquire money to spend on defense and armaments."[35)]

The diamond industry began after the Stalinist gulag era, so Moscow sought to entice people to move voluntarily through generous benefits packages. Soon, five single-industry, or monotowns, were built from scratch in southwestern YASSR to house the influx of workers. In fact, four of YASSR's five largest population centers (excepting Yakutsk) were created during the Soviet era as monotowns servicing an extractive industry. As Table 2 shows, by the late Soviet era, ethnic Russians demographically overwhelmed ethnic Sakha in their own national territory. In one case, the ratio reached 56:1.

	Russian (1970)	**Sakha, Yakut (1970)**	**ratio**	**Russian (1989)**	**Sakha, Yakut (1989)**	**ratio**
Neryungri (coal)	79,200	2,300	34:1	72,500	1,300	56:1
Mirnii (diamonds)	77,000	5,800	13:1	70,900	4,100	17:1
Lensk (diamonds)	79,000	12,300	6:1	76,900	8,700	9:1
Aldan (gold)	81,200	4,800	17:1	77,400	3,900	20:1
Yakutsk	68,800	22,900	3:1	62,500	25,100	2,5:1

Table 2. Demographic differences between ethnic Russians and ethnic Sakha in YASSR's five largest towns. Ratios are rounded.[36)]

When Mikhail Gorbachev rose to power in 1985, the USSR was a country weakened by multiple system-wide problems, from stagnation to re-emerging nationality grievances. Gorbachev, intending to revitalize the country, introduced a series of liberalizing reforms. The Sakha elite took advantage of his *glasnost'* (openness) reform to form "ethnic consciousness" groups to revitalize Sakha culture. YASSR took advantage of Gorbachev's *demokratizatsia* reform to air its overarching economic objection to the Soviet state. Its mining operations were a large source of revenue for the USSR. However, due to the Soviet economy's command-and-control structure, most of the revenue generated from YASSR's resources stayed in the center.[37)] The Republic wanted to retain a greater percentage of the profits being generated in its territory.

Ironically, the reforms intended to strengthen the Soviet system, accelerated its collapse. Upon realizing their collective grievances, national groups began to seek independence. The various union republics seceded from the Soviet Union until, on December 25, 1991, the USSR ceased to exist. YASSR became the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) (RSY), a subordinate unit of the new Russian Federation.

Was it colonialism?

Each of the five elements constituting colonialism was present in Imperial-era Yakutia and in Soviet-era YASSR. While substantively different in each period, the transfer of ethnic Russians to the "external" Sakha ancestral lands occurred during both. The "empty" land was converted to productive use through the extraction of natural resources, first above ground (furs) then below (mining). The profits from Yakutia/YASSR funded the central treasury, not the regional budget, which rendered the region financially dependent. Discourses of civilization and modernization emerged in Russification policies and the FoP narrative. The relationship became hierarchically codified, as evidenced by the Speranskii

Code and, later, ethnofederalism. Russian ethnocentrism was demonstrated by their placement at the top of the hierarchy, by calling the Sakha by a Russian name (Yakuts), and by basing the ideal of Soviet citizenry on an ethnic Russian blueprint.

The evidence available sufficiently fills in all of the elemental categories. Thus, it is viable to conclude that the relationship between the Sakha and the (ethnic) Russian state was indeed colonial throughout both the Imperial and Soviet eras. Yet, despite such a readily recognizable case of colonialism, there is almost no acknowledgement of it as such.[38)] Perhaps the most fundamental explanation for this is that the Sakha are still under the authority of the Russian Federation, where the "colonial allergy" thrives to the present day. To be fair, scholars have critiqued the colonial order in other ways. Recent scholarship has sought to reframe Sakha identity as part of a pan-Arctic identity.[39)] Rights-based terms regarding self-determination[40)] and ancestral lands[41)] have been invoked, but it is notable that the scholars giving voice to them are physically outside of Russia.

A Third Wave?

In lieu of a conclusion, I wish to highlight some trends that could foreshadow a third wave of colonialism in contemporary RSY.

The 1990s were economically brutal for Russia, but also politically empowering for RSY. *Glasnost'*-era ethnic-consciousness movements retained their momentum and led to Sakha cultural revitalization. The Republic enjoyed greater financial autonomy over the profits of its natural resources, thanks to an agreement signed between RSY's leader and Boris Yeltsin. Although Russians still continued to overall outnumber them, the Sakha regained some of their demographic strength, as tens of thousands of ethnic Russian *priyezhiye* returned to the "mainland" (as the European Slavic heartlands are often nicknamed) after the collapse.

These trends began to reverse when Vladimir Putin took office. Under his regime, Moscow has re-centralized power over its peripheral areas. The state has commandeered controlling interest in RSY's diamond industry by becoming the majority shareholder of its monopoly company. Most recently, in 2016, the federal government initiated a homesteading act that is attempting to repopulate Russia's peripheral areas by granting free land to citizens willing to resettle there. While these acts remain insufficient to assert that there is a new wave of colonialism, they do not lend confidence to the idea that the epoch of imperial and colonial domination is relegated to history.

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Homesteading in the Arctic: The Logic Behind, and Prospects for, Russia's "Hectare in the Arctic" Program

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Moscow launched its "Hectare in the Arctic" program in summer 2021, allowing Russian nationals to obtain a free hectare of land in the country's northern regions. This plan is the latest attempt to address the chronic problem of outmigration and to attract new settlers to the Russian Arctic. Yet, multiple obstacles stand in the way of making the scheme a viable demographic solution. The primary obstacle to success with this program, we argue, is the logic that undergirds it. This article unpacks Moscow's logic by applying Foucault's "security, territory, population" analytical triad. We conclude that the program is Moscow's reaction to perceived threats to Russia's sovereignty in the Arctic, particularly the perceived "China threat" that has been brought on by warming relations between the two countries. This logic undermines the potential of the program by neglecting substantive consideration of the needs and socio-economic conditions for Arctic residents. Ultimately, this case illustrates the challenges and central policy contradictions that Putin's regime faces in making the Russian Arctic an effective zone of economic growth.

Introduction

In the summer of 2021, the Russian federal government launched the "Hectare in the Arctic" program, (also called the Arctic Hectare, or AH, program).[1] Under this scheme, any Russian citizen can receive a one-hectare plot of land (approximately 2.5 acres) free of cost for five years. If the citizen has done something productive with their hectare during that time, they will then have the option to either own the land or lease it for a period of forty-nine years. Activities considered "productive" include building a home, starting a farm, or launching an entrepreneurial enterprise such as a tourist resort. The only criteria for eligibility are that the applicant must 1) be a Russian citizen or a person in the federal Program to Assist Voluntary Resettlement of Compatriots Living Abroad and 2) must have a plan for how they intend to use their hectare.

To an outside observer, a homesteading act in the twenty-first century, moreover one in the Arctic—a region that many would say is less than ideal for such a task—invites confusion and prompts the question, why is the Russian government seeking to colonize its northernmost

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periphery? The answer to this question is situated within the greater geopolitical context of Russia's fears vis-à-vis China in the Arctic. To unpack this mystery, we employ Foucault's "security, territory, population" triad (Foucault, 2009) to elucidate the logic behind the emergence of the AH program, and conclude that it is a reactionary measure against demographic decline in the face of an existential fear that the Russian state perceives from external actors, especially China, in this era of Arctic "opening."

The article proceeds as follows: first, we introduce the broader geopolitical context of the Russian Arctic and Russian-Chinese relations. Next, we introduce the AH program and the Foucauldian concept of "security, territory, population" (STP). Then, we apply the STP analytical framework to the AH case in an attempt to explain why Moscow has embraced such a program. Finally, we conclude with some thoughts about the prospects for the AH program's success, as a microcosm of the broader Sino-Russian relationship in the Arctic, and particularly in the aftermath of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The Russian Arctic

During the Soviet era, the Russian Arctic became heavily populated as towns were built to house workers who migrated to various areas of the macro-region, primarily for the purpose of extracting natural resources from fixed locations. Many of Russia's modern northern cities were thus created from scratch, including the country's third, fourth, and fifth largest Far Northern[2] urban areas. Norilsk (pop. 184,645) was founded in 1935 to develop the nickel industry; Novy Urengoy (pop. 118,667) was founded in 1975 to facilitate development of nearby natural gas fields; and Vorkuta (pop. 71,279) was established in 1932 to develop the coal industry.[3]

When the Soviet Union dissolved, these far-flung, and heavily subsidized, locations came to be seen as a burden on a nascent Russian Federation that did not have the sufficient budgetary means to continue supporting them. As a result, employment opportunities dried up and many of those migrant-settler workers returned to their familial support systems, primarily in "the mainland" (*materik*) of Central Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus.

Since Vladimir Putin assumed power, his regime has sought to bring the Russian Arctic back under stronger centralized control. Thanks to its natural resources and potential as a maritime corridor, Russia's Far North has come to be officially viewed as the key to the country's future wealth, status, and prosperity. Under Putin's direction, Russia has sought to regain its great power status and, more specifically, to solidify its status as *the* dominant power in the Arctic. To this end, Moscow had declared, through a variety of decrees and policy documents over the past decade, ambitious targets for developing the Northern Sea Route (NSR) as a set of viable commercial shipping lanes, as well as plans to exploit the country's Arctic Zone as a strategic base of natural resources.[4]

Russia jealously guards its sovereignty in the Arctic, both those portions that are internationally acknowledged, as well as those that are subjectively perceived, as belonging to Russia. In addition to ever-present fears of NATO military domination (Petersen & Pincus, 2021), Moscow feels that its perceived control over the NSR is also at risk. In policy documents, this set of shipping lanes is considered to be "the Russian Federation's competitive *national* transportation passage in the world market" (emphasis added). The word "national" is significant because it "indicates that Russia intends to maintain control over the navigation of foreign civil ships and warships through the NSR" (Koshkin, 2020: 444). This stance puts Russia at odds with the United States, which views

the NSR as international waters (Todorov, 2022). Similarly, while being more circumspect about its stance on the NSR's legal status, Beijing supports the idea of the Arctic as subject to international law but also as a *de facto* international space, given its importance from an economic and scientific viewpoint (Lanteigne, 2017). The perceived threat of "internationalizing" the NSR are therefore taken very seriously.

In tandem with this risk is the fear that the abundant Arctic mineral wealth will create a race for resources in areas that Russia considers to be its own national territory and waters. As numerous non-Arctic states have begun to intensify their Arctic engagement, fears have emerged of international—especially Chinese—corporations "buying up all the resources" (Hønneland, 2020; Paul & Swistek, 2022). China, being the largest and most visible non-Arctic actor, has argued that there can and should be a place for non-Arctic stakeholders to assist in the study and development of the circumpolar north (Lanteigne, 2020; Lim, 2018). Moscow views China as an essential partner in much of its Arctic development plans, especially in light of its increased isolation as a consequence of its invasion of Ukraine beginning in February 2022. However, there is still a degree of distrust in Moscow as to China's long-term intentions for the region. Due to the centrality of Arctic development for Russia's future economic stability, "this is perceived as a threat aimed at the heart of Russian well-being" (Petersen & Pincus, 2021: 499). Moreover, Moscow, and a variety of Russian scholars, perpetuate the narrative that low population numbers in the Russian Arctic are "weakening…the geopolitical and defense interests of the country" (Lagutina, 2019: 22). According to this narrative, without a massive influx of Russian bodies on the ground, the country's Arctic periphery remains vulnerable to external threats.

The China-Russia Relationship

The term "frenemy" might best encapsulate the current Russia-China relationship. Historically, it has been precarious, as reflected predominantly in the region of their mutual border (Fei, 2011). Since the 1990s, Russia has sought economic partnerships with China and has opened its side of the Sino-Russian border to Chinese migration, in order to stimulate economic growth (Zhao, 2020). However, there have been worries about "Sinicization" of the Russian Far East (RFE) (Guo & Wilson, 2020) and the lopsided population distribution on the Sino-Russian border remains a source of anxiety. The RFE has a population of approximately eight million, compared to over 79 million in the adjacent Chinese regions (Simes & Simes, 2021). Even Putin himself was not adverse to using a "China threat" narrative (Liou, 2017). These concerns are spilling over from the RFE into the wider Russian Arctic, which are also facing demographic strains, economic uncertainty, and expanding interest from China.

Prior to its actions in Ukraine in 2014, Russia was actively trading with, and receiving investment from, its preferred Western partners. When Russia annexed Crimea, it provoked international censure and brought sanctions upon itself as a consequence, resulting in the withdrawal of funding, technology, and resources by many Western businesses. Since then, "Moscow has had no choice but to seek alternatives to the losses of its technological partnerships with the West, and so open up to China" (Laruelle, 2020: 20). While both countries have placed a great deal of emphasis on developing cross-border trade and overall economic cooperation, the historical distrust between the two states has not healed. With the knowledge that China is Russia's largest trade partner, while Russia is only the eleventh-largest trading partner for Beijing (FMPRC, 2020), Moscow is

suspicious of China's potential to "buy" influence in Russian domestic affairs and fears potential Chinese infiltration into its sovereign borders.

Most recently, the Putin and Xi Jinping administrations have sought to maintain the impression of a strong and evolving bilateral relationship, despite Russia's pervasive distrust of China's intentions and potential influence in the Federation, and despite ongoing Chinese misgivings about the Ukraine conflict and its long-term strategic and economic implications (Troianovski & Bradsher, 2022). Days before the Russian invasion began, the two leaders met in Beijing and co-signed a joint statement which included the declaration that *'friendship between the two States has no limits, there are no "forbidden" areas of cooperation'*.[5] Yet, despite such assertions of goodwill, there nevertheless remain several points of division between the two governments that are spilling over into the Russian Arctic.

China in the Russian Arctic

Beijing promotes the idea of the Arctic as an international space. Although China has deepened its Arctic engagement policies since the turn of this century, the country nonetheless remains a relative newcomer in the region. At present, China's interests in the Arctic are threefold: the country wishes to develop relevant scientific expertise in the region, preferably in cooperation with other Arctic and non-Arctic nations, to expand its economic interests in the Arctic, and to play a greater role in emerging areas of far north governance. Its 2018 White Paper on the Arctic, "China's Arctic Policy" (*Zhongguo de beiji zhengce*), states that while no non-Arctic state has the right to claim sovereignty there, they do have the right to engage in economic and scientific endeavors within the boundaries of international law.[6] It also promotes the idea of itself as a "near-Arctic state" (*jin beiji guojia*) (Zhao, 2021), but because it does not possess any Arctic territory, Beijing remains heavily dependent on the goodwill of the eight member governments of the Arctic Council for its far northern policies.

At the center of China's Arctic policy is the Polar Silk Road (*Bingshang Sichou Zhilu*), or PSR. It was designed in 2017 in partnership with the Russian government to place the Arctic within China's greater Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). China initially sought to develop a pan-Arctic PSR, but its partnership with Russia is the only one to have somewhat succeeded so far. However, even in the Russian Arctic, some ambitious projects, such as the long-discussed Belkomur railway and associated Arkhangelsk port, have failed to progress beyond the drawing board stage "due to the delays and concerns from the Russian side," (Gao & Erokhin, 2021: 20).

The "crown jewel" of the PSR endeavor was to be the Yamal LNG project - the first BRI energy project in the Arctic. Initially worth approximately US$27 billion, the project commenced in 2017 on Russia's Yamal Peninsula, and is overseen by Novatek, a private Russian energy firm. Partners included France's Total (which suspended operations in May 2022 in response to post-invasion EU sanctions on Moscow), the China National Petroleum Corporation, and the Beijing-based Silk Road Fund (*SiLu Jijin*). In the beginning, Yamal was lauded in Chinese policy circles as being a primary source of much-needed natural gas for Chinese markets, a means to assist Russia in competing with other giants in the global gas market, and a way for Chinese commercial interests to become better integrated into the Russian Arctic (Yang, 2019). However, the double blow of the coronavirus pandemic, which depressed fossil fuel prices to near-unprecedented levels (Lanteigne, 2020), and the widespread post-invasion sanctions placed on the Russian economy have cast doubts on the short-term viability of Arctic energy projects. Various Chinese firms

contracted to work on the Arctic LNG 2 project in Siberia reportedly suspended their operations for fear of sanction penalties (Zhou, 2022). Reports also appeared that China had no plans to send cargo vessels through the NSR during the summer of 2022 (Staalesen, 2022). As the war in Ukraine continues, Beijing has found it more difficult to maintain a non-aligned stance between Russia and the West, and the Polar Silk Road may be an early casualty of this diplomatic conundrum (Lanteigne, 2022).

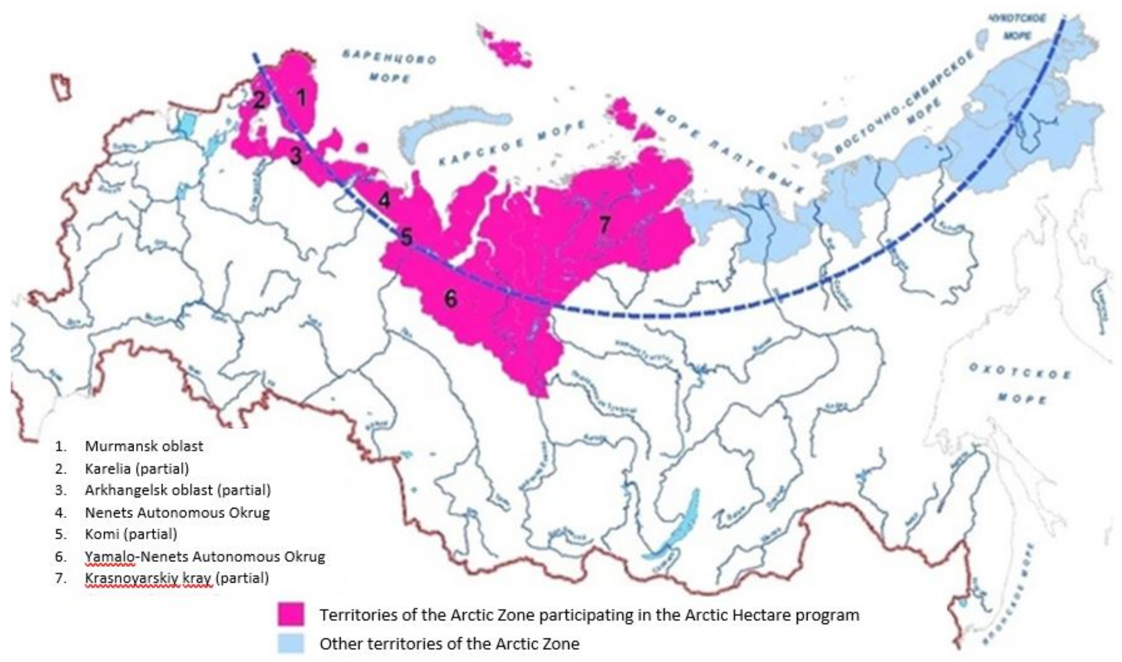
Going beyond strictly state-to-state relations, Chinese influence is also a factor in the emerging debates about Russian Arctic development. A number of scholars believe that China's investment in the Arctic is an existential threat to Russian sovereignty.[7] They see it as an avenue for "creeping conquest of the Arctic: gaining access to the region's natural resources…and *taking control of* the Northern Sea Route" (Koo, 2020, emphasis added). Some have even expressed fear that, "Russia may…become a 'vassal of China'" (Sheng, 2022: 64).

Even tourism has been a factor in this equation as the number of Chinese tourists to Russia's Arctic regions had been rising prior to the pandemic, and this has frequently been cited as a major facet of deepening bilateral Arctic cooperation. For its own part, China also sees tourism as necessary toward legitimizing its claim to being a "near-Arctic state" (Bennett and Iaquinto, 2021) and consider it as "part of the 'soft power' propaganda and popularisation of Chinese culture abroad [which in turn solidifies] the image of the state as an Arctic actor welcomed in the region" (Kobzeva, 2021: 46). However, greater numbers of Chinese tourists had caused strains with local citizens and governments, while raising concerns about economic dependency (Midko & Zhou, 2020; Khurshudyan, 2020; Niu *et al.*, 2020).

That Russia feels threatened in its Arctic has been established. *Why* Russia feels threatened is a bit more of a mystery. As Baev (2013: 489) notes, "With its large population centres (like Murmansk and Norilsk)…and huge resource-extraction industry, *Russia is objectively the Arctic superpower*" (emphasis added). Despite depopulation, Russia's Arctic is still the most heavily populated of any of the Arctic countries and, as stated above, the largest Arctic cities are all in in Russia. So, why does Moscow feel that (re-)populating these areas will bolster its security?

The "Hectare in the Arctic" program

As mentioned above, the outmigration of residents from Russia's Arctic region since the collapse of the Soviet Union has been a regular source of concern for Moscow. The proposed solution offered by Moscow and various Russian scholars is twofold. First, the country's military capabilities need to be revamped (Sergunin, 2019). Secondly, the civilian population needs to increase. One of the most readily observable ways Moscow is trying to incentivize the latter is through the creation of the "Hectare in the Arctic" program.



Map 1: Territories included in the "Hectare in the Arctic" program. Source: http://n-mar.ru/news/35277-v-pervyy-den-realizacii-programmy-arkticheskiy-gektar-v-arhangel-skoy-oblasti-podano-315-zayavleniy.html

The AH program is administered by the Ministry for Development of the Far East and Arctic, and is an expansion of the government's 2016 Far Eastern Hectare (FEH) program, which was designed as one way to discourage depopulation from the country's peripheral areas and, hopefully, to encourage in-migration. Approximately 1.1 million hectares were made available through the AH program. The land plots were "donated" by six of the sub-federal administrative units that are listed as Arctic territory. The Murmansk oblast' has approximately 730,000 available plots, the Republic of Karelia – approx. 337,000, the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug – approx. 17,000, the Republic of Komi – 4261, and the Nenets Autonomous Okrug – 1293. Krasnoyarsk krai is included in the project and intends to offer up 2500 hectares, but has yet to launch the program in its territory (Voronova, 2022). The Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) and the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug are also considered to be Arctic territory, but are not included in the AH program because they are already included in the FEH program. The benefit to participating municipalities would be that "the unused plots of land [would be put] into economic turnover and therefore increase tax payments to the local budgets" (The President signs.., 2021).

To an outside observer, this program may seem reminiscent of nineteenth-century American land races. In fact, several Russian scholars have commented on the historical similarity (Maksimov, 2021; Sokolov & Volkova, 2022). As well, with the knowledge that the AH program includes land available on the island of Novaya Zemlya, an island north of the Russian continental mainland which has never been permanently inhabited,[8] one might recall the Canadian government's Cold War-era "High Arctic relocation" program, which attempted to bolster sovereignty by colonizing the extreme northern islands of Ellesmere and Cornwallis with "human flagpoles" (Jull, 1994). However, Russian news reports were quick to assure that the needs of current Arctic residents were taken into consideration, for example, Indigenous peoples' reindeer herding areas have been

removed from consideration for the program (MRFDVA, 2022). Furthermore, it seems that localities can opt out of the program entirely, as did two village councils in the Nenets Autonomous Okrug (Makarova, 2021).

While it seems that the government hoped that "free" land would be as enticing a prospect in the twenty-first century as it was in the nineteenth, thus far the scheme has not proven too popular. Cynicism towards the initiative has come from internet commentators and experts alike. For example, when a 2020 *RIA Novosti* article announced the government's decision to expand the FEH program to the Arctic, comments ranged from quips about penguins and polar bears to predictions of corruption by local officials seizing the best hectares for themselves ("Polyarniy gektar," 2020). Experts interviewed also expressed pessimism about the program's viability, such as an economist who opined that the AH's purpose was for government officials to justify their salaries without actually accomplishing anything (Zakharchenko, 2021).

For those who have considered obtaining a plot, the biggest obstacle has been lack of infrastructure, the most frequently cited being lack of roads and electricity to the hectares (Lezhneva, 2021). It is unsurprising, then, that the most popular areas have been in the Murmansk oblast' and the Republic of Karelia (KDVA, 2022), both of which have the most developed infrastructure and relatively milder climates, compared to other AH areas. As of 1 June 2022, just over 100,000 people have taken the government up on its offer of either an FEH or an AH plot. According to the operator of the programs, the Corporation for the Development of the Far East and Arctic, 103,800 people have received an FEH plot (out of 140 million available plots) and 2,500 (of the 1.1 million available plots) have received an AH plot (KDVA, 2022). Given that the population of Russia is over 144 million, this means that less than 0.001% of the population has chosen to participate..

Based on the outsized number of promotional articles highlighting participants who chose to create "glamping" sites, hunting/fishing lodges, and even a military sports complex (NaDalniyVostok, 2022), government and media sources seem to be pushing people to consider launching tourist enterprises. One likely reason for this is that, unlike natural resource exploitation, tourism is not a capital-intensive industry and, in theory, provides for greater economic diversity. Another reason is that tourism is a soft-power "technology defining and reassuring sovereignty over a certain territory…tourism may serve as a political mechanism of territorialization and sovereignty maintenance" (Zelenskaya, 2018: 37). According to Zelenskaya, the Russian state engaged in such a territorialization already in 2009, when it created the Russian Arctic National Park, which was intended to demonstrate to the world that Russia had not abandoned its Arctic region after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Now, the state is expanding opportunities to small businesses to help it with its work in asserting Russian sovereignty in the Arctic.

Despite its best efforts though, so far, most plots granted are designated for building private houses (Golubkova & Matsiong, 2021). Herein lies the conundrum. Since the majority of AH participants are building homes, rather than starting a business, an external source of income is necessary to develop and maintain it. One of the biggest reasons for outmigration has been the lack of employment opportunities in these regions. To be sure, there are areas in the Far North where labor is needed, such as in the hydrocarbon exploitation regions like the Nenets and Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrugs. However, these areas have underdeveloped infrastructure and therefore are attracting few participants. Furthermore, most of those taking advantage of the offer

have been local residents, tempering hopes of in-migration—and a potential influx of labor—from more densely populated central regions of the country (Ivanova, 2022).

Security, Territory, Population

In a series of lectures from 1977 to 1978, Michel Foucault articulated the precursor to his groundbreaking governmentality concept as "security, territory, population." In this triad, he understood security as an attempt by the state to limit "what the state might be called to account for or what the state might intervene in and how" (Salter, 2019: 360). This decidedly neoliberal security concept is operationalized as a devolution of responsibility for potential future negative outcomes onto non-state entities (private enterprises, individuals). The AH program is an ideal case to demonstrate this concept in action. Rather than investing in education or (re-)training northern populations for economic development opportunities beyond raw material extraction, the government is offering land for people to develop on their own. The government will help them get set up (registering a plot, financing the building), but will not assume responsibility for individual-level consideration such as, how can participants pay back the loans if they do not have jobs or how people can develop their plots in the absence of sufficient infrastructure.

While Foucault's focus of inquiry was not on territory (and its attendant concept, sovereignty) on the international level, many scholars in the following years have developed this dimension (Bonditti et al., 2017). This is important, especially in our case, because as prominent Foucauldian IR scholar Mark Salter (2019: 360) notes, "sovereignty does not simply occur in relation to an absent audience or to an international metasovereign authority. Rather territory and sovereignty are both asserted somewhere *in relation to other competing actors*" (emphasis added). So, in Foucauldian terms, territory involves "the consolidation of territorial claims through the assertion of sovereignty" (Salter, 2019: 360) for the benefit of potential international rivals (real or imagined) for ownership of that territory. Here, Russia is demonstrating this understanding of territory in a rather antequated way – colonizing its Arctic region to assert effective occupation over it, despite the fact that no challenges to its sovereignty have been mentioned by its perceived rivals (primarily NATO and China). While it is true that the US considers the NSR to be international waters and that China is investing in Arctic enterprises, it is worth noting that no challenge has been made to Russia's sovereignty over the continental mainland (or Novaya Zemlya) which is included in either the AH or FEH programs.

In Foucauldian terms, population refers, not to people, but to quantitative groups that are socially constructed "through knowledge practices and governed indirectly through cases, rates, and statistics [and from which] populations came to be constructed, known, and managed" (Salter, 2019: 361). In our case, Russia is demonstrating this understanding of population through its constant worry about demographic decline. The remedy that Russia is proposing – the Arctic Hectare program – demonstrates the government's intense desire to control its Arctic territory and population, primarily for the benefit of an international audience, as well as its tone-deafness to the needs of its Arctic residents.

The overall situation is one of contradictions. The contradictions involved in, and surrounding, the AH program are numerous. In an attempt to generate more local revenue, Moscow is attempting to attract more people to a region of the country that is expensive to subsidize. The preferred areas in Murmansk and Karelia are not where labor is needed most, which could potentially result in higher budgetary commitments from the center. Moreover, the federal government is intent on

pursuing both the FEH and AH programs, despite low levels of interest and even lower levels of participation. These programs suffer from an overemphasis on reaction, based on a "top-down" Moscow-centered view of its peripheries. Rather than taking substantive (as opposed to declarative) action to improve the developmental status of the Russian Far North by delivering on the general needs of Arctic residents for jobs and economic security, quality schools, improved transport infrastructure, increased broadband, etc., the government is offering them bare plots of land. Finally, the AH program is one attempt to signal to NATO and to China that Russia is effectively occupying its northernmost territory and is therefore immune to any external threats. However, Russia's sovereignty over the areas in the AH program are uncontested. The federal government is responding to a challenge that has not been issued about Russia's sovereignty of the continental mainland of the Russian Far North. Such logic will continue to undermine Moscow's domestic Arctic ambitions. Ultimately, this case illustrates the challenges, and central policy contradictions, that Putin's regime faces in making the Russian Arctic an effective zone of economic growth.

Conclusion

In this article, we have attempted to use Foucault's "security, territory, population" analytical model to explain the logic behind the Arctic Hectare program as a reactionary measure of the Russian federal government, in the face of both internal demographic decline and a perceived external threat to its sovereignty in its Far North, primarily by China. In line with the Foucauldian understanding of security, the Russian state has devolved responsibility for its Far Northern economy onto Arctic residents in the hopes that they can build a living, literally from the ground up. Moscow has demonstrated a Foucauldian understanding of territory and sovereignty assertion through an old-fashioned settler colonization campaign. And finally, Moscow's anxiety over demographic decline in peripheral areas, and the need to boost numbers, underscores the Foucauldian understanding of population.

It is still too early to evaluate the outcomes of the AH campaign. At the program-level, as a reasoned assessment would need to wait at least five more years until 2026/2027, when information will be available regarding which recipients actually fulfilled the "productive use" criterion with their hectare. Macro-level developments are also likely to have a significant impact on Russian citizens' desire to "take the leap" into homesteading. Some effects of Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine are already being felt. Economic sanctions have caused a halt to Western investment in Arctic partnerships and hesitancy on behalf of Chinese partners, for fear of sanctions being levied against themselves as well. With the NSR being shunned by Western concerns as well as (quietly) by China, Moscow's visions of the Russian Arctic developing into a major transit and energy hub have collided with hard political realities (Solski, 2022). This could lead to another unemployment-induced exodus of residents from the Arctic. With regard to the heavily-promoted tourism opportunities, experience shows that people are less likely to migrate or start a business during times of uncertainty. Those considering establishing a tourist destination have two negatives working against them: the tourism industry has not recovered from the coronavirus pandemic and as Russia is "closed" to international flights and travel.

The greater Russia-China relationship, often contradictory, is the wild card in gauging the future of the AH program. The Putin regime has sought to build an Arctic partnership with Beijing, viewing China as an essential provider of economic and logistical support for the Polar Silk Road, while at the same time pressing its Arctic sovereignty and allaying concerns within Russia about

possible outsized Chinese influence in the Russian Far North. For its part, China has, since February 2022, sought a middle ground between ostracizing Russia and deepening relations with the Putin regime which could result in Western punative measures. From Moscow's viewpoint, there is the potential for the "worst of both worlds" scenario whereby Russia is forced to increase its dependence on Chinese economic support in the face of Western pressures, which might open the door to greater Chinese influence on Russian policies, including in the Arctic, regardless of the results of the AH initiative.

Only time will tell.

Notes

1. Federal Law of 28 June 2021 N. 226-FZ "On Amendments to the Federal Law 'On the Peculiarities of Provision to Citizens of Land Plots in State or Municipal Ownership and Located on the Territories of the Subjects of the Russian Federation that Are Part of the Far Eastern Federal District, and on Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation' and Certain Legislative Acts Russian Federation." https://base.garant.ru/401399809/ [in Russian]
2. For the purposes of this article, the terms "Russian Arctic" and "Far North" will be used synonymously.
3. With a population of 349,190, Arkhangelsk is currently both the largest Arctic city in Russia, as well as the biggest city in the pan-Arctic region. However, it is an historical settlement whose growth was not connected to natural resource exploitation. The Arctic's second largest city, Murmansk (pop. 279,064) was – and still is – a major military outpost. Statistics source: "Resident population of the Russian Federation by municipalities as of January 1, 2022," *Federal State Statistics Service,* format: Excel spreadsheet, uploaded April 29, 2022. https://rosstat.gov.ru/ [in Russian].
4. Presidential Decree of 5 March 2020 No. 164 "On the Foundations of the Russian Federation's State Policy in the Arctic for the Period Up to 2035." http://static.kremlin.ru/media/events/files/ru/f8ZpjhpAaQ0WB1zjywN04OgKiI1mAvaM.pdf [in Russian].
5. 'Joint Statement of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China on the International Relations Entering a New Era and the Global Sustainable Development,' *President of Russia*, 4 February 2022, http://en.kremlin.ru/supplement/5770.
6. White Paper on China's Arctic Policy. *State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China*, 26 January 2018. http://www.scio.gov.cn/zfbps/32832/Document/1618203/1618203.htm [in Chinese].
7. One extreme example can be found in Ananskikh et al. (2019). Although the article's academic quality is questionable, the facts that it was published in a scholastic journal and that the lead author is a member of the State Duma, indicate the pervasiveness of the "China threat" narrative.
8. The Russian Imperial government did attempt to settle a group of Indigenous Nenets people on Novaya Zemlya in the late nineteenth century, but they eventually returned to the mainland (Engelhardt, 1899).

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