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**ARCTIC TERRITORY: SOCIO-POLITICAL
TRANSFORMATIONS**

Medeya Ivanova (a)*, Tatiana Belevskikh (b), Olga Shabalina (c)

*Corresponding author

(a) Barents Centre of the Humanities – Branch of the Federal Research Centre «Kola Science Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences», 40a, Academgorodok, Apatity, 184209, Russia, medeya99@yahoo.com, + 7(921) 169-09-28

(b) Murmansk Arctic State University, 15, Kapitan Egorov str., Murmansk, Russia
belevskihtv@mail.ru, + 7(921)275-22-90

(c) Barents Centre of the Humanities – Branch of the Federal Research Centre «Kola Science Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences», 40a, Academgorodok, Apatity, 184209, Russia, oshabalina@yandex.ru, 8(81555)79-713

Abstract

This article presents a description of the processes of socio-political transformation in the Arctic. The study identifies two fundamental aspects that determine the content of socio-political changes in the Arctic. In the course of the study a conclusion is made that the driving force of human activity in areas being not comfortable for living is the parameters of economic activity. At the same time, the migrant population in Arctic latitudes forms and determines the dynamics of social territorial conditions. The results of the study show that socio-political transformation can be local in nature, determine the development trends of not only the individual state as a whole. However, today the Arctic is an international space where ecological, social, economic and political interests of various states are realized. The authors concluded that modern socio-political transformation in Arctic latitudes is carried out in the context of human economic practice and government decisions of a particular country, is the subject of analysis and assessment of the world community. Consequently, globalization is making its own socio-political changes, interfering with issues of human and state presence in uncomfortable, but strategically rich territories, such as the Arctic. At the same time, the paper notes that globalization gives a new impetus to the development of the Arctic economy. Modern Arctic economy becomes less industrial and acquires a human-oriented character, concentrates on creating comfortable living conditions for people in extreme discomfort, the capability of self-realization and self-actualization of a person, but represents an arena of political struggle.

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1. Introduction

The Arctic today is again in the focus of modern research, strategic economic, environmental and geopolitical development plans of different countries. However, the Arctic territory has its own internal logic of social, political and economic life. The territory of the Far North and the Arctic has always been characterized by extremely low population density throughout world history. The causes of low occupancy are the following conditions: uncomfortable climatic conditions of northern latitudes, high cost of living, significant absolute costs of conducting economic activity. At the beginning of the 20th century, the period of active exploration of the Arctic resources and the awareness of their economic significance in world practice begin. As a result, global trends in the intensification of migration processes in northern directions and large-scale industrial development and settlement of Arctic regions, which intensified in the second half of the 20th century in the USSR and other Arctic states, are outlined. A new wave of interest in the Arctic in the 21st century was spurred on by the Ilulissat Declaration, adopted in May 2008. Representatives of five coastal states - Canada, Denmark, Norway, the Russian Federation, and the United States of America met in Greenland, and adopted the following declaration: The Arctic Ocean is on the verge of significant changes. Climate change and ice melting have potential impacts on vulnerable ecosystems, livelihoods of local people and indigenous communities, and the potential exploitation of natural resources. Thus, the Arctic becomes not just a physical-geographical space but acts as a territory of socio-political transformations.

2. Problem Statement

There are various approaches to the definition of transformation and socio-political transformation. Under the territorial socio-political transformation in the framework of this study, we understand the ongoing territorial changes in the life of society, the social structure of an individual under the influence of external and internal factors that are accompanied by political institutional changes.

The concept of “socio-political transformation” is more associated with periods, events and phenomena that are radical in nature, where serious, as a rule, institutional changes in the political sphere or the life of society and an individual happen, covering the entire territory of the state. At the same time, we consider it necessary to note two conceptual points in the scientific consideration of the problem of socio-political transformation at the present stage. First, a socio-political transformation may be regional in nature and determined by territorial boundaries of the ongoing transformation that do not coincide with the territory of a particular state. Thus, the socio-economic transformation can characterize the socio-political situation in the framework of individual territories of the country (regions), cover different states or be peculiar to local territories of different countries. This suggests that the socio-political transformation may be regional in nature. Second, the socio-political transformation is a multifactorial problem, which is defined by a number of conditions, criteria, indicators and is simultaneously a generalized and specific analysis. So, according to Shmatko (2014) “... attempts of scientific, political and general social comprehension of the processes revealed the existing boundaries of understanding the evolution of social organisms during the periods of their qualitative transformations” (para. 5). In our opinion, one of the key factors that determine the scientific study of the socio-political transformation of modern society is

globalization. At the same time, globalization can be both a cause and a consequence of the transformation of political, social, and economic life of a person in a particular territory. Only in the first case, globalization will determine the content of the socio-political transformation in the territory, and in the second case - contribute to globalization.

The modern Arctic as a region of close interaction between the interests of the state, business and man demonstrates the practice of regional socio-political transformation that goes beyond the limits of one Arctic state, unites the interests of various even “non-Arctic” states, is happening and will happen in the context of globalization taking into account the strategic nature of the territory and arctic territorial resources.

3. Research Questions

The socio-political transformation of the Arctic communities as a whole is determined by the parameters and dynamics of economic activity associated with the exploitation of Arctic territorial resources. However, the Arctic is a remote high-latitude territory, which is distinguished by the uncomfortable living conditions of a person and the high costs of organizing economic activity. Therefore, it is necessary to define the significance of Arctic territorial resources in the life of society and individual social groups, which determines the interest in the Arctic.

Historically, these territories were poorly populated and developed due to extreme discomfort of the territorial conditions. Population growth in the Arctic regions is associated with migration processes, which determines social transformations, the content of which is generated by the arriving population. As a result, it is necessary to identify the social and economic events that caused in the past and continue to cause now the presence of a man in Arctic latitudes, namely, the formation and dynamics of social conditions.

Political transformation in the Arctic is determined by the dynamics of state interests, the need of institutionalizing and consolidating the state in this territory. Therefore, it is necessary to trace the dynamics of Arctic sentiments of the country and identify key government decisions in separate historical periods.

In addition, the modern Arctic is an international space where various interests of various states are concentrated, even without territories or borders in this region. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the impact of globalization on the processes of socio-political transformation in this strategic region, which finds manifestation in the dynamics of the Arctic economy structure, social life of a person and local communities, and political decisions made by Arctic and “non-Arctic” states.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to describe the processes of socio-political transformation within Arctic territory in the history of mankind, which are determined by the dynamics of the volume and structure of Arctic economy and are realized in the context of globalization at the present stage of development of the world community that addresses the issue of interaction of economic subjects from regional and national levels to the international.

5. Research Methods

In world history, the territory of the Arctic as a local socio-political system has changed under the influence of socio-economic and natural factors that characterize a specific period in human history. The Arctic territory is a complex system of interaction of human economic activity in an extremely uncomfortable territory, which has a special geo-economic and geopolitical significance at a certain historical moment. Therefore, the study of the socio-political transformation of the Arctic requires an interdisciplinary integrated approach that gives an idea of human behaviour, the local community, state and world community, their motivation and values. In the framework of the system approach, historical-genetic, comparative-historical methods, political science and interdisciplinary analyses are used.

6. Findings

Historically, northern territories of the whole world in general and the Arctic zones were extremely poorly developed and inhabited. Up to the end of the 19th century, extremely weak migratory movements to the North were noted, accompanied by the need to use the territorial factor, and the emergence of small focal settlements (Fauzer, Lytkina, & Fauzer, 2016). For example, in Euro-Arctic region on the Kola Peninsula (now the subject of the Russian Federation - Murmansk region), the main representatives of households were industrial and agricultural national groups engaged in traditional labor activities: indigenous people of the region were Saami; old-time population – the Pomors; migrants – the Finns, Norwegians, Komi-Izhems (came to the Kola Peninsula after 1880s) (Ivanova, Patsiia, & Shabalina, 2018). Historically, representatives of these groups of the population were characterized by a certain isolation of households, the use of the local natural resource base, and the ensuring of their own existence. Traditional economics was based on reindeer herding, fishing, hunting, and other fields. They form the content side of human and local community living in the Arctic, which most clearly shows the experience of close interaction and interdependence of man and nature. The introduced traditions of life and economic activity form a special national character of northern identity and worldview of the population living here. The outlined population growth has marked the question of strengthening the state presence and the institutionalization of the state rights to these territories.

The middle of the 20th century in world practice was marked by a sharp intensification of colonization processes in Arctic areas that are associated with the discovery and production development of significant strategic mineral raw resources of the Arctic, the development of social and industrial infrastructure, as well as the development of technologies for human living and production in the extreme conditions of the North. However, despite the high level of infrastructure facilities in northern territories and the strategic importance of Arctic territorial resources, the population growth slowed down by the end of the 20th century in the Arctic and, in some cases (for example, in the Russian North and the northern territory of Finland), the population decreased.

The transition period in Russia at the end of the 20th century dramatically changes the position and situation in the Russian part of the Arctic. The transformation of economic and political processes in the country leads to the need to reassess many phenomena and events, such as the development of territories of the Far North and the presence of a significant contingent of resident population in extreme and

uncomfortable territories and high costs of conducting economic activities. In the 1990s, a multitude of points of view and opinions appeared on the subject of the importance of geography and a territorial factor in the development of a market economy in general and the practice of market relations in Russia in particular. A new topical terminology of the transition period as “burden of space”, “price of cold”, “Siberian (resource) curse” appears, where the territorial factor is considered as the main deterrent factor of success of all reforms and the basic cause of problems and failures.

At the turn of the century, both in foreign and domestic scientific literature, the discussion on the topic “To be or not to be a person in Russian Arctic” is sharply aggravated. At this time, foreign publications actively appear and try to prove the economic inefficiency of the applied approach of Soviet economy to the development of northern territory and the inexpediency of the presence of a large contingent of resident population in uncomfortable conditions of the Arctic and Subarctic. The most significant works and scientific sentiments characterizing this period are the works of Khill and Geddi (2003) “Siberian Curse: how communist planners froze Russia” and Parshev (1999) “Why Russia is not America”. The main tone of these works in the development and presence of Russia in the Arctic – “We have built our state where no one else lives”. The conclusions of foreign authors unambiguously boil down to the need of reduction the dynamic economic activity in northern latitudes of Russia, the mass resettlement of the population in territories that are favorable for living and working conditions, and transition to the rotational method of providing the territory of the Far North with labor resources.

Among Russian opinions, we can also point out contradictory views on the subject of human presence in the Arctic. Treivish and Shuper (1992) declare:

We give our vast spaces more than we receive from them, they suck juices out of the country's body, constantly pushing it on the path of extensive development ... Speech is about the awareness of their role, positive or negative in the development of the country, the need to reduce burden of costs and increase the economic and social effect through reasonable regional policy and making the right geopolitical decisions. (p. 25)

According to Arabkina, “To ensure state security and save resource potential, it is necessary to give the special status to northern territories ... It is clear that the state is eager to maintain control over the exploration and extraction of natural resources by the northern sea route, and this requires activity” (Denisenko, 2003, p. 9).

The chronology of actions of the Russian state can be described as follows. Throughout the transition period, regulatory documents are being developed, aimed at supporting northern territories in terms of preserving the existing socio-economic potential of northern regions of the Russian Federation in difficult conditions of the transition period and the economy transformation. However, a number of regulatory documents are being adopted aimed at optimizing, and, rather, reducing the country population in northern latitudes.

As a result of ongoing political and economic processes, measures taken at the state level, the population of the Arctic Russian territory had sharply decreased by the end of the 1990s. The trend of

population decline in the territory of the Russian Arctic was observed in the early 2000s and continues to the present moment (Korchak, 2018).

Currently, in the context of transnationalization and globalization, the Arctic zone of the globe is positioned as a new international economic space, characterized by a commonality of world resources, markets and technologies that many leading states are eager to control. In addition, it is possible to note new trends in the implementation of human economic activity in the Arctic, namely the shift of emphasis from environmental exploiting types of economic activities to creative practices (Petrov, 2014; Belevskikh & Ivanova, 2018). According to Stepien (2016), in the modern world more and more attention is paid to innovation and the creative industry in the Arctic. The commercialization of Arctic creativity is made up of local “northern” skills, knowledge and culture. Since creativity and innovation form the industrial concept of the 21st century, creative human capital is considered as the basis for the transformation and rethinking of Arctic communities and economies.

7. Conclusion

As a result, it can be concluded that economic activity was, is and will remain the prime cause and driver of the socio-political transformation of Arctic territories. The development of northern territories and zones of the Arctic in certain historical periods is directly related to the need of exploitation of Arctic manufacturing resources that are of national and global importance. This trend is typical both for Russia and other foreign northern countries.

Currently, about four million people inhabit the world Arctic and are divided into eight Arctic countries: Canada, USA, Russia, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Iceland and Denmark. Using a broader definition of the Arctic territory, according to the Arctic University, the population of this circumpolar territory has about 13.1 million people living in the Arctic and the Far North. However, it is important to note the fundamentally different trends in the formation of the number of resident population in Arctic territories of the northern powers. World statistics show that, despite the population growth in the Arctic in world practice as a whole and the expanding human presence here, the Russian Federation significantly reduces the resident population in this region. At the same time, the population dynamics in Arctic cities of the northern countries also has contradictory trends. Russia, Finland, Sweden demonstrate a decrease in the Arctic cities’ population at a time when other countries tend to enlarge settlements in the Arctic.

However, the Arctic is a territory of potential opportunities that are recognized not only by countries that directly have Arctic territory within their borders, but also by candidate countries having territories beyond the Arctic Circle and claiming to Arctic resources, as well as countries- observers being interested in developing the Arctic zones for various reasons. At the moment, the Arctic is the center of attention of the world community in terms of the strategic importance of all the resources of this territory. These are not only mineral raw resources of the region, but also the unique territory that has not experienced anthropogenic impact, fresh water supply, biodiversity, and others. The strategic resource base of Arctic territories ceases to be a local national character and attracts the attention of the world community. And it is reflected in the dynamics of political decisions.

Nevertheless, the Arctic economy is transformed in the context of globalization. If recently the classical Arctic economy has a pronounced mono-profile nature of environmental management and is rather

vulnerable in general, having a weak opportunity to diversify, then the socio-political transformation in the coordinate system of globalization gives a new creative character to the Arctic economy. Modern Arctic economy is becoming less industrialized and acquiring a human service-oriented character, concentrating on creating comfortable living conditions for a person in extreme discomfort, conditions for self-realization and self-actualization of a person.

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