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

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

Introduction

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

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related to power, and through formal or informal means of regulating governs the behaviors of societal actors.

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

Northern Development in the Context of Global Development 'Projects'

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

Any discussion of this matter, however, is impossible without placing development in the North into the global context of development projects that have been imposed around the "underdeveloped" world throughout the 20th century. Summarizing these experiences, Peet & Watts (1993) pointed out the existence of the dominant Western regional discursive formation of development that crosses political and geographic boundaries in shaping development doctrines. This formation (exposed and criticized in the postcolonial literature) presents an overarching framework for modernist discourses of development; a framework "calibrated around the relative weight attributed in its normative vision to the role of the state, the market, and civil institutions" (Peet & Watts, 1993: 233), all of which share a number of principal similarities. It is based on the normative views on development imported from the West (Escobar, 1995; Watts, 1993). Resting on assumptions and ideals invented by classical and neoclassical economists, equipped by the Western strategies of economic growth and enforced by the state or international organizations, the colonial development doctrine emphasizes industrialization, external aid and development planning. By emulating the Western economic success, development efforts were designed to fulfill a "civilizing mission" of colonialism and attempt to create "modernist utopias" (Scott, 1998), neither acknowledging economic differences nor appreciating cultural diversity around the world (Power, 2003). While the manifestation of the Western discourse of development are largely

documented in the "Third World," the "internal colonies" within more developed countries have also been deeply affected (Sidaway, 2002).

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

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

The Canadian North

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

The Hudson's Bay Company that governed the Canadian North on behalf of the British government was engaged in exploiting the region, but never ventured to develop or settle it (Rich, 1958). Notably, this paradigm of colonization contrasted with the American 'Turnerism' practiced in colonizing the Great American West and the Canadian Prairies. The latter was a colonial discourse of acquisition and expropriation of the frontier (Francis, 2003), when the frontier has

been deemed a continuation of the mainland, not its antipode (Wood, 2006). Although the immediate effect of both approaches was a subordination of colonized spaces and a 'cyclonic' (using Innis's metaphor) nature of regional development (Barnes et al, 2001) in association with resource cycles and extreme instability of economies and population, the long-term differences emerged in the ability of regional systems to withstand the economic 'storms' and 'calms'.

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

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

The Northern Vision was a manifestation of a new hegemonic discourse of northern development that may be termed 'Diefenbakerism'. Diefenbakerism brought about a doctrine of centrally-planned publicly-funded development and of shared responsibility between the state and monopolistic capital. It became a central component of the new development regime in the Canadian North. This regime, dominant in the 1950-1970s, secured the rapid expansion of resource exploitation through the ideologies of Fordism. Not entirely dis-alienating the frontier, Diefenbakerism moved closer to 'Turnerism' in its desire to make the North an integral part of the national territory and national identity. Not accidentally, Diefenbaker offered this metaphorical connection in his Northern Vision speech: "Sir John A. Macdonald … opened the West. He saw Canada from East to West. I see a new Canada - a Canada of the North" (Diefenbaker, 1958: 1).

Diefenbakerism was almost uncontested until the early 1970s, when alternative counter-discourses, propelled by environmentalism and Aboriginalism, began to emerge (Hayter, 2003). The adequacy of the industrialism (and "high modernism" as termed by Scott in 1998) for delivering viability to northern regions was boldly challenged. The 1972 Federal Government strategy of northern development demonstrated a shift towards mixed development, community viability, environmental issues and Aboriginal people. The policy studies by the Canadian Council

on Rural Development (1974) and the Science Council (1977) advocated abandoning the objective of "industrial growth" by means of mega-projects in favor of "locally based development strategies" and mixed development options (industrial and traditional sectors, non-renewable and renewable resources (Barrie, 1987: 97). Most vocally, the Diefenbakerist doctrine was confronted in the Berger's inquiry (1977) that disputed the legacy of resource mega-projects and emphasized the importance to Indigenous rights and institutions in regional development. In essence, these writings outlined a counter-discourse that rejected the idea of "opening and modernizing the North," i.e. the central premises of Diefenbakerism and the Western development discourse in general.

The Soviet North

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

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

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

Soviet planners fully embraced this discourse. The themes of "the conquest of the North" and "overcoming the nature" became quintessential for planning in the early Soviet period (e.g.,

Sergeev, 1949). Northern romanticism and desire to drastically transform the North were going hand-in-hand with policies of socialist collectivization and industrialization (McCannon, 1998), which these planners designed. It is quite interesting that some romantic and development clichés were borrowed directly from the North American experience, specifically from the Turnerist practices of territorial acquisition by conquering and populating the hinterland.

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

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

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

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

its' riches for the Stalinist "mobilization economy" (Gregory, 2003; McCannon, 1998). The economic ideology also served a geopolitical goal of Soviet planners to re-construct Soviet nation-space and make the USSR self-sufficient through the extraction of natural resources.

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

Discourse, Power and Development: The State in the Norths

The role of the State in the formation and empowering of northern development discourses and policy in Canada and USSR/Russia deserves specific focus to fully grasp. Foucault argued that discourse and knowledge are related to power; the discourse is regulatory, and it legislates inclusions, exclusions, and criteria for acceptability. This may be expressed in forms of governmentality that sets 'rituals of truth' and creates a particular style of subjectivity with which one conforms to or resists (Foucault, 1970). The role of the State as a conveyer of governmentality is crucial for the production of the discourse of northern development. Capitalist and communist states both propagated northern development and modernization. The State, as an institution and societal structure, empowered through implementing governmentality, facilitated creating the 'regimes of truth' about the North suitable for its own interests, which were discursively understood in terms of recourse expansion and development. Certainly, the Soviet northern economic development policies are an outstanding example of the state-enforced ideological dogmatism (Hill & Gaddy, 2003); however, the northern planning in Canada was also heavily influenced by the government, which determined the allocation of a large share of research and development funding in the North (Barre, 1987).

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

From Social Construction to Material Production of the North

How did the discourses of northern development in the 20th century impact material production of the Norths? Table 1 attempts to associate selected characteristics of northern development, shared by the two development regimes, with their outcomes (elaborated from the framework proposed by Bourne (2000)). Given the previous discussion, it is not surprising that the strategies

of development in Canada and Russia produced rather similar and disappointing outcomes, for instance, in respect to relative economic prosperity (Glomsrød et al., 2015) and community well-being (Larsen & Fondahl, 2014; Larsen et al., 2015). The colonial developmentalist project in the North showed poor results — in the sense that it was unsuccessful in mitigating perpetual marginality and delivering sustainability to northern regions. Instead, it generally exacerbated the levels of marginality and worsened dependency and vulnerability of northern economies. This approach to development in the North was unsuccessful much like their counterparts in the Third World (Watts, 1993; Escobar, 1995; Scott, 1998).

Table 1. Selected similarities of Canadian and Soviet northern development and development outcomes

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

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

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

Table 2. Selected differences of Canadian and Soviet northern development and development outcomes

Canada	USSR/Russia	Development outcomes

Exploitation and 'othering' of the North ("Innisianism")	Expropriation and acquisition of the North ("Turnerism")	Greater exploitation of resources, grand scale of development, resettlement of millions to the Soviet North
Small/medium scale development	Very large scale development	Large cities, overpopulation, developed infrastructure, major extractive operations in the Soviet North
Slower tempo of development	High tempo of development	Planning lagged behind development, mismanagement of growth in the Soviet North
Relatively low level of national resource mobilization for development	Low level of national resource mobilization for development	Enormous financial, labor, social, infrastructure commitments in the Soviet North that was hard to maintain.

Indeed, the development regimes in the North have not been completely unsuccessful. After all, resource extraction in the Norths has continued and expanded throughout many decades. In fact, resource economy worked well for some places and for some periods of time. Regions involved in mega-projects received enormous investments, drastically improved their infrastructure and population well-being (Agranat, 1992; Rea, 1976; Slavin, 1972). Workers in the northern wage sector were well paid and lived in state of the art industrial towns developed through urban planning and design (Stelter & Artibise, 1978). The material wellbeing and employment in Indigenous communities generally increased (Stabler & Howe, 1990), although the welfare gap has never been closed (Petrov et al., 2015) and negative impacts always accompany and often surpass the benefits. As powerful cyclones (Barnes et al., 2001), these development surges dissipated, often leaving ruins with intermittent miniscule successes behind (Hayter, 2003, Gaxinger et al., 2016).

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

Concluding Remarks

Being the products of the Western development discursive paradigm, the 20th century Soviet and Canadian northern development projects shared some principal commonalities. As in other parts

of the 'developing' world, they included 'othering' and subordinating the North to the metropolis. The normative development paradigm attempted to dis-other the North by emulating development paths of the 'South'. Whereas the ideological bases of the Canadian and Soviet development discourses were different, the idea of 'taking care' of the North by 'taking advantage' of its' resources was the key value that both countries embodied through their actions; as was the idea of State involvement and State intervention as a primary regulation mechanism. In congruence with other authors (Bolotova, 2004; Hill & Gaddy, 2003; Watts, 1993) we can observe that the common discursive elements of the development regimes in the Norths included: a teleological modernist approach to planning based on normative and discursively constructed set of goals, the conception of nature as an object of activity and as an inexhaustible storage of resources, the mythology of frontier as an empty space which ultimately devoid its own value and meaning, the ideology of 'othering' the North from the South, and the positioning of state as a primary actor and the leader in the developmentalist 'hegemonic block'. However, a many important questions remain unanswered. Among them how different are the current, 21st century's, development models of the North from its 20th century predecessors and have the lessons been learned and what do they mean under the new circumstances (such as globalization, climate change, Indigenous self-governance, post-colonialism, etc.)?

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