Module 5

Changes Prior to modern State Formation: Migration, Exploration, Trading and Taxation

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Course objectives

This module covers the migration of Europeans (British, French, Scandinavians and Russians) to the northern areas of the circumpolar world, the settling of Iceland, and the migration of indigenous peoples in the period prior to modern state formation. This era of northern exploration involved hundreds of ocean-going efforts to explore the Arctic as well as overland expeditions designed to map the rivers, lakes, mountain ranges and passages of this region. The arrival of explores, and then later traders and settlers, had a huge impact on the traditional livelihood of the indigenous peoples across the circumpolar North. This module discusses, not only the efforts southern migrants made to explore the Arctic, but also the impact of their newly created secondary societies on the already established northern inhabitants during this particular period which meant mixed populations, diseases and colonial policy (taxation, fur trading).

After completing the module you should be able to:

1. analyze the changes prior to modern state formation; how migration from the south and indigenous peoples themselves changed the demographic situation;
2. explain the impacts of trade and taxation on northern inhabitants.

Introduction

Many generations after indigenous peoples established themselves firmly in the circumpolar world, outsiders began to take an interest in the area. The story of the expansion of secondary societies is a complicated one, and in this module we will only focus on the first and most tentative elements of that expansion. Over a very long period of time, from before AD 1000 until the early decades of the twentieth century, when airplane travel replaced sea and overland journeys as a means of exploring uncharted lands, southern societies sought to understand and exploit the vast circumpolar world. In a series of cautious, timid, and often fearful steps, explorers, traders, government officials, and scientists moved into the region. These outsiders provided their home societies with their glimpses of the region, often in highly creative and inaccurate paintings and descriptions. These initial images proved to be extremely difficult to dislodge and they continue to both fascinate southerners and to influence the outsiders' understanding of the possibilities and realities of the North.

The outsiders entered the North in a series of waves. The first, largely European, was driven by opportunities for trade and resource development, resulting as well in the mapping and general description of these northern regions. The second wave emphasized the harvesting of the rich marine resources of the northern seas, sparking a burst of southern commercial interests in what many initial observers had viewed as barren and valueless regions. The third wave – the one that continues to attract the most interest – involved more politically motivated explorations, combined with a scientific desire to better understand the geography of the Far North. This wave also contained an element of national rivalry, as the British, Norwegians and others searched for the Northwest Passage, for many of the same reasons that as the Americans and Russians competed to be first to the Moon in the 1960s. While there was considerable contact with indigenous populations during these periods, their encounters were more sporadic and often less traumatic than subsequent interventions by outsiders in the region.

Only with the advent of trade and exploration – followed shortly thereafter by sovereignty claims and processes to establish colonial control of newly found lands – did peoples begin to understand more about distant lands and the people, land forms, and environments that could be found there. Those regions of the North which were among the last parts of the globe to be inhabited by human beings, were also among the last to become known to outsiders.

The manner in which southern peoples came to understand the North, and their reasons for looking to this mysterious and unknown area, is a crucial process in the evolution of the circumpolar world. The primary societies had thousands of years to adjust to their territories and to develop social, subsistence, and spiritual regimes that suited them and that grew from their relationship with their home territories. Then, often with dramatic suddenness, southern people arrived in the North, ushering in new economic systems, radically different political assumptions, and the broader, complex, and often disruptive tapestry of indigenous-newcomer relations. This process – the onset of a new age in the North – was the beginning of early and initial development of southern interest in the region.

Migration of southern migrants

The expansion of southern, secondary societies into the North reflected a series of crucial developments:

1. The advent of sailing and navigational technologies that allowed those venturing into new regions a reasonable possibility of returning successful return without proper vessels, people perished in the frigid waters of the North.

2. The development of interest in new lands, sparked perhaps by stories, rumours, or accounts offered second- and third-hand of resources, opportunities, and new peoples and territories to be examined.

3. The need for new or additional resources, either because of population pressures (such as over-crowding on available land), inadequate supplies of food or other material supplies (such as lumber, minerals), or a search for new wealth (particularly gold).

4. The desires of governments to extend their power and authority over new areas, often spurred by the possibilities that rival governments might move first into new areas.

5. Simple curiosity or the desire to discover what lay beyond the horizon of contemporary knowledge.

6. The desire to share the benefits of southern civilization with, as yet, unknown northern peoples, principally associated with the determination to bring the Christian message to the non-Christian peoples of the North.

Beginning well over one thousand years ago, representatives of southern societies began to venture into new lands to the North of settled areas. They did so with great fear and hesitation. Before the first explorers returned from their northern adventures, people knew nothing of the North, its land, its inhabitants, its dangers, or its opportunities. Into this vacuum of information flooded all forms of rumour, speculation, misinformation, fanciful concept, geographic forecasting, and simple bad guessing. Early maps and drawings of the region – prepared without the advantage of encounter with the region – included portraits of dangerous monsters and human foes. Some promised a great and open northern sea, offering access to far distant lands. Still others hinted at northern land masses, perhaps abundant resources. The simple point, however, was that the outsiders did not know but some – not many, to be sure – wanted to know and were determined to find out what lay to the North.

Outsiders provided graphic descriptions of their experiences in the region. From the Norse accounts of dramatic and exciting expansions – five full centuries before Columbus reached North America – to the exploration and subjugation of the western continent, to the tragic accounts of vessels lost at sea, of mariners stranded on Arctic islands and forced into cannibalism in a desperate attempt to survive. Many, writing to enhance their status through tales of courage and determination, exaggerated the hardships, downplayed the contributions indigenous peoples made to their survival, and presented a stunningly inaccurate depiction of the land, its resources, and its original inhabitants. Even today, exploration literature remains a mainstay of northern libraries and bookstores, and southern fascination with the North as seen through the eyes of these adventurers and agents of expansion seems destined to live on, indefinitely.

As southerners moved north, they found, most often, that the lands were occupied, that there were resources and opportunities to be had, and that the North lacked the agricultural lands and farm surpluses that formed the basis of settled societies in southern locations. Occasionally they discovered riches but more often they encountered disappointment and frustration. They found, too, that the climate was harsh, unforgiving and even dangerous if unprepared. Many outsiders perished before they learned how to survive in the region. The best way to understand the opening of the North to outsiders is to consider it as a series of three major waves resulting in the establishment of claims by southern governments to all of the regions of the North and the initial occupation and development of portions of the area by outsiders. How southern migrants affected the traditional livelihood of indigenous peoples will be discussed more in detail in the second part of this module.

First wave of southern interest: general investigations and trade in the Medieval Period

In this first period, southern populations in what is now Europe (Swedes, Danes, Norwegians, Fins, and Russians) began to explore trade opportunities in contiguous and comparatively accessible northern regions. These areas had not, for the most part, been occupied and settled earlier because they had not been deemed fit for agricultural purposes. But the desire for trade goods, including animal products and fish drew outsiders slowly and tentatively to the North. The movement occurred very gradually, with the Swedish, Finnish and Norwegians moving northward toward the Gulf of Bothnia and the northern coastline of Norway. Russian traders based in Novgorod (one of the most ancient cities of Russia, and a great export centre for furs) moved slowly into the northern reaches of what is today understood to be European Russia. While the initial impulse in this wave of exploration was focused on trading opportunities, the outsiders were also intrigued by the new lands and new peoples. In the southern half of North Norway farmers had been living side by side with the Sami hunters since the Early Iron Age, and the fur trade had already been important for many centuries. In the Bothnic area farmers and tradesmen also had settled along the coast at an early stage. Table 5.1 shows a history of explorations of the Arctic.

Date	Expedition
330 BC	Greek geographer and explorer Pytheas is the first known visitor and reporter of the Arctic and polar ice after his voyage to northwestern Europe.
AD 870	Norse people settle in Iceland.
985-86	Erik the Red founded the first Norse settlement of Greenland.
1497	John Cabot discovers parts of North America.
1534	Jacques Cartier maps the Gulf of St. Lawrence and shores of the St. Lawrence River.
1576	Sir Martin Frobisher's search for the Northwest Passage, landing in north-eastern Canada (Today's Frobisher Bay).
1585	John Davis explores western shores of Greenland.
1596	Willem Barents discovers Spitsbergen while seeking the Northeast Passage.
1610	Jonas Poole's exploration of Spitsbergen.
1612	James Hall and William Baffin voyage of discovery of Greenland.
1648	Semyon Dezhnev sails through the Bering Strait.
1721	The missionary Hans Egede started his mission among the Greenlanders.
1728	Vitus Bering discovers today's Bering Strait while seeking Northeast Passage.
1742	Semyon Chelyuskin reaches the northernmost point of mainland Russia.
1770	Ivan Lyakhov explores the islands off the northern Siberian coast.
1822	Sir William Parry sails through Hudson and Hecla straits.
1831	Sir John Ross located the position of the North Magnetic Pole.
1845	Sir John Franklin's lost expedition to chart the last section of the Northwest Passage.
1854	Sir Robert McClure makes the first successful transit of Northwest Passage.
1878-79	Nils Nordenskjold completes Northeast Passage from west to east.
1888	Fridtjof Nansen makes first overland crossing of Greenland.
1895	Nansen's ship, *Fram*, achieved a record farthest North latitude of 86°13.6'N.
1903-06	Roald Amundsen successfully navigates Northwest Passage by ship.
1909	Robert Peary's expedition reaches the North Pole.
1926	Roald Amundsen's first verified explorers to have reached the North Pole with the airship *Norge.*
1968-1969	Sir Wally Herbert completes the first surface crossing of Arctic Ocean.
1977	Icebreaker *Arktika* was the first surface ship to reach the North Pole.

Table 5.1 A history of exploration of the Arctic

This initial summary suggests a great deal of caution, even timidity on the part of the Europeans of the pre-1400 era; but in that age, long before the Portuguese and Spanish perfected the capacity to undertake long-range, open-sea sailing expeditions, even these comparatively short oversea and coastal ventures represented bold steps of discovery. In this same era, however, some of the most daring adventurous and dramatic exploratory thrusts in human history occurred. The Norse-peoples, especially those living along the coasts of Norway, undertook significant ocean-going excursions into the North Atlantic. Using what would now be seen to be basic navigational tools, and with largely open vessels that placed the occupants at the mercy of the Atlantic swells, the Norse reached to the Faroes and other North Atlantic islands. Where appropriate, as in Iceland, which they reached in the late ninth century – Reykjavik was settled c.872 according to the latest research (Sverrisdóttir 2006) – they occupied the uninhabited lands and established settlements. And then they pushed on, to the mild south-western coast of Greenland, where they settled as farmers and hunters. In the first centuries there was a considerable distance between the Norse farmers and the Inuit who lived much farther north on the island. The new farming settlements in Iceland and Greenland must be understood against the background of the especially mild climate in the Viking Age. But when the climate became colder in the Late Middle Ages, the Inuit hunters of north Greenland moved to the south where they encountered the Norse. The Norse settlements on Greenland existed for about 400 years. There was also a short-lived expansion to L'Anse aux Meadows, on the northern tip of Newfoundland, in North America, around the year 1000. But the indigenous people in this area defended themselves bravely against the newcomers, and after only a few years the settlement was given up.

Second wave of southern interest: marine resources of the northern seas (1500-1800)

The usually tentative and occasionally bold steps of the first wave laid a foundation for the second wave of southern interest. As southern populations expanded, as pressure on locally available resources increased, and as technological improvements permitted longer and more reliable exploratory activity, Europeans began to extend their commercial operations. They came, in particular, in pursuit of the rich marine resources of the northern seas. Arctic coastal waters, stretching from the northeastern coast of Russia, to Norway, Iceland, and to Baffin Strait and the Grand Banks of Newfoundland, hosted abundant stocks of cod, walrus, whale and other harvestable commodities. In the medieval period most of Europe was Catholic and fish was a regular and required part of the diet, due to the prohibition of meat-eating on holy days, of which there were many during the year. Commercial cod fisheries started in North

Norway in the 11th century. Both Norwegian farmers and the Coast Sami population participated in the hunt taking advantage of the trade. The cod was preserved by wind-drying and exported to England and other northern European states by merchants. There was strong demand for this harvest from the sea and prices were affordable.

After the European discovery of America, a belief arose that the as yet uncharted lands of the North held the same kind of wonderful resources that had been discovered in Central and South America. During the 16th century European states took an interest in the far north and began to finance expeditions and companies to explore the region. An illustrative example would be the adventures of Martin Frobisher. The British-sponsored adventurer set out in 1576 to discover a passage across the top of North America. Sailing into what he believed to be a westerly passage – it turned out to be the bay on Baffin Island that now bears his name – Frobisher made a landfall and discovered what he thought were large quantities of gold. Abandoning the original expedition, he collected samples, returned to England to much acclaim, and outfitted a second expedition for the next year, and a third one, also for 1577. This third journey, which included miners and supplies to build a large camp, ran into severe difficulties when one of the ships sank and the expedition came into conflict with the Inuit. When Frobisher returned to England after the third voyage, it was revealed that his find was not gold, but iron pyrites – fool's gold. Frobisher and his backers were ridiculed and charged with fraud. The assumption that the North held vast quantities of rich mineral resources was, at least for a time, replaced by the realization that all that glitters is not gold.

Marine resources proved to be more reliable. They were harvested from the most readily accessible areas first and, then, when supplies became depleted moved into new regions. Small fleets capitalized on the rich harvests of cod and other fish off the coasts of Norway, Iceland, and North America. Whalers found quick returns by following the pods into Arctic waters, where they engaged in a dangerous dance of death with the large swimming creatures. The whaling sector proved to be quite voracious in its appetites, clearing out and depleting large areas in the eastern and central North Atlantic, Baffin Strait, and Hudson Bay and, in the late nineteenth century, moving through the Bering Strait and along the northwest coast of North America. The Dutch especially were engaged in whaling and were leading explorers both in the Barents Sea and in the Svalbard area (Spitsbergen), with Willem Barents (1550-97) who was searching for the northeast passage to China as the most outstanding explorer. In the footsteps of the explorers whaling stations were established in the north by the Dutch – the

best known of these is Smeerenburg on Spitsbergen which was in operation for half a century from 1620 onwards.

The fact that large stocks of large and valuable mammals could be found and commercially harvested in the north, particularly whales and walrus, fitted well with the southern image of the region. It was, the outsiders believed, a harsh and unforgiving region, one that gave up its resources only with a struggle, and surrounded by uncertainty and danger. This was the world of the whaler, the North Atlantic fisher, and the sea mammal hunters. And if they returned to Europe with valuable harvests and became wealthy, their wealth was not resented for they had braved waters, lands, and frozen seas that few on the continent were prepared to challenge. While there was wealth to be made, it was clear that there was no opportunity for major settlements in the region, apart perhaps from on the Norwegian coast and in Iceland. The rest of the North, many believed, was best left as a preserve for the wildlife, to be harvested profitably when and as southern markets dictated.

The search for harvestable resources also connected Europe and Northern America together in a significant manner. Between 1728 and 1741, the Danish explorer Vitus Jonassen Bering travelled from Kamchatka in the Russian Far East across the strait that today bears his name, commanding a Russian expedition that discovered the coastline of Alaska. Besides the creation of detailed maps of Northeast Asia, Bering also discovered large quantities of harvestable sea otters in the North Pacific waters, a resource that the Russians sought to exploit (by way of a critical trade network with China). As a result, Russia’s first joint stock company - the Russian-American Company - established posts along the Alaskan coast. Long before the sale of Alaska to the United States in 1867, the Russians had already surrendered much of the coastal trade to the Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) at a time when the profits from the fur trade had been declining due to over-exploitation of the resource.

A systematic exploration of the Russian Arctic, however, did not start before the 16th century (McCannon 1998:12) stimulated by the development of trade and diplomatic contact between the courts of Ivan the Terrible and foreign states. The best example was the expedition of Richard Chancellor of England, which – while searching for a path to China – landed on the shore of the White Sea in 1553. Active trade resulted in the foundation and development of an important Russian maritime city located in Arkhangelsk in 1584 (McCannon 1998:13). Moreover, exploration of the Eastern frontiers was most significant for Russian Arctic

colonization. In 1581 Western Siberia became a part of the Russian State as a result of the crusade of Yermak Timofeyevich through the Ural Mountains. Throughout the following century, Russian hunters and tradesmen explored the vast Siberian realm and reached the Pacific (McCannon 1998). In 1648 Fedot Alekseyevich Popov and Semyon Dezhnev started historical expedition from Kolyma to Anadyr and managed to navigate through the Bering Strait becoming the first Europeans to sail between Asia and America (Ibid). This discovery remained relatively unknown until the previously mentioned first Kamchatka expedition (1725-1729) under the leadership of Bering and Alexei Ilyich Chirikov. This successful expedition was followed by the second Kamchatka expedition in 1732 – also known as the Great Northern expedition – resulting in the discovery of Alaska and the Aleutian Islands (Frost 2003).

Third wave of southern interest: voyages of exploration and geographical confirmation in the 19th century

The third and perhaps best-known phase of external interest in the northern region consisted of a lengthy series of exploratory adventures designed to unlock the remaining mysteries of the Far North. The discovery of great wealth in Asia and the difficulties of navigating around Africa or South America sparked a great interest in an alternative route to the Orient, one that could be controlled by European governments and companies. As a result, enormous efforts were made to try to find a suitable passage, northwest across the top of North America, or northeast across the top of Europe. (See table 5.1). National rivalry was a significant element in these efforts. Whoever found a navigable passage would be destined for great wealth and fame. When the search had demonstrated that there was no commercially practical passage, as it had by the early nineteenth century, states nevertheless continued their explorations for reasons of national prestige. Europeans, and a few North Americans, sought to solidify national claims to northern lands, to increase scientific knowledge about the region, and to identify potential resources.

The end of the Napoleonic Wars (1807-14) aided the search for the Northwest Passage partly because large numbers of British naval vessels and personnel became available for more scientific purposes. With considerable national pride at stake – once the idea of a viable northern passage (north or east) had been abandoned – the effort to explore for scientific purposes was supported by promises of monetary rewards, international fame, and personal satisfaction. Among those who embodied this spirit and era and this spirit were John Franklin,

British (1786-1847), Roald Amundsen, Norwegian (1872-1928) and Nils Adolf Erik Nordenskiöld, Finnish (1832-1901). John Franklin led his first expedition in 1819 and the last in 1845 and mapped wide arctic areas in North America. His written descriptions of a harsh, difficult, and dangerous land helped entrench European images of the Far North for generations. He returned on two more expeditions. The last one which started in 1845 ended in disaster as his two ships HMS Terror and HMS Erebus were locked in the ice, resulting in the deaths of all of his 129 crew members and of Franklin himself. Inspired by Fridtjof Nansen's earlier expedition with the Fram, Roald Amundsen equipped the Maud in 1918 in an attempt to sail east through the Northeast Passage. The initial plan was to freeze the Maud into the Siberian polar ice and as such go further north(east) than Nansen had done earlier but due to a lack of progress after spending three winters in the ice, Amundsen abandoned his mission and returned to Norway in 1921. More than forty years earlier, however, Nils Adolf Erik Nordenskiöld was the first to successfully sail through the whole length of the Northeast Passage.

The era of northern exploration involved hundreds of ocean-going efforts to explore the Arctic regions as well as an equally large number of overland expeditions designed to map the rivers, lakes, mountain ranges (and passages) of the vast Subarctic and Arctic regions. After 1910 exploring by airplane also became possible. By tedious and hard-won bit-by-bit, the map of the North was slowly filled in. The river systems that drained huge areas of Europe and North America were gradually explored, mapped, and described to the world. Arctic and Subarctic coastlines were defined with increasing accuracy. Land masses, landforms, natural characteristics, flora, and fauna were described, painted, and identified. In the process, scientific knowledge about the North grew in leaps and bounds, adding new insights about the mysterious northlands, and fuelling a continuing southern fascination with the region.

In Russia, the exploration of the Arctic continued throughout the 19th century. From 1770-1840 the expeditions provided more detailed studies of Siberian territories and the Arctic coast line, and ethnographic material that was collected contributed to scientific findings. The expedition (1820-1824) of Ferdinand von Wrangel and Fyodor Matyushkin, for instance, described the Russian Arctic coastline, including Medvyezhy Island. After conversations with local populations and some observations, Wrangel claimed the existence of a land which at a later stage was found and got his name – Wrangels's Island (Davydov 1959). Interest in Alaska's natural resources further accelerated explorations and maritime achievements. First,

Russian circumnavigation was conducted in 1803-1806 under the lead of Ivan Fyodorovich Kruzenshtern and Yuri Fyodorovich Lysyansky. One of the main objectives of this around-the-world expedition was an investigation of the Californian coast for possible colonization (Magidovich). Second, exploration of the Arctic helped to accumulate knowledge in such spheres as oceanography, geology, biology, geography and ethnography. A scientific-commercial expedition (1898-1908) from Murmansk – led by Nikolai Mikhailovich Knipovich and later by Leonid Breitfuss – monitored some of the unique biological and hydrological environment of the Barents Sea. As a result, a bathymetric map of the Barents Sea and a map of sea currents were created (Josephson, 2014). The need for more systematic studies and dissemination of the results was acknowledged and the Russian Geographical Society (RGO) was established in 1845. The creation of a special commission with its main focus on the Arctic within the RGO became an important step towards systematization of the information gathered and coordination of future expeditions. Besides interest in various fields of science, technological development was an important motivation for the Russian explorations. The first steam-powered icebreaker – the "Yermak" – was built in 1897 in England under contract for the Russian Navy and the first Russian research vessel – the "St.Andrew" – was built as early as in 1899. Not all expeditions ended successfully. The "St.Martyr Foka" left Arkhangelsk in August 1912 under command of an experienced Arctic explorer named Georgy Yakovlevich Sedov. Because officials refused to sponsor his sleigh expedition to the pole, he found private supporters. The expedition was not well prepared and ended tragically with Sedov's dead in 1914 (Pinegin 2003). After his death, the crew returned home with difficulty and rescued the only two survivors from another Russian expedition led by Georgy Lvovich Brusilov whose vessel – the "St.Anna" – left the harbour of Arkhangelsk in 1912 with the goal to navigate through the ice-choked Northern Sea route. The ship got stuck in the ice and then ice-locked drifted away from the Kara Sea into the Arctic Ocean. Eleven members of the 24-man crew left the ship trying to walk through the drifting ice in search of the land. All except the two members later rescued by Brusilov died on their way. The vessel disappeared and the destiny of crew remained unknown until recently when a sailor's log was discovered on Franz Josef Land (New York Times 2010). Thus, although, Russia initially refrained from taking part in the 'race for the Pole,' which was more popular in the United States, Great Britain and Scandinavia, Russian expeditions had a more practical (and often less heroic although Yan Nagursky became the first pilot who successfully managed to fly an airplane above the Arctic Circle in 1914) attitude towards the Arctic. This

is considered to be one of the main reasons why Russia's achievements in the Arctic remain unknown to the world (McCannon 1998:17).

Another example was an expedition to Spitsbergen under the command of Vladimir Alexandrovich Rusanov. Rusanov – an experienced Arctic geologist – was commissioned by the Russian government in 1912 to investigate the possibility of industrial coal extraction in this region. After completing this mission successfully, Rusanov decided – without consultation with the authorities – to explore the Northern Sea route on his way back to Russia. Tragically enough, the last signal ever received from the vessel was send from the Matochkin Strait, which connects the Barents and Kara Seas (Barr 1974).

In Soviet Russia, many efforts were made to organize a series of Polar expeditions and the 'race to the Pole' became a more popular phenomenon. Under strong political pressure the process of systematic assimilation of the Arctic was started (Josephson 2014). High-profiled marine, airborne and land operations brought glory to many Soviet Arctic explorers between 1932-1939 (McCannon 1998). In 1932, the icebreaker "Sibiryakov" – under the command of Otto Schmidt and Vladimir Nicolaevici Voronin – was the first vessel crossing the Northern Sea Route non-stop (McCannon 1998: 60). A year later, Shmidt and Voronin took command of a voyage with the steamship "Chelyuskin" which also had to follow the Northern Sea Route. This voyage received world-wide attention when a rescue operation took place in the Chukchi Sea. The ship was not built for sailing through polar waters and subsequently sank in February 1934 crushed by the ice. Chelyuskin's crew and passengers (in total 104 people, including women and children), however, survived two months on the Arctic ice until an airlift operation managed to locate and rescue them (McCannon 1998). Resulting from this, aviation in USSR became a cultural symbol of progress and development (Bergman, 1998:146). The 63 hour flight over the North Pole from Moscow to Vancouver (Washington, USA) in June, 1937, for instance, was the first polar flight from Europe to America and the pilot responsible for this achievement – Valery Chkalov – became a national hero (Bergman 1998). Furthermore, the first ever airplane landing at the North Pole took place during the same year. The goal of that expedition – under the command of Mikhail Vasilyevich Vodopyanov – was to deliver equipment and participants to the first Soviet manned-drifting station in the Arctic: the research outpost – "The North Pole" (SP-1) under the leadership of Ivan Dmitrievich Papanin.

The impact of migration on northern inhabitants in Scandinavia, Greenland, Canada, Russia, and Alaska

As we saw in the previous module, European nations engaged in significant exploration and trade across the circumpolar north during the period spanning the latter part of the fifteenth century to the eighteenth century. The British and the French went to Canada; the Russians to Siberia and Alaska; and Scandinavians to Lapland, Finnmark, Greenland and Iceland. Indigenous peoples and the newcomers from Europe came into contact during the period of initial expansion and exploration but the degree and intensity of the encounter experience was decidedly less than in subsequent decades. Unfortunately, relatively little information about the encounter experience from the indigenous perspective has been found – although recent collaborative efforts with researchers and indigenous elders and knowledge keepers are providing additional insights into this important phase.

In general, the transitory and rapid movement of the initial explorers and adventurers through indigenous lands resulted in relatively little contact and few difficulties. There were occasions where misunderstandings and conflict broke out; but there were even more occasions when, instead of conflict, the indigenous people saved the newcomers from starvation and exposure to the elements and local guides assisted the explorers with their journeys.

The arrival of traders, and on rare occasions, settlers, had a more significant impact on the northern inhabitants. The fate of the Norse settlements on Greenland and Newfoundland will never be fully known, but there is some evidence of conflict between the newcomers and the original inhabitants. Those who settled in Iceland, by contrast, had the globally rare experience of finding a habitable land that was completely uninhabited, and they moved in without competition for the resources of the island. In other areas, as will be discussed in the current section, trading relations resulted in much greater contact, sometimes with mutually beneficial results, but also typically with significant unintended and negative consequences for the indigenous peoples.

The traditional picture of the early contact experience – crafted by European observers – is one in which the indigenous peoples were awestruck by the arrival of the technologically superior newcomers, with their large sailing vessels; their iron tools, guns, knives, and axes; their manufactured clothing; and complicated Christian faith. The reality is more complex. Certain elements were alternately surprising and disturbing, including the impressive technological advances of the Europeans, but many European manufactured products were not suited to northern conditions. Untempered steel, for example, did not do well in the extreme cold. Nor were European boots, pants, coats, and coverings anywhere near as well suited to the Arctic conditions as indigenous clothing. While some newcomers were reluctant to accept the advice and clothing of the indigenous peoples – the British navy being among the most resistant – they discovered that sealskin boots worked better than leather boots made from other mammal, and eventually accepted the logic of using indigenous methods, materials, clothing, and transportation. With some notable exceptions, as when epidemic diseases were introduced to vulnerable populations, the initial encounter experience generally resulted in each group learning from the other, borrowing technology, knowledge and ideas that suited their needs and inclinations; gaining a strong and more positive impression of the other group's abilities; and remaining relatively firm in their beliefs that their distinctive approaches to life suited them best. The Sami people in Scandinavia and in Northwest Russia had-encountered Europeans from adjacent areas and had traded with them since the Iron Age, so the 16th century technology did not have the same impact on to them as on other Arctic people who had not encountered it before.

In the sixteenth century, however, human societies around the world began to undergo what in time would be deemed major transformations. One of these transformations was economic: the rise of capitalism. The other was political: the expansion of the state system. Focusing on the indigenous peoples of North America, Scandinavia, Greenland and Russia, this section is an attempt to show how colonization and early state administration prior to the building of the modern state had an enormous impact on the lives and communities of indigenous peoples across the circumpolar North who were affected by new technologies, trading systems and diseases. Although Europeans did secure a foothold on the land of indigenous peoples, from the sixteenth century to the early twentieth century European colonization and control of northern areas was relatively weak compared to the political power of contemporary states. The financial, organizational, and military resources these southern states had to devote to

northern colonization were rather limited, resulting in a relatively high degree of political autonomy for the indigenous populations during this particular period.

How do we define a state? What distinguishes a modern state, such as the eight Arctic states that are member of the Arctic Council, compared to more traditional states? In one of his classical works, German sociologist Max Weber defines the state as an entity which successfully claims a monopoly of the legitimate use of force within a given territorial area. It is important, however, to make a distinction between traditional states and modern states. Traditional states were not highly centralized and had small bureaucracies. Their boundaries, moreover, were not always well defined and lands were not always contiguous. As a consequence, traditional states often had vague frontiers rather than precisely marked borders, and the administrative reach of the traditional state beyond forts and military outposts was very weak. Consequently, traditional states were marked by a cultural and political pluralism, a pluralism that would be challenged by the rise of modern states. The colonial administrations in Siberia, North America and northern Scandinavia fit closely the model of the administrations of traditional states. European powers would have difficulty claiming to uphold a monopoly of political authority over indigenous peoples and Aboriginal lands, especially the further one moved from the centre of administrative power. Nevertheless, the power and accompanying influence of secondary societies did grow, as did the impact of their policy – or lack of policy - on the demographic situation of the indigenous peoples.

Scandinavia

Scandinavia has the longest history of contact between northern indigenous peoples and European states. Throughout the Middle Ages and even before, contact between Europeans and the Sami was intermittent. The fur trade was active as early as in the ninth century, and traders came to the Sami areas both from trading centers of the Atlantic Coast and the Gulf of Bothnia. Fishermen from the Norwegian coast also came north to the coast of Finnmark in spring and summer to catch cod and temporary fishing stations were established. Colonization in Finnmark did not take place until the late thirteenth century when the first permanent fishing villages were founded. Thereafter there was a rise in the Norwegian population in the Sami coastal areas. Merchants also settled permanently in the fishing villages, churches were built and in some places there were also fortifications. The Sami hunters were forced to pay taxes to Russian, Swedish and Norwegian traders during the Medieval Period. In Finnmark the Sami were obliged to pay tribute to traders from three nation-states (Russia, Sweden and

Norway), while in most parts of the Sami area there was 'only' double taxation to the Danish/Norwegian or Swedish Crown. In Norway, for example, the Crown had claimed the tax on the fur trade at an early stage, and it was collected by the regional chieftains who passed it on to the King.

In addition to trade, taxation became an increasingly important issue affecting the lives of the Sami people. According to Scott Forrest (1997),

> One of the earliest examples of Sami taxation was a decree by the King of Sweden in 1277 granting traders, known as *bikarls*, [the right] to tax the Sami with whom they traded (Sillanpää 1994:38). As the emerging states began to take direct control over these taxation regimes conflicts developed, especially in northern Sweden where claims overlapped. In some cases, such as the region around Inari, the Sami were taxed by all three kingdoms (Ibid)[1]. The transition from loosely defined taxation schemes to territorial control is provided in the example of the Swedish taxland system.

Further east the *carnelians* collected the tax on behalf of the Prince of Novgorod who was the political leader in North Russia. Although nominally under the control of one European crown or another from the sixteenth century onwards, the Sami remained the majority population in the north. But this changed during the 1600s and 1700s. Scandinavian settler colonization gained momentum also in the inland. At the same time, missionary work received renewed interest. One of the most notable missions was led by Thomas von Westen in the early 1700s. He made really great efforts to Christianize the Sami in Norway. One important instrument was to translate liturgical writings into Sami language.

In spite of the expansion of European influence, the land of the Sami remained very much a frontier area. When Sweden and Denmark-Norway, for instance, concluded the border treaty of 1751, a supplement to the treaty was added, known as the Sami codicil (*Lappekodicillen*). The Sami codicil recognized the rights of the reindeer herding Sami to the pasture lands on both sides of the newly fixed, international 'border.' The Sami codicil's importance stems from the fact that it recognized, in a legal international treaty, 'the right of the Sami to freely cross the border as part of their seasonal migration of reindeer herding' (Forrest 1997). The text of the codicil states:

[1] After 1326, competition between Denmark-Norway and Russia for political authority over Sami lands led to the subjection of the Sami to joint taxation of competing European powers. This situation lasted more than four hundred years.

> The Sami need the land of both states. Therefore, they shall, in accordance with tradition, be permitted both in autumn and spring to move their reindeer herds across the border into the other state. And hereafter, as before, they shall, like the state's own subjects, be allowed to use land and share for themselves and their animals, except in the places stated below, and they shall be met with friendliness, protected and aided (Sillanpää 1992:6, reproduced in Forrest 1997).

The codicil, however, forced pastoral Sami to choose citizenship in either Sweden or Denmark-Norway and established the state's right to regulate trans-border reindeer husbandry. Yet, as a whole, the document must be taken as remarkably respectful of Sami interests. According to Forrest, it shows a level of commitment to the survival of the Sami and their way of life that is lacking from later state policies towards Sami reindeer herding. For these reasons, this codicil has been referred to as the Sami Magna Carta, referring to the English document of 1216 that served to define the rights of citizens vis-à-vis the monarch.

Until the nineteenth century, the primary interest of the state in the Sami was limited to Christianization and taxation; in other spheres, the Sami continued to enjoy considerable autonomy. In spite of the gradual erosion of their political and economic independence, the Sami were more or less left in peace until the nineteenth century.

Greenland

Continuous European colonization of Greenland came much later than in the case of Sami lands. The Norwegian-Danish Lutheran priest Hans Egede arrived on Greenland's western coast in 1721 and established a mission and trade station near modern-day Nuuk, marking the first European incursion since the time of the Vikings, who arrived on the uninhabited southern part of Greenland in the beginning of the 10th century and remained there until the 15th century. His mission served to convert many Inuit to Christianity but his efforts in trade were not as successful (Nuttall 1994). As a result, the Danish-Norwegian government took over responsibility for trade in 1726. Although commercial activity developed only slowly, the government formed the Royal Greenland Trading Department – Det Kongelige Grønlandske Handel (KGH) – in 1776 and a trade monopoly was established, which lasted until the end of the Second World War.

The year-round presence of the Danes and Norwegians in Greenland's Inuit west-coast communities was felt in the hierarchy of authority that included – besides missionaries –

inspectors, traders, and their assistants. Traders began to occupy positions of real power over the Inuit, determining wages and distributing goods. Most of them stayed no longer than a few years before being replaced by other employees of KGH. However, the colonialist attitude towards Greenland was isolationist and aimed to protect the Inuit hunting culture. Far from being exploitative, any trade had to benefit the local population, which was a different approach from most other colonial administrations in the period prior to modern state formation. In spite of a KGH effort to prevent the Inuit from becoming dependent on trade goods, these goods did eventually become integral parts of Inuit diet and hunting technology (Nuttall 1994). In 1814 the combined kingdom of Denmark and Norway was divided – from then on the Danes alone ruled in Greenland.

A gradual warming of Greenland's coastal waters in the early 20th century resulted both in a migration of seals to colder waters and the arrival of large stocks of cod. This resulted in a major transition from hunting to fishing. Though Inuit culture valued the hunting of sea animals, the Danes encouraged the rapid development of a cod fishery. As many Inuit were unable to continue whaling and hunting, traditional hunting camps were abandoned and many moved to larger settlements in search of employment (Nuttall 1994).

As will be discussed later on in the following modules, Denmark abandoned its isolationist policy after the Second World War. Colonial status was formally abolished in 1953, Home Rule was inaugurated in 1979, and a referendum on self-government was held in 2009, making Greenlandic the sole official language.

Canada

In 1534, French explorer Jacques Cartier voyaged up the St. Lawrence River, marking the beginning of sustained contact in Canada between indigenous and European peoples.[2] During the 17th and 18th Century, British and French colonists began their expansions across the continent and conflicts occurred between them over the natural resources that this enormous territory had to offer. The European settlers and their conflicts had a serious impact on the lives of indigenous peoples. Europeans introduced new technologies, such as steel axes and firearms, as well as Christianity, but they also brought along infectious diseases such as smallpox and measles, decimating the indigenous population. The impact of European

[2] Norseman settled briefly at L'Anse aux Meadows around 1000 AD.

markets altered subsistence patterns within Aboriginal communities and changed trading relations amongst indigenous peoples. European contact also led to a number of territorial changes among indigenous peoples. The Cree for instance, who originally were hunter-gatherers of the boreal forest stretching from northern Quebec to northern Manitoba, were pushed westward as far as north-eastern British Columbia as a result of the fur trade.

In Canada, as throughout North America, the fur trade was one of mutual exchange. While there is ample evidence that exchanges were not always equitable, especially for the indigenous people, there is also evidence that many indigenous peoples were skilled negotiators and were often able to obtain favourable returns for their furs. By the end of the fur trade period, Europeans in Canada had managed to cross the continent to the Pacific Ocean and maintained their presence through the construction of a series of trading forts owned by the HBC in strategic locations. It was the HBC – jokingly referred to by Canadians as 'here before god' that conducted the fur trade and came into contact with the indigenous peoples.

HBC's policy afforded considerable autonomy within Aboriginal communities, while at the same time it encouraged change in Aboriginal ways of life. One explanation for the relative non-interference in Aboriginal communities is that, since indigenous peoples were the primary producers of furs, it was better to leave a good thing alone. The fur trade was a period of hands-off with respect to the Aboriginal way of life. While relations of dependence and subordination emerged during the course of the fur trade, in part because of the reliance of indigenous peoples on European commodities, some anthropologists and historians nevertheless suggest that this was a period of 'non-directed cultural change' (Miller 2000). Aboriginal lifestyles were central to the fur trade, and Europeans generally did not want to tamper with a successful system of commodity production (Satzewich and Wotherspoon 1993).

While economic factors were no doubt important in the formulation of state policy, another explanation can be found in the nature of colonial and absolutist regimes themselves. As discussed earlier, colonial states, in contrast to modern states that were to succeed them, had frontiers instead of borders. While 'frontier' refers to an area on the peripheral regions of a state (not necessarily adjoining another state) in which political authority of the centre is diffuse or thinly spread, borders are precisely demarcated boundaries, and the encompassing

territory is subject to a high level of surveillance and internal pacification by the political administration.

The distinction between borders and frontiers is crucial to understand the impact of colonists over the lives of indigenous peoples in the period prior to modern state-building. Unlike their modern state successors, European settlers tolerated a plurality of ways of life on the social, cultural, and political frontiers of the state and, thus, the autonomy of indigenous peoples. For that matter, these states did not have the administrative capacities to do otherwise. The notion of the 'frontier' in British North America was captured not only by the Royal Proclamation of 1763, which 'reserved' lands for indigenous peoples that were not the territory of extant colonies, but also by the very existence of Rupert's Land, a massive territory owned and administered by the Hudson's Bay Company. The Royal Proclamation of 1763 recognized indigenous peoples as autonomous political communities. It is to Canada's First Nations peoples what the Sami codicil of 1751 is to the Sami.

Russia

In 1581, Yermak Timofeyevich crossed the Ural Mountains, marking the start of sustained relations between the peoples of Siberia and those of European Russia. The conquest of Siberia marked the beginning of huge changes for the inhabitants of the northern part of Siberia, such as the Evenki, Nenets, Yakuts, Yukagir, and Chukchi among others and later on the Yupik and Aleut people. During expansion of the Russian empire in the 17th Century, indigenous peoples experienced population losses of 30 to 40 per cent due to epidemics, wars and habitat reduction. The Yukagir population, alone, for instance, fell from 4,500 by the 17th Century to approximately 1,500 in 2002, mainly as a result of smallpox and environmental degradation of traditional territories. Colonial policy led to the transition from hunting to herding on the Siberian tundra.

However, as was the experience in the previous cases, state policy afforded considerable autonomy within Aboriginal communities, while encouraging change in Aboriginal ways of life. One key difference between Tsarist colonial administration and the pattern experienced in Northern America needs to be highlighted. In Tsarist Russia, the fur trade was less of a trade than the coercive extraction of furs from indigenous peoples. Like the French and the British in Canada, the Russians constructed a series of forts called *ostrogs* along strategic waterways across Siberia. These fortified trading posts served as collection points of *yasak*,

which was a tribute imposed on indigenous peoples to be paid in furs – primarily sable. To ensure the collection of furs, hostages were often taken and held in the forts until the tribute was paid. Communities that refused to pay *yasak* were subject to military force. These differences in the treatment of indigenous people in the fur trade reflected broader economic differences between Western and Eastern Europe. While trade, exchange, and market relations were growing in Western Europe, feudalism and serfdom showed no signs of waning in Russia.

In all other respects however, *absolutist* Russia pursued a paternalistic policy of protection of indigenous peoples from the increasingly dominant Europeans. Indigenous peoples subject to the payment of the *yasak* tribute were to be protected from Russian 'thievery' (violation of the Tsar's decrees) and corrupting vices. No tobacco or liquor was to be sold to them; no gambling was allowed; and no 'insults' (*obidy*) of any kind were to be tolerated. The Russian people were to stay away from the indigenous people subject to the payment of the *yasak* tribute. Moreover, in an otherwise repressive regime such as Tsarist Russia, indigenous peoples were often not subject to the same laws as were Russians. The case of murder poignantly highlights the difference: an Aboriginal murderer had to compensate the relatives of the victim but remained alive, whereas a Russian convicted for a similar crime was condemned to die. Finally, there were some areas, such as Chukotka, over which the Tsarist regime claimed domination, but which were never conquered, let alone colonized, until the Soviet period.

Alaska

In '*The Alaska Natives'*, Fae L. Korsmo (1994) introduces Russian America in this way:

> When Vitus Bering and Alexei Chirikov and their crews landed on the Alaskan coast in 1741, they opened the way for more than [half] a century of Russian fur trade. Russia extended its empire to Alaska as part of the sweep across Siberia. Whereas peasants were brought to till the soil and colonize Siberia farming made little headway in Alaska. Few Russians actually settled in Alaska. Instead, the sea otter became the main [focus] of the Russian hunter-traders….The Russians forced the Aleuts to hunt sea otters and fur seals for them, taking advantage of the expertise and equipment the Aleuts had developed over thousands of years of living in their marine environment. As a result of the harsh treatment as well as new diseases brought from the European continent, the Aleut population declined by at least 80 per cent during the first and second generations of Russian contact (Fortuine 1989; Gibson 1989; and Veltre 1990, cited in Korsmo 1994).

Cultural change also followed, as male hunters were taken from their homes, leaving women and children to hunt. Settlement patterns changed, and Russian Orthodoxy replaced traditional spiritual beliefs (Korsmo 1994). Other coastal peoples – such as the Koniag, Yupik, Kenaitze, and Tlingit, were affected by the presence of Russians as well. Although, as Russian interests were tied up with the hunting of seal and sea otter, indigenous peoples living in the Far North and interior regions of Alaska had minimal contact with Russians.

In spite of the harsh treatment of the Aleuts, the Russians accepted Creoles (people with mixed Aboriginal and Russian heritage) as Russian subjects and devoted significant energy to teaching and preserving the Aleut language (Black 1990; Dauenhauer 1990 cited in Korsmo 1994). This may be explained as an extension of the Russian form of colonialism, whereby local leaders who were willing to cooperate were co-opted, their followers *integrated* – not assimilated – into Russian society (Svensson 1978, cited in Korsmo). Simply put, assimilation was not the basis of Russian indigenous policy.

In 1799, the Russian-American Company was established as a hybrid governmental and economic organization in Alaska (Korsmo 1994). The classification system used in its charter became an important source of knowledge for the United States when it purchased Alaska from Russia in 1867. Neither Russia, nor the United States consulted the societies living in Alaska before making the transaction, and some indigenous people in Alaska today continue to wonder how Russia could ever have sold Alaska, of which it never had legitimate possession (Pullar 1991, cited in Korsmo 1994).

> In any case, the Treaty of Cession between Russia and the United States recognized three groups of Alaskan people: (1) Russian subjects who preferred to retain their allegiance and were permitted to return to Russia within three years; (2) Russian subjects who preferred to remain in Alaska and enjoy the rights and immunities of US citizens; and (3) the uncivilized tribes who would be 'subject to such laws and regulations as the United States may from time to time, adopt to aboriginal tribes of that country'[3] (Korsmo 1994).

According to Korsmo (1994), the indigenous people of Alaska did not sign a treaty with Russia or the United States surrendering their Aboriginal rights.

[3] Between the double quotation marks is an excerpt from the Treaty of Cession (15 Stat. 539), Article III, as quoted from *United States v. Berrigan*, 2 Alaska Reports, 445 (1905); (Korsmo 1994).

> Immediately after the 1867 Treaty of Cession, the United States occupied Alaska militarily…The 1884 Organic Act ended military rule in Alaska and made Alaska a customs district…(Naske 1985, cited in Korsmo 1994).
>
> With regard to Native rights, US rule consisted of a mixture of neglect, assimilation and segregation (Korsmo 1994).

In sum, the colonial regimes in Northern America, Scandinavia, Greenland and Russia increasingly affected the lives of indigenous peoples during the period prior to state formation. Nevertheless, indigenous peoples remained largely self-determining, although their traditional livelihood and numbers were influenced by the colonial policy of southern migrants.

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Glossary of terms

Absolutism	a political theory that absolute power should be vested in one or more rulers; government by an absolute ruler or authority; despotism.
Absolutist	a ruler or authority completely free from constitutional or other restraint.
Autonomy	the quality or state of being self-governing; especially from alliances and other political and economic relations.
isolationist	a policy of national isolation by abstention from alliances and other political and economic relations.
Laudable	worthy of praise; commendable.
pacification	the act or process of pacifying; the state of being pacified; the act of forcibly suppressing or eliminating a population considered to be hostile.

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