A Century of Humans in the Arctic: Population of the Northern Regions during the International Polar Years

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Key questions

**Dependent variables**
- Total population of Arctic regions
- Percent indigenous
- Percent native-born
- Percent urban and settlement structure
- Sex ratio
- Age structure
- Educational levels

**Independent variables**
- Economic growth and natural resources
- Improved transportation
- The role of the state
Geographic coverage

Russian North is broader than Russian Arctic.

Attempt was made to have geographic comparability over time.
Data sources

• Population censuses conducted at or near IPY dates

• Supplement with other sources since many Arctic regions have poor coverage

• Arctic regions are often first where census is conducted

Alaska - 2010 Census is Under Way in Noorvik

Noorvik, Alaska, January 25, 2010 -- Census Bureau Director Robert Groves traveled by dog sled today and visited residents in the remote Alaskan village of Noorvik.
Emphasis was on synchronized meteorological, sea ice and other observations. Very few observations of humans in the Arctic.
Global population growth, 1750 to 2150

- It took all of human history to reach first billion people, in about 1804.
- At time of first IPY, total population was about 1.7 billion.
- Currently about 6.9 billion or 4 times the population at first IPY and more than double previous IPY in 1958.
Moved by the State: Perspectives on Relocation and Resettlement in the Circumpolar North
MOVE is part of the International Polar Year scientific programme

http://www.alaska.edu/boreas/move/

Dorms in Nuuk into which Greendlanders were resettled

Perhaps first recorded resettlement in the Arctic of 40 Nenets to Novaya Zemlya in order to buttress Tasrist government claims against Norway in 1910.

Total northern population less than 300,000
Second IPY (1932-1933)

• Just prior to start of major industrialization of the northern and Arctic regions

• Air travel became common which greatly opened up access to the Arctic

• Trans-Siberian railroad had been completed in 1904
An ethnographer’s early years: Boris Dolgikh as enumerator for the 1926/27 polar census

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First Soviet census in 1926
Codified ethnicity and ethnic homelands
THE NORTHERN SEA ROUTE 1920 - 1970

The development of the Northern Sea Route, linking European Russia by the shortest seaport to the Russian Far East, has enabled the vast resources of north Siberia to be opened up. In 1917 the route had already been charted. By 1970 it was a busy, wealthy waterway, its ice cleared by atomic-powered icebreakers, its trade continually expanding, and its full potential still to be realized.

A labour camp area in existence in the 1930's. Prisoners were engaged in hunting, farming and fishing. The temperature is below freezing point for an average of 250 days a year.

From Moscow to Tiks is 5,291 nautical miles via Archangel and the Northern Sea Route, 9,421 land by the most direct overland route via Tuktuk.

In 1921 Canadian flags were raised here, when a Canadian expedition claimed the island for the British crown. In 1923 a Soviet icebreaker took the Canadian claim, and raised the Soviet flag. Soviet sovereignty was fully recognized by 1945.

O'Kion, stores and bases established on the Siberian rivers by the Northern Sea Route administration 1920 - 1925

Shipyarding centres serving the Route from 1937

Coal basins whose fuller exploitation since 1950 has only been possible by using the Route

Principal ports in operation since 1970

Number of days during the ice-free season on which logis is a common experience to navigation. The ice-free season lasts for a minimum of 150 and a maximum of 210 days. Since 1965 the use of atomic powered icebreakers has greatly increased the period of navigation.

The principal waterways of the Northern Sea Route.

Headquarters of the Committee for the Northern Sea Route (Komseaprom) set up in 1920. Replaced in 1932 by the Northern Sea Route Administration (Gosseaprom). Gosseaprom's work included geological prospecting, fishery management, the raising of winds, the development of the fur industry and the setting up of port and wharf facilities both on the Route and along the main Siberian rivers.

The first sea journey from Murmansk to Vladivostok to be done in a single season took place in 1932. The 13,000 miles from Murmansk to Vladivostok was half the distance via either Suez or South Africa.
International Geophysical Year (1957-1958)

- Occurred during Cold War
- Gave impetus to space exploration
- Little emphasis on humans in the Arctic
Population Growth in Selected Northern Cities in Russia, 1897 to 2002

Murmansk

Noril'sk

Population of Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug and Novy Urengoy, 1926 to 2009 (thousands)
Fourth IPY (2007-2008)

• Much more of a human and indigenous element than previous IPYs
• Much more research on human issues in Arctic
Estimates of the Northern and Arctic Populations at the IPYs

- Total northern population of 11.6 million
  - Versus roughly 300,000 at first IPY

- Total Arctic population of 4.0 million from Arctic Human Development Report
  - Nearly double since third IPY when it was 2.3 million
  - More than ten times size of first IPY
Population in Greenland, 1781-2005

Source: Rasmus Ole Rasmussen
• Alaska’s population growth has been fueled by natural resources and militarization

• State has among the highest shares of persons born elsewhere
Combined Population of the Canadian Territories

- Non-indigenous population on decline since 1991
- Relatively continuous increase in indigenous population since 1911
Russia put many people into the Arctic and North, first through Gulag labor and later with wage incentives.
Most Arctic regions are predominantly male because of industrial structure.
Characteristics of Arctic populations

• Arctic populations tend to younger, more educated, more urban

• Much explained by Arctic being composed of migrants
Conclusions

• The population of the Arctic/northern regions have increased significantly since the first IPY, due to in-migration

• Better title might have been “A Century of Southerners in the Arctic” or “A Century of Migration into the Arctic”

• Hard to predict future population of the Arctic from climate change as usual demographic rules don’t apply
Thank you

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