Articulating the concept of security assemblage: the territorial dimension (with special reference to the Shtockman gas field and the Murmansk region)

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Shtokman begins

The field discovered in 1988
Located 550 km from the shore
Initial geological reserves estimated at 3.8 trillion m$^3$ of gas and 37 million tons of gas condensate
The sea depth is 340 m
The wave height is up to 27 m
The annual temperature range from $-50^\circ C$ to $+33^\circ C$
The presence of icebergs weighing up to 4 million tons

Assemblage is a process of “arranging, organizing and fitting together.” (Livesey, 2010:18).

Security assemblage time framework is 2007-2012
- Dmitry Medvedev becomes president (2008-2012)
- 2007 - 2012 the first phase of Shtokman field development
- 2012 the Shtokman project is frozen

The Arctic as “a strategic resource base of the Russian Federation providing the solution to problems of social and economic development of the country.” (The basics of the state policy of the RF in the Arctic until 2020 and for a further perspective, 2008)

National security, economic security, energy security, military security.

Does human security have any place in security assemblage created around Shtokman?
The driving forces of assemblage: desires and rules

- Desire as force that forms intensities and connections within an assemblage.

“The rationality, the efficiency, of an assemblage does not exist without the passions the assemblage brings into play, without the desires that constitute it as much as it constitutes them.” (ATP: 399).

- “It is commonly believed by petroleum, geologists, investors, speculators, governments, and peoples of northern regions that the on- and offshore oil and gas resources of the Arctic constitute a source of vast future wealth.” (Conant, 1992: 180).

- “If the most active people have the ability and the desire to do so, they will leave if they are not able to live well here, are unsure of tomorrow and that their children, after studying somewhere, will return to be with them. The least active part of the population has a slightly different mood, but still quite a joyless one. We will live the rest of our days here. Well, people like me. We have nowhere to go. Who needs us elsewhere? After you turn forty it is too late to twitch. Let our children get education and not be returned. They have nothing to do here. Wherever, in other regions of Russia, more interesting life awaits them, and they will fulfil themselves there.”(Respondent 6).

Rules of assemblage:

- «Vertical power structure» as a governance model
- (In)security of expectation (state dreams and regional reality)
- Everyone for themselves
- • State: securitization of oil and gas resources
- • People in the region: «do not trust anyone, do not be afraid of anyone, do not ask for anything»
“A territory can be a system of any kind: conceptual, linguistic, social, or affective” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 508).

Territory as “land” versus territory as “earth” (ATP)

Function of territory: to stabilise an assemblage (time and space); to articulate the concept of a state (territory as earth and territory as land); to “accompany” changes (Message, 2010: 281).

“For Russia, space is like a suitcase without a handle: it’s not easy to carry, but it would be a shame to throw it away” (Medvedev, 1999: 16).

Russia has “a deliberative cognitive lack of the concept of region, territory or district” (Zamyatin, 2003: 38). Any region can only exists as Russia “here and now”, as a totality.

“Atopic culture” (Medvedev, 1999: 18). Russia is lacking sense of space because of vast territory, big distances and undefined borders. “This characteristic reconciles Russians to the centralized government, and they have become accustomed to define their geographical surroundings according to administrative/territorial divisions, rather than by historical/cultural regions, as do the majority of the world’s nations” (Medvedev, 1999: 18).
A state perspective on a territory: territory as a land

- Attempts to define the Arctic:
  - Enumeration of the regions of the Far North and territories equivalent to the regions of the Far North was approved by the resolution of Council of Ministers of the USSR № 1029 (10.11.1967)
  - The basics of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic until 2020 and for a Further Perspective (2008) defined “The Arctic zone of the Russian Federation”
  - Presidential Decree ‘On the land territory of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation’, № 296 (02.05.2014)
- Attempts to reorganize the space:
  - Presidential Decree № 849, ‘On the Plenipotentiary Representative of the President of the Russian Federation in the Federal District’ (13.05. 2000)
Redefining space: Moscow – Shtokman-Teriberka

“Yes, it is a question of our existence, that we should not disappear from the face of the earth. We have a terrible demographic situation. At a birth of 5 people a year, up to 70 die. Understand? Two years ago, at a meeting, while the question of Vidyayevo and Teriberka was discussed, I presented, let’s say, a little analysis of the past five years. I showed that in the next 10 years Teriberka will be gone. It will die.” (Respondent 5).

“All companies and head offices are located in Moscow. The poor Moscow is already swollen with money. Tomorrow a social explosion may follow, which will be caused by a particular antagonism between the city and the rest of Russia.” (Respondent 13).
Shtokman in the land-and seascape: an escape from «land» to «earth»
Murmansk region as a periphery

- “Polyperiphery” (or “a conglomeration of peripheries”) (Medvedev, 1999: 17) as one of the burdens of Russian territory.

- “Russian space itself symbolizes and signifies the absolute, "total" power discourse in which power relations, relations of domination and subordination are the spatial relationships.” (Zamyatin, 2003: 40).

- Distance as a source of power, a source that contains forces uncontrollable by the state and therefore bearing chances for transformation and creation of something new.
Murmansk region as a transit region

“A picture existed in Soviet times, my grandmother told me about it. So it is a huge oil pipeline. It could be “Druzhba”, it could be something else. And on a side, there is a village, and a old granny, bent with a bundle of firewood, walks to her small hut. And a pipeline is passing by… so the pipeline will go, go past, Murmansk will get a little.” (Respondent 2).
Murmansk region as a «sacrifice zone» (Lerner 2010)

“actually people here are accustomed to the fact that we do not have everything in order with the environment. People always drove by Monchegorsk or Nickel, saw these moon landscapes. For fifty years people have already been living with nuclear icebreakers, standing almost in the city centre. So everything is quiet, everyone reacts calmly.” (Respondent 9).
Murmansk as a capital

“According to evaluation of some experts, in the next fifteen years Murmansk region will become one of the most investment-attractive regions not only in Russia, but possibly also in Europe ... The Murmansk transportation hub will be modernized, it is the project which is estimated at 310 billion rubles, which is comparable to the investments in the Olympics games in Sochi in 2014.” (Respondent 7).

Meanings assigned to a metropolis:
- power, glory, and richness
- freedom and ability to change
- a token of a lost paradise: Murmansk region as “a fish capital” of the Soviet Union
Murmansk as a borderland region

“Cooperation between the northern countries and the Murmansk region is more developed. There is a cooperation with the southern [regions] too, but they are too far away from us. We have a lot of common interest with the North, e.g. Finnmark. It is climate, roads, a kind of everyday moments. It plays a certain role. The relations become deeper, kinder, not so cold as they were before. Of course, in some critical situation the coldness appears again. Like for example the relation became colder when the war events were going on in Southern Ossetia.”

(Respondent 4).
The strategy of the socio-economic development of the Murmansk region: from a draft to a final version

The quality of life achieved in Northern Europe as a reference for the draft of strategy. “These countries are geographically the closest neighbours of the region, they have similar climatic conditions, a similar resource and ethno-cultural potential. They are connected to the region by close historical and contemporary political and socio-economic relations in the framework of cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic region - a unique project of international cooperation in the North, which has been successfully developing for more than 15 years with the active participation of the Murmansk region.” (MS 2009: 5).

“International cooperation became vital for the region. At the beginning of the XXI century Murmansk region faced several challenges, which are also on the agenda in the macro-region: ecology and sustainable exploitation of the resources of the ocean and land, transport politics and security, youth and social policy, energy, cooperation in the field of emergency response, research and education, cooperation in economics (in particular in forestry and custom regulations).” (MS 2010: 26).

“The state of closeness and isolation of the country and the region seems to be gone forever” (MS 2010: 25).
Redefining the space of state security

- The BEAR framework provided not only direct money to the Murmansk region, but also the possibilities to tackle soft security issues in the region (in terms of money, knowledge, expertise, and practise). Due to the experience, accumulated through cooperation, the region felt more secure within the non-security BEAR framework than in the security framework of the national state. BEAR allowed to prioritise people and their problems, as well as allowed the region to gain valuable experience and significance within this framework through various connections established through joint projects in education, business, culture, environment etc.

- The Barents region has become a resource for Murmansk and helped to address challenges, important in the regional context (environmental issues, economy and business, infrastructure). As a result, the Barents region has become a source of security in the Murmansk region.

- Human security appears as a side effect of a broader security agenda in the Murmansk region, and becomes a very important issue at the regional level.
Thank you for your attention!