

Different narratives form the self-understanding of Russians within a diverse country and diverse world.

In *The rush for the north pole* the Russian understanding of Arctic geopolitics are deciphered. Drawing from extensive newspaper analyses, the author shows, as in his other books, the high degree of suspicion towards the other Arctic states as to their motives in the Arctic. In order to further make this feature understandable, Hønneland does not shy away from citing a critical article in *Kommersant* in its entirety directly after the infamous 2007 flag planting (see page 52–55). But all in all it is the narrative of NATO which is ‘surreptitiously preparing for the rush for the Arctic, while Russia insists on international cooperation and open dialogue’ (page 55) which steers Russia’s discourse and foreign policy in the Arctic.

*Delimitation of the Barents Sea*, as the title implies, covers the Russian reactions prior and after the signing of the Norwegian-Russian Barents Sea delimitation treaty in 2010. As such, the chapter draws heavily from *Arctic politics* (Hønneland 2014) by using the same interview excerpts and following the same structure of the respective chapter in *Arctic politics*. But while earlier Hønneland’s account was more based on description and his own views on the matter, the present chapter has been significantly expanded with more information and data as well as substantiated with IR theory. In a sense, the data provided in *Arctic politics* could therefore be considered a prelude to or a teaser of what this volume has to offer. Naturally, if one has read both books there will be some overlap in content, but given the different foci of the books and the further expansion of the data, one is not left disappointed.

Similarly, the chapter *Management of marine resources* is partly taken over verbatim from *Making fishery agreements work* (Hønneland 2013) and constitutes a compressed version of the book. And as the previous chapter, the data presented is not necessarily new, but significantly expanded through more details and the theoretical underpinning. The difficult and shaky relationship between Russian and Norwegian negotiators, commentators and diplomats becomes ever more apparent in this chapter. And once again, it seems that suspicion is a driving force behind Russian narratives that constitute a discourse of opposition regarding fisheries management in the Barents Sea.

*Region building, identity formation* draws from *Borderland Russians* (Hønneland 2010). This chapter depicts and analyses self-understanding of Russians in the Barents region *vis-à-vis* the proximity to Norway. It becomes clear that while active region-building has created the Barents Euro-Arctic Region

(BEAR), this does not mean that it is to be equated with the historical identity the region shares, first and foremost in the form of the Pomors. To the contrary, in spite of regional political cooperation, cultural exchange and environmental problem-solving (Sellheim 2013), Hønneland shows how the fostering of Barents-identity can lead to significant problems with the Russian authorities, once again sparked by a fear of the West aiming to undermine Russian integrity.

In the last chapter of this engaging book, *Arctic talk, Russian policy*, the author links the findings of the foregoing, recalling that the ‘sense of self, or identity, is part of the fabric that constitutes action, foreign policy included’ (page 145). To this end, actions taken by Russia in the Arctic become explainable and in order to clearly do so, Hønneland has included short tables of key events after the end of the Cold War for the Arctic Ocean, the Barents Sea and the Barents Region after which he lets the ‘story-tellers’, meaning key articles in the Russian press, speak themselves, once again linking the narratives of identity and Russianness with actions within foreign policy.

The author ends the book with the words: ‘The Arctic is the ultimate commonplace for the cultivation of Russianness. [...] It is the venue for the big epic dramas in life, a ballroom floor for the wild Russian dance – through the ages, across the plains’ (page 170). *Russia and the Arctic* certainly makes exactly this ‘Russian dance’ understandable for those that have been wondering about Russia’s actions not only in the Arctic, but also elsewhere in the world. And in combination with Hønneland’s unmistakable personal style, which this reviewer is very fond of, *Russia and the Arctic* should be read and be an inherent part of the book shelves of those interested in Arctic politics, geopolitics and International Relations in general. (Nikolas Sellheim, Faculty of Law, University of Lapland, PO Box 122, 96101 Rovaniemi, Finland ([nikolas.sellheim@ulapland.fi](mailto:nikolas.sellheim@ulapland.fi))).

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**The socialist way of life in Siberia: transformation in Buryatia.** Melissa Chakars. 2014. Budapest, New York: Central European University Press. 320 p, illustrated, hardcover. ISBN 978-963-386-013-7. \$55.00 / €42.00 / £35.00

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The formation of ethnic identities is influenced at the same time by state discourses and local experiences. It is, however, hard to draw a line between ‘ideology’ and ‘daily life’, as Mark Bassin and Catriona Kelly (2012: 9) point out, because everyday practices are often shaped by relationships with political institutions. Melissa Chakars, the author of *The social-*

*ist way of life in Siberia*, focuses on this complex interplay of ideology and everyday life in Buryatia (south-central part of Siberia) pondering the following questions: Who are the Buryat people? How were their identities shaped by Soviet-time reforms? Answers to these questions are sought from a rich compilation of sources ranging from statistical and archival data and publications in Buryat newspapers to transcripts of Soviet TV-shows.

The theme of ideology and daily life in Buryatia was primarily developed by Caroline Humphrey in her famous anthropological study of the *Karl Marx* collective farm (1983) and its updated edition *Marx went away – but Karl stayed behind* (1998). In her 1983 work Humphrey argues that the categories existing in Buryat society long before the Soviet time

were applied to new relationships, but preserved their meaning. The updated edition reveals, conversely, that while the Marxist ideology behind the collective farming disappeared, the shadow of it still remains in people's daily practices (Humphrey, 1998). While the fieldwork of Caroline Humphrey took place in the 1960s – mid-1990s, Melissa Chakars has the opportunity to study Soviet Buryatia in retrospect – analyzing it more than 20 years after the collapse of the Soviet Union. This temporal separation could provide additional insights to the discussion on Buryat Soviet identities.

*The socialist way of life in Siberia* starts with the story of a Buryat woman Darizhap Zham'ianova, a participant of the local radio program back in 1978, who describes how her life – the path of a highly educated successful scientist – is very different from the life of her mother, a rural woman who had to struggle every day to survive. The story of Zham'ianova may serve as an illustration of Soviet propaganda, but it is far more complex than that, as it reflects the real changes in the region and the opportunities which many Buryat people used in order to improve their lives. The book is devoted to people similar to Zham'ianova and their experiences during the second half of the twentieth century. Chakars convincingly argues that the Buryats were not simply passive victims of state ideology; they actively engaged in the building of their new life in the Soviet Union. The book highlights three main reasons for the appreciation many Buryats felt towards 'the socialist way of life': pre-Soviet history and the existence of an intellectual class long before the 1917 Revolution; the availability and attractiveness of educational and professional opportunities; and, finally, the emergence of institutions that encouraged Buryats to follow a prescribed notion of success.

The first two chapters are focused on Buryat experiences in tsarist Russia and the early years of the Soviet period. Chakars reflects on the increasing state involvement in the daily lives of Buryats; starting with tributary relations, then the growing influence on Buryat institutions and the design of legislation, and finally the Soviet consolidation and modernization plans. However, long before the 1917 Revolution, the Buryats had their educated intellectual class, mainly due to the large amount of Buddhist monasteries (*datsans*), which became educational centres of the area (page 17). In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Buryat intelligentsia offered various ideas for the modernization of the region, though many of these options were simply dismissed with the strengthening of Soviet rule.

The third chapter titled *The new Buryats* is primarily devoted to the opportunities offered to the Buryat people alongside the new Soviet rule. A large influx of Russian industrial migrants into the region after the 1930s diminished the percentage of Buryat population, but at the same time created opportunities for social mobility. As ethnic Russians dominated industry in the republic, the Buryats came to occupy a number of cultural, educational, political jobs. This shift was especially noticeable among Buryat women who were practically not present in many professions before the 1960s due to their low literacy rates and poor Russian language skills; however, by 1989 more Buryat women than men had higher education degrees (page 106). While the author points out rightly that Buryats were overrepresented in many professional and political positions, in 1939–1989 they comprised only slightly more than 20% of the total population (compared to around 70% of Russians), and this proportion may make the reader wonder to what extent the Buryats could truly influence the policies of the republic.

Chapters four, five and six concentrate on different forms of institutions and practices engaging Buryats in the Soviet ideology: standardized education, reforms in literature and new forms of media. Soviet-time ideological shifts influencing public opinion can be illustrated with the story of the Buryat folklore epic poem *Geser* (page 165–175); in this reviewer's opinion, this is one of the most vivid examples in the book. The research on *Geser* and its depictions in literary works were initially supported by the Soviet authorities as it went alongside the general discourse on the importance of the leader in history. The main character of *Geser* gained a new meaning during the war, serving as a model of brave patriotic fighter. However, in 1946 the newly appointed first secretary of Buryatia criticized *Geser* for having nationalist implications; following the changing course, many politicians, scholars, writers who had praised *Geser* in previous years started criticizing it harshly. The poem was officially censored until its 'rehabilitation' in 1951, when the research on *Geser* continued. The story of *Geser* is just one example of the interrelations between the Soviet system and educational and cultural institutions. While the ideology shaped literature, education and media, they supported, grounded and promoted the ideology. Again, Chakars points out that the Buryats were not simple receivers of this information; they took part in shaping the curriculum, producing literary works, or refining the messages of newspapers, radio and television.

In the conclusion Melissa Chakars returns to the question which was posed in the opening paragraphs: how was the Buryat identity shaped by Soviet modernization? The author argues that although the Soviet period resulted in significant language loss, at the same time it created new identity markers through literature, media and institutions of cultural knowledge. The post-Soviet years marked significant changes in Buryat society, primarily a great resurgence of Buddhism and shamanism, as well as revitalization campaign for the Buryat language. However, the new influences could not simply erase the effects of Soviet modernization. While the Buryats could not escape engagement with modernization policies, they took part in the implementation of these policies and the construction of their identity under the new Soviet rule. They chose their paths and took advantage of the benefits the state offered. While these choices resulted from local experiences, they were at the same time strongly influenced by dominant discourses. This conclusion illustrates the complex intertwining of ideology and daily life of Soviet citizens.

The book is recommended to everybody interested in the history of Buryatia and Siberia; it provides a strong example of Soviet national policies and their effects on ethnic minorities. The study analyses extremely rich data and pictures a vivid image of Soviet Buryatia in all its controversy. However, as similar experiences were shared by many other ethnicities in the Soviet Union, sometimes the book lacks comparative perspective. At the same time, the author states that 'Soviet modernization produced identity confusion and transformation for people across the Soviet Union throughout its history' (page 262) – the case of Buryatia was definitely not unique. Following that, it would probably be useful to draw more parallels, not only with other regions in Siberia, but also with the areas in other parts of the country such as, for example, The Republic of Karelia. Still, this in-depth study of 'the new Buryats' will for sure provide valuable insights for those researchers who are engaged with other national minorities in the Soviet Union (Anna Varfolomeeva, Central European University, Nador utca 9, 1051 Budapest, Hungary ([varfolomeeva\\_anna@phd.ceu.edu](mailto:varfolomeeva_anna@phd.ceu.edu))).

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**Biogeographic Atlas of the Southern Ocean.** Claude de Broyer and Philippe Koubbi (editors). 2015. Cambridge: Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research, xii + 498 p, illustrated, hardcover. ISBN 978-0-948277-2-3. \$80. doi:[10.1017/S0032247415000984](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0032247415000984)

The Census of Marine Life (CoML) was an international decadal research programme posing the simple question of 'how many species were there in the sea?' The question may be simple but the answer was certainly not.

To even start moving towards the CoML goal required an international sampling effort in some of the world's remotest oceans supplemented by an extensive taxonomic and systematic analysis in the laboratories of museums, research institutions and universities. The core of the CoML was the field programmes dedicated to different geographic or ecosystem aspects of the marine environment. The Biogeographic Atlas of the Southern Ocean is a record of the research achieved by the Census of Antarctic Marine Life (CAML). To study biodiversity in the Antarctic was particularly apposite as there is the physical enigma of where the western Antarctic is one of the most rapidly warming marine regions on earth, the eastern Antarctic is staying thermally steady or even decreasing in temperature.

The Biogeographic Atlas of the Southern Ocean is massive. It is printed on just under A3 size art paper and weighs in at 3.4kg! The first quick look through the Atlas and it is apparent that this is a significant repository of information. The text is supported by abundant coloured diagrams of distribution patterns as well as photographs and line drawings of individual species.

Part 1 is an outline of the history of biogeography in the Southern Ocean up to the turn of the century followed by a brief introduction to CAML. Part 2 describes the data collection and mapping. An important aspect of data handling in CoML was standardization of methodology so data could be compared within CAML and was also clear for future users. Immediately we are presented with taxonomic maps for most of the major Antarctic marine taxa which identifies the uneven knowledge of distribution of taxa and regions round the Southern Ocean. Part 3 develops the evolutionary setting together with the palaeo-construction of the Southern Ocean. Part 4 gives the modern environmental setting including benthic substrata and the distribution of water masses. This chapter is particularly rich in excellent figures that will be hugely beneficial for professionals working in the Southern Ocean and to undergrad and postgrad students with an interest in the region.

Parts 5 to 8 get to the detail of the biogeographic distributions of marine flora and fauna in the Southern Ocean. Part 5 outlines the biogeography of 31 taxa of benthic plants and invertebrates. There are few new descriptions per se as the main aim was to show the distribution of the different taxa throughout the Southern Ocean. Most major taxa are covered although I was a little disappointed that the holothurians and ophiuroids were missing. However, I was pleased to see a section on deep-sea and chemosynthetic environments, the latter only recently discovered in the Southern Ocean. The biogeography of pelagic and sea-ice biota is covered in Part 6, fish in part 7 and birds and mammals in Part 8. All the papers in these four parts are richly illustrated with distribution figures some showing lots of coverage, others very little indicating absence or our continuing poor knowledge.

Part 9 is about changes and conservation in the Southern Ocean. This was an important section and I was not sure why it was before part 10 which took an overview by looking at the pattern and processes in Southern Ocean biogeography. Part 11 is a brief commentary on the Atlas and Part 12 looks to the future for Southern Ocean Biogeography.

And there is no doubt there is a great future in understanding the biogeography of the Southern Ocean. We often think of the Southern Ocean as an isolated region and the increase in resolution of sampling programmes is demonstrating this is a significant reservoir of species. There is also increasing evidence that speciation into the deeper water of the World's oceans arises from the waters surrounding Antarctica. However, this high biodiversity lies under the shadow of the potential impact of climate change and the potential invasion of predatory species at present excluded from Southern Ocean waters by the low temperatures.

This Atlas of the Southern Ocean is a rich source of the most up to date data on biogeography. It is a valuable document for the professional researcher and for the enthusiastic undergrad or postgrad student. Most, I expect, will download pdfs of the separate chapters as the the printed volume in total is very heavy to handle (the report can be accessed online at [www.atlas.biodiversity.aq](http://www.atlas.biodiversity.aq)). The editors and the authors should be congratulated on compiling such an authoritative volume that is well written and wonderfully illustrated. CAML, and the Census of Marine Life programme, have proved to be significant drivers in our understanding of marine biodiversity and will stand as significant benchmarks for many years to come (Emeritus Professor Paul Tyler, University of Southampton, NOC, Southampton SO14 3ZH UK ([pat8@noc.soton.ac.uk](mailto:pat8@noc.soton.ac.uk))).