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**THE “TURN TO A HUMAN” IN PROJECTS AND PRACTICES OF
URBANIZATION OF THE SOVIET FAR NORTH IN THE 1950-1960S**

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The processes of industrialization and subsequent urbanization of the the Soviet North that took place in the 20th century led to radical changes in the region and its integration into the country's economic and social area. The tasks of the industrial development of the North were directly related to the creation of a living environment, because by virtue of economic and cultural ideas of the developed area, a permanent settlement was created for each industrial site.

While the geopolitical interests and actions of the Soviet Union in the Arctic traditionally attract researchers, the issues of the urban development of the northern territories have only recently been studied. The research focus on urbanization in this case is of great importance, since the creation of cities was the most important tool for the dissemination of certain administrative, social and cultural models, thus linking newly developed areas with the center of the country. Urbanization was a process through which a huge region of the Far North materially and symbolically became a "full-fledged" part of the Soviet Union, which was directly related to scientific discussions and projects of its future domestication.

An analysis of the discussions that began in the 1950s on the need to change the living environment for Soviet citizens in the Far North refers to broader issues of social change in the Thaw period, when a lot of attention on the conditions of human life and attempts at their rational transformation comes to the agenda in many disciplines. Therefore, it is important to identify what actors influenced the development of these processes, how influential they were, what were the reasons for the successes of some projects and the failures of others, and what were the consequences of their implementation.

The turn towards the social issues of the North in the mid-1950s was due to the active work of various scientists: urban planners, acclimatization specialists, economic geographers, sociologists and other experts whose work was related to the problems of creating a urban environment in the Far North. Consideration of the previously unexplored aspects of the social history of science and Soviet

architectural practice on the example of discussions on the new principles of creating a more "humane" residential environment in the Far North not only allows us to identify new actors, but also to trace the relationship between those organizations whose activities have not so far been considered together. The study of scientific discussions and projects for the creation of a new environment in northern cities in the 1950s-1960s makes it possible to consider the important question for the history of science of the relationship between science, state and institutional policy, and the professional and personal ambitions of researchers. The disclosure of this plot also fits into the broader context of changing the political and social notion of the Far North during the Thaw years, and various modernist projects for its arrangement can be considered an expression of it.

Literature Review

The problem of transforming the principles of development and urbanization of the Far North in the 1950s-1960s, as well as attempts to develop and implement a special approach to the design of northern cities, have not yet been at the center of scientific historical research. The topic under study is at the intersection of several broad contexts. On the one hand, it is important to consider these processes within the history of the development of the Soviet Far North as one of the Soviet colonization projects of incorporating the region into a social, economic and symbolic space.¹ On the other hand, in order to disclose the reasons for changing the principles of organization of the urban environment in the Far North, it is necessary to take into account the new housing policy of N.S. Khrushchev that radically changed the architectural practices and position of architects in the USSR and influenced the daily urban culture and the problematization of urban development issues. In addition, it is important to take into account the changing

¹ *Sibir' v sostave Rossiyskoy imperii*. (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2007).

role and importance of expert knowledge in the USSR, as well as the impact of social changes after the Stalin period.

Traditionally, the attention of researchers is drawn to the consideration of the official policy of the USSR in the Arctic.² Most of the works often consider the process of development of the North either only "from above" or only "from below", focusing attention on the government actions to develop the region or on the population's response to these measures.³ The incorporation of northern territories into the country's social fabric is usually described as a policy of "conquest" of nature, either viewed from the standpoint of economic colonialism, or embedded in a narrative describing the destructive social and environmental consequences of the development of the North.⁴

A large layer of literature is devoted to the activities of individual scientists and scientific institutions for the development of the Arctic.⁵ At the same time, the

² Nikolay P. Veretennikov, "Ekonomicheskaya i istoricheskaya retrospektiva Severnogo morskogo puti v XIX–XX vv.," in *Severnyy morskoy put': razvitie arkticheskikh kommunikatsiy v global'noy ekonomike «Arktika-2015»: VI Vserossiyskaya morskaya nauchno-prakticheskaya konferentsiya: materialy konferentsii*, Murmansk, 13–14 maya 2015 g., edited by Sergey Kozlenko, et al. (Murmansk: Izdatel'stvo MGTU, 2015); Vladislav I. Goldin, "Arktika v mezhdunarodnykh otnosheniyakh i geopolitike v 20 – nachale 21 veka: vekhi istorii i sovremennost'", *Vestnik Pomorskogo universiteta. Seriya: gumanitarnye i sotsial'nye nauki* 2 (2011): 22-34; *Razvitie Arktiki i pripolyarnykh regionov. Sbornik materialov Vserossiyskoy nauchno-prakticheskoy konferentsii*. (Ekaterinburg: Ural'skiy federal'nyy universitet imeni pervogo Prezidenta Rossii B.N. El'tsina, 2014); Anatoly M. Shelepov, et al. "Arktika. Istoricheskie aspekty osvoeniya i sovremennye problemy," *Vestnik Rossiyskoy voenno-meditsinskoy akademii* 1 (2014): 212-219.

³ Andy Bruno, "Industrial Life in a Limiting Landscape: An Environmental Interpretation of Stalinist Social Conditions in the Far North," *International Review of Social History* 55 (2010): 153-174; Mikhail Rozhanskiy. "«Ottepel'» na Sibirskom moroze. Ustnaya istoriya udarnykh stroek," *Otechestvennye zapiski* 50 (2012): 184–206.

⁴ Pier Horensma, *The Soviet Arctic* (New York, London: Routledge, 1991); John McCannon, *Red Arctic: Polar Exploration and the Myth of the North in the Soviet Union* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Paul R. Josephson, *The Conquest of the Russian Arctic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014).

⁵ Mikhail I. Belov, *Severnyy morskoy put'* (Leningrad: Morskoy transport, 1957); Vladimir P. Korovin, *Istoriya issledovaniya i osvoeniya Arktiki*. (Sankt Petersburg: RGGMU, 2013); Pavel S. Zhuravlev, Oksana V. Zaretskaya, et al., *Arktika v sisteme mezhdunarodnogo sotrudnichestva i sopernichestva* (Arkhangel'sk: Solti, 2015); John McCannon, *A History of the Arctic: Nature, Exploration and Exploitation* (London: Reaktion Books, 2012); Pey-Yi Chu, "Mapping

history of mastering of the Far North is usually written as a study of new lands and seas, and the issues of direct habitation of the developed territories and their social and infrastructural incorporation remain on the sidelines. Moreover, the consideration of the process of development of the Soviet North through the framework of state directives (and, accordingly, the activity of scientists as the embodiment of power initiatives) does not allow to assess the role of experts, discussions between different groups and the importance of their relatively independent research and creative decisions that largely influenced the practice of the Far North development.

Research on the development of the Soviet North is also characterized by a clear temporal imbalance: most of the works devoted to the history of the Far North are primarily focused on the period of the 1930s as the most heroic and event-rich time of the exploration of the Arctic, considering the later period only as a continuation of the principles laid down in the first stage.⁶ Throughout the twentieth century, the domination of the tasks of industrialization of the Far North remained unchanged, which affected the nature of development and financing of various sectors. However, despite certain similar tendencies, the principles of development of the Soviet North underwent serious changes in the second half of the twentieth century. The political and social reforms of the Thaw period, the reform of the Gulag system formed a request for the creation of new forms of management and development of the polar region, but the content and nature of these changes largely depended on the specific scientific institutions and people behind their development.

Permafrost Country: Creating an Environmental Object in the Soviet Union, 1920s–1940s,” *Environmental History* 20 (2015): 396-421.

⁶ Paul R. Josephson, *The Conquest of the Russian Arctic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014); John McCannon, *Red Arctic: Polar Exploration and the Myth of the North in the Soviet Union* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Albina I. Timoshenko, Alexander Elert, “Rossiya v Arktike: problemy izucheniya istoricheskogo opyta osvoeniya regiona,” *Gumanitarnye nauki v Sibiri* 23 (2016): 5-12.

There are several studies examining the change in administrative and social practices in the former northern camp settlements, which received city status in the 1950s.⁷ The issues of changing the living environment in northern cities are sometimes considered in modern anthropological works which describe the North as a multicultural and multiethnic region.⁸ These studies, in the first place, are devoted to the modern social problems of the North, but historical subjects are used in them to a greater extent as a prehistory of existing situations, and not as independent research problems.

In the recent years' historiography there have been several approaches to the disclosure of plots related to the history of post-war Soviet urban planning and architecture. One way is to consider Soviet urban development as an embodiment of state goals and initiatives.⁹ Another possible focus of research involves the disclosure of certain subjects through the prism of the development of basic theoretical urban planning concepts, discussions among specialists.¹⁰ This

⁷ Anatoly Shirokov, *Dal'stroy v sotsial'no-ekonomicheskom razvitii Severo-Vostoka SSSR. 1930–1950-e gg.* (Moskva: ROSSPEN, 2016); Alan Barenberg, *Gulag Town, Company Town: Forced Labor and Its Legacy in Vorkuta* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014); Jeff S. Hardy, *The Gulag after Stalin. Redefining punishment in Khrushchev's Soviet Union* (Cornell University Press, 2016), 19–57; Marc Elie, "Khrushchev's Gulag: the Soviet Penitentiary System after Stalin's death, 1953-1964," in *The Thaw: Soviet Society and Culture during the 1950s and 1960s.* ed.by Denis Kozlov and Eleonor Gilburd. (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2013), 109-142.

⁸ Alla Bolotova, "Gosudarstvo, geologi i kolonizatsiya prirody v SSSR," *Neprikosnovennyy zapas* 2 (2006): 68–84; Idem, "Loving and Conquering Nature: Shifting Perceptions of the Environment in the Industrialized Russian North," *Europe-Asia Studies* 64 (2012): 645-671; *Krayniy Sever: osobennosti truda i sotsializatsii cheloveka – Biografiya, vakhtovyy trud i sotsializatsiya cheloveka v severnom industrial'nom gorode Materialy nauchno-prakticheskoy konferentsii v g. Novyy Urengoy, Rossiya, 4–6 dekabrya 2008.* Ed.by F. Shtammler i G. Eyll'mshteyner-Saksinger. (Novyy Urengoy, 2010).

⁹ Mark G. Meerovich, *Nakazanie zhilishchem: zhilishchnaya politika v SSSR kak sredstvo upravleniya lyud'mi (1917 – 1937 gody)* (Moskva: ROSSPEN, 2008); Mark G. Meerovich, Evgeniya V. Konyshcheva, Dmitry S. Khmel'nitskiy, *Kladbishche sotsgorodov: gradostroitel'naya politika v SSSR, 1928 – 1932 gg.* (Moskva: ROSSPEN, 2011); Evgeniya V. Konyshcheva, Mark G. Meerovich, *Ernst May i proektirovanie sotsgorodov v gody pervykh pyatiletok (na primere Magnitogorska)* (Moskva, Lenand, 2012).

¹⁰ Yuliya L. Kosenkova, *Sovetskiy gorod 1940kh – pervoy poloviny 1950kh godov. Ot tvorcheskikh poiskov k praktike stroitel'stva* (Moskva: LIBROKOM, 2008); Ibid, "Dolgiy put' k gorodu. K postanovke problemy izucheniya sovetskogo gradostroitel'stva 1950-nachala 1980-kh

approach, on the one hand, allows to overcome the view of the expert community as a passive monolith. However, the disclosure of the problem within the framework of the history of architecture can sometimes lead to increased attention only to internal professional discussions, to the detriment of the analysis of wider social and political contexts that have influenced them.

More promising is the approach that considers the mass construction of the 1950s through the prism of the interaction of power directives, the professional groups of experts at various levels, and also the agency of ordinary residents. The attention of researchers is increasingly drawn to issues related to the consequences of "de-Stalinization" in architecture, the directive transition to standardized construction after 1954.¹¹ At the same time, it is noticeable that researchers are more often interested in mass social consequences of the introduction of standardized housing construction, affecting, first of all, newcomers.¹² However, the government steps described above led, among other things, to a change in the role of the architects themselves, since this meant interference of the authorities even in artistic problems of stylistics in architecture. Moreover, most of the historical studies of late Soviet architectural practices are based on the material of central cities, while the influence of N.S. Khrushchev had various effects in different regions, including the Far North.

godov,” *Internet-vestnik VolgGASU. Ser.: Politematicheskaya* 17 (2011), URL: <http://www.nauka.x-pdf.ru/17politologiya/633666-1-udk-711401-kosenkova-dolgiy-put-gorodu-postanovke-problemi-izucheniya-sovetskogo-gradostroitelstva-1950-h-nachala.php>

¹¹ Mark B. Smith, *Property of Communists: The Urban Housing Program from Stalin to Khrushchev* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010); Steven Bittner, *The Many Lives of Khrushchev's Thaw: Experience and Memory in Moscow's Arbat* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008); Blair Rubble, “Ot “khrushcheb” k korobkam,” in *Zhilishche v Rossii: Vek 20. Arkhitektura I sotsial'naya istoriya* (Moskva: Tri kvadrata, 2002): 139 – 153.

¹² Christin Varga-Harris, “Homemaking and the Aesthetic and Moral Perimeters of the Soviet Home During the Khrushchev Era,” *Journal of Social History* 41 (2008): 561-589; Varga-Harris, “Forging citizenship on the home front: reviving the socialist contact and constructing Soviet identity during the Thaw,” in *The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization. Negotiating cultural and social change in the Khrushchev Era*, edited by Polly Jones. (London: Routledge, 2006), 101-116; Steven Harris, “In Search of ‘Ordinary’ Russia: Everyday life in the NEP, the Thaw, and the Communal Apartment” *Kritika* 6 (2005): 583-614.

The aim of the research is to analyze the formation of a new concept for the development and urbanization of the Far North of the USSR, the main focus of which was not only on the industrial development of the region, but also on the creation of settlements with favorable conditions for living in the Arctic climate.

To solve the problem posed, a consistent solution of several **research tasks** is proposed:

- to reveal the reasons for the increased attention to the problem of northern settlements by scientists, specialists and authorities in the 1950s;
- to analyze the transformation of the social and material environment of the settlements of the Far North after the reform of the Gulag system camps;
- to determine the impact of housing reform N.S. Khrushchev on the development of architecture and construction in the Far North of the USSR;
- to analyze how in the conditions of compulsory standard design in the 1950s, projects appearing in the walls of one of the central architectural institutes of the USSR embody the ideas of Western modernism and social design for the Far North;
- explore the role of international cooperation in the field of exploration and development of the Arctic and the North and the circulation of certain economic concepts and project proposals related to urban development;
- to trace how communication between experts in the center and locally was established, including how the modernist projects in the provinces were translated, interpreted and perceived, on whom the practice of projects implementation ultimately depended;
- to trace on the example of several projects all the stages of the circulation of new principles for the design of the residential environment in the Far North, developed by the employees of the Leningrad branch (Lenfilial) of the Academy of Construction and Architecture of the USSR - from the creation process to implementation attempts and assess their consequences.

The object of the research is a set of documents of the Soviet authorities and administration, scientific works, architectural projects, as well as sources of personal origin on the issues of development and creation of new industrial settlements in the Far North in the 1950s and 1960s. **The subject** of the research is the discussions about the new principles of development and urbanisation of the Soviet Far North, as well as the practice of creating an urban environment in the new settlements in the Soviet North in the 1950–1960s. Taking into account the experimental nature of planning,¹³ it can be conceptually considered not just as a momentary event, but as a process consisting of discussions and certain actions. Such a focus allows to analyze the creation of projects for the restructuring of Arctic cities as a result of multi-level discussions, the intersection of various scientific and public discourses, interpretations of the existing framework, so that the already developed at different stages plans could be blocked, changed or incurred with losses. The main focus of the research was not so much on the technical construction aspects of new projects as on the change in the conceptual framework for the creation of the northern city, which during the studied period is transformed from an "appendage" to an industrial enterprise into one of the variants of a full-fledged Soviet residential environment.

The geographic scope of the research is the territory of the Far North of the USSR. The term "Far North" has many definitions and geographical localizations, depending on various professional traditions, when administrative, social, economic or climatic factors may come to the fore in defining boundaries.¹⁴ At the same time, regardless of the exact boundaries that have been repeatedly reviewed during the 20th century, almost half of the territory of the USSR was considered to be areas of the Far North or equivalent to it. In the context of this study, the

¹³ Stefan Couperus, Liesbeth van de Grift and Vincent Lagendijk, "Experimental Spaces: A Decentred Approach to Planning in High Modernity," *Journal of Modern European History* 13, 4 (2015): 476-481.

¹⁴ Mikhail A. Tarakanov, "Evolyutsiya prostranstvennoy lokalizatsii ponyatiy «Krayniy Sever» i «Sever» v Rossii," *Natsional'nye interesy: priority i bezopasnost'* 28 (2010): 32-41.

boundaries of the climatic construction zone, allocated from the mid-1950s on the totality of soil and climate parameters, were used to determine the geographical scope, since it was precisely these boundaries that guided scientists in developing new city projects.¹⁵

The chronological scope of the research. A number of contemporary studies call into question the clear boundary between Stalin's time and the Thaw era, showing that many of the processes characteristic of the period of N.S. Khrushchev's rule, began to appear in the 1940s or early 1950s.¹⁶ These tendencies are also valid for the development of Soviet urban planning, since one of the symbols of the Thaw - a typical mass housing construction - began to be developed and implemented in the pre-war time, albeit on a small scale.¹⁷ The first studies and the search for new approaches to the creation of cities in the Far North also began as early as in 1947, when the Northern Committee of the Academy of Construction of the USSR was established in Leningrad and existed for several years. Therefore, the starting point of this study is the late 1940s. The upper chronological boundary of the research is 1968, when several projects of cities with artificial or improved microclimate for Yakutia were created and approved, which allows to fix a complex change in attitude towards the North and creating a residential environment of industrial cities.

The problem and novelty of the research. Projects to change the principles for the development of the Soviet Far North in the mid-1950s-late 1960s and create a new residential environment in northern cities have never been analyzed in the

¹⁵ Tatiana V. Rimskaya-Korsakova, "Struktura selitebnoy territorii naseleennykh mest Kraynego Severa," *Problemy Severa* 10 (1964): 60-63.

¹⁶ Julianne Furst, *Stalin's Last Generation: Soviet Post-War Youth and the Emergence of Mature Socialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Alan Barenberg, *Gulag town, Company town: Forced Labor and Its Legacy in Vorkuta* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014).

¹⁷ Mark B. Smith, *Property of Communists: The Urban Housing Program from Stalin to Khrushchev* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010); Yuliya Kosenkova, *Sovetskiy gorod 1940kh – pervoy poloviny 1950kh godov. Ot tvorcheskikh poiskov k praktike stroitel'stva* (Moskva: LIBROKOM, 2008).

research literature. At the same time, the projects of "special northern settlements" in the North, at first glance, atypical for their time and place of destination, were not a simple kind of utopian paper architecture, creativity for the sake of creativity. On the contrary, their creation was caused by a number of public changes in the 1950s, both in the Soviet Union and on a broader international scale. In many respects, the turn towards the social environment of the North was due to the active work of scientists: urban planners, acclimatization specialists, economic geographers, sociologists and other experts whose work was related to the problems of urbanization of the Far North. It was they who, from the 1950s, began to argue from different sides on the need for a drastic change in the urban concept of the Far North. The main focus of this research is shifted from the macro history of the development of the Soviet North, often designed exclusively through the prism of state directives, to the average level - reviewing the activities of various experts in order to identify and show the role of various institutional and individual actors and their interests, assess their influence and track connection between them. Instead of considering experts as direct executors of state initiatives, this work shows that they were the most important mediators between the state, Soviet society and the professional environment, carrying out a permanent link between state tasks, the public order and their professional ambitions.

The source base of the research consists of a collection of different types of unpublished and published sources. In developing the problem, it was of great importance to identify and introduce into scientific circulation archival materials deposited in 7 central and regional national archives: the State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF), the Russian State Archive of Economics (RGAE), the Russian State Archive of Social and Political History (RGASPI), the Central State Archive of scientific and technical documentation of St. Petersburg (TsGANTD SPb), Central State Archive of Literature and Arts of St. Petersburg (TsGALI SPb), National Archive of the Republics of Sakha (NARS), municipal archive of Mirny district of the Republic of Sakha (MAMDRS).

To analyze the official policy regarding the organization and management of cities in the Far North, assessing its effectiveness and awareness in the center of the situation on the ground, materials from the funds of the Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPSU for the RSFSR, stored in the Russian State Archive of Social and Political History (F.556) as well as the Fund of the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR (F.259) and the Supreme Soviet of the USSR (F. 7523), located in the State Archive of the Russian Federation. These funds contain numerous orders and resolutions of these bodies on the issue under study, correspondence with various ministries, departments and officials, reports on the situation from the sites.

To examine the views of central specialists on the exploration of the North, the materials of the Council for the Study of the Productive Forces of the USSR (ARAS, F. 174), the Institute of Economics of the USSR Academy of Sciences (ARAS, F.1877), as well as the Commission on Problems of the North under the Council for the Study of the Productive Forces of the USSR, stored in the Russian State Archive of Economics (RSAE, F.339). It was this organization that dealt with issues of planning the development of the country's territories, therefore, with the example of its documentation (materials of research activities, documents of conferences, expeditions, etc.) it was possible to follow the scientists' views on the development of the North and their activities in promoting their projects. Of particular value is the fund of the initiator of its creation and leader in 1962-1980 - S.V. Slavin (RSAE, F. 746), since it contains his reports from the 1930s to the 1980s, copies of correspondence with various Soviet and foreign scientists, departments and ministries, materials of expeditions to the Soviet and foreign North.

To identify new conceptual designs for northern city projects, the focus was on the materials of the Leningrad branch of the Academy of Construction and Architecture of the USSR¹⁸, that became the main research institution for the

¹⁸ Since 1964, it has been transformed into the Leningrad Zonal Scientific Research Institute for Experimental Design (LenZNIIEP).

development of issues of northern urban development since 1956. Due to the high degree of centralization of the scientific and research sphere in the USSR, it was this organization that was entrusted with the development of new planning principles in the North, for which in it a special group of the North was created in 1958. Materials of the sector's work are stored in the Central State Archive of Scientific and Technical Documentation (F.17), as well as in the Central Archive of Literature and Arts of St. Petersburg (F. 347).

In addition, the following materials were used: materials from the Mirny City Committee of the Komsomol kept in the National Archives of the Republic of Sakha (NARS, F. 3051), materials from the Mirny City Committee of the CPSU (NARS, F.3160) and the Council of Ministers of the YASSR related to the social structure of industrial cities and construction in the Republic of Yakutia (NARS, F. 974), which allowed to trace possible links with central specialists and the reception of projects at the local level. Documents of the work of the Yakutproalmaz trust in the settlements Mirny, Aikhal and Udachny, stored in the Municipal Archives of the Mirny District of the Republic of Sakha (MAMDRS, F.22) and in the archive of ZAO AK ALROSA were also used.

The most important group of published sources were the texts of speeches by scientists and architects, their published scientific articles, pamphlets and collections, allowing to reconstruct and analyze the content of project proposals and their arguments. Chronological comparison of such narratives allows us to reconstruct the development of certain ideas and scientific proposals.

Discussion of development and construction projects in the Far North was carried out in specialized scientific literature (for example, in the pages of the journals "The Annals of the North", "Some Problems of Construction in Eastern Siberia"). To analyze the changes in the social environment in the northern cities after the reorganization of the Gulag system, as well as to consider the responses of the population to the existing housing environment, the materials of the central and

local periodicals (“Pravda”, “Izvestia”, “Zapolyarnaya Pravda”, “Zapolyarye”, “Mirninsky Rabochy”) were studied.

For a more detailed study of the development of Soviet urban planning and architecture in the 1950's and 1960's, the materials of various specialized periodicals were studied: "Architecture of the USSR", "Soviet Architecture", "Decorative Art of the USSR", "Technical Aesthetics". A number of articles in these journals contain information on major trends in architecture and design, on foreign influence on Soviet architecture, on discussions within the expert community.

Another important group of published sources is the memories of architects and other city experts. In addition to the valuable biographical details that allow us to reconstruct the professional path of researchers, they contain information about the architects' perception of the changes and their role in Soviet architecture during the Thaw years after the introduction of the standard design, which often led to the explanation of the reasons for switching to northern studies to create experimental projects. Moreover, this group of sources often describes the travel of specialists to the Far North, which allowed to reconstruct the material and social environment of polar settlements.

In the course of the research, six deep semi-structured interviews were also recorded with direct participants or eyewitnesses of the events studied, primarily with the architects of the Lenfilial of ASA of the USSR, who worked out projects of cities for the Far North in the 1960s: V.G. Tankayan, A.G. Rappaport, Y.D. Brusnikin, A.I. Shipkov, K.A. Lytkin. Also, the children of major planners and engineers - P.V. Rimskaya-Korsakova and A.A. Petrov - were interviewed. The materials of the interviews, despite their incompleteness and subjectivity, are one of the rare sources that shed light on the internal processes that took place both in the environment of the institute under study and in the level of Soviet urban planning and architecture and research of the North as a whole. These materials allow to get a point of view of the direct participants, the meaning of these events

for them. It is the comparison and supplementation of information obtained from the sources listed above with the analysis of the interviews that allows to understand the process of creating and "promoting" projects.

Theoretical significance of the results of the study. The main research topic of the dissertation is at the intersection of several theoretical fields and broad historiographical contexts: the study of the policy of resource and political development of the Far North as one of the Soviet colonization projects; studies of the new housing policy of N.S. Khrushchev, which radically changed the architectural practices and position of architects in the USSR and influenced the everyday urban culture and the problematization of urban development issues, as well as studies on the history of Soviet science and the role of expert knowledge in the USSR. Such a combination of research perspectives allowed to formulate a new understanding of the process of urbanization and the incorporation of the Far North into the Soviet space.

Practical significance of the results. The results of the research were used in the preparation and teaching of the courses "Socialist Urbanism in Global Context", read on the history department of the St. Petersburg branch of the Higher School of Economics in 2016-2017 academic year and the course of "Historical Urban Studies", read for bachelor and master students at the department of history of the St. Petersburg branch of the Higher School of Economics in 2017-2018 academic year. In addition, the results of the study can be used to prepare courses on the history of the Arctic, as well as to organize exhibitions on the history of Soviet architecture or the development of the Soviet North.

Statements for defense

1) In the mid-1950s, after the end of the Stalinism period and the gradual closure of forced labor camps, not only management practices but also the principles for the development of the Far North changed, which also affected the

urbanization of the region: thus, the problem of "rational" development of territories and the creation of settlements with favorable conditions for living in the Arctic climate has become central to specialists of various disciplines, including economic geographers and architects.

2) The large-scale projects for the development of the resources in the Soviet Far North that began in the 1950s led to serious changes in the social and the material environment of the region: in a couple of decades, several hundred towns and "workers' settlements" emerged, often in previously uninhabited territories and consisting mainly of the new-coming population. Such intense and diverse migration flows to the North, on the one hand, led to a change in the official narratives of the northern industrial cities: it was from this time that the Soviet press began to describe the development of the North not only through the prism of its industrial development, but primarily through the "creation of normal life", equivalent to the more southern regions. On the other hand, unsatisfactory living conditions in new industrial settlements, as well as wider changes in the period of the Thaw, have led to the articulation of the requirements of good living conditions for the population both in official discourse and among the local inhabitants.

3) New housing policy, started by N.S. Khrushchev in 1955, has changed not only the practice of construction in the USSR, but also led to the specialization of planning according to climatic zones. Employees of the Northern Sector at the Leningrad branch of the Academy of Construction and Architecture of the USSR, which emerged as a result of the reform, began to formulate the problem of a special approach to creating living environment in the North, and also organized a new system for studying construction principles in the region.

4) Since the late 1950s, as a result of social and administrative changes in the settlements of the Far North, and also thanks to the activities of various experts and scientists, a new concept of the Soviet "northern city" has emerged, the main focus of which was not only on the industrial development of the region, but on creating settlements with better living conditions in the Arctic climate, which, in

turn, affected the region's reconceptualization and its cultural and social assimilation into the Soviet space.

5) The emergence and wide circulation of modernist urban planning projects of the northern settlements with an artificial microclimate developed by Leningrad and later Yakut architects shows that in the 1960s architects sought to create and implement their own non-standard projects, despite the contemporary practice of architectural creativity placed in the framework of the necessary typical design. Likewise, Leningrad city planners and architects raised the problem of creating a comfortable living environment in northern cities to a new level, speaking of the need to create a different urban development perspective and changing the whole concept of city design in the North.

STRUCTURE OF THE WORK

In the introduction, the urgency of the research and its scientific novelty are substantiated, the degree of the study of the topic is analyzed, the purpose and objectives of the research are formulated, its chronological and territorial frames are determined, and an analysis of the source base is given.

The first chapter is devoted to the study of changes in the models of the development of the Far North in the 1950s and their consequences. **In the first paragraph** "Dynamics of exploitation and development of the northern regions of the USSR in the first half of the twentieth century," the formation of a policy for the development of the Far North in the first half of the twentieth century was considered. Analysis shows that cities were not only a symbol of conquest of harsh nature, but also a means of disseminating certain administrative practices, an instrument of incorporating the region into the social, economic, cultural national area. This was reflected both in the visual appearance of the settlements, and in their infrastructure organization. At the same time, the first mass wave of the creation of industrial settlements in the Far North, closely connected with the growth of the Gulag system, when settlements of civilians were formed along with the camps, laid the principles of resource-centric urbanization of the Soviet Far

North, which also affected the formation of the material environment of these settlements. This process can hardly be called a full-fledged urbanization. In the second half of the 1950s, there was a significant change in the practice of developing the polar region. On the one hand, after the gradual closure of the Gulag system, the principles of the development of the northern territories have changed. Henceforth, hundreds of new settlements were built without using the labor of prisoners, which required not only other management and settling of these cities, but also special attention to the housing conditions created in them. Thus, with the beginning of the Thaw in connection with the gradual closure of the Gulag camp system, a social and authoritative "order" for strengthening scientific research of northern urbanism appears.

In **the second paragraph** "Material Environment of the First Northern Industrial Cities", the practice of creating Arctic industrial cities in the 1930s-1950s was analyzed. Consideration of the policy of development and urbanization of the Soviet Far North in the first half of the 20th century shows that the formation of the residential environment in the Arctic was closely dependent on approaches to the industrialization of the region. Orientation to the central schemes was reflected both in the visual appearance of the settlements, and in their infrastructural organization. The analysis shows that the new Soviet cities and their external appearance were viewed as symbols of the development of space and as tools for creating and spreading a certain socialist culture. At the same time, the first mass wave of the creation of industrial settlements in the Far North was closely connected with the growth of the Gulag system, when settlements of civil settlers were formed along with the camps. These principles of resource-centric urbanization of the Soviet Far North also affected the formation of the material environment of the Arctic settlements. Due to the fact that the meaning of the northern cities was seen in their industrial destination, the living environment itself had a purely applied significance, and the space of the cities of the Far North was often built chaotically, without the necessary research and without the adaptation of the environment to climatic conditions.

In **the third paragraph**, "Formation of New Principles and Institutions for the Development of the Far North in the late 1950s," the focus of the analysis was on the institutional changes in the management and research of the Soviet North that occurred after the end of the Stalin period, the changes in the functions of the GUSMP and the reform of the Gulag system. It is shown that after the closure of the system of labor camps, research into the organization of industry and the residential environment in the northern regions became part of public science, which facilitated better coordination between scientific institutions in the center and in the North, planning institutions and industrial departments to develop schemes for rational development of the region. In the mid-1950s, several scientific institutes were created in Moscow and Leningrad, whose duties included the creation of new rational principles for the economic development of the region. The creation of the Commission on the Problems of the North under the Council for the Study of the Productive Forces of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR in 1954 testifies to the important institutional change in the system of studying the Soviet North. After the reform of GUSMP, the Commission became the first open focal point linking various scientific institutions in the center and in the field, planning agencies and industrial departments to develop new schemes for rational development of the region without the use of forced labor. The initiator of its creation is S.V. Slavin in his leading position was responsible for the development of rational and economically effective principles of development of the region. Since the 1950s, in his numerous works, he began to make the main accent not only on economic, but also on humanistic principles: the need to create an enabling environment for man in the North. He began to describe the North not just as a resource-rich economic region in which it is necessary to develop industry, but also as a place of work and residence for thousands of people for whom it is necessary to create comfortable conditions. After the organization of the Commission on the Problems of the North with the SPSA, the issue of strengthening research on the development of the North was brought to a new level, which contributed to the emergence of new departments or whole research

areas related to monitoring and organization of the living environment in Arctic cities. Since the end of the 1950s, thanks to the development of various disciplines on the problems of northern settlements, they began to be viewed in a comprehensive way: not only special economic studies began to appear on the effective development of the northern territories, but also the study of the "human dimension" of newly formed cities.

In the second chapter, "Public problematization of residential conditions in the cities of the Far North of the USSR from the mid-1950s", it is examined how the migration to the Far North was initiated and supported since the late 1950s, as well as how the broader social changes of the "Thaw" affected the appearance of criticism conditions of life in polar settlements by the example of three polar cities - Norilsk, Vorkuta and Mirny. **The first paragraph** of the chapter "Changing the principles of the urbanization of the North of the USSR in the second half of the 1950s and the representation of northern cities in the central press", shows the development of new methods for encouraging voluntary migration to northern industry and the impact of changes in the social composition of Arctic cities on their representation. Large-scale projects on the development of the Far North of the USSR that began in the mid-1950s led to serious changes in both the social environment and the material area of the region: in a couple of decades several hundreds of cities and workers' settlements sprang up, often in previously uninhabited territories with harsh natural conditions. As a result, thousands of workers from the central regions who had no experience of living in arctic conditions came to the northern cities. On the one hand, this contributed to the internalization of the vast territories of the North into the area of Soviet politics and culture. On the other hand, living conditions in these settlements were far from comfortable, because the changes that took place during the Thaw led to articulation of the requirements of good living conditions for the population.

The second paragraph, "Criticism of housing problems on the pages of northern publications" shows the articulation of the critics of conditions in the new

northern cities in the periodical press and archival materials. The ongoing changes in the official rhetoric of improving the welfare of the population, housing reform of N.S. Khrushchev, as well as changes in the social composition of the population of the northern cities, contributed to the emergence of reflection on urban everyday problems on the pages of local publications as early as the mid-1950s. On the one hand, they did not lead to the expected and promised rapid improvement of living conditions: stone construction was accompanied in these cities by great difficulties, and therefore in the 1960s not all the population could move from tents and barracks to the promised apartments. However, these changes have led to the possibility proclaiming their problems to the public. They contributed to the fact that people began to have requirements of a good life - comfortable housing, heat in the apartments. Unlike the central publications, the pages of the local press did not find wide reflection of the picture of a happy move to comfortable apartments, but the area was opened for fixing the discrepancy between the "beautiful everyday life" and the real conditions depicted in the official rhetoric. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the voices of local residents began to appear more clearly in the pages of local and central publications, thus creating a request for a serious improvement in the urban environment.

The third chapter of the research "Institutionalization of the studies of northern urban development in the USSR" is devoted to the analysis of the establishment of special research institutes, which are responsible for the issues of urban development in the Far North. **The first paragraph** "The formation of the northern direction in Soviet urban development" shows the gradual development of the northern direction in urban planning in the late 1940s, when the North Sector was first created in the Leningrad branch of the Academy of Construction and Architecture (1947-1948). It is shown that, in contrast to previous instances implementing construction in the Far North, this Sector has become the first center for studying the principles of creating and improving the living environment of Arctic cities. The author analyzed the conditions under which a center was created from the end of the 1940s, and whose tasks for the first time included the study of

planning principles for populated areas in the cities of the North, which not only raised the issue of building industry and buildings on permafrost, but also the problem of unsatisfactory living conditions in the Far North. It is shown that the focus of the first studies devoted to this topic was somewhat curtailed, since there was no mention of the existence of a camp on the same territory and the terrible conditions of detention of prisoners. In the first projects, the speech of the Lenfilial employees was only about building the actual settlement center intended for free settling.

The second paragraph "De-Stalinization in Soviet architecture: professional and regional consequences" is devoted to the reconstruction of the causes and the process of creating a new Urban Development Sector in the Far North at the Leningrad branch of the Academy of Construction and Architecture of the USSR in 1956. The creation of the Sector at the Leningrad branch of the ASA of the USSR was one of the most obvious consequences of Khrushchev's housing reform, which proclaimed the "struggle against excesses" in Soviet architectural practice and introduced mandatory standard design. In order to unify the principles of industrial construction in 1955, a large-scale development of the "Rules and Norms for the Design and Construction of the USSR Cities" was launched. Archival materials show that in the process of preparing the "Rules and Norms ...", the Far North was singled out as the only region for which it was entrusted to compile a separate set of rules in 1956. To accomplish this, a separate Sector of the North was created in the Leningrad branch of the Academy of Construction and Architecture of the USSR, consisting mainly of young employees of the Institute and headed by B.V. Muravyov. The status of affiliation with the branch of the Academy of Construction and Architecture meant that its employees had to engage in a scientific study of architecture and construction problems in the Far North in order to give practical advice to other project organizations. The principles of the sector worked in many ways according to the developed scheme: the study of existing technical literature, travel to northern industrial settlements to survey the previous experience of construction and survey of its current state, establish

scientific links with local specialists, etc. The scientific nature of the Institute's activities created the possibility of greater freedom of design, and also formally meant that its development should have been used by other institutions as models for their implementation in practice. Based on the analysis of interviews, memoirs and archival materials about the work of the Institute, it is shown that the activities of the North Sector were attractive to many young architects, because it was perceived as an unexplored zone, as a direction, because of its novelty, not in such a rigid framework as the rest of the architectural practice, thus giving a little more freedom from the Soviet model design. Moreover, in this perception, the great merit was not only the novelty of the "northern" direction of architectural practice, but also of the territory of the Far North itself. The materials of the interviews with the employees of the North Sector show that the first acquaintance with the Arctic conditions through the trips made a strong impression on the visiting specialists from the central well-organized cities: after that many of them came to the idea of the need for radical changes in the construction of these cities. The influence of the "humanistic" argument can be traced not only in the statements, but also at the level of specific developments and proposals: the requirements of special insolation standards, the special organization of a full service complex, even in small settlements, special constructive devices for improving the microclimate.

In **the fourth chapter**, "Development of New Principles for Creating a Residential Environment in Northern Cities in the Years of the Thaw", special attention is given to what interests and intentions were behind the appearance of these project proposals, how these projects fit in or fall out from the general practice of design and construction in the USSR in the 1950s, 1960s. Almost in all projects and schemes developed by the employees of the North Sector of Lenfilial and LenZSRIED, the basic principles of northern city planning, formulated in the late 1950s, were traced: the reduction of the building area by increasing the height of buildings, the maximum combination of several institutions in one building, the creation of wind- and snow barriers, etc. Analysis of the publications of Lenfilial's employees from the 1950s to the end of the 1960s made it possible to find out that

in the mid-1960s an important turn was taking place in the studies of the Arctic urban environment. Since that time, due to the development of sociological research in the USSR, and also due to the rapid growth of the population in the northern cities and its gradual "consolidation", the attention of Leningrad specialists has shifted from questions of architecture and planning to the problems of regulating social life in these cities.

On the one hand, these projects clearly show the influence of Western European modernism both on the forms used and on the principles of the social functioning of settlements proposed by the authors, which is most clearly evident in numerous projects for the construction of settlements with an artificial microclimate. At the same time, when justifying projects, the authors paid attention exclusively to the functional features of the proposals, rather than to aesthetic forms, trying to prove their rationality and economic benefits.

It is shown how the discussion of various projects for the creation of a comfortable environment in northern cities took place in the professional environment of central and local architects, how discussions on modernist projects and their approval happened in the State Committee for Construction of the USSR and the State Committee for Civil Construction of RSFSR. Such modernist projects were convenient for power institutions: they were often discussed in the central and local press in a positive way, the architects received main awards for them the at the All-Union competitions, the project for Dikson island was even exhibited at the World Exhibition in Montreal in 1967. The fact that such projects received major prizes testified to their conditional support and approval by higher authorities, which, in turn, created a sense of the possibility to implement pilot projects in reality. At the same time, the organization of construction and architecture in the Far North, on the one hand, provided a certain area within which architects could create atypical projects, trying to speak the same language with modernism. But on the other hand, it is difficult to assess positively the effectiveness of this system during the Thaw years, because due to the multi-level

bureaucratic system, as well as the lack of architectural supervision over the construction beyond the projects, new proposals were rarely issued.

In **the conclusion**, the overall results of the research are summarized, the reasons for the emergence of new principles for the study, development and urban development of the Far North in the mid-1950s-1960s, the impact of changes in the social environment in northern cities on the emergence of radically new projects for creating a residential environment in the Soviet North are systematized.

Large-scale projects on the development of the Far North of the USSR that began in the 1950s led to serious changes in both the social environment and the material area of the region: over a couple of decades, several hundred cities and workers' settlements arose, often in previously uninhabited territories with harsh natural conditions, and consisting mainly of visitors from different regions of the population. All this contributed to the internalization of the vast territories of the North into the Soviet political and cultural area. At the same time, on the one hand, the living conditions in those settlements were far from "normal", but on the other hand, the changes that occurred during the Thaw led to articulation of the demand for "good living conditions for the population" both in the official discourse and among the population.

The study of modern architectural projects and practices of urbanization of the Far North in the 1950s-1970s makes it possible to trace the role and boundaries of the influence of various specialists on the process of urbanization of the North, and also to reveal what ideas and interests were behind the projects being created, what were the reasons for the successes of some and failure of the others. The change in the model of the urban development of the Far North was not so much directed or institutionally conditioned as it was due to the active work of architects, acclimatization specialists, economic geographers, sociologists and other experts whose activities were related to the development of new territories. It was they who from the mid-1950s began to argue the need for a drastic change in the urban concept and the creation of a special type of northern settlements. Due to the high

degree of centralization of Soviet science, the main institutions dealing with these issues were in Leningrad. In other words, specialists located thousands of kilometers from the design sites became responsible for the construction of new Arctic cities, which also influenced the nature of the proposed changes. One of the results of this situation was the creation of projects of settlements with an "artificial microclimate" (residential complexes in which all houses are connected by covered galleries, cities under a glass dome, etc.) by the Leningrad architects, and attempts to argue that these modernist projects are a universal solution to the problems of creation comfortable environment in the Arctic for each person.

On the one hand, the North Sector was created in order to develop theoretical approaches to construction and architecture in an almost unexplored zone, that is, to perform the task of studying the local conditions scientifically and developing optimal proposals for construction in the difficult conditions of the North. It was supposed that its activities would help to ensure "the improvement of the well-being of Soviet residents" declared by the ideologists during the Thaw years. If you ask the question, how much effective was this division of the scientific development of the problem and practice of the routine creation of master plans in the rigid framework of model construction, then the answer to it will be rather negative. However, if we formulate it differently and raise the question of the consequences of such a division, the picture will turn out to be much more complicated.

Moreover, various modernist projects were often supported even by powerful authorities at the level of permissible freedom: while they allowed architects to speak the same language as their Western counterparts, the authorities were also important as an opportunity for a full-fledged public discussion with the Western countries about the advantages of the system, caring about the population. In many respects, that is why to explain the details of such projects, not only aesthetic questions were often used by both sides, but arguments of rationality and functionality. The architects themselves were not responsible for the practical

implementation of projects, which, in a sense, also gave a little more freedom. However, due to various bureaucratic and economic factors, it was extremely difficult to get beyond these conditionally delimited borders, therefore, despite the active scientific study of the problems of town planning in the North, the practice changed very slowly. At the same time, similar projects, as well as the discussions that developed around them, contributed to a change in the perception and practices of the development of the residential environment in the Soviet cities in the Far North, showing how the principles of development and perception of the region are changing in these years. Regardless of the fact that the most radical projects of urban reorganization were not implemented, the basic principles developed in those years became mandatory practice of planning in the North. Instead of considering the work of specialists as a success story or the history of the defeat of high-modern planning, this research shows that through the actions of experts it is possible to trace the reconceptualization of the Far North, so that it was described not simply as a resource-rich region in which it is necessary to develop industry, but also as a place of work and residence for thousands of people, for whom it is necessary to create comfortable conditions.

The list of published papers on the topic of the dissertation:

Publications in peer-reviewed journals and volumes:

1. Kalemeneva Ekaterina and Julia Lajus. "Soviet Female Experts in the Polar Region," In: *Palgrave Handbook on Women and Gender in Twentieth-Century Russia*. Edited by Melanie Ilich, 265-282. London: Palgrave, 2018.
2. Kalemeneva Ekaterina "Arctic Modernism: New urbanization models for the Soviet Far North" In: *Competing Arctic Futures. Voices, resources, governance*. Edited by Nina Worms. Palgrave, 2018.

3. Kalemeneva Ekaterina “Mastering the extreme North: policies and living conditions in arctic cities under Khrushchev’s time” *Quaestio Rossica* 5, no.1 (2017): 153–170.

4. Kalemeneva Ekaterina “Models of the Soviet North Development in the 1950s: the Case of Commission on Issues of the North” *Siberian Historical Research* no. 2 (2018): 181-200.

Publications in other scientific journals

5. Kalemeneva Ekaterina “Northern Climate as an «enemy» and as a resource for the Soviet Urban Projects for Arctic Towns in the 1940s” *Vestnik Surgutskogo gosudarstvennogo pedagogicheskogo universiteta* 51, no. 6 (2017): 89-95.

6. Kalemeneva Ekaterina “Creation of the New Type of Settlements for the Soviet Far North in the 1960s” In: *Nauka, obrazovanie i eksperimental'noe proektirovanie. Tezisy dokladov mezhdunarodnoy nauchno-prakticheskoy konferentsii, professorsko-prepodavatel'skogo sostava, molodykh uchenykh, 3–7 aprelya 2017 g.* T. 2, 428-430. Moscow: MARKhI, 2017.

7. Kalemeneva Ekaterina “City under the Dome: Soviet Architects and the Mastering of the Soviet Arctic in the 1950-1960s” *Bulletin des Deutsches Historisches Institut Moskau*, 7 (2013): 93-108.

8. Kalemeneva Ekaterina “Land of the Future: domed-city projects for the Soviet Far North in the 1960s” In: *Konstruiruya «Sovetskoe»? Politicheskoe soznanie, povsednevnye praktiki, novye identichnosti*, 65-72. Sankt-Peterburg: Izdatel'stvo Evropeiskogo Universiteta v Sankt Peterburge, 2012.

Accepted for publication and in print:

9. Kalemeneva Ekaterina “From New Socialist cities to Thaw Experimentation in Arctic townscapes: Leningrad architects attempt to modernise the Soviet North” *Europe-Asia Studies*, 2019.