

Russian Security State

GOVT-5519 / IPOL-3519 / REES-5519

Lecture 04. Colonial Expansion and an Unstable Frontier

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"Russia was among the few world powers that neither had colonies in Africa or elsewhere nor participated in slave trade throughout its history." - Russian Embassy in South Africa, December 2022

Today's objectives

1. *Trace*: causes, consequences of Moscovia's territorial expansion
2. *Define*: colonialism, imperialism, and their many varieties
3. *Discuss*: challenges and contradictions of Russian colonialism

Geography of Russian Territorial Expansion

Historical Overview



Figure 1: Map of Eurasia in 600

Slavs begin to appear in archaeological, written records c 600 AD.

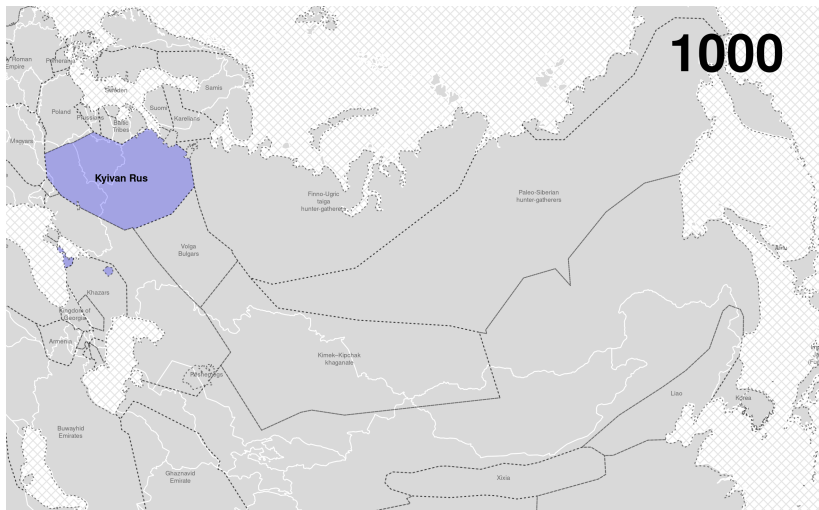


Figure 2: Map of Eurasia in 1000

Kyivan Rus (882-1240) became cradle of East Slavic civilization.

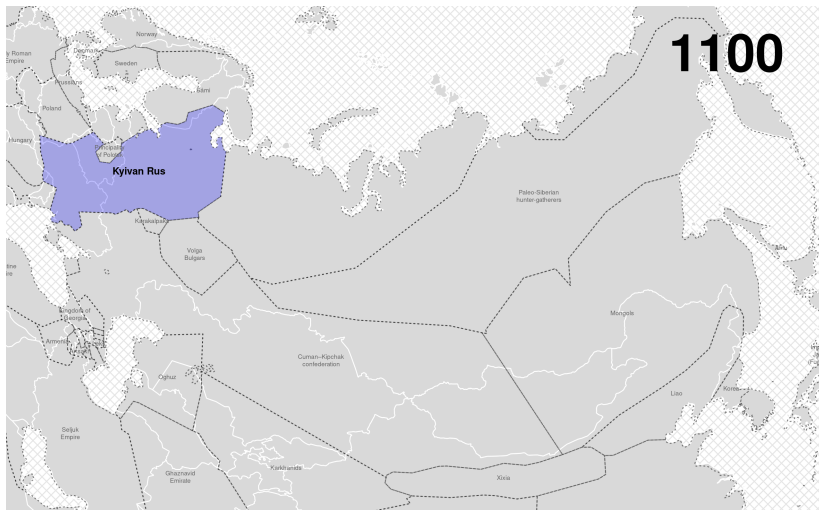


Figure 3: Map of Eurasia in 1100

Initially surrounded by nomads (south, east), principalities (west).



Figure 4: Map of Eurasia in 1200

Mongol occupation of Kyiv begins 1241. Kyiv destroyed in 1299.



Figure 5: Map of Eurasia in 1300

Small town of Moscow emerges as seat of new principality in 1263.



Figure 6: Map of Eurasia in 1400

Tokhtamysh vassalizes Moscow in 1382, unites Blue, White Hordes.



Figure 7: Map of Eurasia in 1500

Moscow regains sovereignty, expands into neighboring principalities.



Figure 8: Map of Eurasia in 1600

Ivan IV becomes 1st Tsar in 1547, expands into Kazan, Siberia.



Figure 9: Map of Eurasia in 1700

Peter I becomes Tsar in 1696, focuses on western frontier.

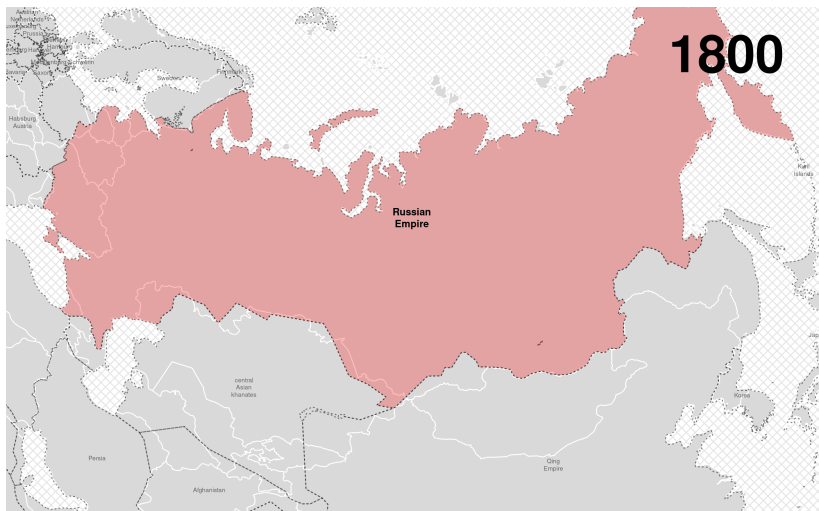


Figure 10: Map of Eurasia in 1800

Empire annexes rest of ex-Kyivan Rus by 1754, heads to Caucasus.

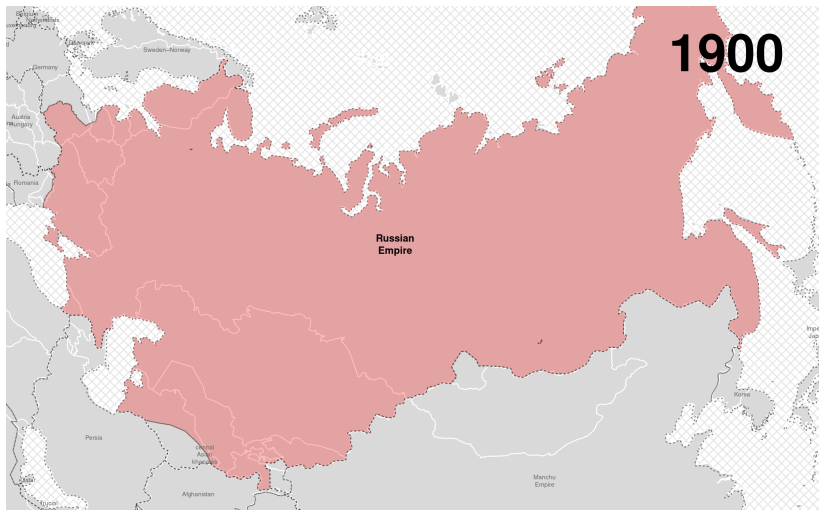


Figure 11: Map of Eurasia in 1900

By 1900, Empire reaches maximum territorial extent (sans Alaska).

Territorial Conquest as Grand Strategy

Recall the Elements of Grand Strategy from Lecture 1

1) Perceived threats

- ☐ territorial threats from neighboring states
(other principalities, Crimean Khanate, Poland-Lithuania)
- ☐ security threats from non-state actors
(nomads, Cossacks)
- ☐ domestic security challenges
(peasant uprisings, revolts by nobles/servitors)
- ☐ other?

2) Proposed remedies

- ☐ strategic depth / buffer zone
- ☐ settler colonization of “new territories”
- ☐ political, economic engagement with West
- ☐ isolation / economic self-sufficiency
- ☐ Russification / conversion to Orthodox Christianity
- ☐ other?

Discussion:

Which of these were more important than others, and when?

Challenges of Russian Colonialism

What is “colonialism”?

colonialism is a form of intergroup domination, where

- a) dominant group seeks to control territory, behavior of subaltern group
- b) settlers from dominant group migrate to territory of subaltern group

imperialism is group domination without permanent settlement (a, not b)

Strategies of intergroup domination:

1. *extermination*: dominant group seeks to eradicate subaltern group through violence, displacement (e.g. Tasmania, Caribbean islands)
2. *assimilation*: dominant group forces subaltern to adopt former's culture, language, religion (e.g. South America, Middle East)
3. *co-existence*: dominant and subaltern groups live side-by-side, with no wholesale acculturation or eradication (e.g. Kenya, Algeria)

Discussion:

Why might a colonial power choose one of these strategies over another?

Russian imperial/colonial administration

1. Governorates (least autonomy)
 - main administrative division
 - governor appointed by Tsar
 - governor has almost no autonomy
2. General-governorates / Viceroyalties
 - introduced in late 1700s to administer new borderland territories (e.g. Poland, Caucasus)
 - Tsar appoints viceroy (namestnik)
 - viceroy has extraordinary, plenipotentiary powers
3. Vassals (most autonomy)
 - used in far-flung territories (e.g. Bukhara, Khiva, Moldavia)
 - local rulers have autonomy over internal affairs
 - no autonomy in foreign relations



Figure 12: Gen Ermolov

Comparison: 13 American colonies

1. Royal colonies (least autonomy)

- king appoints (military) governor
- lower house of legislature elected
- governor has complete authority over regional governance
- if military governor, also manages administration of mil occupation

2. Proprietary colonies

- king grants land to “proprietor”
- lower house of legislature elected
- upper house, governor appointed by proprietor

3. Charter colonies (most autonomy)

- self-government by royal charter
- lower, upper house elected
- governor appointed by legislature

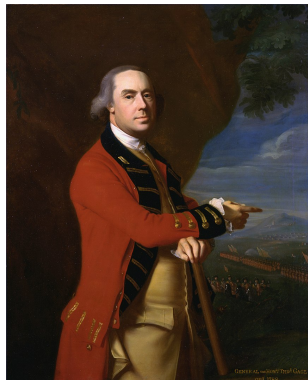


Figure 13: Gen Gage

Demography

An over-extended empire

- *dilemma*: how to colonize frontier without depopulating the interior
 - up to 50% of population lost to famine, war in 1598-1613 (Smuta)
 - serfdom accelerates in response
 - frontier always underpopulated
 - most colonial settlers were “runaway people” (fugitive serfs, deserters, criminals)
- *solution*:
 - strict state control of resettlement
 - assignment of land to servitors
 - punishment, then legalization of illegal settlers
 - reliance on forts, defensive lines to hold on to new territories
 - pro-natalist social policies
 - Russification, conversion of locals



Figure 14: Time of Famine

Legibility

What is “legibility”?

1. breadth, depth of state’s knowledge about its citizens, their activities
2. rendering of this information in standardized forms (maps, registries)

Why is legibility important?

- legibility → state capacity
- allows state to monitor, enforce compliance with laws, regulations
- facilitates tax collection
- facilitates military mobilization
- facilitates public goods provision

Why was this a challenge for Moscovia?



Figure 15: Moscovia, 1720

- *problem*: illegibility of empire
 - no regional surveys, maps commissioned until 1699
 - population censuses limited in geographic, thematic scope
 - mostly illiterate population
 - few surnames outside aristocracy
- *solution* (mostly under/after Peter I):
 - mapping of new territories
 - assimilation of conquered peoples
 - Russification of place names
 - assign surnames based on:
 - father's name (Ivanov)
 - occupation (Melnik)
 - toponyms (Vysotskiy)
 - animals (Medvedev)
 - personal characteristics
 - new census enumeration strategies

Figure 16: Census, 1897

Russia as a “subaltern empire”

Why do many Russians view their country as imperial, not colonial?

What is “internal” or “self-”colonization? Is this a valid category?

What are some commonalities/differences between Russian and Western colonial expansion?

NEXT MEETING

The Seeds of Revolution (Th, Sep. 19)

- how this whole system fell apart (or did it?)
- things to consider:
 - was the 1917 revolution inevitable?
 - what were the main social, political, economic forces that contributed to the Empire's collapse?