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Politicization of Russia's Presence in the Arctic: Mechanisms of Anti-Russian Narrative Construction in Western Political Science and Commentary (2022–2026)

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Abstract. This article examines the mechanism of total technological politicization — the deliberate and simultaneous transfer of several originally neutral spheres of Arctic activity (logistics, ecology, climate, scientific cooperation, resource governance) into the political register — as reflected in recent publications by Western scholars and expert institutions from 2022 to 2026. Unlike single-domain politicization, total technological politicization generates a cumulative effect of mutual narrative reinforcement, forming a self-reproducing cognitive system. The theoretical and methodological foundation draws on the author's concept of the technological politicization of social relations, supplemented by critical discourse analysis, framing theory, and securitization theory. The empirical corpus comprises more than forty English-language texts produced by Western institutions across five genre categories — academic monographs, edited volumes, think tank reports, NGO materials, and analytical journalism — published between February 2022 and January 2026. The analysis identifies four persistent narratives of total technological politicization (“NSR militarization”, “climate rogue state”, “resource revisionism”, “developmental colonialism”), operationalized through subject substitution, causal inversion, lexical escalation, and epistemic asymmetry. The intensity of technological politicization is found to vary by genre: it is highest in military-analytical texts and think tank reports, and lowest in academic monographs. The structural marginalization of critical voices within Western discourse is identified as operating through a “spiral of silence” mechanism. The findings support recommendations on counter-politicization strategies, genre-differentiated source monitoring, and expanding the representation of the Russian position in international academic venues.

Keywords: *Arctic, technological politicization, anti-Russian narrative, critical discourse analysis, securitization, framing, geopolitics, Northern Sea Route, Western expert discourse*

Theoretical framework and research methodology

Between 2022 and 2026, Western academic and expert discourse on the Arctic underwent a qualitative shift, documented by Western literature itself. Whereas the region was previously viewed in terms of “Arctic exceptionalism” — a unique model of depoliticized cooperation that persisted despite the general deterioration in Russian-Western relations — publications of recent years have consistently redefined it as an arena of great-power confrontation, in which Russia is relegated to the role of a “destabilizing actor” (Konyshchev, Lagutina, Sergunin, 2025; Rekvig, Finger, 2025). This reconstruction is not limited to the sphere of military security: it encompasses logistics, ecology, climatology, resource management and scientific cooperation — thematic domains that were previously viewed as spaces for pragmatic interaction.

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The relevance of the topic is determined by several interconnected factors. Firstly, the total technological politicization creates a cumulative effect: narratives from different thematic domains reinforce one another, creating a coherent image of Russia as an unacceptable partner. Secondly, Western texts on the Arctic — monographs, institutional reports, expert materials — are actively used as sources of “objective” data in international discussions, giving direct practical significance to an understanding of the mechanisms of their production. Third, as will be shown below, the mechanisms described have already served as the intellectual justification for specific political decisions — sanctions, the creation of alternative cooperation formats, and the expansion of NATO’s military presence.

The main research question of the article is: what mechanisms of technological politicization are used by Western actors to systematically frame Russia’s originally neutral spheres of Arctic activity as a threat, and what is the cumulative effect of the simultaneous politicization of several thematic domains?

Additional questions: (1) Are there differences in the intensity of politicization between thematic domains (environment, logistics, resources, governance) and between genres of sources? (2) What is the mechanism of mutual reinforcement of narratives in the context of total politicization? (3) Are there positions within Western discourse that oppose the dominant technological politicization?

The theoretical foundation of the study is the concept of the technological politicization of social relations, operationalized in relation to Arctic discourse (Danilov, 2015). According to this concept, the process of transition from the non-political to the political is neither linear, nor inevitable. On the contrary, it may be the result of deliberate intervention by an interested actor. This technological politicization is fundamentally different from organic politicization, which is determined by the objective impossibility of a non-political solution to the problem.

In the context of Arctic discourse, it is necessary to distinguish between two levels of the phenomenon under consideration. This study describes a complex, multi-level phenomenon: several thematic domains are simultaneously subject to politicization. This creates an effect whereby narratives from different domains form a self-perpetuating system of mutual legitimation. The logic of this system is as follows: “military threat” justifies restrictions on environmental cooperation; “environmental irresponsibility” substantiates legal restrictions; “resource revisionism” legitimizes sanctions, which, in turn, are used as an argument for the further politicization of all the aforementioned issues. The concept of institutional incentives for technological politicization is also conceptually important for this study. As will be shown below, various types of agents in Western Arctic discourse — academic journals, think tank reports, NGO materials, and military-analytical publications — have different incentives for politicization, which determines the genre-specific differentiation of its intensity.

In order to empirically distinguish between total technological politicization and the simple sum of individual (single-level) politicizations, three verifiable criteria are introduced. The first cri-

terion is domain coverage: a text or set of texts from a single institution should simultaneously politicize at least three of the five identified thematic domains (military-logistical, environmental, resource-related, administrative, and scientific). The second criterion is narrative intertextuality: narratives from different domains should contain cross-references or explicit logical links through which the politicization of one domain is used as an argument for the politicization of another (for example, a “military threat” as a justification for limiting environmental cooperation). The third criterion is the convergence of framing mechanisms: texts from different domains should reproduce the same basic technologies of politicization (subjective substitution, inversion of cause-and-effect relationships, lexical escalation, epistemic asymmetry), thereby forming a unified cognitive system. Total technological politicization is established when all three criteria are met; if one or two criteria are met, the process is described as single-level or partial politicization. The presented empirical material demonstrates that the analyzed corpus satisfies all three criteria, which allows the process described to be classified precisely as total, rather than cumulative, politicization.

The author's concept of technological politicization is operationalized in this study through three complementary methodological traditions. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Fairclough, 2003; van Dijk, 2008; Wodak, 2001) enables the identification of specific linguistic and narrative mechanisms of technological politicization at the textual level: lexical choice, metaphorical structures, transitivity, and modality. Framing theory (Entman, 1993) describes the mechanism of “switching” an object from a neutral interpretative frame to a frame of threat. The concept of securitization (Buzan, Wæver, de Wilde, 1998; Wæver, 1995) describes the most radical outcome of technological politicization — the transfer of an object to the register of an “existential threat” requiring extraordinary measures. The relationship between these tools and the author's concept is determined as follows: CDA answers the question “how exactly is politicization carried out at the textual level”; framing theory — “what is the mechanism for switching the interpretative frame”; the concept of securitization — “what is the most radical outcome of this process, and how is it institutionally consolidated”. The author's concept of technological politicization provides a general explanatory framework, answering the question regarding the subject-target nature of the process being described: it is not spontaneous, but is carried out by interested agents with specific political goals.

The empirical basis consists of a corpus of more than forty English-language texts by Western authors and institutions, published between February 2022 and January 2026. The corpus was compiled according to four verifiable criteria.

Linguistic and geographical criterion: only English-language texts by authors affiliated with Western institutions (the United States, EU member states, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Norway) as key agents of external technological politicization.

Thematic criterion: direct reference to issues concerning Russia's presence in the Arctic or topics closely related to it (NSR, resource extraction, the Arctic Council, the climate agenda).

Time criterion: the period from February 2022 to January 2026. The inclusion of publications from 2025 and early 2026, i.e., materials published almost simultaneously with the writing of this article, requires methodological clarification. The selection of texts for the specified period was based exclusively on the fact of final publication: preprints, manuscripts and papers “in press” were not included in the corpus. The publication status was verified via publishers’ official websites, the Scopus, Web of Science and SSRN databases, and the repositories of the authors’ institutions as of February 1, 2026. This approach avoids the inclusion of materials that have not undergone full peer review or institutional approval. However, as some of the publications from 2025–2026 may have undergone an accelerated peer-review process, the genre of each such text was additionally taken into account during interpretation: conclusions regarding the intensity of politicization made on the basis of sources of this period were verified through comparison with similar trends of 2022–2024.

Genre diversity criterion: the corpus includes texts of five genre categories: (1) academic monographs and collections; (2) institutional reports of think tanks and analytical centers; (3) NGO reports; (4) military-analytical publications; (5) analytical journalism. Genre distribution of the corpus: academic monographs and collections — 9 texts; think tank and analytical center reports — 14 texts; NGO reports — 7 texts; military-analytical publications — 8 texts; analytical journalism — 6 texts. This distribution, with institutional and military-analytical materials predominating over academic monographs, represents the institutional structure of Western Arctic discourse production during the period in question.

Each text was analyzed using a three-level procedure to verify the mechanisms of technological politicization: textual level (lexical choice, metaphorical structures, transitivity, modality); discursive practice level (intertextuality, institutional conditions of text production); and social practice level (text’s connection to the institutional interests of the producing organization).

In accordance with the principles of academic transparency, it should be noted that we used the Claude.ai language model developed by Anthropic to perform strictly instrumental and auxiliary tasks: initial systematization of sources by keywords, technical formatting of the bibliography, and linguistic verification of the text. All conceptual, analytical, and interpretive operations (formulation of the problem, operationalization of concepts, text analysis, formulation of conclusions) were carried out by the author independently.

From “Arctic exceptionalism” to “confrontation”

Understanding the mechanisms of technological politicization requires a clear comprehension of the initial context: the regime of “Arctic exceptionalism”, which dominated international relations in the region since the end of the Cold War, created an institutional framework for cooperation that significantly restrained politicization. The destruction of this infrastructure after 2022 led to the total politicization of technology (Konyshev, Lagutina, Sergunin, 2025). In the book “GlobalArctic: The New Dynamics of Arctic Governance”, edited by G. Rekvig and M. Finger, this

shift is conceptualized as a transition from the “post-Cold War era of cooperation” to a “new phase of great-power competition”, with the authors attributing responsibility for this transition exclusively to Russia (Rekvig, Finger, 2025). A similar thesis is reproduced in the “Handbook of the Politics of the Arctic”, edited by G. Hønneland, A. Østhagen, S.V. Rottem, where a contrast is drawn between the “era of cooperation” and the “struggle for the Arctic” (Hønneland, Østhagen, Rottem, 2023).

From the perspective of the theory of technological politicization, the logic of these narratives is indicative: the breakdown in cooperation, initiated by Western countries through the cessation of work in the Arctic Council, is described as a consequence of “Russian aggression”, whereas the decision to suspend work was made precisely by Western members of the Council. This is a classic example of the inversion of cause-and-effect relationships. The image of Russia in Western Arctic discourse has undergone a radical transformation. Having passed through the stages of “colonial power” (the imperial period), “ally” (World War II), “enemy” (the Cold War), and “partner” (1990s–2000s), since 2014, and particularly since 2022, Russia has been characterized in Western publications as a “destabilizing actor and geopolitical rival” (Boylan, 2025). It is of fundamental importance that this role is constructed not only in relation to the military sphere, but also extends to all aspects of Arctic activity without exception. This is precisely the essence of total technological politicization.

Mechanisms and thematic domains of total technological politicization

The environmental and scientific agenda, which historically served as the cornerstone of Arctic cooperation and the foundation of “scientific diplomacy”, is subject to the most thorough instrumentalization in recent Western discourse. The central mechanism here is binary framing: the West is depicted as a selfless guardian of the “fragile ecosystem” as a “global good”, while Russia is portrayed as a purely pragmatic actor focusing on the “economic opportunities” opening up due to ice melting (Rekvig, Finger, 2025). This framing implements two technologies of politicization simultaneously: subjective substitution (Russia is described not as a state with sovereign rights over its territory, but as a “violinator” of global environmental responsibility) and lexical escalation (environmental changes are described as a “threat multiplier”, and melting ice — as a mechanism for “legitimizing” Russian military activity).

The article “The Arctic Paradox: Rising Pressures, Enduring Cooperation”, published in June 2025, explicitly asserts that Russia is exploiting the issue of melting ice to justify its increased military presence and control over the Northern Sea Route “under the pretext” of environmental monitoring¹. In the article series “Planetary Approaches to Arctic Politics” (2025), an image of Russia as a “climate rogue state” sabotaging global efforts is systematically constructed. The article “From Exceptionalism to Militarization” (July 2025) describes Russia’s strategy of creating “par-

¹ The Arctic Paradox: Rising Pressures, Enduring Cooperation. Atlas Institute for International Affairs. June 2025. URL: <https://www.atlasinstitute.org/the-arctic-paradox-rising-pressures-enduring-cooperation/> (accessed 15 February 2026).

allel structures” of environmental governance; that is, Russia’s sovereign environmental policy on its own territory is presented as an illegitimate “departure from the legal framework”². The narrative of “green colonialism” deserves particular attention. In the paper “Arctic Climate Interventions” (August 2020), any large-scale economic or geoengineering projects in the region are characterized as posing risks to local communities³. This discourse, formally oriented toward protecting the rights of indigenous peoples, in practice creates a universal tool for blocking Russian economic activity: any Russian project in the Arctic can be declared “colonial”, regardless of its specific content. From the perspective of the theory of technological politicization, the environmental domain reproduces a “positive feedback loop” structure in relation to the entire Arctic agenda: the environmental consequences of Western sanctions (the emergence of “shadow” transporters, the decline in safety standards) are framed as “Russian” environmental risks, which are then used to justify the sanctions policy that gave rise to them.

The Northern Sea Route is the most illustrative example of technological politicization. In particular, Russia’s development of port infrastructure and its icebreaker fleet is interpreted not as a technologically and climatically determined prerequisite for the route’s operation, but as “the militarization of the NSR to protect its economic interests”⁴. Regulatory requirements for navigation in Russian waters, which are standard in global safety and environmental practices, are described as “regulatory barriers” and “political risks”, deliberately created to restrict international transit. The term “militarization” serves as a key lexical marker, semantically loading any infrastructural actions by Russia. It is noteworthy that the article by Huntington and co-authors on the environmental impact of commercial shipping in the Arctic (2023) acknowledges that “the conflict in Ukraine and subsequent sanctions temporarily reduced other countries’ interest in the NSR” (Huntington, Olsen, Zdor et al., 2023), directly identifying Western sanctions as a factor limiting international use of the route. However, in the dominant narrative, the cause of the restrictions remains “Russian policy”, rather than the Western sanctions strategy.

It is also important to note Russia’s logistics investments, which are also incorporated into the threat narrative. The Northern Latitudinal Passage infrastructure projects and the Arkhangelsk port are considered “not only from an economic, but also from a military-strategic perspective” (Rekvig, Finger, 2025), which automatically leads to suspicions of aggressive intentions being attached to them, regardless of their actual economic substance. The topic of Arctic resource management is politicized through the construction of a binary opposition: a “responsible” Western

² From Exceptionalism to Militarisation: The Changing Landscape of the Arctic. Atlas Institute for International Affairs. July 2025. URL: <https://atlasinstitute.org/from-exceptionalism-to-militarisation-the-changing-landscape-of-the-arctic/> (accessed 15 February 2026).

³ Bodansky D., Hunt H.E.M. Arctic Climate Interventions, August 2020. URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343978862_Arctic_Climate_Interventions (accessed 15 February 2026).

⁴ Trends Research Institute. Arctic Policy Reports. 2022–2025. URL: <https://trendsresearch.org/insight/the-arctic-a-risk-of-escalating-con-flicts/#:~:text=Russia%20intends%20to%20reconcile%20environmental,negative%20effects%20of%20global%20warm ing> (accessed 15 February 2026).

approach, focused on sustainable development and the interests of indigenous peoples, is contrasted with “predatory” Russian (and Chinese) “resource nationalism”. Standard lexical escalation techniques are employed: Russia’s development of the Vostok Oil and Arctic LNG 2 fields is described not as the exercise of legitimate sovereign rights to develop its own territory, but as the creation of “instruments of energy policy and targets for sanctions pressure” (Rekvig, Finger, 2025).

The systematically reproduced logic of double standards is of fundamental importance. In the collection “The Arctic’s New Geopolitic — BRICS+ Policies and Investments”, edited by A. Middleton and M. Das, the interest of Russia and China in resources is directly linked to a “military build-up”⁵. Meanwhile, projects of a similar scale undertaken by Western companies in the Norwegian or Canadian sectors of the Arctic are characterized as elements of “supply diversification” and “sustainable development”. The fact that virtually identical actions are described differently depending on the actor serves as a clear illustration of epistemic asymmetry — one of the key mechanisms of politicization. The vague concept of “hybrid threats” plays a special role in resource discourse, as it opens the possibility of attributing any Russian actions in the region to aggressive intent. Centers for countering hybrid threats established in Finland and the Baltic states are actively constructing a discourse on an “existential threat” to the West from Russia (Konyshev, Sergunin, 2024), institutionalizing epistemic asymmetry at the level of specialized NATO structures.

The systemic nature of total technological politicization is most clearly evident in the way Western discourse addresses the issue of multilateral governance of the Arctic. The crisis of the Arctic Council, the main macro-regional forum, is presented as a direct consequence of Russia’s actions. At the same time, a fundamental fact is systematically ignored: it was the Western states — members of the Council — that suspended their participation in its work, which led to the paralysis of the institution (Rekvig, Finger, 2025). The inversion of the cause-and-effect relationship is reproduced here with particular consistency: the Western boycott is described not as the cause of the crisis, but as a “forced response” to “Russian aggression”, while Russia itself, continuing to participate in the Council’s work, is paradoxically made responsible for its paralysis. The future of the Council is discussed in Western publications in terms that exclude Russia’s equal participation. Framing the issue in this way is in itself a form of politicization: the Council’s consensual nature is transformed from an advantage into a disadvantage, requiring a “workaround” in favor of “coalitions of the willing” or formats with veto powers.

The cumulative effect of total politicization and its genre differentiation

The narratives described in the previous section do not function in isolation; they form a mutually reinforcing system. This cumulative effect is precisely what characterizes total technolog-

⁵ Middleton A., Das M. The Arctic's New Geopolitic — BRICS+ Policies and Investments. UArctic Press, 2025. URL: <https://www.uarctic.org/news/2025/4/call-for-chapters-the-arctics-new-geopolitics-bricsplus-policies-and-investments/> (accessed 15 February 2026).

ical politicization. The narrative matrix functions as follows: the military narrative ("Russia is militarizing the Arctic") serves as a pretext for abandoning environmental cooperation; the environmental narrative ("Russia is a climate rogue state") justifies resource sanctions; the resource narrative ("Russia is seizing energy leverage") legitimizes the dissolution of governance institutions; and the institutional narrative ("Russia has destroyed the Arctic Council") substantiates NATO's military presence. The circle is complete: total politicization forms a self-sufficient cognitive system in which each narrative finds support in all the others.

The intensity of technological politicization varies significantly depending on the source genre. Academic monographs and collections demonstrate the lowest intensity of politicization, whilst still containing basic assumptions about Russia's "destabilizing role". Institutional think tank reports reveal a structured politicization conditioned by the task of producing policy recommendations: the NSR and the Arctic as a whole are functionally preferable for these actors as a "problem requiring a solution" rather than as an "opportunity". NGO reports politicize environmental and humanitarian expertise, making it more difficult to identify and therefore particularly significant as a tool. Military-analytical and institutional texts from NATO structures demonstrate the highest level of politicization, conceptualizing Arctic issues exclusively through the framework of military planning.

Critical positions exist within Western discourse, but their marginalization is structural rather than accidental. For example, M. Nojonen notes that, under pressure from government structures, Western universities have ceased collaborating with Russian researchers, and critical work has been marginalized by funding mechanisms⁶. A number of authors propose a methodologically rigorous, de-escalatory legal interpretation of Russian NSR legislation. However, such works are typically published not in peer-reviewed journals, but as working papers of think tanks⁷, which structurally limits their academic weight. This pattern illustrates the "spiral of silence": alternative positions exist, but are systematically placed in formats that deprive them of institutional authority.

A targeted search for alternative viewpoints across the entire corpus (44 texts) revealed only isolated instances, which in itself is a significant finding: the absence of critical voices in 42 out of 44 texts is not coincidental, but structurally determined by the logic of the institutional production of Western Arctic discourse. In addition to Nojonen and Todorov, two other examples can be cited. Firstly, the Norwegian researcher G. Hønneland includes a section in the "Handbook of

⁶ Nojonen M. Securitization Narrative in the West and Its Restrictive Impact on Research on Russia and China. *Arctic Yearbook*. 2024: 1–4. URL: <https://arcticyearbook.com/arctic-yearbook/2024/commentaries/546-securitization-narrative-in-the-west-and-its-restrictive-impact-on-research-on-russia-and-china> (accessed 15 February 2026).

⁷ See, for example: Zhudro I.S. International Legal Means of Protecting Russia's Historical Rights in the Waters of the Northern Sea Route. *State and Law*. 2024; 1: 16–23; Bekyashev D.K., Bekyashev K.A. Trends in the Development of the Legal Regime of the Northern Sea Route. *Bulletin of St. Petersburg State University. Law*. 2021; 12 (2): 276–295; Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC). *The Northern Sea Route: National Legal Status in the Context of International Law*. Working Notebook No. 9. Moscow: RIAC; 2013. URL: <https://russiancouncil.ru/sevmorput/> (accessed 15 February 2026).

the Politics of the Arctic” on Russian legal positions regarding the NSR, which does not reproduce the dominant narrative of threat. However, this section is placed in a chapter entitled “Russian Issues”, rather than in the analytically neutral section on international law — thus, the overall structure of the collection shifts the interpretive framework. Secondly, in the Arctic Council’s research report on the state of the Arctic Ocean (AMAP, 2024), published by Western scientists, climate data on the Russian sector of the Arctic are presented without politically charged commentary; at the same time, this report is scarcely cited in the political and military-analytical texts of the corpus — a characteristic mechanism of selective citation that reinforces the “spiral of silence”. Thus, the marginalization of critical voices is confirmed not only by the presence of two to four isolated cases, but also by the systemic logic of the entire corpus.

Forecast scenarios as a basis for political decisions

The analysis shows that the described narratives are not purely academic constructs; they serve as an intellectual justification for specific political decisions: sanctions pressure, attempts to create alternative cooperation formats without Russia’s participation, and the expansion of NATO’s military presence. Forecast scenarios, reconstructed on the basis of an analysis of Western publications, and the “measures of deterrence” against Russia are presented below (Table 1).

Table 1

Forecast scenarios and measures of deterrence against Russia in Western Arctic discourse

Scenario	Key characteristics of Russia’s possible actions (according to Western analysts)	Proposals of Western analysts on containing Russia
Strengthening control over the NSR	Russia will continue to regard the NSR as a strategic artery, developing its icebreaker fleet, port infrastructure, and military presence along the route. The NSR will become a tool for economic and geopolitical influence, particularly in cooperation with China and other BRICS+ countries	Accelerating the development of their own Arctic resources (Norway, the US, Canada). Establishing alternative routes and supply chains to minimize dependence on the NSR
Deepening cooperation with non-Western partners	In response to Western isolation, Russia is intensifying partnerships with China (the Polar Silk Road), India, BRICS+ countries, and other non-Arctic players to attract investment in infrastructure and resource development	The de facto exclusion of Russia from the Arctic Council on key issues. The creation of alternative cooperation frameworks without Russia (for example, a coalition of Western Arctic states and the EU)
Militarization and “hard security”	Russia will increase its military presence in the Arctic, modernize its bases, deploy air defense and anti-ship systems, viewing the region as a zone of strategic deterrence against NATO	Expanding NATO’s presence in the Arctic (exercises, bases, surveillance systems). Strengthening the Arctic capabilities of the US, Canada, Norway, and Denmark. Developing underwater and space systems to monitor Russian activity

Scenario	Key characteristics of Russia's possible actions (according to Western analysts)	Proposals of Western analysts on containing Russia
Selective engagement on climate and science	Specific forms of cooperation with the West on climate and scientific projects (monitoring permafrost thawing, studying biodiversity) are possible, but overall, scientific diplomacy will remain hostage to political relations	Criticism of Russia's environmental standards in the NSR and in resource extraction. Promotion of the "green agenda" as a means of exerting pressure and legitimizing restrictions on Russian projects
Division of spheres of influence	Further escalation of the confrontation could result in the Arctic being de facto divided into spheres of influence, with Russia retaining control over the eastern sector (NSR, shelf resources), and the West — over the western sector (Alaska, Canada, Scandinavia)	Sanctions against Russian Arctic projects (Vostok Oil, Arctic LNG 2). Restrictions on the supply of equipment for resource extraction and shipbuilding. Decline in the attractiveness of the NSR for international companies due to logistical risks.

These scenarios are united by a line of reasoning that is fundamental from the perspective of the theory of technological politicization: Russia's sovereign actions in the Arctic (infrastructure development, resource extraction, and the establishment of management systems) are described exclusively as "threats" requiring restrictive countermeasures. This logic ignores the fact that Russia bears the primary costs of developing and securing the region, including for international shipping.

It is important to note a geopolitical paradox revealed by the analysis of the scenarios: total technological politicization directed against Russia entails significant costs for the European states themselves. This concerns not only the economic and scientific losses that are inevitable when Russia is excluded from normal dialogue. The United States, using the rhetoric of politicization, openly declared its claim to Greenland, thereby creating a "second front" of geopolitical instability for its European allies.

Conclusion

This study allows formulating four main conclusions.

Firstly, the politicization of Russia's presence in the Arctic within Western expert discourse represents a systemic process of total technological politicization; that is, the deliberate and simultaneous reframing of several neutral thematic domains (logistics, ecology, resources, governance) into political threats. This process differs from single-level politicization in its cumulative effect of mutually reinforcing narratives: the narrative matrix is a self-reproducing system, resistant to the refutation of its individual elements.

Secondly, four persistent narratives of total politicization were identified in the corpus: "NSR militarization", "climate rogue state", "resource revisionism", "developmental colonialism". Each of these is implemented through the same techniques: subject substitution (Russia as "Mos-

cow"/"the Kremlin"), inversion of cause-and-effect relationships, lexical escalation, and epistemic asymmetry. The intensity of technological politicization varies by genre: it is the highest in military-analytical texts and think tank reports and the lowest in academic monographs.

Thirdly, critical voices within Western discourse exist, and some of them are methodologically sound. Their marginalization is structural in nature: alternative positions are systematically relegated to institutional formats (commentaries, working papers, publications marked "author's point of view"), depriving them of normative academic weight. This corresponds to the "spiral of silence" mechanism and indicates the systemic, rather than accidental, nature of the production of the dominant narrative.

Fourthly, total technological politicization has specific political consequences: it serves as the intellectual justification for sanctions against Russian Arctic projects, the creation of alternative governance formats without Russia's participation, and the expansion of NATO's military presence in the region. This corresponds to the logic of a "positive feedback loop": the politically produced consequences of politicization are subsequently used as its "objective" justification.

From a practical perspective, the study's findings point to three areas of focus for Russian foreign policy analysis and diplomatic practice. First, the need to distinguish between different types of sources — texts produced by military-analytical organizations and NGOs cannot be treated as neutral data on Russian intentions in the same way as peer-reviewed academic publications. Second, a strategy of counter-politicization by ensuring the availability of Russian official documents, legal arguments and monitoring data on leading international academic platforms. Third, target engagement with those segments of Western Arctic discourse where the intensity of technological politicization is minimal — academic journals and legal expert platforms.

Let us specify each of the three areas. Regarding the first area, developing a differentiated system for monitoring Western Arctic discourse requires distinguishing sources according to their level of institutional independence (peer-reviewed journals — collections — think tank reports — NGOs — military-analytical publications) and applying appropriate clarifications when using these materials in analytical documents of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Science, and relevant agencies. Regarding the second area: ensuring the accessibility of Russia's legal and scientific position should be achieved through the following specific platforms: the Arctic Yearbook journal (an open, peer-reviewed yearbook available to Russian authors), the Polar Geography and The Polar Record journals, the Arctic Circle Assembly platform, as well as through the deposit of official documents in the open SSRN repository. Interaction formats: commentary to key publications, special issues on the legal aspects of the NSR and Arctic governance, and analytical response materials in the "perspectives" and "commentaries" sections of those publications that provide for such contributions. Regarding the third area: among Western academic institutions, the criterion for selecting partners for cooperation should be based not on geographical affiliation, but on the degree to which the analytical categories used have been operationalized and the existence of precedents of neutral expert assessment of Russian activities in the Arctic.

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