

7 ABRAMOVICH'S COTTAGES: A POST-PROJECT ANALYSIS OF ADAPTATION TO IMPORTED ARCHITECTURE IN RURAL CHUKOTA

Gavriil Malyshev

Introduction

How do post-Soviet or late-Perestroika infrastructure modernization projects in the Arctic unfold over time? What practices and tensions emerge once the modernizers leave and residents inhabit the architectural environments imposed upon them? This article examines the long-term outcomes of the housing renovation carried out in Chukotka's Indigenous villages during the 2000s under Governor Roman Abramovich, when most Soviet-era log houses were replaced with American-style timber-frame cottages clad in siding. How do the consequences of this project influence contemporary policies and practices aimed at providing people with housing infrastructure in the villages of Chukotka? What social relations and practices did it give rise to? I explore these questions in this chapter.

Post-project anthropological research on architectural transformations is an emerging but promising field of study. Almost ten years ago, Bruno Latour called for the invention of an analytical tool that would allow us to see the processual nature of architecture rather than the common view of a building as an immobilized, static structure (Latour and Yaneva 2017). In the present context of climatic, political, and economic instability, deviations from architects' plans are increasingly seen as a common feature of urban and architectural processes (Thiel et al. 2025); Ibert proposes „act first, reflect later“ as a guiding principle (Ibert 2025). From his perspective, in conditions of uncertainty, unexpected, and radical changes, professionals need to develop not so much the ability to draw up ideal plans as the capacity to respond flexibly and experiment, and then analyze the results in detail and derive meaning from them. It is precisely here that high-quality post-project reflection becomes essential.

Social anthropology provides the methods for addressing this challenge. In her recently published book, Maria Salaru demonstrates how, through a combination of in-depth interviews, participant observation, visual ethnography, and archival research, one can explore the changing materiality of an apartment building through the relationships of its residents, administrators, and builders, regarding the care, repair, and retrofitting (Salaru 2025). The Arctic is particularly well-suited to such research, since the gap between architects' designs and residents' lives becomes visible quickly due to harsh climatic conditions that cause physical structures to deteriorate more rapidly (Ustiuzhantseva 2025).

I have examined the longer historical context of Chukotka's architectural transformations – from the *yaranga* to the cottage in detail elsewhere (Malyshev 2024). For the present argument, the salient points are these: in less than half a century the Chukchi and Yupik moved from self-sufficient *yaranga* and earth-house construction to dependence on a state-managed housing infrastructure; the collapse of that system in the 1990s left rural settlements with shortages, deteriorating networks, and population exodus (Vakhtin 2023; Krupnik and Vakhtin 2002). Abramovich's project, launched after his election as governor in 2000, was a response to that crisis. As Niobe Thompson notes, with his arrival the region became "the frontier of Russia's post-Soviet revival, one of the most fertile sites for the production of experiences of Russian modernity (Thompson 2010:148)." The team of modernizers consisted of young and ambitious people from major cities – mainly Sibneft employees and Abramovich's colleagues from previous projects (Dorofeev and Kostyleva 2009). Abramovich's team approached the management of the region as a business project (Vasilenko 2007). Within a strict eight-year horizon – two governor's terms – Abramovich's team replaced Soviet-era log houses in most national villages with single-story wood-frame "Canadian" or "American cottages" – clad in vinyl siding, topped with metal roofing, and installed on jack-up foundations adapted to permafrost. These houses, locally called "Abramovich cottages," are the architectural object of this article.

The fieldwork on which this article is based was carried out over two months in Chukotka in 2024 and yielded more than 80 interviews. My informants fell into three groups. The first and main group consisted of residents of the Indigenous villages I visited – primarily Amguema and Uelkal in the Iultinskii District and Novoe Chaplino in the Providenskii District, with additional material from Kanchalan, Konergino, Uelen, Sireniki, and online posts by residents of Inchoun.

Most are Chukchi, Siberian Yupik, or of mixed descent; they include local bureaucrats, members of the Indigenous elite, residents of various professions, and reindeer herders leading a semi-nomadic lifestyle. The second group consisted of modernizers – officials, builders, housing managers, and architects who worked on Abramovich's team and continue to do so today. The third group comprised witnesses to modernization: urban residents of Chukotka, the regional cultural elite, and local historians who observed the transformation in the villages from close proximity but from the outside.

Renovation in the studied villages was uneven. In Amguema (approx. 400 inhabitants), most older housing was demolished and replaced with 57 cottages. In Uelkal (approx. 200), six cottages plus a kindergarten, school, store, bathhouse, community center, and administrative building were built, while older stock largely remained. In Novoe Chaplino (approx. 400), most housing was replaced with over 100 cottages and a new educational center.

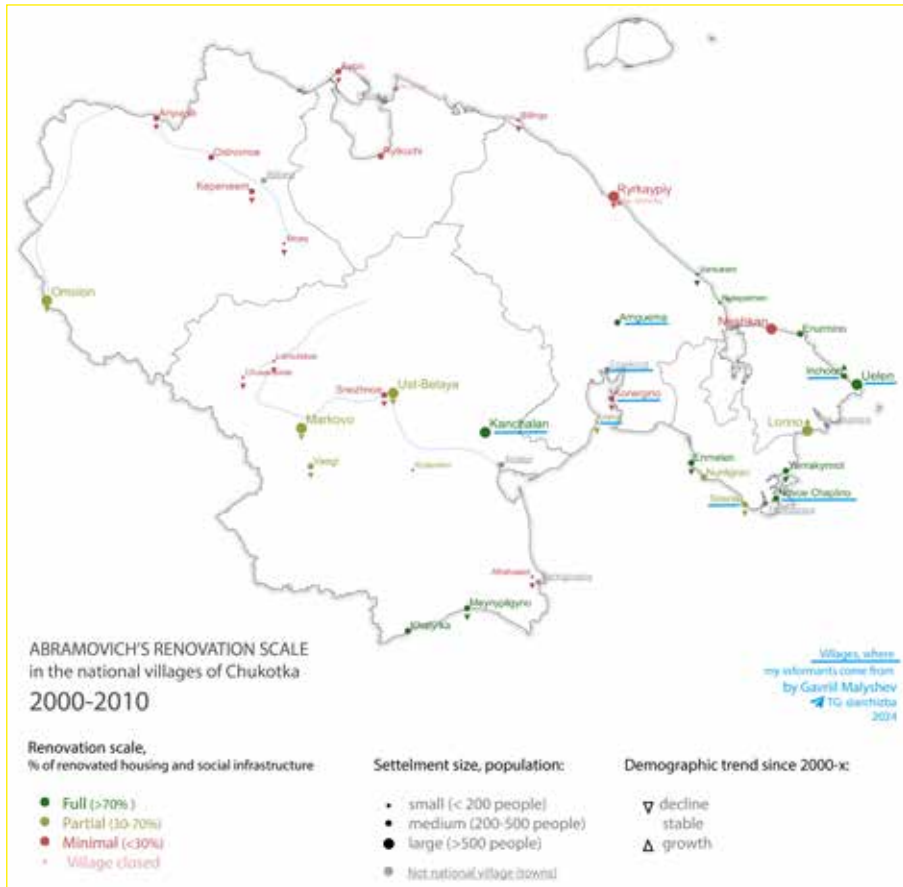


Fig. 1 Map showing the renovation scale and visited villages in Chukotka, 2024. TG: @archizba.

North American architecture to Chukotka

The modernizers team prioritized housing renovation because it produced quick, visible results. Asked in 2002 what interested him most in Chukotka, Abramovich answered directly: “Right now, it’s construction, because the results are visible here quite quickly” (Konovalov 2002). The drive to make administrative work visible often pushes authorities toward showcase projects (Larkin 2012). The architectural imagery was meant to impress the capital’s elite and journalists, while reflecting the modernizers’ own urban-bourgeois ideal: the Euro-American suburban cottage, sharply opposed to the post-Soviet apartment, was the housing aspiration of Russia’s middle class (VTsIOM 2021).

This aspiration was sharpened by the post-privatization housing crisis. In the 1990s and early 2000s, construction fell to roughly half of late-Soviet levels, and prices became unaffordable for most (Koniakhin 2010). Against this backdrop, the free mass construction of cottages in Chukotka's villages appeared striking to city-dwellers. In 2004, per-capita housing construction in Chukotka was twice the national average (Stepura 2005). The "magic of numbers" did its work: the figure looked impressive federally and featured proudly in reports – without noting that Chukotka has among the lowest population densities in the country.

The primary residential typology into which residents of the Indigenous villages relocated from Soviet-era apartments and log houses: were single-story, wood-frame houses built using Canadian construction technology, and installed on elevated jack-up foundations designed for permafrost conditions. Over time, local residents adopted the vocabulary introduced by the modernizers themselves: in contemporary Chukotka, these dwellings are commonly referred to as "Canadian" or "American cottages," "Abramovich cottages," or, most frequently, simply "cottages." Political, ideological, and economic considerations all shaped the choice of this particular architectural model. First, the aesthetics of the North American-style house corresponded to the personal preferences of Abramovich and members of his modernization team. One of the earliest buildings constructed in Chukotka in the new millennium was the governor's private residence: a two-story wood-frame cottage located on the shore of the Anadyr gulf, designed and built by the Canadian architectural and construction firm Fergusson Simek Clark (FSC).



Fig. 2 Abramovich's residence in Anadyr, Chukotka capital, 2024, built by Canadian architects FSC in 2000. Photo: Gavriil Malyshev.

"It feels like I'm in the Moscow Region," Abramovich's wife remarked, apparently referencing the architecture of typical suburban villas development popular among the capital elite (Feklistov 2001). This private residence functioned not only as housing, but also as an architectural prototype that symbolically introduced the new standard of living to the region. In the post-Soviet period, the Western suburban cottage became the housing ideal of Russia's emerging middle and upper classes – business elites, managers, regional administrators – and was embraced by parts of Chukotka's Indigenous elite as well. Demolishing Soviet-era housing and building Canadian-style cottages in Chukchi and Yupik villages thus became the central project of Chukotka's modernization, letting Abramovich's team produce rapid, visible results and cultivate a reputation for effective governance among federal authorities and metropolitan elites. The villages were rebuilt according to the tastes and expectations of external modernizers, with adapted North American wood-frame houses as the foundational model.

Before reaching these villages, Canadian cottage architecture underwent a series of transfers that addressed some contextual differences and overlooked others. The first came during the 1970 North American oil boom, when the technology migrated from the southern United States to northern Canada with adaptations for climate and soil – elevated foundations, enhanced ventilation – while social and cultural differences, especially Inuit lifestyles and spatial practices, were largely ignored. The subsequent transfer from Canada to Chukotka, mediated by Soviet engineers, brought further modifications: heating systems were altered, foundations and ventilation simplified to cut costs and ease logistics. These simplifications stripped away key climatic adaptations, later undermining comfort.

The choice of lightweight wood-frame construction also overlooked structural differences in housing systems: in North America it presumes high residential mobility and widespread insurance, mechanisms largely absent in Russia. Meanwhile, an important social adaptation emerged in policy – where Canadian cottages are bought, rented, or obtained through social housing, Chukotka's villagers received them free and were allowed to privatize. The project thus transferred not only construction technology from capitalist Canada to post-socialist Chukotka, but reshaped its socio-economic logic in a context where the private housing market was underdeveloped.

The institutional transfer was tied to Fergusson Simek Clark (FSC). After Abramovich became governor in 2000, architect Stefan Simek joined a Canadian-Russian ministerial working group and helped draft the Russian wood-frame standard SP 31-105-2002, formalizing the technology within the Russian framework. But scale soon exceeded a single firm's capacity, and the Chukotka Trading Company in Egvekinot took on additional construction. The relationship became one of knowledge transfer rather than competition: FSC built model cottages, which local engineers simplified, cheapened, and adapted to Russian suppliers. From 2003, these localized versions dominated renovated villages, while FSC shifted toward social infrastructure.

As a result, two variations of the Canadian cottage – original FSC designs and locally adapted versions spread across Chukotka’s national villages. The architecture that ultimately emerged was therefore not simply imported, but reproduced through multiple layers of technological, regulatory, and cultural transfer, tracing a complex trajectory from North American suburban housing to the Arctic settlements of post-Soviet Chukotka.



Fig. 3 FSC-built Canadian cottages in Egvekinot, Chukotka, 2024. Photo: Gavriil Malyshev.

Fig. 4 Typical cottage built by Russian localization of the Canadian project in 2004 in Novoe Chaplino village, 2024. Photo: Gavriil Malyshev.



Taking care of the infrastructure: Local adaptations

Once they received their cottages, people soon began using various methods to settle in and adapt them to their own needs, to look after them. Essentially, people were compensating for the inadequacies of the hastily executed showcase modernization project. This chapter discusses the practices of the people who maintain, support, repair, remodel, and furnish the cottages built under the Abramovich program. Residents' adaptation of the cottages has developed into a set of everyday technological practices combining complaints to authorities, routine maintenance, major repairs, and incremental „tuning“ of houses to local conditions. While all four occur, regular maintenance is the most widespread: each year residents adjust foundations, remove snow from attics, fight mold, seal leaks, replace rotting boards and insulation, and repair interior finishes. These practices require significant physical, financial, and technical resources. Yet many residents describe their skills as self-evident and acquired through practice: “you just take it and do it,” as one resident explained while describing sealing ceiling cracks with foam, a skill he later turned into paid work for neighbors. Improvised solutions are common: residents protect wiring from leaks by switching to battery-powered LED lamps ordered online, and isolate damp areas with polyethylene, foil, or even old compact discs.



Fig. 5 Vernacular methods of sealing a ceiling leak using old compact discs. Amguema, 2024. Photo: Gavriil Malyshhev.

These practices are not invisible to local authorities. Village administrators are often involved in maintenance themselves and help coordinate access to scarce materials, measuring damaged siding, collecting orders for insulation and boards, and attempting to recruit skilled workers. At the same time, officials emphasize shortages of labor and expertise, exacerbated recently when many men left: they frame the village as structurally vulnerable and dependent on external resources. This narrative coexists with recognition that most households actively maintain their homes, including single-women households that undertake repairs independently.

In addressing construction problems, residents draw on multiple sources of knowledge. First, they rely on improvisation, experimentation and accumulated practical experience: residents test materials, share outcomes, and gradually refine solutions. Successful practices spread through informal networks, creating a local “technological market” of skilled neighbors offering advice or paid assistance. Knowledge is

also drawn from examples and references: earlier local building traditions, comparisons with Soviet-era housing, and broader northern construction practices accessed online, particularly from northern Russia with similar climates. Some residents study cottages built by Canadian contractors in nearby settlements, treating them as technical benchmarks and attempting to replicate features such as improved ventilation.

Through these practices, residents become active agents of technological adaptation. The cottages, initially delivered as standardized demonstration projects, are gradually reshaped through local experimentation, peer learning, and incremental modification, transforming imported architecture into a lived and evolving infrastructure.

Loss of privacy and the keepers of wrenches

My first night in an “Abramovich cottage” in the village of Amguema was restless. The door to the room where I slept did not close all the way, depriving me of privacy and letting kitchen sounds and cigarette smoke drift in. As the cottage owner explained, this is a result of “the ground shifting” beneath the house: seasonal swelling of the permafrost’s active layer. The foundation consists of jacks that must be raised or lowered to compensate for surface relief; if not adjusted regularly, the house warps.

It turns out we don’t have any doors, except for the bathroom. We took them down because [...] the house was completely warped. Well, it’s not very convenient – the child is in plain sight. We need to adjust the jacks. (Resident of Amguema)

Adjusting the foundation is an essential maintenance skill. Residents complain that the builders didn’t teach them how to do it properly: “No one explained anything to us; they gave the village three wrenches and left.” The wrenches – tools for tightening the jacks’ nuts – are scarce; some residents made their own. Wrench owners are granted both the privilege and the unwritten duty of helping neighbors, so personal conflicts with them are dangerous. One informant said he had stopped adjusting his foundation because “there are no wrenches left in the village.” When I noted that a specific neighbor still had one, he replied evasively, “What can you get out of him?” These two neighbors, it turned out, were in a long-running fight: social disintegration translated directly into material decay. The adjustment process itself requires the whole family. Instead of a level, residents use doorways as a guide: while one person works the jack outside, a relative inside checks that doors close freely. An elderly keyholder told me, regretfully, that he could no longer level his cottage since his wife had died and his children moved away.

The deeper problem, however, lies in the foundation material than in social factors. Instead of the expensive aluminum that Canadian FSC architects recommended for adjustable foundations, local builders used cheap Russian steel prone to corrosion. Many jacks have simply rusted, and residents have lost the ability to compensate for permafrost heave.



Fig. 6 Local man holding the wrench for adjusting jack foundation in the village of Amguema, 2024. Photo: Gavriil Malyshev.



Fig. 7a,b Adjustable foundations:
a) Canadian aluminium alloy Triodetic; b) Russian steel jack-screw foundation. Egvekinot, Amguema, 2024. Photo: Gavriil Malyshev.

The belief in the existence of inaccessible expert knowledge that could have helped avoid the problem coexists with accusations that builders cut corners and skimmed on materials:

In Egvekinot, the cottages stand on Canadian aluminum foundations, they don't rust, and the houses don't lean anywhere – but here they put up some cheap imitation to save money. No, you see, if we'd had a good specialist who knew how to adjust them properly [...] But [a neighbor] was leveling the house with his aunt, and it just split right down the middle: a crack running the entire length of the house. Now we can't do anything – it's all set in place. (Resident of Amguema)

On the village head's list of resident complaints, "cracks in the ceiling and walls" and "the house is warped" – both consequences of foundation shifting – were the most common entries.

Technological expectations: The nostalgia for reinforced concrete

Technological expectations in Chukotka villages are shaped by lived experience and perceptions of durability and status. In a collective petition, residents of Inchoun complained in the "Chukotka Wall of Shame" (*Doska pozora Chukotki*) social media group about jack foundations ("temporary, made of thin metal profile pipes") and demanded "permanent reinforced-concrete foundations." Engineers note that locals reject adjustable metal foundations like Canadian Triodetic in favor of Soviet-style concrete piles. In fact, they are rejecting not the original Canadian stainless-steel system proposed by FSC, but its simplified, rust-prone local version. Reinforced concrete

thus stands for reliability, while distrust of metal stems from cheap substitutes rather than the technology itself. Built by the Soviet state only for multistory high-rises in regional towns, the concrete piles became the unreachable desire: the heritage of old modernity.

Social inequality shapes these expectations too. In Uelkal, many cottages rest on wooden blocks and wedges rather than steel jacks. A visiting electrician praised the solution – durable larch blocks, helicopter-delivered, easy to adjust – yet a local Yupik seal hunter dismissed it as fragile, contrasting it with the concrete piles of a wealthy neighbor. For him, woodblocks symbolized impermanence, since concrete represented "how things are built in cities" and "how the elite builds." Thus, a reliable Arctic adaptation (Dourado et al. 2024) remains symbolically devalued. Technological preferences in Chukotka emerge not only from performance, but from experience, trust, and the social meanings attached to construction.



Fig. 8 Wooden blocks and wedges foundation in Uelkal, 2024. Photo: Gavriil Malyshev.

Black mold: A consequence of technology transfer and some new rituals

Another common problem is leaking ceilings, damp walls, cold interiors, and black mold. A technical report shown to me by a village administration traced these issues to flaws in the original construction: insufficient insulation let heat escape into the

attic, where condensation caused moisture damage and mold, while roof ridges needed sealing. Yet official recognition did not bring centralized repairs – residents were left to cope on their own.

Villagers often blame deviations by the Chukotka Trading Company from the Fergusson Simek Clark designs. As one Amguema resident explained, builders unfamiliar with frame construction simplified ventilation to cut costs: “The Canadians had fans and exhaust systems, but this technology was too expensive – so they left ventilation out.” Shafts added a year later, without forced air, proved insufficient. Warm humid air rises through poorly insulated ceilings, condenses on the cold roof, and freezes, turning attics into seasonal reservoirs of snow and ice.

Each spring, residents climb into the attic to shovel it out. “Every spring we remove ten bags of snow,” one Amguema resident said. The work is hazardous: attics were not designed for access, hatches were added later, ceilings are fragile, and roofs are low and studded with protruding nails. Elderly residents depend on younger relatives or neighbors’ children: “I’m too old to climb up there now; my grandchildren used to be small, and they used to clean snow for me, but now there’s no one. I ask the [neighboring] kids.” (Resident of Novoe Chaplino)

Domestic life intensifies the problem – and in residents’ accounts, children make it worse. “My cottage used to be perfect until my daughter was born. There’s laundry and cooking every day – a lot of moisture, which means condensation. And mold started growing on my walls and ceiling” (Amguema). Black mold is seen as a serious health hazard; some families reported frequent illness among children and moved back into older Soviet-era wooden houses with “healthier air.” Maintaining the cottage thus becomes inseparable from caring for family health, as residents continually adapt houses whose climatic performance deteriorated during the technology transfer.

Infrastructure plugins: Vestibules and additional enters

Drawing on knowledge from examples, the internet, and their own experience, residents adapt the technology introduced from outside during the renovation, incorporating adaptations from Chukchi and Russian practices into the Canadian frame cottage. The Davydovs propose calling such practices of grassroots technology transfer “infrastructure plugins” (Davydova and Davydov 2021). The authors use this concept to denote “grassroots” ways of expanding the capabilities of infrastructure imposed “from above.” They cite as examples greenhouses, *yarangas*, and shipping containers, which allow villagers to accumulate resources and maintain relative autonomy. However, in addition to these “external” plugins that complement “core infrastructures,” there are also those that intrude directly into them. These are various additions that people attach to their cottages, as well as other creative architectural solutions aimed at adapting the infrastructure imposed by modernizers “from the outside” to local cultural, domestic, climatic, and economic realities.

The most common addition is the vestibule (*veranda, tambur* – porch). People attach a series of porches to their cottages to keep the cold away from the front door: “My front door used to freeze shut before I had a porch; it would get covered in frost” (Resident of Amguema village). Porches prevent snow from being tracked inside the house and also serve as a storage space for reindeer hides. “The fur covering of a *yaranga* and *kukhlianki* (fur clothing) get ruined if kept in warmth and moisture, but the vestibule is cool and dry. There’s also a refrigerator here.” (Resident of Amguema village)



Fig. 10 a,b Industrial freezer and reindeer fur stored on the porch. Amguema, Novoe Chaplino, 2024. Photo: Gavriil Malyshev.



Fig. 9 a,b Vestibules additions to the cottages in Amguema, 2024. Photo: Gavriil Malyshev.

Residents actively adapt cottage architecture to everyday needs, often drawing on earlier building traditions. For example, many households place industrial freezers on enclosed porches to store meat, since such equipment occupies too much indoor space. Similar extensions were common in Soviet-era collective farmhouses, as documented by ethnographers (Vdovin 1963), and this architectural form was readily transferred to the new cottages. However, the automatic application of familiar solutions to unfamiliar frame construction sometimes created new problems. As one resi-

dent recalled, a neighbor built a vestibule but drove nails directly into the insulation layer, causing the mineral wool to become wet and reducing thermal performance.

The novelty of frame construction technology, combined with the lack of guidance from builders, meant that knowledge was often acquired through trial and error. This experience produced a paradoxical outcome: residents developed substantial practical expertise while simultaneously expressing a strong desire for professional assistance. Negative experiences and the high cost of mistakes encouraged learning, yet also undermined confidence, reinforcing the perception that specialized technical knowledge, often absent in remote villages, remained necessary for reliable adaptation.

A common architectural adaptation involves reorienting cottage entrances to better withstand local climatic conditions. During construction, compass directions were largely ignored: entrances faced the street, even when exposed to the strongest winds. Residents have addressed this by cutting new doorways on the sheltered side of the house, sometimes sealing the original entrance and sometimes retaining both. As a result, many cottages now have two entrances: a winter entrance, often protected by an additional vestibule and connected to paths along heating ducts that remain accessible after snowfalls, and a summer entrance. This redundancy reduces the risk of being trapped by snowdrifts and echoes the seasonal dual-entry systems of traditional semi-subterranean dwellings – *valakaran* or *klergan* among the Chukchi and *nynlu* among Inuit communities, where winter access was provided through protected corridors and summer entry through roof openings.



Fig. 11 Relocated entrance in the village of Amguema (traces of the former sealed doorway are visible on the leeward side), 2024. Photo: Gavriil Malyshev.

These modifications frequently rely on reused materials from abandoned Soviet infrastructure, demolished buildings, or renovation debris. Old windows, doors, and siding are rarely discarded; instead, they are incorporated into vestibules, sheds,

greenhouses, and additional porches. Such reuse reflects longstanding practices among Indigenous communities of the Far North, where high transportation costs make salvaged materials especially valuable (Davydov 2018). Over time, porches expand, become storage areas or greenhouses, and even serve as reservoirs of spare materials for future repairs.

Both men and women participate in these construction practices. Time constraints often lead residents to hire neighbors. As one boiler-house worker in Amguema explained, long working hours make it difficult to obtain materials and carry out repairs independently, even when skills are available. In this way, everyday architectural adaptation becomes a shared, ongoing process shaped by climate, resource scarcity, and local knowledge.

Subsistence-shaped architectural transformations

The fauna of rural Chukotka differs significantly from that of “mainland” Russia (as the rest of the country is called in Chukotka), where many modernizers and builders originated, and from Canada, where the cottages were architecturally designed. Because no preliminary anthropological research was conducted by Abramovich’s team, the new houses did not account for the central role of animals in Indigenous subsistence: fish, whales, dogs, and reindeer in local subsistence. As a result, residents adapted the cottages to accommodate practices tied to hunting, fishing, and herding.

One example is the installation of *yukolniki* – devices for drying fish and whale meat, which remain staples of coastal diets. Traditionally mounted on poles near dwellings and almost forgotten in 1970–1980s, *yukolniki* began to appear again, attached directly

to log houses during the food shortages of the 1990s: people had to return to traditional food-gathering practices to avoid famine. This practice continued after Abramovich’s renovation, although it had not been considered by architects from Canadian and local construction firms. Residents nailed wooden rods or fishing lines under the eaves, sometimes piercing vapor barriers and insulation layers. As mineral wool became damp, insulation settled and allowed cold air to penetrate the house, eventually requiring costly repairs. Over time, residents refined their methods: attaching drying racks to structural studs or suspending them from strings under the eaves – illustrating how experimentation gradually



Fig. 12 *Yukolniki* were added to cottages facades and the dog door in Novoe Chaplino, 2024. Photo: Gavriil Malyshev.

produced safer adaptations. Animal-related practices also shape settlement life in other ways. Although snowmobiles have largely replaced dog sleds, large numbers of dogs remain, particularly in reindeer-herding villages where they assist herders and protect herds. In settlements such as Amguema, this creates tensions between herders and residents of apartment buildings: dogs gather in entrances, bark, and leave waste, prompting neighbors to post notices asking owners to monitor their animals. Cottages have become a form of relief for reindeer-herding families, who often prefer this type of housing because it allows them to avoid conflicts with neighbors. “When we come back from the tundra, we celebrate, rest, drink, make noise sometimes, and in our own house no one minds,” explained a *yaranga* owner in Amguema. “And no one complains about the dogs either – we keep them under the floor.” In her cottage, the foundation intercolumniation space between the ground and the floor had been enclosed with a metal grid and fitted with a gate, creating a pen for dogs. Such adaptations are common among reindeer-herding families. Residents also install “summer doors” or “dog doors” that close only the lower half of the entrance. These prevent dogs from entering the house while allowing better ventilation during warmer days. This case illustrates the interconnected nature of care practices: caring for the cottage is intertwined with caring for neighbors, dogs, and one’s social reputation.

Aesthetic uniformity and the absence of ethnic markers

Residents rarely decorate the exteriors of their houses. Despite the near-identical appearance of cottages, which often makes navigation difficult for outsiders, locals express clear satisfaction with this uniformity. Differences between houses are minimal, typically limited to shades of siding, cornices, and, most notably, the color of metal roofing. Roof color frequently serves as the primary spatial reference point: as



Fig. 13 Visually similar cottages in Novoe Chaplino with different colours of woofs and roofing, 2024. Photo: Gavriil Malyshev.

one informant explained, directions are often given as “the red house next to the blue one.”

Decorative elements are scarce. Occasionally, small flowerbeds or fences made of reindeer antlers or whale vertebrae can be found, yet such features remain exceptional. No visual representation of identity or social stratification can be easily found by outside visitor’s gaze. The only observed example of architecture being used to signal social status was in the settlement of Uelkal, where a former municipal official (of non-Indigenous ethnicity) constructed a two-story cottage during a renovation project by negotiating with builders. Beyond its height, the house also differs in wall color, marking it as an anomaly within an otherwise standardized built environment. Rural Chukotka seems to appear quite visually uniform.

For many residents of Indigenous villages, stylistic uniformity is not perceived as deprivation but as an aesthetic and moral value associated with order and coherence. As one resident of Amguema noted:

When houses are somewhat similar, it looks more aesthetic, more beautiful than when everything is mismatched [...] There should still be some kind of order [...] ideally, an architect should approve construction so that everything looks coherent together.

Uniformity is thus interpreted as the outcome of expert planning and as a visible symbol of state-led modernization, contrasted with what is perceived as the unattractive “chaos” of unregulated, individual construction. This contrast is sometimes articulated through external comparisons. A resident of Novoe Chaplino, reflecting on visits to settlements on St. Lawrence Island (USA), remarked: “Americans are messy: there’s clutter everywhere, both inside and outside [...] Here, everything is much cleaner and more orderly.”

Such evaluations suggest a broader hierarchy of knowledge, in which expert-driven design is privileged over individual initiative – an attitude arguably shaped by successive waves of state modernization. Notably, arguments once used by planners to justify large-scale renovation and demolition are now reproduced by residents themselves.

This external austerity sharply contrasts with interior spaces, where residents often employ bright wallpapers, paintings, and decorative elements. The facade, however, remains largely devoid of both personal and ethnic expression. The display of ethnic identity in architecture is almost entirely absent. In the reindeer-herding settlement of Amguema, one of the few consistent markers is the *tivichgyn*, a device made of reindeer antler used to knock snow off clothing before entering a *yaranga*; today, it functions as a rare public protective object. In the predominantly Yupik settlement of Novoe Chaplino, occasional decorative garlands made of traditional leather balls (*ankaq* in Yupik) or rosettes can be observed, though these too are limited in scope. Within the home, however, certain traditional tools, such as knives used for cutting

whale meat and skin (known as *uliak* in Eskimo and *pekul* in Chukchi), are preserved and occasionally displayed to visitors, as well as sacred items stored inside, marking a more private mode of cultural continuity.



Fig. 14 Tivichgyn and Ankaq (Yupik toy ball) in the interior of cottages in Amguema and Novoe Chaplino, 2024. Photo: Gavriil Malyshev.

Performing vulnerability: The politics of complaints and self-doubt

Despite the wide range of vernacular techniques developed to cope with condensation and mold, residents continue to invoke the need for expert knowledge. As one informant from Amguema put it, “If we had been told from the beginning how to maintain these houses ourselves, maybe these problems wouldn’t have happened.” Such statements should not be read simply as evidence of incapacity. Rather, they form part of a broader strategy in which demonstrative helplessness becomes a means of engaging the state.

Complaints about housing conditions, especially condensation, dampness, and mold, are regularly addressed to village heads, municipal utilities, and district administrations. Yet, these appeals are often accompanied by skepticism regarding their effectiveness:

If everything had been thought through, we wouldn’t be complaining [...] They say, “we’ll take it under control,” but it stays there [...] We ask the administration to come help – they come, write everything down, and that’s it [...] So we manage somehow ourselves: you open a “do-it-yourself” manual, buy materials, and fix it. (Resident of Amguema)

Here, self-reliance and complaint-making are not mutually exclusive but mutually reinforcing practices. Residents actively repair and adapt their homes, while simultaneously maintaining a discourse of insufficiency that legitimizes claims to external assistance. This duality is evident in statements that combine technical competence with appeals to expertise:

You need a specialist who understands how it should be. We climbed up there and did something – maybe we made it worse [...] There should be at least three vents; I crawled around and led a ventilation tube from the attic outside, and it got better, less condensation. (Resident of Amguema)

Such narratives reveal a calibrated performance: practical knowledge is downplayed, while vulnerability is foregrounded. Complaints thus operate as an “infrastructure of care,” enabling access to materials, labor, and institutional attention that would otherwise remain unavailable.

This strategy becomes particularly salient in relation to complex and costly systems, such as heating. In Uelkal, the failure of imported autonomous convector systems, abandoned due to high electricity costs and maintenance difficulties, reinforced residents’ sense of dependence on centralized solutions. As one might infer from local accounts, technological complexity amplifies vulnerability: without access to expertise or spare parts, autonomy becomes a liability rather than an asset. Complaints in this context were instrumental in securing connection to central heating, which ultimately resolved both financial and environmental issues.

From the perspective of municipal authorities and utility workers, however, such practices are often framed as passivity or dependency. During fieldwork with a district utility team, I frequently heard criticism of residents as “always demanding” and unwilling to take responsibility. Officials emphasized that most cottages remain municipally owned and are occupied under social rental agreements, placing the burden of maintenance on local administrations that lack sufficient funding. As one official noted, “The cottages fall entirely on our shoulders [...] if they were private, it would be different, but people don’t privatize them.” Within this administrative narrative, complaint-making is interpreted as a legacy of Soviet-era paternalism, often linked to the boarding school system that allegedly fostered “dependency.” Some officials even framed the refusal to privatize housing as a deliberate attempt to “outsmart the system” and retain access to state support.

Yet, ethnographic evidence complicates this interpretation. What appears as passivity is better understood as a pragmatic response to structural uncertainty, shaped by experiences of past modernization campaigns and the withdrawal of state support in the 1990s. By not privatizing their homes and by sustaining a visible discourse of need, residents preserve a channel through which they can mobilize external resources. At the same time, they often render their own labor of maintenance invisible, ensuring continued eligibility for assistance.

Importantly, the use of complaints is not limited to residents. Local officials themselves sometimes mobilize collective grievances as a resource, encouraging residents to submit complaints in order to secure funding from higher administrative levels. Public complaint platforms, such as regional online forums, further extend this “infrastructure of visibility,” allowing residents to bypass local hierarchies and attract attention while remaining anonymous. As one informant explained, “Everyone agrees in private, but at meetings people stay silent [...] so now we just post it online.”

In this context, the widely invoked dichotomy between “complainers” and “self-reliant homeowners” collapses. These are not opposing categories but intertwined modes of engaging with infrastructure. Everyday care such as routine repair, adaptation, and maintenance remains the primary condition of habitation. Complaints, by contrast, function as a supplementary tool: a means of translating vulnerability into claims, and claims into material support.

Strategic helplessness

A striking feature of everyday life in the cottages is the coexistence of practical competence and declared self-doubt. While residents often emphasize their lack of expertise, years of repairs and adaptations have endowed them with detailed knowledge of frame construction. This knowledge is frequently acquired through trial and error. One informant recalled discovering the fragility of drywall by punching a wall during an argument – an action that would have been inconsequential in his former log house. Others learned the importance of airtightness when, during renovations or extensions, they inadvertently pierced insulation layers rather than structural studs, allowing moisture to enter and causing mineral wool to collapse and lose its insulating properties.

Over time, informal hierarchies of expertise have emerged within villages. Individuals with construction experience, former members of Soviet construction brigades, participants in the Abramovich-era renovation, or workers from collective farm building units, occupy respected positions as local experts. Alongside them are skilled and proactive residents, often described as *rukastye* (“handy”) or *khoziaevye* (“good housekeepers”), who not only earn recognition but may also provide paid repair services to neighbors. Yet even these figures frequently reproduce narratives of insufficiency: “No one really knows what they’re doing [...] they try and just break things. We manage somehow, like blind kittens. But you need a professional, otherwise it might all fall apart,” remarked a woman in Amguema who had independently replaced insulation in her home.

This paradox competence articulated through the language of incompetence – points to a historically rooted hierarchy of knowledge. Waves of modernization have reinforced trust in external, expert authority while undermining confidence in local knowledge. Expressions of doubt thus serve not only as descriptions of uncertainty

but also as signals of the need for outside intervention. In this sense, narratives of limited expertise function similarly to complaints: they are part of an “infrastructure of care” through which residents mobilize external resources.

A comparable logic underlies the widespread refusal to privatize cottages. At first glance, this reluctance is often interpreted by officials as irresponsibility or a lack of initiative. However, residents themselves frame it as a rational response to the perceived temporality of housing. As many informants emphasized, frame houses are understood to have a lifespan of approximately twenty years. Within this temporal horizon, privatization appears unnecessary or even counterproductive: “It’s all temporary housing, and it gets worse every year – what’s the point of privatizing it if they’ll demolish it and build new ones soon anyway?” (Resident of Amguema)

From this perspective, housing is embedded in a longer history of state-led provision: Soviet authorities once built wooden houses, which were later replaced by cottages during the post-Soviet renovation. Residents thus anticipate future interventions and position themselves accordingly. Privatization, in turn, becomes meaningful primarily in the context of outmigration. Those planning to leave the village often formalize ownership in order to sell the property back to the municipality and use the funds to relocate. Elderly residents may privatize their homes to pass them on to children who have already left, enabling a similar transaction in the future.

This produces a notable inversion: those intending to stay tend not to privatize, while those preparing to leave do. Far from indicating passivity, this pattern reflects a strategic distribution of responsibility. Residents continue to invest labor in maintaining and modifying their homes, despite the legal ambiguity of altering municipally owned property, while simultaneously preserving their claims to state support. As one informant explained:

By law, we’re not supposed to change anything [...] but everyone here adds extensions, replaces windows and doors. They [the municipality] don’t have the money to deal with us anyway, so I do what I want with the house. (Resident of Novoe Chaplino)

Such practices highlight a key tension: full autonomy is neither feasible nor desirable in the conditions of remote Arctic settlements. The scarcity of materials: drywall, insulation, siding, and other components unavailable locally – makes complete self-sufficiency impossible. In this context, maintaining municipal ownership becomes a way of securing access to external supply chains and institutional support.

The perceived lack of expertise further amplifies this dynamic. During fieldwork in Amguema, my identification as an architect led residents to actively seek my advice, inviting me into their homes and asking for solutions to construction problems. Any outsider with perceived technical knowledge is quickly incorporated into local networks of care. Municipal workers, visiting repair crews, soldiers, and even temporary migrants are similarly mobilized to fill gaps in expertise and labor. As one resident of Novoe Chaplino explained:

If houses are in good hands, they'll last forever. The Canadians built good houses, but they need their kind of maintenance, not our "peasant" way [...] You need specialists here, not amateur work.

At the same time, the conditions of knowledge transfer during the renovation itself contributed to this enduring sense of insufficiency. Residents recall receiving only minimal instruction upon moving into the cottages, often framed in ways they now recount humorously, such as warnings "not to light a fire inside the house." Systematic transmission of technical knowledge from builders to inhabitants was largely absent, just as local knowledge was rarely incorporated into the design process. During the initial period of warranty maintenance, builders addressed complaints quickly, reinforcing expectations of external support. Once this period ended, residents were left to navigate unfamiliar technologies on their own.

Early experiences in the new houses – freezing doors, excessive humidity, structural shortcomings – were interpreted through the lens of complaint and response. Subsequent modifications, such as the addition of entry vestibules and ventilation systems, are often remembered by residents as outcomes of their appeals, regardless of whether they were originally planned. This attribution further strengthens the perceived efficacy of complaint-making as a tool of infrastructural adaptation.

Taken together, these dynamics suggest that what is often labeled as "learned helplessness" is more accurately understood as demonstrative helplessness: a situated and strategic practice. Expressions of doubt, refusals of ownership, and appeals to expertise are not signs of incapacity but mechanisms for negotiating support in conditions of material scarcity and infrastructural uncertainty.

Waiting for renewal: Anticipation as a housing policy

Despite continuous efforts to maintain and repair their cottages, residents increasingly perceive their housing as temporally limited. By the summer of 2024, both villagers and local officials widely expected the eventual collapse of the houses built in the 2000s. As one resident of Amguema put it: "This was always temporary housing [...] maybe it will last five more years for those who take care of it, and then – who knows." Such uncertainty is met with a notable calm, even irony: "If it collapses, it collapses, we'll move back to the *yaranga*." (Resident of Amguema)

Most informants agree that the existing housing stock will need to be demolished and rebuilt, and they assign this responsibility to the state, which has already undertaken similar interventions in the past. This expectation shapes local housing practices: cottages are rarely privatized, and residents show little interest in building new homes independently. Instead, a distinct understanding of the "right to housing" has emerged, grounded in repeated experiences of state-led provision. In the absence of a functioning real estate market, most housing remains municipally owned and occupied under social rental agreements, even as residents themselves carry out everyday maintenance.

At the same time, there is a widespread recognition that the state currently lacks the resources for large-scale renewal. Waiting lists for improved housing move slowly, and new construction proceeds at a pace insufficient to replace the aging stock. This gap between expectations and capacity generates a sense of impending crisis. Rumors circulate about potential solutions – such as relocating residents into apartment blocks – reflecting both administrative logic and local concern. While officials emphasize the economic efficiency of multi-unit housing, residents themselves strongly prefer detached homes, valuing their spatial autonomy despite dissatisfaction with construction quality.

Uncertainty is further intensified by discussions of possible settlement closures and resettlement policies. In this context, narratives about the imminent decay of cottages acquire a strategic dimension. Statements about structural failure, lack of local expertise, and the impossibility of self-sufficient maintenance function as claims-making devices, similar to complaints and performances of helplessness. They articulate vulnerability while simultaneously calling for renewed state intervention.

The legacy of the 2000s renovation is thus ambivalent. On the one hand, it introduced new housing technologies and shifted responsibility for maintenance toward residents, who have since developed significant practical competencies. On the other hand, it reinforced expectations of periodic state-led renewal without establishing the infrastructural or logistical conditions necessary for long-term autonomy, such as access to materials or trained specialists.

Contemporary housing policy in Chukotka appears to be shaped by this tension. Authorities seek to promote privatization and reduce the burden of maintenance, yet residents resist full ownership in order to preserve access to state support. What emerges is a hybrid system: neither a market-based housing regime nor a fully state-managed one, but a form of socially embedded municipal housing sustained through ongoing negotiation.

In this context, the refusal to privatize is not a sign of passivity but a rational strategy under conditions of infrastructural scarcity and uncertainty. By maintaining their status as municipal tenants, residents secure a degree of social protection while continuing to invest labor and resources into their homes. Vulnerability, rather than diminishing, remains central: it structures expectations, informs strategies, and sustains the ongoing relationship between residents and the state.

Discussion: The afterlife of post-Soviet modernization in Arctic

This study demonstrates that the large-scale housing renovation of Chukotka's Indigenous villages, initiated in the 2000s under the governorship of Roman Abramovich, cannot be assessed unambiguously as either a success or a failure. Its consequences are far more complex and contradictory than the original vision of its planners, and continue to unfold two decades later, shaping contemporary social relations, infrastructural practices, and housing expectations.

As a technocratic and demonstrative project oriented toward external audiences, the renovation achieved its immediate goals. It rapidly produced a visually modernized built environment, reinforced the reputation of its initiators as effective managers, and facilitated the transfer of North American frame construction technologies to the Russian Arctic. At the same time, its rushing implementation logic excluded local residents from decision-making. Construction resulted in a material environment insufficiently adapted to local climatic, social, and cultural conditions. Crucially, long-term maintenance was not embedded in the project's design.

The most significant outcome, therefore, was not simply the introduction of a new housing type, but the emergence of a complex and dynamic infrastructure of care. Contrary to stereotypes of passivity, residents have demonstrated considerable agency. They have not only appropriated the cottages but also developed diverse practices of adaptation, repair, and extension. These "infrastructural plugins," such as vestibules, outdoor drying structures, relocated entrances, and dog-related modifications – highlight the capacity for grassroots technological transfer and creative reinterpretation of imported architecture.

At the same time, these practices are inseparable from politics. Through complaints, performances of helplessness, and refusal to privatize housing, residents strategically distribute responsibility. While they undertake everyday maintenance and adaptation, they continue to appeal to the state as a provider of scarce materials, expertise, and, crucially, as the agent responsible for a future wave of renovation once the current housing stock deteriorates. This approach should not be understood as "learned helplessness," but as a rational strategy under conditions of remoteness, infrastructural scarcity, and historically shaped expectations of state responsibility. Non-privatization, in this context, functions as a mechanism for preserving access to social guarantees and future rehousing.

The Chukotka case thus illustrates that the outcomes of modernization projects in the Arctic are determined less by their initial design than by the ongoing processes of adaptation, maintenance, and reinterpretation carried out by residents themselves. A post-project anthropological perspective reveals architecture not as a static object, but as a continuous process produced through relationships between people, materiality, and governance.

These findings have both theoretical and practical implications. They point to the necessity of involving local communities in the planning and implementation of future infrastructural projects, taking into account their technological preferences and ensuring the conditions for long-term maintenance. Without such considerations, new waves of renovation risk reproducing the same contradictions embedded in earlier interventions. Supporting existing practices of care through funding, material provision, and recognition of residents' labor may offer a more sustainable foundation for future housing policy in the region.

Conclusion: Slow breakdown and invisible labor – rethinking infrastructure in use

The central finding of this study resonates strikingly with the work of Maria Salaru, who examines the social life of post-socialist blocks of flats in Romania (Salaru 2025). Despite the geographical distance between these cases, both point to a crucial insight for the anthropology of architecture. Where infrastructure has often been treated as invisible, revealed only in moments of failure, the Chukotka case suggests a different temporal logic: breakdown is not an event but an ongoing condition.

For residents, infrastructural failure unfolds as a continuous, drawn-out process requiring constant intervention, not only for maintenance but also for cultural adaptations through infrastructural plugins. Houses do not simply “break;” they were already inappropriate right after construction, and they gradually deteriorate under the pressure of time, moisture, gravity, mold, and material fatigue. What appears from the outside as a stable built environment is, in practice, sustained through ongoing, labor-intensive care.

Paradoxically, it is precisely this labor that is rendered partially invisible. Residents actively maintain, repair, and adapt their homes, yet downplay these efforts in their interactions with authorities. This strategic invisibilization allows them to preserve claims to external support and avoid the full individualization of responsibility for infrastructural maintenance. In this sense, the “invisibility” of infrastructure is not a given property, but a socially produced effect.

Understanding breakdown as a slow and negotiated process has important implications. It shifts attention from moments of crisis to everyday practices of maintenance, and from design to long-term use. For policy, this insight underscores the need to support not only construction but also the ongoing residents labor that sustains infrastructure over time. More broadly, it calls for qualitative post-project research to study built environments – with methods and tools of architectural anthropology, capable of capturing the social relations and practices through which infrastructure continues to function long after its formal completion.

References

- Davydov, Vladimir N. 2018. Pragmaticheskoe ispol'zovanie infrastruktury i tekhniki korennyimi zhitelami krainego Severa: Tekhnologii osvoeniia prostranstva i sokhraneniia energii [The pragmatic use of infrastructure and technology by Indigenous peoples of the Far North: Technologies for spatial adaptation and energy conservation]. *Polyarnye chteniia na ledokole “Krasin”* 5: 42–54.
- Davydova, Elena A. and Vladimir N. Davydov 2021. Mikroinfrastruktura podsobnogo khoziaistva na Chukotke: Yarangi, konteinery i teplitsy [The micro-infrastructure of subsistence household economies in Chukotka: Yarangas, storage containers, and greenhouses]. *Sibirskie istoricheskie issledovaniia* 4: 76–93.
- Dorofeev, Vladislav and Tat'iana Kostyleva 2009. *Printsip Abramovicha: Talant delat'*

- den'gi* [Abramovich's principle: The talent for making money]. Moscow: Kommersant; Eksmo 69.
- Dourado, João Batista de Oliveira Libório, et al. 2024. Foundations in Permafrost of Northern Canada: Review of Geotechnical Considerations in Current Practice and Design Examples. *Geotechnics* 4(1): 285–308.
- Feklistov, Yuri 2001. Roman s Chukotkoi [Roman and Chukotka]. *Ogonek*, (January 2) 52: 8 <https://www.kommersant.ru> [accessed: 19.05.2026]
- Ibert, Oliver 2025. Expecting the Unexpected. In *Contingencies in Urban Future-Making*. J. Thiel, M. Grubbauer and L. Pohl (eds.), 299–320. Hamburg: transcript Verlag.
- Koniakhin, Gennadii Vladimirovich 2010. Gosudarstvennaia zhilishchnaia politika Rossii v 90-kh gg. XX v.: Mify i real'nost' [Russian state housing policy in the 1990s: Myths and realities]. *Sotsial'no-gumanitarnye znaniia* 5: 278–285. <https://cyberleninka.ru> [accessed: 19.05.2026]
- Kononov, Valerii 2002. Chukotka: v poiskakh smysla, III chast' [Chukotka: In search of meaning, Part III]. *Chukotka – prekrasnyi i... surovyy krai*, (October 21). <https://chukotken.ru> [accessed: 19.05.2026]
- Krupnik, Igor and Nikolai Vakhtin 2002. In the “House of Dismay:” Knowledge, Culture, and post-Soviet Politics in Chukotka, 1995–96. In *People and the Land: Pathways to Reform in post-Soviet Siberia*. E. Kasten (ed.), 7–43. Berlin: Reimer Verlag.
- Larkin, Brian 2013. The Politics and Poetics of Infrastructure. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 42(1): 327–343.
- Latour, Bruno and Albena Yaneva 2017. “Give Me a Gun and I Will Make All Buildings Move”: An ANT's View of Architecture. *Ardeth* 1: 103–111.
- Malyshev, Gavriil Nikolaevich 2024. Kontsept identichnosti v sovremennoi rossiiskoi arkhitekturno-gradostroitel'noi praktike kak instrument professional'noi legiti-matsii [The concept of identity in contemporary Russian architectural and urban planning practice as an instrument of professional legitimation]. *Gorodskie issledovaniia i praktiki* 9(4): 40–53.
- Şalaru, Maria 2025. *An Anthropology of Architectural Transformation: The Changing Fabric of a Romanian Block of Flats*. London: UCL Press.
- Scott, James C. 1998. *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Stepura, Irina 2005. Chto budet s Chukotkoi, esli u nee otniat' Abramovicha? [What would happen to Chukotka without Abramovich]. *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, (July 14).
- Thiel, Joachim, Monika Grubbauer, and Lucas Pohl 2025. *Contingencies in Urban Future-Making*. Hamburg: transcript Verlag.
- Thompson, Niobe 2009. *Settlers on the Edge: Identity and Modernization on Russia's Arctic Frontier*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Ustiuzhantseva, Olga Valer'evna, Sof'ia Mikhailovna Prokopova and Svetlana Georgievna Kravchuk 2025. Arkticheskii gorod mezhdu proektom i povsednevnost'iu:

- Epistemologiya komforta [The arctic city between planning and everyday life: An epistemology of comfort]. *Sibirskie istoricheskie issledovaniia* 3: 226–248.
- Vakhtin, Nikolai Borisovich 2023. Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskaya neopredelennost' 1990-kh godov na Chukotke kak problema i kak resurs [Socio-economic uncertainty in Chukotka during the 1990s: A problem and a resource]. *Neprikosnovennyi zapas* 151: 59–91.
- Vasilenko, Elena Valer'evna 2007. Ispol'zovanie biznes-tekhnologii v upravlenii regionom: Proekt "Chukotka" [The use of business technologies in regional governance: The "Chukotka Project"]. *Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta. Seriya 12. Politicheskie nauki* 5: 104–112.
- Vdovin, Innokentii Stepanovich 1963. Nekotorye dannye o sovremennom khoziaistve i kul'ture chukchei [Some data on the contemporary economy and culture of the Chukchi]. *Sovetskaya etnografiya* 1: 39–48.
- VTSIOM 2021. *Ideal'noe zhi'e glazami rossiian* [Ideal housing in the eyes of Russians]. Russian Public Opinion Research Center (WCIOM), January 15. <https://wciom.ru> [accessed: 19.05.2026]

Figures

- 1 Map showing the renovation scale and visited villages in Chukotka, 2024. TG: @archizba.
- 2 Abramovich's residence in Anadyr, Chukotka capital, 2024, built by Canadian architects FSC in 2000. Photo: Gavriil Malyshev.
- 3 FSC-built Canadian cottages in Egvekinot, Chukotka, 2024. Photo: Gavriil Malyshev.
- 4 Typical cottage built by Russian localization of the Canadian project in 2004 in Novoe Chaplino village, 2024. Photo: Gavriil Malyshev.
- 5 Vernacular methods of sealing a ceiling leak using old compact discs. Amguema, 2024. Photo: Gavriil Malyshev.
- 6 Local man holding the wrench for adjusting jack foundation in the village of Amguema, 2024. Photo: Gavriil Malyshev.
- 7 Adjustable foundations a) Canadian aluminium alloy Triodetic; b) Russian steel jack-screw foundation. Egvekinot, Amguema, 2024. Photo: Gavriil Malyshev.
- 8 Wooden blocks and wedges foundation in Uelkal, 2024. Photo: Gavriil Malyshev.
- 9 Vestibules additions to the cottages in Amguema, 2024. Photo: Gavriil Malyshev.
- 10 Industrial freezer and reindeer fur stored on the porch. Amguema, Novoe Chaplino, 2024. Photo: Gavriil Malyshev.

- 11 Relocated entrance in the village of Amguema (traces of the former sealed doorway are visible on the leeward side), 2024. Photo: Gavriil Malyshev.
- 12 *Yukolniki* were added to cottages facades and the dog door in Novoe Chaplino, 2024. Photo: Gavriil Malyshev.
- 13 Visually similar cottages in Novoe Chaplino with different colours of wools and roofing, 2024. Photo: Gavriil Malyshev.
- 14 Tivichgyn and Ankaq (Yupik toy ball) in the interior of cottages in Amguema and Novoe Chaplino, 2024. Photo: Gavriil Malyshev.

