

Inner Asian and Altaic Studies Lecture
Harvard University

February 3, 2021
1:15 pm EST
Online event
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Settler Nativization in the Inner Eurasian Borderlands of the Qing and Russian Empires

Settler nativization is an important issue, yet insufficiently studied in colonial histories of early modern Eurasian empires. In the early modern era, the Qing and Russian empires both penetrated the heartland of Inner Eurasia. Military subjugation and conquest was followed by a migration of people and colonization toward the Inner Eurasian borderlands. Both regimes faced similar problems, and settler nativization was one of them. Those Han Chinese and Russian settlers were mostly poor, lowly educated, and single men working as farmers and merchants. They migrated into the Inner Eurasian borderlands for seeking arable lands and trade opportunities. To survive in the strange lands, those settlers and their offspring as minorities had to work with indigenous peoples and gradually acquired indigenous cultures and identities. This paper explores the similarity and difference between the nativization of Han Chinese and Russian settlers and the responses of the states. This paper argues that the difference of autonomy and local authority of native peoples in both empires should contribute to the consequence of settler nativization in the Qing and Russian empires.

Keywords: Inner Eurasia, Borderland, Nativization, the Qing Empire, the Russian Empire