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Title: Theorizing the Origins and Advancement of Indigenous Activism: The Case of the Russian North

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ABSTRACT

“Why and how do indigenous peoples’ rights movements arise?” This is the most fundamental question this dissertation sets to answer. In seeking to better understand contemporary indigenous movements, I examine the broad historical and sociopolitical trends of indigenous activism and then use the relatively recent emergence of indigenous peoples’ mobilization in the Russian North as a case study.

The study makes three contributions to the scholarship on indigenous activism. First, I propose an original theoretical model, based on a review of the literature and my immersion in the real-world process of indigenous activism, which identifies the principal stimuli that trigger and shape indigenous movements across the world. To my knowledge, no one has yet attempted to construct a theoretical model that accomplishes that. I believe that examining national indigenous movements through the suggested theoretical model may possibly lead to much needed standardization of future comparative analyses within the subject area. Second, I argue that studying the institutions involved in indigenous discourses, i.e. identifying the key actors and the

interactions between them, provides valuable insights on the emergence and development of indigenous rights movements. The *actors* are thus the unit of analysis in my research; they are the lens through which I examine the indigenous activism in the Russian North and compare it to the movements from other parts of the world. Finally, this dissertation presents a comprehensive case study account on the indigenous peoples' mobilization in the Russian North – a subject matter that to my knowledge has not yet been thoroughly examined in scholarly literature.