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## Editorial

The present issue *Arctic Studies 4* (which is also *Pro Ethnologia 10*) contains a digest of reports which were outlined within the annual conference of the Estonian National Museum called “Identity of Arctic Cultures” between the 13–15 April 2000. In addition, a few more articles on related themes have been added, the authors of which actually were expected to be involved in the conference. Yet, for different reasons, they could not participate in the conference. The publication of the conference materials will also be continued in the forthcoming issue *Arctic Studies 5* (*Pro Ethnologia 11*).

The conference involved participants, from five countries (namely – Finland, Hungary, Norway, Russia and Estonia), all being outstanding researchers. The conference involved miscellaneous subject areas, considering both geographical aspects (e.g. Ainus, North-Siberian peoples, Sámi, as well as some other peoples inhabiting the areas near the Arctic regions) and also cultural aspects. The main elements of the Arctic peoples identity were seen as language, sources of livelihood, material cultural heritage, environmental conditions, overall socio-economic situation, contemporary literature tradition, as well as worldview and folk art. The topics also involved descriptions of Arctic cultures on the basis of museum exhibits and other data available in museums, and also the opinions of different researchers about essential aspects of Arctic cultures. Relevant discussions were also provided in the workshop “Changing Ethnic Identities” held within the conference.

Eva Toulouze (Tartu) gives a fascinating overview of the adaptation strategies of the Northern peoples’ intellectuals in different decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Arctic writers, belonging to different generations, chose various ways of survival and answering their aspiration to be a writer in Soviet society.

Kjell Olsen (Alta) examines the language and integration policies of Norway towards the Sámis in the 19–20<sup>th</sup> centuries. He also discusses the reaction of Sámis to the constantly changing language policy.

In her paper, Helena Ruotsala (Turku) analyses ethnic mobilisation in the Finnish part of Lapland during the 1990s. She considers ethnic origin, language, way of life and folklore, as well as objects of

material culture functioning as cultural symbols and self-determination of individuals to be the main factors determining ethnic identity of Sámis. Ruotsala examines aspects of ethnic identity in one of the ethnic contact areas in Lapland.

Jukka Pennanen (Oulu) analyses women's role in the Kultima Sámi community. Pennanen's case study is part of the Finnish-American research project "Gender Dynamics and Subsistence Systems in Circumpolar Societies". The project attempts to understand how the differences in male and female economic roles are discovered, how they connect with each other and complement each other.

Kirill Istomin (Tartu) looks at a cultural phenomenon that has probably not received the attention it deserves, namely reindeer herding among Izhma Komis. Based on his recent fieldwork material, Istomin gives an overview about current stratification and behavioural strategies of the Izhma Komi reindeer herders. He also touches upon an unusual character of gender roles in tundra Komi ethnic groups.

Vladimir Lipin (Syktyvkar) and Art Leete (Tartu), in their research, examine changes in hunter ethics and behavioural strategies of the Komis at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The article is just a short introduction to the topic that should definitely be deliberated upon more in the future.

Finally, a text of the workshop "Changing Ethnic Identities" held on the last day of the conference is provided here. The workshop was based on two articles. Firstly, Liivo Niglas (Tartu) in his paper presents his conception about reindeer as being a basic factor, a key symbol of the tundra Nenets worldview. Secondly, Marjut Huuskonen (Turku) compares in her research different wind descriptions related to the Sámi identity.

The board wants to thank the Finnish Institute in Estonia, Tartu Branch Office, as well as the Tartu NEFA group and The Estonian Cultural Endowment, being the groups which supported the conference. Also, the conference was part of the grant 3134, noted as "Identity of Arctic Cultures" of the Estonian Science Foundation. The organising committee and editorial board are grateful to everybody who helped to organise the conference and the publishing of this issue.

# **Adaptational Models of Intellectuals among Northern Peoples**

**Eva Toulouze**

The title of my paper contains two notions I will try to elucidate without delay. I call “intellectuals” the educated natives from Northern Eurasia, who dominate and practise written culture. The second notion I refer to is “adaptational models”. I will not use it in the broader meaning of native adaptation to new external conditions, but in a more narrow meaning, concerning this group from the point of view of its position and social function. In order to understand its meaning, I have to comment briefly, and therefore schematically, on some historical data and first of all, how this social group emerged in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This introduction will thus give me the opportunity of presenting the background, the context in which some choices had to be made.

## **I. The adaptation models**

### *The peoples of the North and a written culture*

The written form of social communication is historically a new phenomenon in the life of the peoples of the North. In spite of some attempts made by the orthodox missionaries in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, literacy started spreading only in the second third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as a direct consequence of the Soviet power’s political initiative. Its development has not proceeded from an internal process. It has not been the answer to a social need felt by the communities themselves, but a clearly formulated project of the leading groups, whose final aim was to integrate, as soon as possible, the peoples of the North in

a whole system. The introduction of written culture, the creation of a new social group, the educated native, was but a means in order to provide the state with trusted mediators.

### *The birth of a new social category*

As soon as 1922, the Soviet organisations, dealing with nationalities, decided that the languages of Russia's people's of the North were to be written. The concrete work of literary languages' creation started in the midst of the 1920s and was achieved at the beginning of the thirties: in 1932, 14 languages were officially recognised. They were also to be the bases of elementary school education. But the Soviet power was impatient to broaden its influence in the North as well as everywhere else, and didn't intend to wait for the results of educational measures: it was urgent to educate people able to transmit to their peoples the soviet truth. The first adults to be educated in Leningrad's university arrived in 1925, most of them were illiterate and some didn't even speak Russian. After a few years experience in different Institutions, a special Institute was established in 1930, the Institute of the Peoples of the North. The first students graduated in the mid-thirties: they had studied with excellent professors, internationally famous ethnographers, they had contributed to the formation of their own written languages, they were part of a very exciting intellectual adventure.

### *Totalitarianism and positivism*

At this point, it is important to stress some well known characteristics of the Soviet power and first of all its totalitarian dimension: the 'Bolsheviks' project was global and universal. There could be shifts on formal aspects, there could even be temporary regional shifts taking place, but the aim was global and no groups were to be left behind. The second idea was that, in the first years of Soviet power, the Bolsheviks as a whole and in particular the leaders dealing with the North were fully convinced of the importance of education. The oppressed peoples were to be developed by education: the "cultural construction", the massive development of a school system in a

clearly under educated Russia was a very important part of the whole project, as an achievement in itself and also as a means of political propaganda. The societies of the North had no real experience of education. Their social values, the main criteria of prestige were different, these were such as age, wealth or aptitude in communicating with the spirits.

### *Tasks and personalities*

This new social category, the intellectuals of the North, had therefore upon it, from the beginning, a heavy social pressure; they must exist, act and create between two worlds, whose values are entirely different. They were to fulfil a task, they were supposed to serve the political power, to implement its penetration in the depth of their people. But they had also been given the means of personal initiative, of autonomous reflection, of original creation. What I call an adaptation model is the way each of these educated natives inserted himself in the framework previously noted and the kind of opportunities they found in which to express themselves. One important part of this question is therefore their attitude towards the political power as it appears in their intellectual production or in their social attitude, the position they adopt between the Soviet power and their peoples. I will limit my analysis geographically to the Nenets and the Ob-Ugrian peoples. Moreover, I will limit my analysis to the literary scene and examine the deeds of the native writers from the beginning of their literature until recent decades. I found that the models follow quite thoroughly the generation gaps.

## **II. The generation of the misunderstanding**

### *The bases of the misunderstanding*

This first generation is sincerely convinced that Soviet power is able to give native peoples the means of a better life, a way to harmonious progress, while respecting their identity. They have been involved in a really exciting individual and collective adventure, whose basic character was to do something for their peoples: by creating literary

languages, they felt that their poor despised tribes were elevated to the status of cultured peoples. They felt that Soviet power was giving them dignity and – through education – the opportunity of deciding for themselves their own life. Many of them had very concrete personal experience of a miserable life in former times, when no hope was permitted: they were both orphans. Pyrerka worked for rich reindeer herders without hope of ever possessing any reindeers. Noho was educated by the missionaries and found no place either in the tundra or in the town. They welcomed the new power.

They reached maturity in the midst of the thirties. It is the period when the indigenous societies on the spot were deprived of their traditional leaders, shamans and wealthy hunters or reindeer herders, against whom a pitiless campaign had started in the early thirties. The roots of the misunderstanding are here. While they are convinced that by developing schooling, by founding a literature, by giving a status to their language, they contribute to the promotion of their peoples, the latter's own structures and spiritual resources were being systematically destroyed by the political power, the same to which they own their existence.

### *The personalities inside the model*

In this first period, the writers' attitude toward the power can't be but positive: they have been chosen, they personally received something, they are thankful. They express this attitude in slightly different ways: the communist fighter (Ivan Noho), the subjective supporter (Anton Pyrerka), the integrators (Nikolay Vyika and Panteley Yevrin) different methods.

Ivan Noho, the communist fighter, in his play "The Shaman", follows very closely all the themes promoted by official propaganda. His play is a faithful illustration of Soviet policy's aims and ideological trends. The main character's villainy is revealed to the villagers, who thus understand the justness of comrade Stalin's policy. In another play, Ivan Noho turns to an historical subject: the main character is Vauli Nenyang, a reindeer herder who, in the midst of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, fought both the richest reindeer herders and the representatives of Russian power. He was therefore considered in the Soviet

times as an early symbol of class struggle. Ivan Noho's starting points and goals are exclusively ideological.

Anton Pyrerka, a European Nenets, displays himself in his short autobiographical novel "Vedo's Younger Son" as a subjective supporter of the Soviet power. He explains simply and plainly why the main character welcomed the arrival of the Reds: no pathetic scenes, no pompous phraseology nor propagandistic slogans. Just a very discreet description, very matter of fact, of the hard life of poor orphans in a very recent past.

Nikolay Vylka, a Nenets from the island of Novaya Zemlya, also describes life in the past, in his two short novels "On the Island" and "Maria". The past he presents is a system, a coherent and complex system. Life is hard, the Nenets are being oppressed by exploitation and spirits, the women are the main victims (all themes dear to the Soviet propaganda) and nevertheless, there are nice moments, there is some harmony, a very natural mixture of joy and sorrow. Nikolay Vylka seems to integrate the Soviet values in his people's world view, taking, from the Soviet ideology, the very points he considers useful to his people, inserting Lenin in the Nenets popular legends, as he does in a famous poem.

In a different way, the Mansi Panteley Yevrin, in his novel "Two Hunters", relates in a thorough construction the week spent in the forest by two men hunting together, a young Russian and an old Mansi. Their behaviour, their values, their world view differ considerably, but, notwithstanding quarrels and conflicts, they learn to overcome their prejudices. Although the new world wins the challenge (the old Mansi deciding to join the kolkhoze), both characters are positive and the young Russian learns himself to respect, at least partially, the old Mansi's universe.

I dedicated some space to this generation and to its main personalities, for it is an interesting, even an exciting period. Their works are fresh and sincere. They believe in what they profess, they can compare with the past, and their writing is carried out with real enthusiasm.



### III. Their master's voice

The war is a real turning point: it decimates the intellectual elite of the North as well as great repression did for other peoples. All the names mentioned above disappear during or just after the war. There is a slight link between the generations, thanks to writers who were too young before the war and started writing after it (the Komi-Nenets Ivan Istomin, the Nenets Ivan Juganpelik, the Mansi Matra Vakhrusheva, and to a lesser extent, the Khanty Grigory Lazarev). But most of the names of the next generation are really new.

They start writing when the ruling system is already institutionalised. There is no place for quest and hesitation, no need for personal choice: Stalin's position has been confirmed by his triumph over Germany, Soviet power is firmly established. Moreover, the unification of the country, i.e. of the values and ways of life, has been widely implemented. Creators are supposed to contribute to it and their freedom of movement is extremely limited, not only by the effect of direct censure, but also of the whole social atmosphere, which leads to one direction – the hagiography of the regime.

The new writers are certainly not less gifted than the former ones, and they are technically able to write in their mother tongue. But they have the misfortune of appearing in a time which excluded originality. The subjects are given: the war, the heroism of the men on the front and the women at home, the prosperity of kolkhozes and the performances of the milkmaids, and of course – at least until 1953 – the genius of comrade Stalin. These are the so called *grazhdanskiye* (patriotic, social) subjects. Ivan Istomin, Ivan Juganpelik, Grigory Lazarev, Matra Vakhrusheva were sons and daughters of their time, they had no real choice. And no such personality arose, who would have been able to overcome these limits. Texts were written in Khanty, Mansi and Nenets, but they didn't differ in essentials from the ones written in Russian. They speak of general ideas, not of particular problems as felt by the people. This celebrated generation is in some way a lost generation: its representatives identify themselves with the triumphant power and transmit its voice without any kind of mediation.

#### **IV. The liberation of talents**

The lost generation opened the doors to a new one, whose development took place in a new political context, characterised by a certain release of the former pressure. The sixties must be examined without indulgence: the so much celebrated Khrushchev era brought, notwithstanding the larger space of expression it provided creators with, many transformations that have continued to destroy the coherence of Northern cultures, such as the disappearance of native languages from school, or concentration of the people in larger economic units and villages. Nevertheless, while these fundamental and catastrophic processes were taking place, new voices appear, more numerous, more diverse than previously. None of them come near to the question of the legitimacy of power. They don't renounce nor question it. But new themes appear, more connected with personal experience and emotions, and literati can write about love and landscapes without referring to the Party.

This larger room given to individuals allowed the blossoming of real talents, and of very different ones. The Nenets Leonid Laptui expressed in his native language his love for the Yamal's tundra and the world of traditional Nenets legends. A whole group of Khanty poets – Prokopi Saltykov, Mikul Shulgin, Vladimir Voldin, Roman Rugin, Maria Vagatova – introduce their home landscape, the Ob, the forests, the hunters' life, and even their native tongue as new fertile themes. The most representative of this generation is undoubtedly the Mansi writer Yuvan Shestalov, whose works are famous all across Russia and even abroad, and who was considered, as Yuri Rytkeu or Vladimir Sangi, as a star of arctic literature. Yuvan Shestalov doesn't contest the political power and the changes it brought to the Mansi. He integrates them in a new myth, invented by him but deeply rooted in his people's traditions, in the Mansi mythology and world view. He achieves the compromise sketched by Nikolay Vylka, but on a larger scale and with a most pregnant individual originality. The generation that starts writing in the latter sixties is able to build its work in a newly discovered space of freedom, inside the existing framework, without even thinking of criticising or removing them.

## **V. The voice of the people**

Some representatives of the generation of the latter sixties are still alive, either retired in smaller villages (Prokopi Saltykov, Mikul Shulgin) either occupying leading positions in the cultural world (both Roman Rugin and Maria Vagatova are editors in the regional or national press). Yuvan Shestalov turned toward business and constantly moves between Khanty-Mansiysk, St. Petersburg and Budapest. Most of them are not creative any longer. They have witnessed the radical change of a whole world: the most radical transformations have taken place in the period of their activity and maturity. The oil business achieved what political power and economic centralisation hadn't been able to do: establish complete control over the whole territory once inhabited, only or mainly, by native citizens. Its penetration has led to a very deep crisis of the remaining traditional structures and, by polluting nature on a very large scale, has endangered most seriously even the physical survival of the indigenous communities.

This state of things has provoked a new start in the intellectual world of these regions: the writers who started writing during this period can't be indifferent to the processes going on. They are often personally affected through their own families, they have witnessed how their relatives died one after another in despair and alcoholism. They can no longer keep their eyes closed and choose to watch only the glorious achievements of the so-called progress: these achievements are cracking all over. A new generation, a new model appears, from the end of the seventies on. But the main work, which illustrates this model, is published at the end of the eighties and later.

The Nenets Anna Nerkagi and the Khanty Leonty Taragupta in the Yamal, the Eastern Khanty Yeremey Aypin and the Forest Nenets Yuri Vella are the main names until today. They create an original and powerful literary voice for a personal rebel attitude. Their message is both a protest and an appeal. They question without cosmetics the present and the past. They may touch very different themes, not only highly polemic ones: Leonty Taragupta's few published poems express the deep spirituality of the Khanty, Yuri Vella also writes love poetry. But they are involved in social life as intellectuals in a larger meaning by feeling responsibility concerning their people's

future and acting accordingly. Anna Nerkgi, whose painful narrative expresses the drama of the lost identity, of the not-belonging any more to anywhere, lives between the tundra and the town and supports reindeer herders by her little enterprise. Leonty Taragupta has enthusiastically dedicated himself to radio and has been trying to develop radio schools for children in the tundra. Yuri Vella lives with his reindeers in the taiga, and leads a permanent fight on the local scale to protect the natives' land against the oil industry. Yeremey Aypin is probably the most impressive of them as a writer: two novels and many shorter stories express the deepest pain and concern for the disappearing world and the human dramas around him. As a citizen, he has chosen the path of higher politics, and has been a deputy at the last Supreme Soviet as well as in the First State Duma.

## **VI. Conclusion**

The original goal placed on the new born intellectuals was to be mediators between the political power and the peoples, in principle and ideals, to permit a communication from one to the other and vice versa. In practice, the first and the second generations could only achieve but one part of the scheme: the transmission of the central power's ideology down to their readers (how much they have been able to reach them is an interesting subject – but a slightly different one), down to their people. The last generation, the one living and acting nowadays, seems to apply the inverse model: nowadays intellectuals intend their voice to be the voice of their suffering peoples. The circle seems to be closed.

## **Ethnic Symbols and Everyday Life. Language in Finnmark, Northern Norway**

**Kjell Olsen**

The Sámi are an indigenous people that traditionally lived in the northern areas of Finland, Norway, Sweden, and on the Kola Peninsula in Russia. Today, the majority of the Sámi live as Norwegian citizens in Norway. They are spread out all over the country but the interior of the northernmost county, Finnmark, is usually regarded as a “core area” for Sámi culture and language even if just as many or more live on the coast line.

The Norwegian policy from approximately 1850 to 1940, labelled Norwegianisation, had the aim of assimilating the Sámi in Norwegian society and culture. Even if this policy was changed at a national level after World War II, it still continued at a local level in the northern area in the post war period. The de facto change did not take place before the early 1980s when the Sámi ethno-political movement gained momentum in their struggle for political rights.

This paper aims to analyse the changing symbolic significance of the Sámi language. During the Norwegianisation period, the Sámi language appeared to be dying. It was the counterpart of modern culture and seemingly without a future. After the breakthrough of the ethno-political movement the language has become a symbol of survival and resistance against the Norwegian majority. The Norwegian language has had a different symbolic development. Previously, it was a symbol of modernity and integration in the modern state formation. Today, it is still important in a Sámi society where bilingualism and bi-culturalism are important assets for success (Stordahl 1994).

The historical changes of the symbolic value of language might also be traced to other levels than the political. These are levels where ethnic boundaries are played out in an everyday context and have often been established by other means than in the political discourse. This paper thus aims to investigate the interface between different levels where exclusion and inclusion of identity is negotiated (Barth 1994; Baumann 1996).

### **Language as a symbol of ethnic identity**

In an article, Jean E. Jackson (1995) argues that a common language is not necessary for group solidarity and ethnic identity. Her work, from the Vaupés in Colombia, shows that among people there, other features than language are emphasised for identity. Even if the people of Vaupés do not share a common language and speak several dialects that are not mutually understandable, they still look upon themselves as a common group. In this group, the question of language is not a problem. Language becomes a problem in the relationship to the surrounding State where a common language is looked upon as an almost primordial feature of ethnicity and by this becomes crucial in a struggle for political rights. This points to the topic of ethnicity being maintained at different social levels (Barth 1994; Baumann 1996).

In the relationship between the Sámi and the Norwegian State in Northern Norway, language has often been important in creating boundaries. Language is a formal criterion for recognition as a Sámi. Today, the formal request for claiming a Sámi identity and to be enlisted in the Sámi electoral roll is that you feel that you are a Sámi and that at least one of your great grandparents was Sámi speaking. The Sámi Language belongs to the Finno-Ugric languages and is quite different from Norwegian (Hætta 1992: 34–35). It might be divided into three main languages not mutually understandable and nine main dialects. By this it has also had an important function in creating boundaries in everyday life, both between Sámi and Norwegians and also among Sámi people themselves.

Since the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, language has been an important question in the integration of Sámi people into the changing

State formations in the area. The Christian mission directed against the Sámi was accelerated in the 1770s, and for a long time it was discussed if Sámi or Norwegian was the proper language for this work. Even if the Sámi gained some recognition for their rights at the end of the period under the rule of the Danish King, the mission work might be looked upon as a prelude to the following period.

From approximately 1850, the pressure against the Sámi language became greater. At that moment, the Norwegian State became more influential in the region and started a conscious policy of turning the Sámi into Norwegians. This policy of Norwegianisation was strongly present in the economic and religious sphere and the public health service but maybe most strongly felt in the educational system. Even if an economic integration into Norwegian society normally presupposed a cultural conversion in all fields, language became a symbol for entering Norwegian society (Bjørklund 1988).

The background for this policy of Norwegianisation has often been viewed as a result of the appearance of Social Darwinism and nationalism. In Norway, nationalism became important from the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and was influenced by Norway's background as a Danish "colony" until 1814. From 1814, Norway became a joint kingdom with Sweden. The administrative written language and the language of the upper classes was Danish, and from the middle of the century great efforts were made to create a Norwegian language called New Norwegian, Nynorsk, based on dialects from Southern Norway. The struggle, between "the Norwegian" Nynorsk and the Danish based Book language, continued until the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and might partly explain why language became such a crucial question in the policy of Norwegianisation.

In 1851, the Norwegian government established the "Finnefond" (Lapp Foundation). This fund should provide money to support the teaching of Norwegian among the Sámi. Among others, it was used to pay teachers a bonus dependent on their success in teaching Sámi children the Norwegian language. For most teachers in the northern area this was a welcome support to their normal salary. In 1880, a new teacher instruction manual stated that all textbooks should be in Norwegian and that the Sámi language should only be used when

absolutely necessary (Jensen 1991: 31). At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this policy was accelerated by the building of boarding schools for Sámi children. By this means, many Sámi children were situated in a Norwegian speaking milieu. This policy continued with little explicit protest until the 1930s. Only the lay Christian Laestadian movement, with its emphasis on Sámi and Finnish language use and on the local way of life, might be interpreted as an implicit resistance against the ethnic assimilation (Bjørklund 1988; Minde 1998).

After World War II, the Norwegian government changed its policy, but had difficulties getting a more tolerant policy accepted in Sámi areas. Even in what is now called the Sámi core areas in the inland there was a firm resistance against what was looked upon as a policy that regarded Sámi people as any different from the Norwegians. Local authorities fought against a curriculum that paid more attention to Sámi language and culture. For many Sámi, the mastering of Norwegian culture was the way into the modern welfare state, even if it meant leaving the local community. Not until 1967 was Sámi introduced as a teaching language in Kautokeino, a municipality that now is, and has always been, predominantly Sámi speaking (Hoem 1989: 14).

For many local communities and individuals the earlier policy of Norwegianisation had an enormous impact. In most coastal areas, the Sámi language was hidden, i. e. not used, when non-Sámi and outsiders were present, over time disappearing completely or about to disappear (Paine 1957; Eidheim 1971; Høgmo 1986). Sámi speaking children who entered a school using a language that they had no knowledge of were regarded as stupid or second rate compared with their Norwegian speaking contemporaries. Often they ended up with a lack of competence in both Sámi and Norwegian, both as written and spoken languages. For many people this process was experienced as an identity crisis, where a Sámi past in most contexts was hidden, transformed and regarded with shame (Høgmo 1986).

The turning point in this process came at the beginning of the 1980s after a long period of ethno-political struggle by an educated Sámi elite. The protests against the plans for a hydroelectric dam in the Alta-Kautokeino River gave the Sámi movement a wide support



in Norwegian society. Even if the Sámi movement lost its struggle against the dam, their struggle for ethno-political rights was rewarded with victory. In this struggle, it was important to build up a collective Sámi self understanding and in this process the language became an important symbol of Sáminess (Eidheim 1992; Stordahl 1994). As the earlier Norwegianisation process had caused individual tragedies, so also this symbolic shift came to have an impact on many individuals that could be both painful and/or liberating.

### **From a symbol of inferiority to a symbol of resistance**

The process of Norwegianisation had differed in most local communities. Even if the Norwegianisation policy represented a massive pressure, the loss of Sámi language competence in many cases was determined by individual choices. The opinion of influential persons in the local community or among relatives could uphold the Sámi language or decide the shift to Norwegian. The ordinary view was often quite in conformity with the view raised in Karasjok in the 1960s; namely that the future belonged to Norwegian culture and Sámi culture belonged to the past and was best forgotten.

As a result, for many people born in Finnmark in the 1960s, their knowledge of the Sámi language depends on when people in their surroundings took the decision not to teach the children Sámi or in what spheres Sámi still was used when they grew up. Their grandparents, parents and older siblings might speak the language, but they might not learn it themselves.

Many such cases might be found in the local area of Unjarga/Nesseby, on the coast of Finnmark. In this village, the change from Sámi to the Norwegian language occurred early in the 1960s. People born before the sixties often are bilingual, either with Sámi or Norwegian as their first language. People born in the sixties are Norwegian speaking while younger people born after the Norwegianisation ended, may be Sámi speaking. In this local community, language does not symbolise ethnic identity. Identity is ascribed on the background of kinship and local knowledge. Sámi is in use when Sámi speaking people meet and most locals know how well other locals know Sámi; they might speak Sámi themselves and get an answer in

Norwegian by another local. If you are born into what is regarded as a Sámi family in Nesseby you are regarded as Sámi whether you speak the language or not. In this context, a symbol such as language is not applied, that elsewhere is regarded as a symbol of distinct Sáminess.

But this type of local identity does not necessarily fit in with identity politics elsewhere. Lack of the Sámi language might be, and is often, regarded as an outcome of the Norwegianisation process and may then position the person as less Sámi than others. Language, which in Uinjarga is used as a practical tool among locals, becomes a symbol that excludes some people in other contexts or in other villages.

This link between language, practical use and identity is demonstrated by a case involving a reindeer herding family. The family can trace their origins both to a Sámi and Finnish heritage. The parents in the family, like many Sámi of their generation, mastered Norwegian in addition to Finnish and the Sámi language. The oldest daughter in the family, born in the early 1960s, told me that she for a long time believed only people of her parents' generation mastered the Sámi language. At home they always spoke Finnish since her mother used this as her first language, and in school they used Norwegian. Her lack of competence in Sámi together with her background from a reindeer herding family became a problem for her when she moved to the interior of Finnmark to attend high school. A non-Sámi speaking reindeer owner was unthinkable in the inland context. In addition, this was in the late 1970s when the struggle for political rights was at its peak, and the lack of this important symbol of language on her behalf put her in many unpleasant situations.

When her elder brother was going to visit her, she therefore tried to prepare her friends that they for the first time should meet a non-Sámi speaking reindeer herder. To her great surprise, her brother started to immediately speak Sámi fluently when he met her friends. As she later found out, he had learn the language among the men herding the flocks. In this context, Sámi was the working language and he had never reflected upon why he never used it at home. For him it was two languages used for separate spheres. To speak Sámi or Norwegian at home, was for him just as unthinkable as speaking any

other language than Sámi when herding with the men. For him, this practical arrangement of languages became an asset in his encounter with a context where the Sámi language had become a symbol of Sáminess (Olsen 1997). For his sister this became a loss. She experienced that in many occasions she was regarded as less Sámi than those who had apparently resisted Norwegianisation.

### **Ethnic symbols and everyday life**

The struggle for Sámi political rights and a need for becoming visible as an indigenous minority, made it necessary for Sámi ethnopoliticians to emphasise a contrast to Norwegian society (Eidheim 1992). The ethno-political movement that was instituted may be described as highly successful. Today, the Sámi language is an official language in Norway. It is legislatively protected, in official use in the municipalities that have attained the status as Sámi, and is taught in many schools throughout the region of Northern Norway. In Kautokeino, there is also a Sámi college that provide teachers education in the Northern Sámi language. All these features point to a growing institutionalisation of the Sámi and, by this, the development of institutionalised ethnic boundaries. But as most minorities have experienced, it does not mean that official recognition and institutions in a plural society is equality. Usually, the dominant culture is regarded as neutral or not as culture, in most multicultural contexts. On the contrary, the minority's culture is often regarded as a symbolic expression.

This became highly visible at a meeting arranged by the local Sámi association in Alta and a research group at the Finnmark University College. The meeting, arranged as a part of the celebration of the Sámi National Day, the 6<sup>th</sup> of February, had as its topic a discussion about the Sámi rights to resources in Finnmark. Several politicians were invited and among them Janos Trosten the leader of the leading Sámi national organisation, Norske Samers Riksforbund (NSR). The debate turned from a debate about land claims to a debate about language. Trosten had prepared his speech in Sámi which is his mother tongue and one of three official languages in Norway. No one had told him that the debate was supposed to be in the Nor-

wegian language and that simultaneous interpretation would not be available. He claimed that his use of Sámi language was practical. Trosten had prepared his speech in Sámi and even if he is a fluent Norwegian speaker, it was a problem to change language. This is a reason which to me seems quite likely when one considers that he was going to meet some of his most fierce opponents in the debate. The NSR leader was speaking Sámi, spontaneously interpreted by one of the arranging committee, throughout the whole meeting and his opponents saw this as a symbolic use of language that was meant to create boundaries in Norwegian society, boundaries that should legitimise distinct political rights for the Sámi. This is a division quite contrary to the unity emphasised by many politicians in coastal areas: some of them present at this particular meeting. This idea of regional unity rejects ethnicity on behalf of the fellow Norwegian citizenship and a common situation living in a northern periphery.

Others interpreted Trostens' use of language as a way of making a distinction between the Sámi in the inland and the – in this particular interpretation – Norwegianised population on the coastal line. For the local Sámi association, it was probably humiliating to arrange a meeting where Sámi could not be spoken and they had to rely on the language used by most people on the coastline. Anyhow, this case points out several interesting features of the use of language in Finnmark. First of all, it is not only by the Sámi that Sámi language is looked upon as an important symbol. This becomes clear when Sámi is spoken in what is regarded as “unproper” spheres of society. It seems like multicultural public events, such as this debate, are regarded as contexts where a practical attitude is expected. This expectation is monolingualism and the use of Norwegian language which is supposed to be neutral (Joks & Andersen 2000). This means that it is the majority culture and the dominant language which is supposed to be the practical and neutral tool in most multi-ethnic and bi-lingual situations. The Sámi language, in this view, is only proper when used when there are only Sámi speakers present.

This view is exemplified by the debate in the newspapers that followed the above mentioned meeting. Many Sámi people claimed that there was a strong expectation of speaking Norwegian as long as only one non-Sámi speaker was present. Such attitudes also have a

symbolic content. It points out the Norwegian language as the neutral link that people have in common, and that multilingualism is not a necessity. Other languages are only needed in certain contexts (Joks & Andersen 2000). The Sámi language is only necessary for reindeer herders, because in other contexts it is possible to rely on Norwegian. It is possible to interpret this view in such a way, as it is still the Norwegian language that belongs to the future. This shows that the dominant public- and everyday discourse also inform each other in the case of language as an ethnic symbol.

There has been a persistent image of the Sámi as an ethnic group, though with changes in ideological content (Mathisen 2000). This image is displayed in different fields such as museums, mass media and in tourism (Olsen 1997; 2000). In all these fields of public discourse, the Sámi culture is represented as highly distinct and as having clear boundaries with Norwegian culture. It is the Sámi speaking reindeer herder in the interior of Finnmark who is emphasised in most public discourse as displaying this distinctness.

Such public discourses might be labelled as dominant in representing cultural differences (Baumann 1996). These dominant public discourses are usually fed by the western-colonial political ideology that is rooted in romantic nationalist ideas about culture. These are ideas that pre-suppose certain distinct features and a particular content in the demarcation of culture (Jackson 1995). As Baumann describes the political discourse about culture it is; "... couched in the language of separate communities defined by their cultures that demand collective recognition and rights" (1996: 9). What Baumann (1996) argues is that the boundaries that are codified in the dominant discourse, their persistence, and their impenetrability normally are contested by the everyday, or demolitic, discourses. In the quotidian, other group solidarities are emphasised, diverging boundaries are upheld, different cultural features are put forward, and belonging is characterised by flux and fluidity. As Fredrik Barth states, this radical cultural alterity plays an important part in Western thought and I will add, that so do symbols that articulate these distinct differences. But most ethnic relations in the everyday life of plural societies are about familiar people, not about strangers. These relationships "involve co-residents in encompassing social systems, and lead more

often to questions of how 'we' are distinct from 'them', rather than to a hegemonic and unilateral view of 'the other' (Barth 1994: 13). Dominant discourses of other levels often provide the answer to how these differences might be articulated, but often they do not fit in with local discourses of everyday relations.

In the examples put forward previously, such a discrepancy between dominant and everyday discourse is highlighted. The examples describe people who are aware of their Sáminess which has never been contested in their local communities. The first case was of being Sámi by being identified as one of the locals in a Sámi local community; and the second case was of a girl belonging to what was perceived as the only Sámi family in a multicultural area and her problems of demonstrating her Sáminess in the inland. In both cases, a Sámi identity is not contested before people enter realms where a Sámi ethno-political discourse is dominant. In the context of such a dominant discourse, the lack of knowledge of the Sámi language may communicate a certain connotation. The shift to Norwegian for the practical use of language is often interpreted as a lack of resistance to the Norwegianisation process, non-Sámi speakers in this context might be looked upon as less Sámi or as traitors to the indigenous culture. Fluency in the language becomes a sign of continuity perpetuating, a heritage and a heredity that guarantees your ethnic belonging (Bendix 2000).

The shift from a local demilitic discourse to a dominant discourse, turns language into a symbol that alters the way of perceiving for many people who lack the knowledge of the Sámi language. For these people, the manifest political result of the ethnical struggle has turned language into a scarce resource, a coveted good. But also among those who have access to this scarce resource a demilitic discourse may critically challenge the symbolical value of the Sámi language. This view can be found among older people in what is often called the Sámi "core areas" in inland Finnmark.<sup>1</sup> For many of them

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<sup>1</sup> Even in these "core areas" one may find people born in the 1960s and early 1970s who never learned to speak Sámi. This is often a result of choices in certain families. It is quite ironic that many of the non-Sámi speakers belong to the first generation who where taught Sámi as a compulsory language in school, but who opted not to speak it at home.

the scarce resource is Norwegian, not Sámi. The story told by an 80 year old man living in an almost totally Sámi speaking community might show that language – and the lack of knowledge of it – could give another interpretation of history than is usually found in the dominant discourse (see also Olsen 1997).

This man grew up with Sámi as the only language spoken. He learned some Norwegian from some Norwegian friends in his childhood, but entered the school without sufficient preconditions for language learning. He tells how he found it very hard to go to a school where they used a language that he did not master. At the same time, he states that the process of Norwegianisation was not so bad as people state today. On the contrary, his wish was that this process had been stronger so that he could better learn the Norwegian language. In his career, as a farmer and as a worker in a contracting company, his lack of competence in Norwegian was an obstacle. His opinion is that: "... what need do I have of Sámi when I make a phone call to Southern Norway to order spare parts for my tractor?" In his view, too little Norwegianisation denied him an opportunity to get better jobs, a higher income and a different career rather than being a farmer and unskilled labourer. For his generation, the welfare state in the 1950s made it possible for most people to have careers, which previously were reserved for the upper classes and definitively not for a poor boy from the interior of Finnmark. But such a career demanded education and skills in Norwegian. His life had given him the experience that a lack of knowledge in Norwegian had been his main problem. There is a saying about this: "Sámi is good enough for the kitchen table and for Sámi fairytales". In other contexts than the local, Sámi for this old man and many of his generation has been of little use for their career (Hætta 1999: 7).

In the encounter with this story, it is quite possible to change views on the argument put forward previously about the ethno-political discourse. For the Norwegian authorities, their aim of Norwegianisation was to use the Norwegian language as a symbol giving access to the prosperity of the modern Nation-State. The lack of mastering this symbol marked people as belonging to another category discredited by a western ideological thought highly influenced by social Darwinism and romantic nationalism. But the

Norwegianisation process need not necessarily be interpreted in a negative way. For many people, the influence of modern society and the rapid development of the welfare state after 1945 symbolised a change from poverty to relative wealth. To obtain access and to be a part of this dramatic change in welfare, the Norwegian language was a prerequisite in the same way as the fluency in both languages is a necessity in the Sámi society today.

### **Ethnicity and contextuality**

Barth (1994: 21) argues that in analysing ethnic identity three interpenetrating levels may be found. Firstly, there is a macro level of state politics and structures together with global discourses, transnational NGOs and international organisations that play an important part in how ethnicity is shaped. Secondly, there is a median level that: "... is needed to depict the processes that create collectives and mobilise groups for diverse purposes by diverse means" (1994: 21). But there is also a micro level where: "Constraints and parameters on this level will in large part derive from other levels, but come together as a live context for each person's activities and interpretations" (1994: 21). As Baumann (1996) argues, the discourses on these different levels do not necessarily create the same boundaries. Group solidarity and the maintaining of boundaries often appear different at the micro level where everyday life is lived. A different knowledge is in use and might blur the boundaries on other levels. At the interface of these levels, new understandings might be negotiated or/and people's ethnicity might be transformed according to power relations in the particular context. This paper is an attempt to show such changes and point out such discrepancies between different levels. One consequence for many persons in Finnmark is that the symbolic meaning of language at a macro and median level creates doubts about their ethnic identity. The lack of knowledge of the Sámi language might be interpreted in practical terms in local everyday life, but gets a new symbolic value in contexts where other discourses become dominant. These dominant discourses are often created by ideas of radical cultural alterity that is prominent in Western thought and also by essential ideas about culture.



At the same time, this use of language is illuminated by the fact that the Norwegian language is given a symbolic value as neutral and the common *lingua franca*. This makes Norwegian a necessity in most public and multicultural spheres. This is a symbolic message conveyed in both a public- and an everyday discourse and shows important structural power relations between majority and minority. The Sámi language becomes a necessity only in certain spheres as the reindeer-herding context and at the “kitchen table”. Obviously, this will create such a symbolic message, and in everyday practice, an opinion in favour of the Norwegian language. Anyhow, not being a Sámi speaker still places you out of many contexts in many Sámi communities and this is a loss for many Sámi that only speak Norwegian.

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# **Ethnic Mobilisation among Reindeer Herders in Finnish Lapland during the 1990s**

**Helena Ruotsala**

## **Introduction**

Reindeer herding is generally regarded as an ethnic (i.e. Sámi) source of livelihood in Scandinavia. It is one privilege of Sámi people in Sweden and in Norway. The situation is different both in Finland and in Russia, although also their ethnic minorities are involved in reindeer herding. However, most of the reindeer herders and reindeer owners of Finland are Finnish as an ethnic group, while reindeer herding is regarded as one of the most important symbols of Sámi culture. Crucial elements of the Sámi ethnicity include descent, language, livelihood, folklore and material objects of cultural symbolism, mutual interaction and regional engagement. The role of self-identification as an element of ethnicity is highly emphasised.

It has been pointed out, that ethnicity and ethnic conflicts are continuing because central periphery relationships cause regional distribution of labour. Different ethnic groups are working in different occupations; reindeer herding is an excellent example of this. This division of labour is hierarchical, some occupations are highly valued, and others are not (Hecter 1974). In some occupations, certain benefits are also granted. Sometimes, these benefits belong only to native minorities – this is the case in Russia, e.g. on the Kola Peninsula. These benefits have been quite modest: e.g. statistical figures in education, free medicine and better fishing rights. Often these benefits have been valid only on paper, not in reality. These kind of special rights have been regarded as the main motive for ethnic mobilisation or new-ethnicity as it is also described.

### People of the fringe area

The northernmost part of Lapland is called Sápmi, Sámiiland, which officially and administratively is the home area of the indigenous people of Finland, Sámi. Sápmi is also an area, which doesn't "admit to" the borders of nation states, because it stretches through areas of four nation states, Finland, Sweden, Norway and Russia. Multilingualism and multiculturalism haven been inevitable results of living on the borders of many different cultures in the North-Calotte (Lehtola 1997: 41–42). Part of this population can be called *väitihiniset* ("people-in-between" in Finnish), these are those people, who don't clearly identify themselves with either of these groups, Finns or Sámi (Müller-Wille 1996: 93). The area where people-in-between are living is called as *Keski-Lappi*, literally Middle-Lapland, because it is situated in the middle of Lapland, just below the arctic zone (Lähteenmäki 1999: 188). This is a cultural area, where different cultures and people have inter-mixed. If we compare the results of these cultural processes with modern concepts, according to the anthropological jargon, we could speak about hybridisation or creolisation of cultures. On the other hand, we could also speak about genocide or ethnocide, because the so-called forest Sámi groups of Kemi Lappmark have disappeared in this process as the study of Helmer Tegengren from 1952 already shows.

This area can also be considered as *rajamaa* (a fringe area in Finnish), by which I mean an area, where overlapping cultural areas are in contact. The borders of Sápmi are very strictly drawn on the map. There has been criticism that the border left Sámi and Sámi speaking population outside Sápmi. This fringe area is very interesting because different ethnic groups and people have come into contact there and this has led to different cultural solutions. People have changed their ethnic grouping because of different and pragmatic reasons. Survival has been more important than ethnic belonging or language. The ethnic and cultural processes that have been going on in this area are interesting and they have created debate but are not yet really studied.

The reindeer herding community, which I have studied, is situated just on the fringe area. The members of the community are living in different villages and they belong to different ethnic groups,

although their background is more complicated. The members of this community identify themselves with different groups. Firstly, the descendants of the forest Sámi, who are already assimilated as forest Sámi. Secondly, the descendants of reindeer Sámi who emigrated from Norway after the border between Finland-Russia and Norway closed in 1852. Thirdly, descendants of the so named tax Lapps (they have had so-called Lappish persons as natural sources of livelihood and have paid Lapp tax) and finally, to the colonists and settlers. These different groups have lived together and separately, herding their reindeer on the same pastures, fishing in the same waters and during recent centuries using the same language. Living has partly been harmonious because nomadic reindeer herders and settlers had different sources of livelihoods and modes of living. So they were economically dependent on one another. The so-called *verdi*-institution or friendship institution – being partners in a reciprocal relationship between a reindeer herder and a local resident – has played an important role in this. Settlers received meat from reindeer herders, who needed, e.g. a place for an overnight stay in the village. Settlers could also sell butter or wool to the herders and they could also use the reindeer of herders if they didn't have their own reindeer. Reindeer were important as draft animals, also in settlers' households. In places, there have been conflicts between different groups, e.g. regarding fishing rights and pastures; these are recorded in the archives, in litigation documents and in folklore. These conflicts seem to be concentrated in certain villages, e.g. when I have studied the litigation documents on fishing rights and hay losses in western Lapland. People remember the bad relationships and negative attitudes towards Sámi especially from school time. As a result of this stigma, some people even wanted to identify themselves as Finnish and to get rid of the Sáminess.

The administrative difference between the Sámi and Finns is that the Sámi have, since the 1970s, had the right to vote in the Sámi Parliament elections. Already in the beginning of this article it was stated that, reindeer herding is a privilege of the Sámi in Sweden and in Norway. However, most of the reindeer herders and reindeer owners of Finland have Finnish as their ethnicity, while reindeer herding is regarded as one of the most important symbols of Sámi culture.

After joining the EU, any citizen of any EU-state having permanent residence in the reindeer-herding area in northern Finland has also the right to own and herd reindeer.

### **The law of cultural autonomy**

In 1996, a law regarding the cultural autonomy of the Sámi was ratified. It guarantees the Sámi as an indigenous people a right to cultural autonomy within the Sámi Homeland in matters concerning their language and culture. At the same time, a new Sámi Parliament was established to plan and implement this autonomy. The Sámi Parliament represents the Sámi nationally and internationally, and its purpose is to attend to the matters that concern the language and culture of the Sámi and their position as an indigenous people. The purpose of the legislation on cultural autonomy is to bring the Sámi into a position where they will have more administrative and political influence on matters that concern especially them (*Saamelaiskäräjät, Saamelaisen kulttuuri-itsehallintolaki*).

During the period of my research a lot of changes took place in the relationship between the different ethnic groups and in the majority-minority relations. Ethnicity has been, during the end of the 1990s, recently used as a tool of political mobilisation. There are people who want to change their ethnicity in order to take advantage of it. They have been called as 'wannabes'. The law regarding Sámi cultural autonomy is in this discussion combined with the rights to use land and water. People are quarrelling about their "ethnic origins"; who are the real indigenous people of Finland? People whose families have for many centuries lived here are arguing about being the real indigenous people of Lapland, because according to them the Sámi are descendants of those who emigrated from Norway after closing of the borders in 1852. The question of which group has the right to the land and the waters, and what this has to do with ethnicity is an important question, even in everyday discourse in Lapland.

This has led to a situation, where a couple of thousand Finnish people wanted to "become" members of the Sámi society or to re-integrate with Sámi society. The reasons behind this are partly due to the new definition of Sámi, which is included in the law. The defi-

inition emphasises Sámi language, so that if one of your parents or grandparents or the person herself/himself has had Sámi as mother tongue you will fulfil the criteria. In addition to this language criteria according the law a Sámi can be a person, whose forefathers have paid so called Lapp tax e.g. during 17<sup>th</sup> century. Sámi Parliament and the Supreme Administrative Court have not accepted this additional criterion. Sámi Parliament have criticised that the definition of Sámi became so ambiguous that most non-Sámi people in the Sámi Homeland have reason to believe that if they so wish they can seek to be defined as Sámi. These people, who have tried to be defined as Sámi, believe that this gives them a right to enjoy the rights and benefits afforded to the Sámi people. Sámi Parliament rejects this wider definition of a Sámi and demands that the definition based on language has to be restored to what was the definition in the former Decree on the Sámi Parliament and still is in the Sámi Language Act (*Saamelaiskäräjät*).

The law of cultural autonomy has today nothing to do with the territorial rights, or to the question of who has the right to be a reindeer herder, but it should give better rights to the Sámi language, and the right to get education and services in the Sámi language. But later, the land rights also maybe are coming into question, which is the issue that the local majority people are now afraid of. It has been discussed whether reindeer herding and belonging to the Sámi ethnic group should be considered to go hand in hand, as they are considered to do in other Scandinavian countries. After joining the European Union, there is now a lot of uneasiness, and even fear, about what EU may bring with it. It has been pointed out that the situation of minorities should get better in the EU. At the same time, the consequences of EU-membership on reindeer herding as a source of livelihood are mostly still unknown except the increased bureaucracy and nonchalance for local traditional ecological knowledge. In the joining document between EU and Finland there is a mention that Finland and Sweden have right to grant privileges to Sámi in matters concerning reindeer management (*Pöytäkirja* 1994).

One result of this discussion, and a step on the way to the ratification of the ILO convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Rights, is the report by Ministry of Justice. According to this report it is not

acceptable to consider reindeer herding as a privilege of the Sámi, because it will cause problems in equality (Vihervuori 1999: 118–119). Also a couple of researchers have pointed out that, too (e.g. Bendix 1998, cit. Anttonen 1999: 446).

### **Identity levels**

In his study on ethnicity Fredrik Barth has developed a model of three levels. Besides micro and macro he has divided also the middle level, on which the opinion leaders, politicians etc. are acting (Barth 1994: 182–184). This helps to get more order in this contemporary situation, where multiple voices are heard – and has to be heard.

The identity produced on the macro level is the official identity defined by state and other official organs, e.g. Parliament and the Supreme Administrative Court. This official identity can differ from that which the individuals on the micro level identify or recognise. The middle level is the level of processes that have to be analysed. Different opinion leaders, organisations and activists belong on this level. These identities are represented e.g. in the media and publicity. These are very simplified, homogenous and can be even aggressive (Anttonen 1999: 255)

On the micro level people are creating and producing their own identities according to their own experiences and needs, too. They choose and abandon in interaction with each other's in different life situations etc. This can even be situational. The problem is that, the middle or macro level does not always accept identity chosen on the micro level. The echoes from the middle level can also very clearly be heard and recognised in the identity. This is the case with the ethnic mobilisation, because some local politicians in the Lapland County have been very active in this movement.

Ethnic group is always defined in the relationship to other. Therefore the ethnic border is invisible, but a social product which has different meaning and can even change during the time being. The differences between different cultures have importance only when they have meaning in the interaction. This is the reason why ethnic borders were not so strictly drawn before than they are today. There was no need for that.



This ethnicity discourse is a very difficult and complicated – and also very sensitive question now (e.g. Stoor 1999; Tuulentie 1999). A part of local Finnish population in the fringe area were against the law of Sámi cultural autonomy because they fear that they would lose the right to natural sources of livelihood for the benefit of Sámi. It must be emphasised that natural sources of livelihood are also important for the majority population and also for their identity and way of life. The contemporary campaign has been very loud. Media, mainly local and even some politicians on the parliament level have been involved in this discussion. A local majority association (Association for Lapp Culture and Traditions) has been set up, which changed its tactics according to the changes in the situation. First they opposed the proposal of cultural autonomy of the Sámi in 1995, but when the law was ratified, they changed their tactics. The members of this association wanted to become members of the Sámi society, but they were not accepted. They were the very same people who, in the sixties, would not have seen themselves as the Sámi (Stoor 1999: 73). But on demonstrations they were dressed in Sámi dresses, which is the most visible symbol of Sámi identity. Now they insisted, that they are the real indigenous people of Finland, Lapps. Re-naming themselves as Lapps they have conquered for their own benefits the old concept Lapp, which was abandoned as pejorative by the Sámi. They also tried to get the right to vote in the Sámi Parliament elections, but were refused, and also their appeals were refused by the Supreme Administrative Court (Turunen 1999: 14; Tahkolahti 1999).

### **Is Lapp an ethnic epithet?**

In this ethnic mobilisation the essential question is if ethnicity is primordialistic or instrumentalistic. Primordialistic view emphasises background and birth and this is an unchanged part of the identity, it is static and deterministic. According to the instrumentalistic view ethnicity doesn't have any historical or political explanations. You can choose your ethnicity and it will get it's meaning on the political arenas and in political processes. Ethnicity is some kind of product which individuals or groups produce when they want to unify certain

groups because of need or purpose (Banks 1996: 9–40). Ethnicity is used as a strategy, which is closely connected with occupations or privileges of ethnic minorities. This is the core question in my study on reindeer management. People are nomadising from their former ethnic group to another to secure their survival or to get certain benefits in the future. It is their strategy in this campaign of survival. But this nomadism is refused and forbidden. They cannot re-emigrate to the ethnic society, which somebody of their ancestors has left or abandoned.

One result of these nomadising identities is that now there are three ethnic groups in Lapland. Except Sámi – the indigenous people of Finland – and Finns – the descendants of the settlers – the third, “new”, group consist of those who call themselves as Lapps. They insist to differ from other population, because they draw their history from their forefathers who have paid Lapp tax during earlier centuries. Also media has “found” and “accepted” this new ethnic group, and Lapps are really introduced as an ethnic group in media and in everyday language. Lapp is connected with a juridical position, so-called Lapp sources of livelihoods (reindeer herding, fishing and hunting) and paying Lapp tax. It is not a clear ethnic epithet but a concept, which the others have given to Sámi. Lapp is regarded as pejorative and it can originally belong together with word *lapp*, *lappaa* that mean side or margin. According to this etymology a Lapp could mean a person who lives in periphery (Häkkinen 1996: 173).

My aim has been to try to find out the reasons behind the ethnic mobilisation in Lapland in 1990s. This story emphasises two explanations. For those who want to re-emigrate to Sámi society it is an example of identity negotiation without acceptance by the other party. For the other party it is a conquest of an old concept for own benefits (*käsitvaltaus*). For the former group it is possible to have both Finnish and Sámi identity. For the latter group identity can never be both and, for them identity is either or. So, if you or your forefathers have chosen Finnish identity, the descendants must be either or. Multiple identities are not accepted or possible. Ethnic borders on the fringe area are very strictly drawn.

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# **The Role of Women in Subsistence and Ethnic Identity in the Kultima Sámi Society in Lapland**

**Jukka Pennanen**

## **Introduction**

My presentation, as a case study, is part of the Finnish-American research project, "Gender Dynamics and Subsistence Systems in Circumpolar Societies". Collaborators are the Department of Anthropology at the State University of New York at Albany in the USA; the Department of Art Studies and Anthropology at the University of Oulu, Finland; and the Department of History at the Ural State University, Yekaterinburg, Russia.

The goal of this project is to study the interplay of gender dynamics and subsistence behaviour in the Northern circumpolar area. In other words, the project seeks to understand how the differences in male and female economic roles are discovered, how they connect with each other and complement each other so that people have survived in the severe circumstances of the North. We have collected knowledge acquired by memory and observed peoples' modern behaviour, activities and social organisation. With this knowledge we can verify and interpret cultural phenomena by comparing modern and ancient behaviours of northern societies above all from the female aspect. In this project, there are four northern societies representing several major bio-geographical zones and cultural-linguistic traditions: an Inupiaq society in the Little Diomedé Island in the Bering Strait, a Sámi society in Finnish Lapland, a Chipewyan society in Saskatchewan, Canada, and a Khanty society

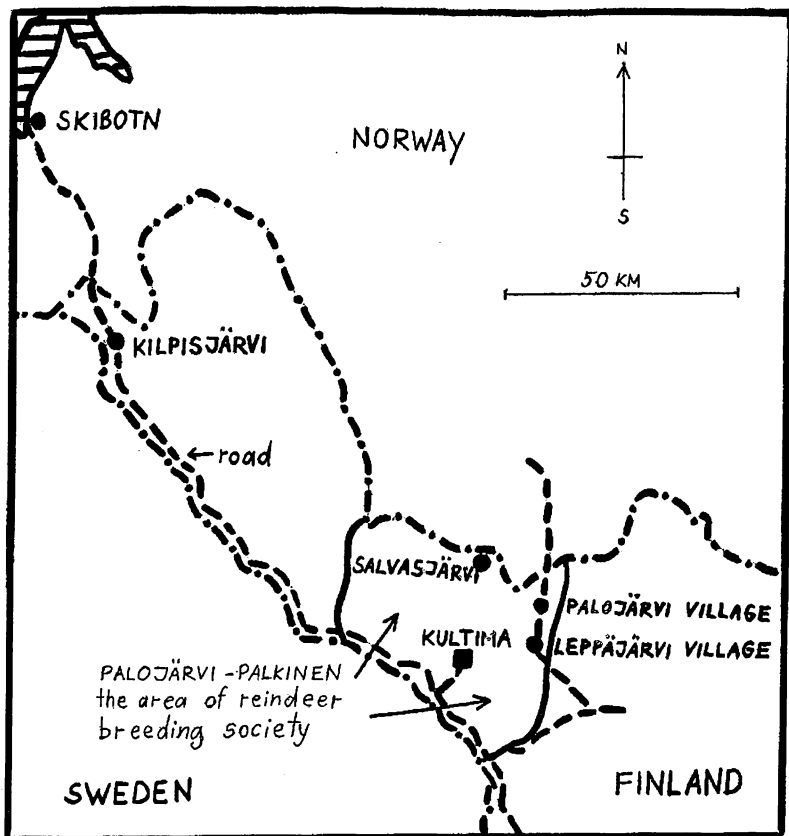
in the Trom Yugan River in western Siberia, Russia. The University of Oulu is responsible for the study of the Sámi society.

In the field methodology, we have adopted an ethnoarchaeological analytic pattern called “task differentiation analysis”. It consists of four basic dimensions: social unit, task setting, task time and task materials. To study the total pattern of the subsistence activities of the Sámi community and to analyse the elements of its structure and relations to each other, we have adopted the pattern of the adaptive dynamics of the Human Ecology Theory.

### **The history of Kultima village**

The wilderness village of Kultima is situated in the municipality of Enontekiö in the so-named Lapland of Käsivarsi (“the arm”). It was established in 1857, when a Sámi man with his family moved from the Leppäjärvi Sámi village to the heart of the wilderness. According to some geologists seeking gold there, the village was named Kultima, which comes from the word *Kultamaa* meaning “Goldland”. The Sámi family adopted the same name as their family name. At the end of 1910, Kalle Kultima sold the farm to another Sámi man who moved with his family to Kultima. At the end of the 1930s, this man, called Eeli, sold half of the farm to a rich reindeer Sámi and he gave his land to his son who, on the other hand, sold part of the land to his brother-in-law. So at the end of the 1950s, there were the homesteads of four families in the village. When the sons of these families got married, they built their own homesteads, so today there are eight households in Kultima. Four of them belong to the family of Leppäjärvi, three to the family of Palojärvi and one to the family of Väli-talo.

In 1999, there were 16 inhabitants in Kultima. Four of them were pensioners, eight were middle-aged people and four persons belonged to the younger generation. Eight middle-aged persons had moved from the village and one man had died, but his wife was staying for the present in the village. Four younger children had moved from Kultima.



### The phases of the economy in Kultima

When the first family, Juhani Leppäjärvi and his wife, moved to Kultima the way of life was founded on a self-supporting economy and a multiplicity of livelihood. This way of life consisted of both traditional arctic livelihood and one modern Finnish livelihood. The Leppäjärvi village, from which Juhani Leppäjärvi had moved, had already adopted Finnish customs at that time so that some houses had cattle. Juhani, who had a couple of cows in addition to some reindeer had chosen the area of Kultima because of good cow pastures and feeding grounds, this means natural meadows by the river.

Anyway, people got most subsistence from traditional livelihoods. Fishing was the most important. In summer time, fresh fish was the main staple. In the beginning of June, the gathering of the eggs of water fowl, above all a goldeneye, supplemented the diet. At the end of summer, the gathering of berries like cloudberry, lingonberry, blueberry and crowberry was also important. In winter, people trapped and hunted ptarmigan, wood grouse, hare, etc. Reindeer breeding, though not very dominant, was, however, important because reindeer were necessary as draft animals. People, of course, got some meat from reindeer, but above all fur material for winter clothes and shoes. This pattern of economic life was maintained after Eeli Leppäjärvi bought his farm in the 1910s.

The village of Kultima was situated in the area to which a reindeer Sámi society, Kova-Pienni (three families), had the custom of moving with their reindeer stock from the mountains of Käsivarsi for the winter. This meant a period from December to April. The winter pastures were situated in the shelter of forests. In terms of the economy, the reciprocity of villagers and reindeer Sámis was very important. The question was a kind of barter, a so-called "*väärti*-system". Because reindeer Sámis, above all wives and children (most men were herding stock), lived in the houses of Kultima, villagers received reindeer meat, fur clothes and other reindeer goods from the nomads in return.

The second phase of the economic life in the village began in 1948, when two reindeer nomadic families moved to Kultima. Although they had cows (one family had a cow and the other had two cows), they continued their nomadic life. The families moved to the summer village of Lake Salvasjärvi in May and returned to Kultima in October. The cows followed them. The reindeer breeding was the most important subsistence factor for these families, although fishing, above all, and cattle breeding maintained their positions in subsistence. Trapping and hunting had marginal importance. Because the older households continued their traditional economic activities, there were two different economic systems in Kultima.

The third phase of the economy began when the nomadic life ended in 1956 and reindeer breeding decreased slightly and changed. Of course, every family still had their important draft reindeers and a

couple of houses also had their stocks of meat reindeer. In any case, cattle breeding started to become more important. Every household had several (4–9) cows, sometimes a bull and even 8–20 sheep. One house also had two horses sometime after the last war. Therefore, it was a hard job to collect enough feed for the winter. People even began to cultivate oats for feed. Some vegetables like potato, carrot and turnip were cultivated. The intervention of the Finnish government encouraged people to increase cattle breeding and cultivation. The farms also got a right to land.

Until the 1970s, both reindeer breeding and cattle breeding were equally important in their own way. Reindeer breeding gave monetary income, sometimes 70–80%, and cattle breeding was the base of self-supporting. Fishing in spring and in fall was also still important in subsistence like the gathering of berries. Because the need for cash had become more necessary in daily life, the income from cloudberries could sometimes even be the most important in such a household which did not have any meat reindeer. Reindeer meat was almost the only commodity that could be bartered until the 1960s. Then the quality of meat became controlled.

In the beginning of the 1970s, the fourth economic phase started. The subsidy for the cattle farm was diminished and the need of cash became bigger. So cattle breeding ended until 1975, and people without reindeer began to find salaried work outside the village. The households which had a breeding stock of reindeer became more important. In 1999, in the village of Kultima, there were two houses of pensioners and two houses of single men who did temporary work. One of them had, however, some reindeer, but he was not a reindeer man. Three farms were reindeer farms, but one reindeer man worked also as a border guard. The master of the eighth house was a full-time reindeer man before his death. The reindeer breeders of Kultima belonged to the bigger reindeer breeding society of “*Palojärvi palkin*”, which consisted of three villages.



### **The changes of ethnic identity and the role of women**

People who had moved to Kultima and were born there have been pure Sámi people in genetic terms. Only one man, Frans Vältälö, who arrived in 1948, was a Finn, but he formerly had been a hired man in a reindeer Sámi's household and married the daughter of the house. In spite of this, the ethnicity of villagers has changed at times due to changes in the economy and the role of women.

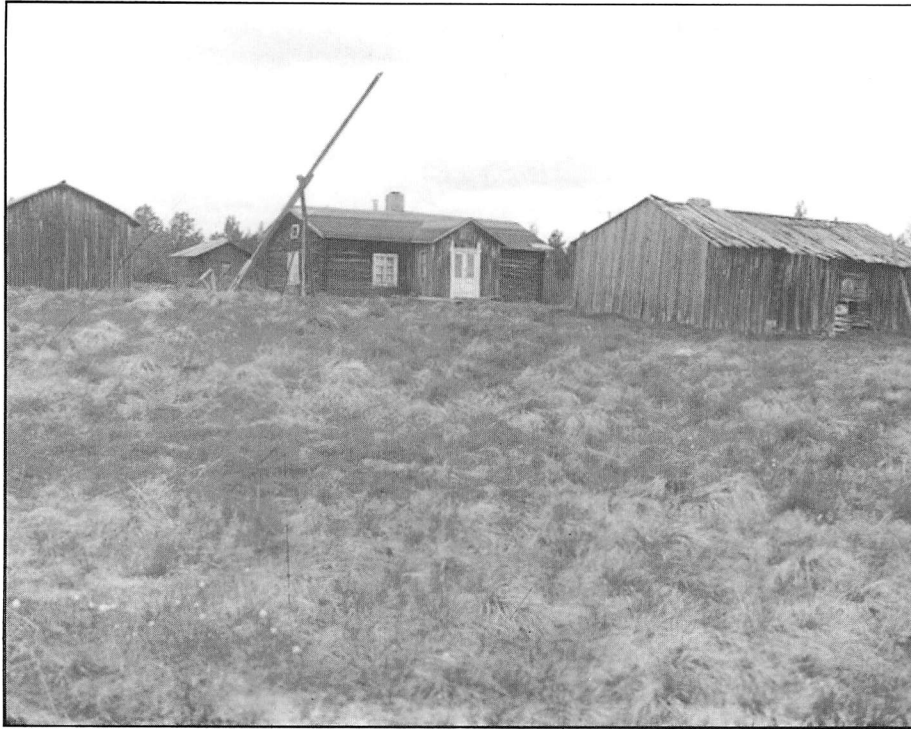
The first inhabitants in Kultima were not reindeer Sámis but they represented an old-fashioned, or ancient, fishing and hunting culture of the forest Sámis. In addition to that, there was already a small aspect of Finnish culture because they had a cow. Women were as important persons as men in the household. They kept house, carried and prepared skins and sewed shoes and clothes, even took part in fishing trips, gathered berries and finally took care of the cattle, which was an extra job in addition to traditional work. This way of life continued when the next inhabitants, Eeli's family, moved to Kultima at the end of the 1910s. When freight traffic from Sweden via Kultima to Norway became the most important source of earnings, not only the way of life but also language started to become even more Finnish. So Eeli's children began, for example, to speak Finnish. The return to Sámi ethnicity occurred in the 1940s. Firstly, two nomadic reindeer breeding families had moved to the village and the way of life of the reindeer Sámis started. Secondly, Eeli's two sons had married the daughters of reindeer breeders. These girls appreciated their Sámi roots and one of them had even worked as a reindeer herder, which had been a masculine role before. Material culture, and also the language to a considerable degree, became Sámi once more.

This boom of Sámi ethnicity was in progress until the middle of the 1950s. Radical changes took place at that time. Firstly, reindeer Sámis finished their nomadic life and secondly cattle breeding and agriculture increased. People wanted to become Finnish style farmers, although they had still reindeer stock. The women became even more important in the work of household, because they were completely responsible for the cattle. They had no time to think of the values of ethnicity. A female interviewee said: "I have always blamed cows. 'Cow people' wanted to become farmers." A still more

radical cause for becoming Finnish was the following. When the children reached school age, they had to be sent to a boarding school far away from the village. There they were for nine months and visited home only four times in a school year. The school was completely Finnish. Children did not get to speak the Sámi language and they learned the Finnish way of life perfectly. Therefore, it was very easy for many of them to move from Kultima when they got out of school. The others who stayed in the village brought the pure Finnish way of life there. The future of the Sámi ethnicity seemed lost.

Once again, the women and the change in economy changed the direction of the process. Three sons who stayed in the village got married to the daughters of Sámis who still lived a nomadic life. The new wives' mother tongue was Sámi, and they had learned the traditional life of reindeer Sámis. The women, although also bilingual, started speaking Sámi with each other and also taught it to their children. Teaching in Sámi at school had also started at that time, further strengthening the language skills. When cattle breeding ended and reindeer breeding became more effective, it was natural to maintain the skill of traditional handicraft, cooking and as a rule, the traditional way of life. "When those cows disappeared, then people warmed up to being Sámi again." Of course, these activities got new forms. For example, handicrafts were made for the tourist trade. Thus, women got money for the household. For Sámi ethnicity, it was very important to keep in touch with the women's relatives who were still reindeer nomads. It is interesting that, although everybody in the village had been registered as a Sámi citizen and they had the right to take part in the election of the Sámi parliament in Finland, they seemed to have a disinclination for the Sámi policy.

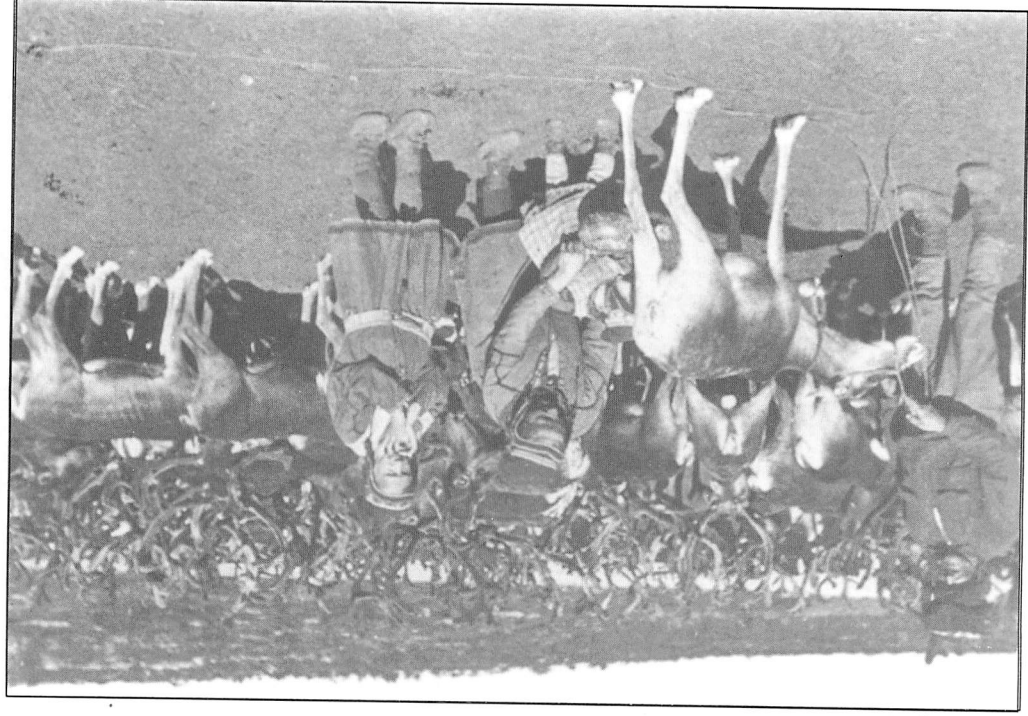
As a summary, we can see that the role of women in subsistence has been as important as the men's role in the village. We can also see that the women have been crucial for the Sámi ethnicity in Kultima.



Photograph 1. The homestead of Alakultima preserved from the last war represents the oldest system of a cow farm in Enontekiö. Photograph by Jukka Pennanen 1999.



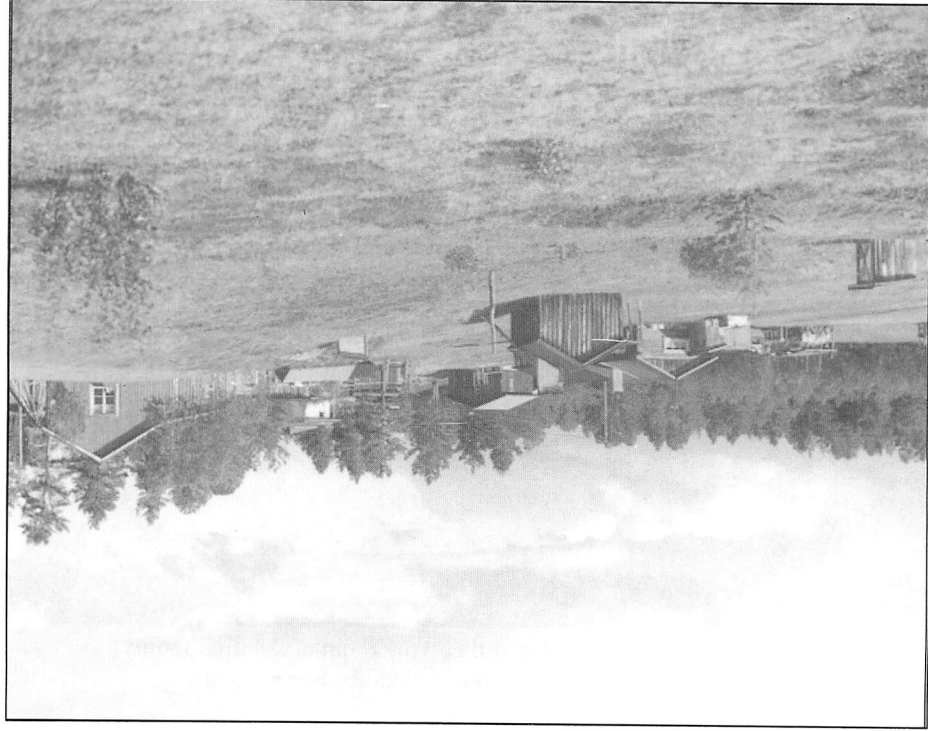
Photograph 2. Luisa Kultima, the daughter-in-law of the first inhabitant in the village, shows in her living room how to churn butter. J. Leppäjärvi's archives, early 1950s.



Photograph 3. A Sami woman is milking a reindeer during the summer separation of reindeer in Salvasjärvi, T. Palojärvi Jr.'s archives, 1950s.



Photograph 4. The wedding-picture of Tuomas and Elli Palojärvi who moved to Kultima in 1948 and returned the reindeer nomadism to the village. T. Palojärvi jr's archives, 1939.



Photograph 5. The old homesteads of Kultima in 1999. Photograph by Jukka Pennanen 1999.

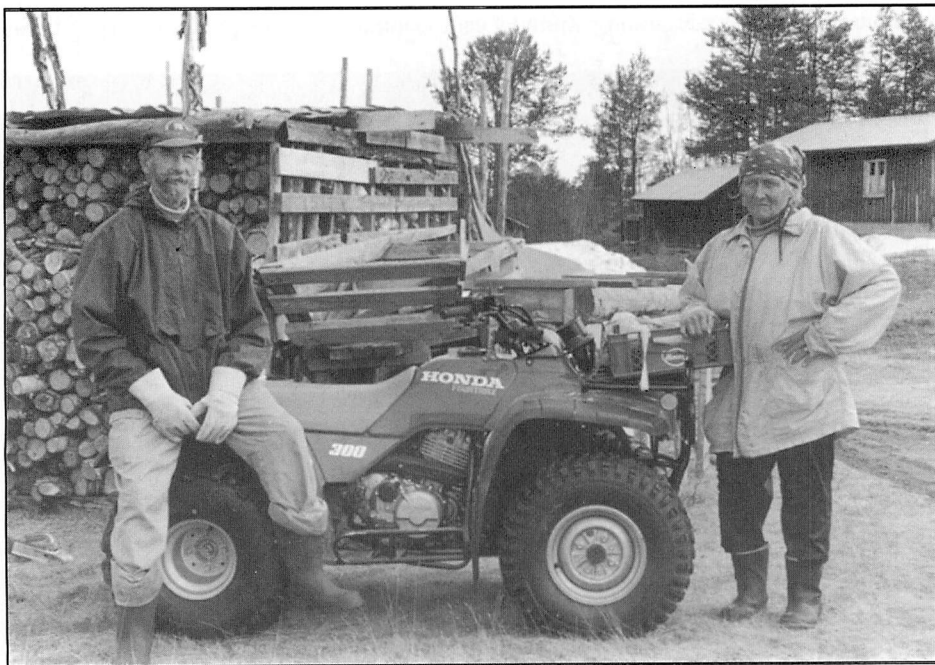


Photograph 6. The interior of the living room of a retired family in Kultima. Photograph by Jukka Pennanen 1999.





Photograph 7. The modern house of a reindeer man's family. Photograph by Jukka Pennanen 1999.



Photograph 8. A retired couple having a rest by their four-wheel-drive after doing wood. Photograph by R.-M. Leinonen 1999.

## **Living in *Chum*.**

### **Social Relations and Personal Behavioural Strategies among Komi Reindeer Herders**

**Kirill Istomin**

#### **Introduction**

In anthropological studies of arctic peoples, the Komi reindeer herders always occupied a very marginal place. Their position as part of an ethnographic group inside the Komi people, which are not supposed to be a northern nation, very often excluded them from the field of northern researching activities. Despite this fact, the influence of the Komi reindeer herders upon the culture of other reindeer herding traditions is quite obvious. This influence was often seen as an impact from outside the world of circumpolar reindeer herding cultures and attributed to the impact of modernistic “European” cultures. This prevented many researchers of the northern reindeer herding nations from studying the Komi reindeer herding tradition. On the other hand, the Komi ethnographers trying to produce the general image of Komi culture usually ignored its local variations. Even in the most basic of Komi ethnographies, the Izhma Komi ethnographic group and the Komi reindeer herding practised by part of its representatives is described in a few paragraphs and the descriptions do not contain even the most important details. Therefore, a paradoxical situation has come into existence: now we know much more about the impact Komi reindeer herders made upon other peoples than about Komi reindeer herding itself.

On the other hand, the culture of the Izhma Komi contains a set of peculiarities which, if carefully studied, can contribute to our understanding of the world’s cultural diversity. Indeed, the Komi reindeer

herding system and the ethnographic group practising it are unique in many ways. First of all, this is a very new phenomenon: it was not until the end of 16<sup>th</sup> century, when the Izhma Komi ethnographic group came into existence. However, the introduction of the reindeer herding into their culture took place some 150–200 years later. The core of the predecessors of this group was compiled from migrants from the more southern regions of the Komi cultural area. Therefore, Komi reindeer herding is the only reindeer herding systems in the world formed not on the base of extracting economy (hunting, fishing and gathering), but on the basis of highly developed producing economy including cow breeding and agriculture. There are some other peculiarities making this system different from the reindeer herders of neighboring populations. First of all, Komi reindeer herders are semi-nomads. This semi-nomadic character of the Komi reindeer herding pre-supposes the existence of large permanent settlements where the relatives of reindeer herders lived and where the reindeer herders themselves returned every year. This is a unique peculiarity of Komi reindeer herding. The Izhma Komi is the only group of people who can have reindeer herders, cow breeders and agriculturists, not even in one village, but in one household. The market character of Komi reindeer herding allows some scholars to refer to it as “tundra capitalism” (see for example KerCELLI 1911). This does not have analogues in the world either.

Among the peculiarities of the Komi reindeer herding are the social relations. Komi culture during the emergence of reindeer herding activity did not already have clans like many other arctic peoples. Questions about how regarding Komi herding groups were formed and the mechanisms and questioning of their integrity are still not well researched. Almost completely unknown are the relations between Komi reindeer herding and their non-migrating fellows in the village and even relatives in households. The processes of modernisation including the impact of such experiments by Soviet communist government as collectivisation and *raskulachivaniye* upon the Komi are also almost completely enigmatic. Now, we have some case-studies about the impact of these processes on other northern peoples (for example the Nenets, see Tuisku 1998) but not the Komi. At the same time, the semi-nomadic and “capitalistic”

character of Komi reindeer herding made this group of the northern population especially sensitive to these processes and the research of their impact would be especially valuable for the further development of the theory of cultural change. Izhma Komi were always supposed to be the most educated among the northern peoples (see Babushkin 1930; Maksimov 1987). The situation seemingly has not changed now: all Komi reindeer herders have at least 4 years of education and more than 70% – 8 years of education. All children of the reindeer herders attend a school. This fact should have quite a significant impact upon the traditional economy and way of life. However, this impact has also not been researched despite the valuable information such a research could provide for fundamental theoretical studies.

All these facts show that the need to alter the present-day situation in the Komi studies is obvious. The author of this article hopes that this paper will be the first (but not the last) attempt to study the modern position of Komi reindeer herding and the Komi reindeer herding tradition. This article is devoted to the problems presented above within the social structure of the Komi reindeer herders and the personal behavioural strategies employed by them in order to cope with each other and the surrounding world. Of course, I do not pretend to give complete answers to the problems posed above. My aim here, rather, is to pose questions and to provide my colleagues with factual material which may stimulate further considerations.

The article is based mainly on fieldwork I carried out among the Komi reindeer herders in the summer of 2000 (with a short preliminary trip to the field in January, 2000). The fieldwork was done in the biggest co-operative organisation of the Komi reindeer herders, the sovkhos *Izhemsky olenevod* (Izhma reindeer herder), joining the reindeer herders from the original area of the Komi reindeer herding – the Izhma region. The fieldwork lasted 7 weeks and covered June and the beginning of July. It is especially important, that the fieldwork could be done in the native language of the reindeer herders, the Komi language, which is also my mother tongue. Thanks mainly to this fact, the reindeer herders accepted me without much reservation and essentially their behaviour seemed not to be altered in my presence. Because of these facts I was in a position

which allowed me to gather more information than it would otherwise be possible.

The fieldwork consisted of two stages. In the first stage, I joined the reindeer herding brigade number 1, Sizyabsk division of the *Izhemsky olenevod* sovkhhoz on its migrating route from the spring area to the summer pastures. I migrated with the brigade for about two weeks and gathered factual information about every-day life, social relations and the personal strategies within this herding unit. The interviews done in this stage were of a formal, as well as of informal, nature and included 1 to 4 participants. All the members of the brigade expressed a strong will to participate in my work and some of them were so interested in this, that they expressed their wish to continue the work themselves and to supply me with its results later. Unfortunately, since I was prevented from using a tape-recorder in his work, the only way of recording the information was by taking field notes. On the other hand, the photo-camera was not met with such caution. The reindeer herders even encouraged me to take pictures of them and their everyday activity wishing only to have copies of the pictures for themselves.

At the end of June, the brigade reached the reindeer herding corral on the southern bank of the Laya-to lake, the place where all the brigades of the division come in order to vaccinate their reindeer and mark the new-born calves. Here, I was asked to leave the brigade in order to provide help in these operations to other brigades going to come to the corral. Considering the huge size of the Komi reindeer herds, the lack of working hands is the main problem in these operations and every extra man is needed. Being unable to deny the call for help, I went to corral. In the course of the next four weeks, I worked in the corral simultaneously gathering information from the arriving reindeer herding brigades. Since the brigade number 1 was the first to come to the corral this summer, I had a possibility to gather the information from all the brigades in the division (totalling 7), which allowed me to make comparisons between the brigades and differentiate the general cultural elements from the particular. The reindeer herders, seeing me working as one of them, usually abandoned all their suspicions and more willfully provided information. The inter-

views were mostly informal, but some formal interviews were also conducted.

After all the brigades had gone, two reindeer herders who worked in the corral and I made an 80-kilometre trek to another corral belonging to the Bakur division of the same sovkhos. Here, I had the possibility to work with two other reindeer herding brigades, this time from the Bakur division. Since the social surroundings of brigades in this division of the sovkhos were a bit different from that in the Sizyabsk division (the Bakur reindeer herders have frequent contacts with Nenets in their summer and autumn places), this last stage of work gave quite valuable comparative information.

Altogether, about 30 reindeer herders (individually as well as in groups) were interviewed and 9 brigades of reindeer herders from two kolkhoz divisions were qualitatively studied. This information describes the main details of the present-day social relations in the reindeer herding brigades. Some of this data will be presented in this article.

The second source of information used in this article includes the reports of outsiders and scholars who studied the region of Izhma Komi at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> – beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The comparison of this data with the information of the present-day Komi provides a basis for historical perspective upon the existing system of the social relations and personal strategies. Although this article, as was mentioned above, is of a preliminary, descriptive nature, rather than of an analytical nature, some interesting ideas about the origin and essence of social norms possibly appeared to be formed on the basis of this comparison. These ideas will be also presented here.

In my presentation of the material, I wanted to preserve its systematic character. Every phenomenon is shown, when possible, in its relation to others. It seemed quite logical to start with a characteristic of the basic herding unit of the modern Komi reindeer herders – the reindeer herding brigade. Since this unit is relatively young in the reindeer herding system and its introduction into this system was deliberate, special attention was paid to the historical peculiarities belonging to previous types of Komi herding units which survived in brigade life. These peculiarities seem impossible to understand with-

out a historical background. Some attention was also paid to the social modeling of the inner space of the Komi reindeer herding movable shelter (the *chum*). This modeling is important for the understanding of functioning and re-producing of the social relations inside a brigade. In discussion of the personal behavioural strategies inside a brigade, the strategies of women are described in more detail. This is reasonable, due to the fact that the female behavioural strategies seem to be more culturally defined than male ones.

At the end of this introduction, I want to express my gratefulness to those who supplied information, Komi reindeer herders of Sizyabsk and Bakur divisions of the *Izhemsky olenevod* sovkhov. Special thanks should be sent to the head of the Sizyabsk division, experienced reindeer herder Prokopi Terentyev, whose help was vital for the fieldwork. I also want to thank the members of the 1<sup>st</sup> reindeer herding brigade of the Sizyabsk division, who accepted me, treated me well, and supplied the most valuable information.

### 1. The *Chum* and the brigade

Officially, Komi reindeer herders are now placed in seven large economic enterprises which have their origin in former sovkhozes and kolkhozes of the Soviet time. Since the beginning of Russian economic reforms, all these enterprises have more or less changed their status and have become free from state ownership. In fact, it possible for some of them exclude the term *sovkhov* (from Russian *sovetstskoye khozyaystvo* – soviet (e.g. state) enterprise) from their names<sup>1</sup>. However, the actual structure and official relationships inside the enterprises have only slightly changed and the difference between reindeer herders' life in modern sovkhozes and one in enterprises having abandoned this adjective in their names is minimal if any<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The names of the modern Komi reindeer herding enterprises are sovkhov *Izhemsky Olenevod*, sovkhov *Severnnyj*, sovkhov *Ust-Uzinsky*, stock-company *Bolshaya Inta*, municipal enterprise *Intinsky*, sovkhov *Fion*, sovkhov *Olenevod*.

<sup>2</sup> The reason for the persisting of the *sovkhov* term may be in the fact that the Komi reindeer herders actually do not know the exact meaning of this abbreviation. In fact, only one of my informants could determine this meaning.



Members of each sovkhos (obviously excluding its administration) are divided into 6–7 brigades of 8–10 reindeer herders in each, responsible for some part of the sovkhos's joint reindeer stock. Besides that, a brigade's reindeer herd includes reindeer belonging to the reindeer herders themselves as private property. The proportion of private/sovkhos reindeer is different in different brigades depending on the number of private reindeer, but the total amount of reindeer in a brigade is quite stable (2000–3000 reindeer) responding to the traditional Komi strategy of pasturing. The only exception from this scheme is the *Izhemsky Olenevod* sovkhos, where the additional level of divisions (*otdeleniye*) is added. Each division, which originally was an independent sovkhos included in the enterprise in the period of “magnification” (*ukrupneniye*) in the 1970s, includes 6–7 brigades and, therefore, repeats the structure of the smaller sovkhozes. Therefore, the reindeer herding brigade appears to be the smallest reindeer herding unit in modern Komi reindeer herding.

The administration of the enterprises, or (in the case of the *Izhemsky olenevod* sovkhos) divisions, usually treats the brigades as basic economic units (producers and consumers). The food and other supplies (for example: guns, bullets and gasoline for gasoline lamps) which an enterprise is obligated to provide for reindeer herders are given to a brigade, leaving the members of a brigade to decide about their distribution themselves. Similarly, the amount of money reindeer herders get for pasturing the sovkhos reindeer (which depends on the number of reindeer in the herd minus the price of the supplies provided) is also given to the brigade in general and its further redistribution is supposed to be up to the brigade members. On the other hand, the members of a brigade officially keep common responsibility for the obedience of the rules of pasturing and pastures management. Each brigade is given its own migrating pass inside 7 so-called reindeer herding corridors, which are given to the Komi reindeer herders in the Bolshezemel'skaya tundra. A violation of the pass borders, if proved, is punishable by the payment of certain fines (in cash or private reindeer) to the encroached brigade and a violation of the corridor borders means an even bigger fine paid to the owner of the neighboring territory. All these fines are officially taken from the money given to the punished brigade or the brigade is obligated to

provide reindeer from private stock. It is also up to the brigade members to decide whose reindeer should be given away or who should be deprived of his share of the money (*Ustav...* 1993).

It is easy to agree, that the rules described are almost the only possible ones for the administration of the enterprise to devise in the conditions of the existing structure and economic relations. Indeed, a herd of 2000 reindeer is presupposed by the Komi traditional pasturing ecology to be the average standard for separate herding, but could not be managed by an individual herder. A common force of at least 6 herders is needed for its management. On the other hand in the deep tundra, where the reindeer herders spend most of the year, the administration lacks the means to control their work and to measure the individual share of each worker in the group's common work or guilt. Therefore, the only possibility is to abandon the system of individual rewards and punishments and to accept group responsibility. At the same time, it is difficult to deny, that a group which is capable of taking common rewards and responsibilities has to be something more than simply a company of persons working together. This group has to have a certain social structure and mechanisms making it possible to regulate the behaviour of its members, in order that their common work would be most effective. The group also should have some mechanisms to prevent or solve conflicts among the group members. It should be capable of redistributing the income and punishment among its members. In other words, the group should have mechanisms making it possible to subordinate the will of everyone of its members to the will of the group. All this shows that the reindeer herding brigade cannot be a purely administrative unit. The mechanisms it must have (and actually has) can only be a part of long lasting cultural tradition, which is probably much older than the kolhoz system and the brigades connected to it. It is logically easier to infer, that these mechanisms were inherited from the older type of herding units and have somehow been adapted to the brigades.

Let's try to discover what these mechanisms are and what their origin can be. As the interviews with the Komi reindeer herders clearly show, the basic trait of a brigade in their conciseness is the common place of living – the movable reindeer herding house *chum*

(*chom* in Komi). All members of a brigade are living in one *chum* and therefore belong to one social unit. This can be supported by the clear fact, that the words *chom* and brigade are often used synonymously in the every-day speech of the reindeer herders. A reindeer herder of Sizyabsk division can for example say “*Krasnabor chomys lokris*” (the Krasnabor *chum* has come, i.e. the third brigade has reached the corral place) or “*möd chomsa körjas tydalöny*” (the reindeer of the second *chum* (i.e. brigade) have become visible). Giving a characteristic of somebody, a reindeer herder always employs phrases like “*sijö medvodza chomys*” (he is from the first *chum*, i.e. he works in the brigade number 1) or “*Sa öd Bakur chomjasys*” (he is from the Bakur *chums*, i.e. works in the Bakur division). It is also worth mentioning, that the first thing Komi reindeer herders mention when asked to show the difference between their’s and the Nenets culture is the brigade’s common living in one *chum*: “The Nenets have several little *chums* standing in line in a brigade. Every family or even non-married persons have their own *chum*. That is their way, which is different from ours.” It should be said here, that this opinion hardly corresponds to present-day life. After the collectivisation, most Nenets reindeer herders were forced to adopt the Komi system of common living as it was more economically practical. Therefore, the difference mentioned refers rather to traditional culture than to present-day conditions.

The most striking fact, which the interviews show, is that the concept of *chum* clearly includes a wider range of people than officially included in a brigade. When asked to count people belonging to his *chum*, the head of one of the brigades replied like this: “Besides the people you see, we have one man who is ill and have left in the village and one woman who was this spring replaced by Lusya (the second female *chum*-worker of the brigade). They migrate in line one after the other. We also have her three children, who have been left in the village this year, because their mother is there.” The “people I saw” included, by the way, also five children who came to migrate with their parents. I got similar responses from most other brigades. Everywhere, not only present but also absent, people and their children were said to be members of *chums*. Furthermore, in one of the brigades, there was an old man who was officially retired

from the sovkhos. Nevertheless, he was not only classed as a member of his *chum*, but also participated in reindeer-horn selling which took place in the corral and got his share in the money received from this.<sup>3</sup> These prove two important facts about the domain of *chum* in the reindeer herder's consciousness. First of all, the concept of *chum* as a social unit and the official concept of brigade only partly coincide. In no doubt, the children cannot be official members of the brigade (the official minimum age limit for the sovkhos workers is 15 – *Ustav...* 1993), but this fact does not prevent them from being members of their *chum*. The same relates to the retired person. Secondly, the concept of *chum* as a social unit refers not to an actual social group but rather to a cultural category in the terminology of Keesing (1981). That means, that it does not describe the actual group of people living in *chum*, but rather the group eligible to live there and to have their share in the groups common income or punishment according to some procedure of redistribution. This is the reason why the *chum* also included absent people.

The notion about the *chum* as a cultural category allows us to suppose, that it is this unit that traditionally was the elementary herding group in Komi reindeer herding and has been adopted (not completely) to the sovkhos system as analogue to the brigade. In order to prove this fact, let us try to find some evidence about this phenomena in sources written before the introduction of the sovkhos system. This search is quite difficult, because the scholars of the 19<sup>th</sup> – beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries were more interested in the technology and economy of the “tundra capitalism” than in its social organisation. However, some evidence, about the topic we are interested in, can be found, for example, in the work of Kercellii (1911). He tells us the following facts about the social organisation of the Komi reindeer herders: 1. Komi do not make “sies” (*stoidishe*, i.e. the clusters of *chums*) as Nenets do. 2. Their *chums* migrate separately and independently. 3. Every *chum* herds its own herd. 4. When *chums* come to the taiga zone, a reindeer meat selling from the reindeer herds is

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<sup>3</sup>The horn-selling is a relatively new phenomenon connected to the development of pharmaceuticals. The reindeer horns are used as the raw material for the production of pantoicinum and are quite valuable on the international market. In the tundra, reindeer horns are bought by special agents in some sort of a barter operation.

organised. These quotations show, that Kercelli clearly employed the word *chum* to designate some social unit. Indeed, a physical *chum* hardly can migrate, let alone herding a herd. They also show, that the *chum* was an economic or at least productive unit. It herded its herd separately and independently. Unfortunately, the evidence does not show if the *chum* was a cultural category or just a social group. However, the existence of such a concept and its economic role is obvious. Therefore we can think, that if even the transition of the concept of *chum* into a cultural category is relatively young, the economical grouping on the basis of the common living in one *chum* is traditional for the Komi reindeer herding and it is this grouping that forms the basic economical herding unit.

Therefore, the basic cultural social category in Komi reindeer herding is the category of *chum* including, as its basic trait, the *people* living in one movable herding house or eligible to live there. Although this category was adapted to the sovkhos system and corresponds to the official working unit (brigade), this adaptation was neither complete. Still, the *chum* includes more people than the brigade does. However, the principle of common reward and responsibility employed by the administration of sovkhoses allowed the category to exist and devise its mechanisms of work consolidation and redistribution. It is this category, its structure and the mechanisms, that will be discussed in the few following paragraphs.

## **2. The structure of *Chum*, actual and social**

As in the previous chapter, let's start with the officially presupposed structure of a brigade as it is mirrored in the sovkhos documents. In accordance with these documents, a brigade must consist of 6–8 reindeer herders depending on the size of a herd. Although it is not officially said, that all of them must be males, this is clearly presupposed by the document. One of these reindeer herders (supposedly the most experienced) elected by the members of brigade becomes the head of the unit. His appointment must be confirmed by the administration of the sovkhos. The head of the brigade has the right to decide about the ongoing activity of the brigade, to govern the brigade's work and to solve conflicts in the brigade. He also repre-

sents the brigade in relations with the administration. Every brigade also includes two women, whose duty is to take care of the order and cleanliness in the *chum*, to prepare food, to sew clothes for reindeer herders and to help in procedures of maintaining and taking down the *chum*. These women are officially named “*chum-workers*” (*chum-rabotnitsy*). They are also ruled, up to some degree, by the head of brigade. However, their relation to the brigade is slightly different than that of one of the male reindeer herders. The amount of money they get from the sovkhos depends on the size of the brigade (not the size of the brigade’s herd) and it cannot be taken out for fines (*Ustav... 1993*).

Officially, every man applying to the sovkhos can become a member of a brigade. However, the administration of the enterprise has to admit, that in the existing conditions, when the members of the brigade should work and live together for a long time, the problem of trust and psychological reciprocity has crucial importance. Therefore, the members of a brigade, and especially its head, have the right of final decision about the acceptance of each new member. In fact, this means that the Komi reindeer herders are free to devise the traditional mechanisms of forming their herding groups. Let’s try now to trace, what these mechanisms are and how the actual structure of the herding group is different and adapted to the official one.

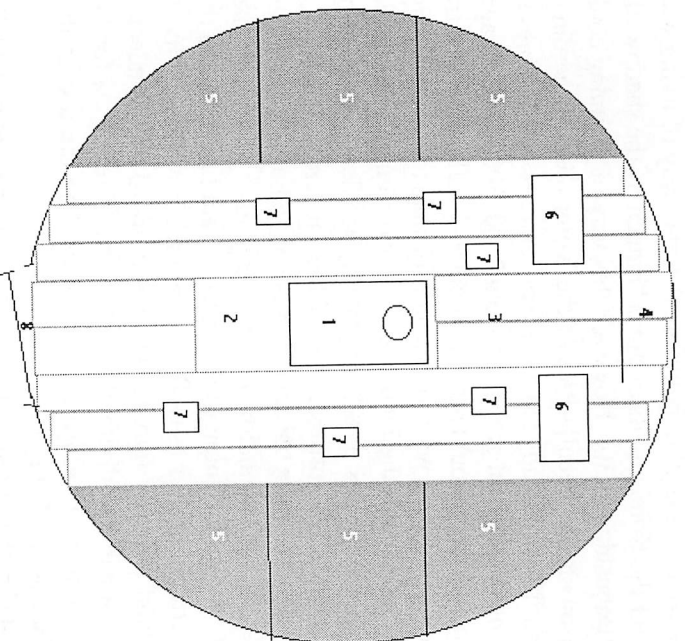
In his already cited work, Kercelli tells us only one clear evidence about the internal structure and content of the Komi reindeer herding group in the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. He writes, that in contrast to the Nenets, a separately migrating Komi *chum* is usually inhabited not by one but by two families (Kercelli 1911). Slightly more specific is Babushkin, who studied the Komi reindeer herders in 1927–1929, that is just on the eve of collectivisation. He mentions, that a Komi reindeer herding *chum* was usually inhabited by two elementary families including husband, wife and their unmarried children. In poorer *chums*, these families most often were relatives and sometimes formed a big undivided family (that is, the second family was one of a married son of the first pair). In richer *chums*, the connection between the families was more often economical. Here, the second family was one of a worker hired by the first family. In this case, the second family even could be (and often was) of different ethnic ori-

gin (Nenets). Babushkin believed, that this way of living was traditional for the Komi and its origin is “hidden by the shadow of centuries” (Babushkin 1930). However, this way of grouping could have its reasons in the peculiarities of the Komi reindeer herding of the time. As it was already stated, Komi reindeer herding presupposes pasturing reindeers in groups of about 2500–3000. An average Komi elementary family could provide about 3–4 male reindeer herders of working age, which was not enough for managing such a big herd. On the other hand, the labor force of two elementary families was quite optimal for this. It is surely not by accident, that it completely corresponds to the official size of the modern brigade. In poorer families having, from the data of the same Babushkin, less than 1000 reindeer, this consolidation of work was made by following the channels of “blood”. A union of two relative families provided the optimum herd of reindeer as well as the optimum working force. On the other hand in richer families having up to 10 000 reindeer, it was more reasonable to divide the herd between relatives, for example married sons, and to hire a worker providing the rest of the labor force for each of them.

Whatever the origin of this structure of the group actually was, the notion about *chum* consisting of two families strongly persists among the modern Komi reindeer herders. This notion was consistently expressed by all of my informants. But the most important point is that this notion is clearly imprinted in the construction and the internal spatial structure of the “physical” *chum* – the movable house of the reindeer herders.

The reindeer herding *chum* is a conical house made of wooden sticks. One end of each stick (*öv*) is placed on the ground and slightly pushed into it. The other end is installed into a cord-ring about 4 meters over the ground. This construction is covered by two large pieces of tart (*pon'uche*) each covering a half of the *chum* and, in winter, also by two conical covers made of reindeer skins (*n'uk*) placed on the linen. The covers are placed so, that their side edges can be opened like a curtain in one particular place leaving an entry to the *chum* (photograph 1).

The internal structure of a *chum* is planned around the line connecting the “door” and the point on the other side of the *chum* in front



- 1 – the iron oven
- 2 – the fuel place
- 3 – the pottery place
- 4 – the “God place”
- 5 – a sleeping place (reindeer skin)
- 6 – a table
- 7 – a chair
- 8 – the entrance

Drawing 1. A plan of an average Komi *chum*.

of it (drawing 1). Along this line, several wooden boards (*latayas*) are laid on the ground forming a floor cover in the central part of the *chum*. A metal oven (*kört pacht*) is placed in the center of the floor. The back (i.e. the opposite to the “door”) part of the *chum* behind the oven is separated by a linen curtain. This curtain hides a wooden shelf called *yen mesta* (God place). Originally it was a place for icons, but the communist struggle against religion made it work even in the tundra. There are no icons in *chums* now. However, the place is



used for storing documents, brigade maps (if there are any) and other valuable things usually stored behind icons in Komi villages.

The line, mentioned in the previous paragraph, divides the *chum* into two halves (*chom bök*) absolutely similar in their structure. Each half has a little table and 3–4 wooden chairs or boxes used for sitting as well as for storing little things. These chairs “belong” to the half and can never be taken across the dividing line. When I tried to take a chair with me going to the opposite half in my first days in the *chum*, I was asked not to do this, because “there are own chairs here”. The sides of the *chum* not covered by the boards are covered by reindeer skins and used for sleeping. These parts are divided from the rest of the *chum* by curtains (*bölögan*) serving two functions: they protect the sleeping people from mosquitoes and maintain their privacy. Every part of the *chum* has its own sleeping place and not one reindeer skin from it (not to say about other elements) can be taken to the other part. The space between the oven and the icon place is occupied by the pottery used for food preparing and eating. Each half of the *chum* has its own set of pottery and the rules for its transportation in the *chum* are the same as for chairs.

Therefore, the internal space of the *chum* has a clear dual structure. Both halves of it have the separate set of all items needed in life excluding the oven and, in the past, religious items can be viewed as separate sections (photograph 3). These are really the separate “houses” supposed for two elementary social cells, the families. The duality is further proved by the order of *chum* transportation during migrations. In a migration, every Komi herding group forms 4–5 lines of reindeer sledges connected to each other (*argish*) plus several separate reindeer sledges for individual reindeer herders (*dad*). Two of the lines are loaded with the *chum* items and called *chom böka argish*). The striking fact is, that each of these lines is loaded **only** with items belonging to the corresponding *chum* section and **all** the items belonging to a section (including the elements of *chum* construction) are loaded onto the corresponding line. Thus, each line is loaded with the half of sticks needed for *chum* construction, one tart *chum* cover, one reindeer skin cover, half of the boards forming the floor, the table, all the chairs standing in the section and so on. The reindeer herders are very careful about sorting the items

during loading. Once I saw that a metal tea cup was taken by a reindeer herder into his private sledge just because it belonged to the section of the line already gone. The reindeer herder preferred to keep the cup with him rather than to put it into the sledge of the line of the other section just being loaded.

The model of a reindeer herding group consisting of two families and living in a two-sectioned *chum* is realised in the modern Komi reindeer herding brigade along the lines of its official structure. An ideal brigade, as the reindeer herders have it, consists of two elementary families, ideally related to each other by the ties of blood. Both families consist of a man, his wife working as a *chum*-worker and his children including 2 or 3 grown-up unmarried sons. The older of the married men becomes the head of the group. His power, however, is somehow restricted by the second married man, with whom he should consult in all his important decisions. The rest of the group obey the decisions of these leaders as heads of their families. The official structure of the brigade, pre-supposing the existence of two *chum*-workers and 6–8 reindeer herders, gives a good possibility for this system to exist.

A good example of this life-style can be the first brigade of the Sizyabsk division of the *Izhemsky Olenevod* sovkhov. The structure of this brigade, as the reindeer herders themselves insist, is quite near the ideal structure of a herding group. The core of the brigade consists of two families, whose heads are cousins. The older cousin is the official head of the brigade. Each family possesses one section of the *chum*. The *chum*-workers, who are also the wives of the cousins, take care of the cleanliness and order in their sections and rarely cross the "dividing line" between the halves. They also prepare food for the members of their families. The families sleep and eat separately, each in its section of the *chum*.

All the official income of the members of the families is divided equally between the families. Thus, the supplies given by the enterprise in the beginning of the migration were chosen in the enterprise store-house by both *chum*-workers and divided between them. The *chum*-worker further decides about spending the supplies she got in favor of the members of her families. Every reindeer killed by the members of the brigade for food is cut in longitudinal section and

every family gets half. The meat is given to the *chum*-worker, who decides about its further distribution. Respectively, a punishment fine is taken from the property of the family, of which the member was guilty.

Most of the items usually stored in the *chum* belong to one or the other family's property. During migrations, these items are transported in one of the *chum* lines of sledges (*chom böka argish*). On the other hand, the items stored outside the *chum* are the common property of the brigade. These usually include the working tools, the hunting and fishing equipment (excluding guns), some materials (wood and iron are the most valuable) and rubber boats. In migrations, the brigade forms five lines of sledges. The first line, loaded with the tools and fishing equipment, is led by the head of the brigade. This line moves in the vanguard of all of the migrating brigade. It is followed by the *chom böka argish* of the head's *chum* half. This line is led by the head's wife. The second *chom böka argish* led by the wife of the second cousin follows the first. The cousin himself leads the fourth line loaded with the rest of tools, boats and equipment. The last line with the materials is led by the older son of the head of the brigade. The rest of the reindeer herders travels in their private sledges (*dad'*).

As it can be clearly seen, here we deal with binary hierarchical system based on blood ties and mutual economic union between two families. The system seems to be quite efficient in organisation of work and redistribution of rewards and punishments. The heads of the families can easily find consensus in the important topic of the group life, even more so, because they are relatives and the younger accepts the authority of the older. Being in agreement with each other, the cousins can further co-ordinate the work and behaviour of the members of their families using the rights of father and husband. Therefore, the common activity of the group members is easily directed towards the goals put forward by the cousins.

Unfortunately, the brigade described is a quite rare example of the almost ideal herding group structure. The decrease in the birth rate among the Komi population and, most importantly, the mass flow of the Komi population away from reindeer herding in the last few decades have created the situation when an elementary family often

cannot provide the needed labor force for the dual family system to work and for all the working places supposed by the official structure of a brigade to be occupied. It is also very difficult for a family to find a relative counterpart for the classical dual organisation. In fact, the brigade described above was the only one among the studied units where the two member families were related to each other. The most important thing, however, is that a herding unit has to include people, who are not members of the two basic families. These people, of course, decrease the integrity of the group and threaten the classical mechanisms of work consolidation and redistribution. One way to solve the problem is to include unmarried relatives in the group. Although not members of the elementary families, they are nevertheless related to one of them and can be somehow governed by the head of a family. However, this way is not always possible because of a lack of relatives eager to practice reindeer herding or to obey to the head of one of the elementary families. In fact, almost every contemporary Komi herding group includes some number of people completely unrelated to both of the families. These unrelated members of a group are called *bökövöy yöz* (side-people), and their existing in *chums* is perceived as a big problem by almost all reindeer herders, including the side-people themselves. It is commonly supposed, that a big number of side-people is a factor reducing the efficiency of brigade work and quality of life of the brigade members. As one of my informants put it “*Chomys öd kyk böka. Koinöd böktö nekyrchö on s’uy*” (A *chum* has two halves. The third one cannot be installed into it). Nevertheless, the side-people are a reality to which the social mechanisms of the *chum* have to adapt themselves.

In fact, even the most ideal brigade described above actually had two side-men. These men, however, were included in the classic structure of the brigade by the mechanism I would call “integration”. The men simply behaved and were treated as members of one of the elementary families of the brigade. They slept on its side and ate at its table. They referred to the *chum*-worker who fed them as their “master” and called her husband directly “father”. This “step-relativeness”, however, was possible only because both side-men were quite young and inexperienced and their age really was approximately the same as one of actual sons of their “step-father”. Other

herding groups employ other, some times quite exotic ways of integration of their side-people. For example, the brigade mentioned in the previous chapter has as side-men two brothers. One of them is married and his wife works as a *chum*-worker in the same brigade for half of the period of its migration. After that, she is replaced by the other *chum*-worker, who is the wife of the other reindeer herder. Therefore, one of the elementary families constituting this herding group is unstable: for half of the migration, the brother and his wife constitute it, and the husband of the second “half-time” *chum*-worker and his son constitute the side-people. For the second half of the same migration, the brothers become the side-people and the former side-people’s part of the brigade plus the newly-come *chum*-worker become the second elementary family. Accordingly, the adviser of the head of brigade also changes and so does the leader of one of the brigade *argishes* (lines of sledges). The head of this brigade told, that this order of life helps the unit to save its integrity and well-being of its members: “The men understand, that if one of them will not work with the other today, the other will not do this tomorrow. The women understand, that if one of them will not care about food and clothes for the husband of the other, the other will behave in the same way after her arrival. Besides that, both have the chance to be with their husband or wife for a part of the migration period.” Of course, this order has a disadvantage, that each *chum*-worker gets two times less money for her work. However, the reindeer herders involved believe, that advantages outweigh.

Unfortunately, not all herding groups are so lucky to involve mechanisms like this. In many brigades, especially those having many side-people, the traditional order is deeply undermined. Of course, even in these brigades, the side people have to choose a side of the *chum* to sleep in, a table to eat at and a *chum*-worker to be fed by. However, their relations with the head of brigade and the head of their “host-family” (the family living in the same side of the *chum* as they) are difficult. The head of the brigade has particular problems with mobilizing them for common work, with distribution of the brigade income among them and extracting punishment fines from them. As I was told, the general rule is, that the side people should pay a part of their family expenses used for brigade supplies. Their

refusal to do this is a sufficient reason for the brigade to exclude them from its members. However, the distribution of income and extracting of the fines always provoke problems and conflicts which are very difficult to be solved by the traditional mechanism.

A quite unusual type of herding groups, created by some brigades, appeared in the last decades due to the unwillingness of many women to become *chum*-workers. In these brigades, there is only one real family and, correspondingly, only one *chum*-worker. All the people who are not members of this family (more than a half of the brigade) are the side-people. These brigades are named *iti böka* (one-sided) by the reindeer herders and, fortunately, are still quite rare, at least in the *Izhemsky Olenyov* sovkhovz. The Sizyabsk division includes only one such brigade and the total number of such brigades in the sovkhovz is 4 (out of 23). However, there is evidence, that such brigades are more common in other Komi reindeer herding enterprises. In the only one-sided brigade I had a chance to study in the Sizyabsk division, all the side people lived in one side of the *chum* while the other side was occupied by the members of the elementary family. The *chum*-worker had to take the responsibility to prepare food for their table. As a repayment, the side-people had to pay for the larger part of the supplies the *chum*-worker got from the enterprise store-house. They also paid the *chum*-worker for clothes they asked her to make for them. The brigade's income was divided equally between all the members of the brigade (including the members of the elementary family) by the head of the brigade (the husband of the *chum*-worker). Unfortunately, I could not get reliable information about the ways of decision-making and work-organisation in this brigade. It should be mentioned, however, that the head of the brigade seems to be quite a powerful personality able to dictate his will to others. Further research is also needed to find out if the order described is common for herding groups of this type.

Whatever the deviations can be, the ideal structure of a Komi reindeer herding group presupposes the system of two families. According to this structure, there are defined appropriate social roles and behaviour. It is these roles and behaviour we should discuss now.

### 3. The personal aims and personal behaviour

As it could be already seen from the previous discussion, a Komi reindeer herding group has a clear gender labor division. Now it is time to discuss this division in more details, for it is one of basic points structuring the behaviour of the members of a *chum*.

Generally, the labor division inside the *chum* can be described in spatial terms. Females do all the work inside the *chum* while the working place of males is outside the movable house. A labor division of this type is brilliantly described by Golovnev for Nenets (1995), and those interested in its detailed analysis can refer to his work. The Komi division of work has, however, one important difference compared to the Nenets one. This difference is connected to the two-sidedness of a Komi *chum* and the existence of two full-rights women in it. Therefore, a Komi woman is not a “master of the *chum*” (using the words of Golovnev 1995), but a master of a half of the *chum*. On the other hand, the men are masters of the undivided space outside the *chum* just in the Nenets manner. This fact determines the striking difference in aims and behaviour of males and females to be described in this chapter.

A major part of the life of a male Komi reindeer herder is spent outside the *chum*. Every morning, two reindeer herders are leaving the *chum* site to herd the brigade herd pasturing usually at some distance from the *chum*. They spend there twenty-four hours and are replaced by the next two reindeer herders next morning. The rest of the male part of the group stay near the *chum* and do their work there. Their duty is to take care of herding and travelling equipment, reindeer harness and the small herd of castrated reindeer (bulls) pastured near the *chum*. They fix reindeer sledges, plait fishing nets, prepare boats for river-crossing and make ropes and ribbons for reindeer harness. Sometimes some of them leave for hunting, fuel collecting or fresh water. Once per day, the herd of bulls must be driven to the *chum* to change the reindeer harnessed in sledges by new ones (*jortas'öm*). This is quite a time and work consuming operation. Two or three reindeer herders with sledges and several herding dogs drive the herd into some sort of round fence made of empty sledges. Then the other reindeer herders close the entering hole of the fence by long rope. The new reindeer must be captured in the fence by the strongest

reindeer herders while the others guard the entrance and the side of the "corral" preventing reindeer from escaping.

The main point is that almost all the described operations presuppose some amount of common work of at least a part of the herding group. Even those activities which do not pre-suppose the group work (for example fuel or water collecting) are performed in the interest of the whole brigade. Therefore, a Komi male reindeer herder always work collectively or at least in interest of the collective. This peculiarity is strengthened by the fact, that there is no further division of functions among the male reindeer herders in the group (with the exception of the function of decision-making which is performed by the head of brigade). As my informants regularly put it, "The real reindeer herder has to be able to do everything." This multi-functionalism is quite understandable in the small isolated group unable to find a replacement for every member who could be incapable of performing his function due to illness or some other disaster. However, it does not mean, that reindeer herders can manage separately. On the contrary, it can be said, that the reindeer herders indeed can do everything but only in a group. A really skilful person can make a reindeer sledge alone, but he cannot be similarly skilful in everything. A person not so skilful can make the same sledge only with help of others, but his skills can be much more varied. The latter peculiarity can be completely applied to the Komi reindeer herders.

By coming inside the *chum*, one finds himself in a completely different world. This is a kingdom of women, a space of the master of a half of the *chum*. Her duties are not less divorced and time consuming. As it was already said, a woman must take care regarding her family food and clothes and about her side of the *chum* and property stored in it. In migrations, she is leading the line of sledges loaded with this property and the elements of the *chum* construction. After the migration, she maintains her side of the *chum*, that is, places the sticks, the covers on her side and the boards and skins producing the floor and the sleeping-place in her side of the *chum*. She also is responsible for buying, storage and spending of the supplies needed for her family and people living in her side of the *chum*. She, together with her counterpart (the second woman) makes decisions about spending of the part of the brigade's income given for payment for



the supplies. In this respect, her control over the group's resources is nearly the same or even more than that of the head of her family: she controls all the spending excepts the punishment fines. However, she also takes full responsibility for the consequences of her decisions.

The "world of woman" is very different from the world of men. The border between them is marked by various cultural habits and prohibitions. A woman cannot travel in a separate sledge (*dad'*), her place is in the line of sledges loaded with the equipment she takes care of. She should not touch hunting and fishing equipment. She does not participate in reindeer harnessing. On the other hand, the *chum* maintenance is the women's activity, and the help of men in this process (if any) is very limited and often unwelcome.<sup>4</sup> But the most important difference between these worlds is the character of the work. While the work of men is collective, the work of woman is completely individual. This means, that there are no operations the two women of the brigade would do together and there is no product they could refer to as common.

Each woman cares only about her own side of the *chum*, about her own table and her own part of the brigade and she is the only one who can care about them. Although they perform absolutely similar functions, the objects of these functions are different. Two examples can help to imagine the degree of this separation of objects. In a Komi *chum*, there is a custom to keep a warm water and tea base all day long so that every man coming to the *chum* for a short rest could have a cup of tea. In order to provide these luxuries, each *chum*-worker has two tea pots, one for the water and the other for the tea base. All these tea pots are always on the oven but a reindeer herder can use only those belonging to his half of the *chum* (photograph 4). If one of the tea pots is empty, the reindeer herder should wait while the *chum*-worker will refill it and heat it again, but cannot use the teapot of the other side. The second example is the *chum*-maintaining. Each *chum*-worker maintains only her own side of *chum*. The custom prevents her from helping the other in maintaining the other side even if her side is already complete. In fact, the other *chum*-worker

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<sup>4</sup>To be sure, these rules are necessary to be obeyed only by married women. Girls (daughters of the *chum*-workers) are free from many such prohibitions. They can travel in separate sledges and even help men in their male work.

would rather accept the help of males than of the second female. The only activity the *chum*-workers perform together is the buying of the brigade supplies in spring and summer during horn-selling. However, even here it takes a lot of time for them to reach a consensus about the content of goods to buy.

These differences determine the system of values and the strategies of behaviour employed by males and females. Among Komi reindeer herders, just as among many other societies, the prestige of an individual is determined by his success in performing his work, that is, in the final instance, by the results of his work. Since the Komi male reindeer herders pasture the common herd, the results they reach are also common. Therefore, the prestige they obtain as a measure of these results is given to the every member of the group. This does not mean, that individual prestige is unknown among the Komi reindeer herders. A skillful and experienced reindeer herder is respected by others whatever the condition of reindeer of his *chum* are. A member of a family having a lot of reindeer is respected more than the person or family having a small individual herd, even if both are living in one *chum*. However, the fact of being from “a good *chum*” considerably adds to the personal prestige of an individual. This fact is a good mechanism of the group consolidation among the men. The value of the group prestige causes them to choose the strategy of mutual help and avoidance of conflicts inside the brigade. Of course, every reindeer herder also pursues personal prestige, but he cares not to disturb the prestige of group in this. He understands, that a rich reindeer herder from a bad *chum* would gain less prestige than one from a good *chum*. Actually, such a reindeer herder would gain a display of caution in relations rather than respect.

On the other hand, a woman can gain only personal prestige. Besides that in opinion of the Komi, a woman cannot have prosperity, that is cannot be rich or poor. The prosperity of her family including the private reindeers belongs to her husband and will be inherited by his son after his death whether his mother is alive or not. Of course, both father and son take care of the woman, but this does not add to her prestige. The group’s prestige does not add to that of the woman either. In the tundra, one often can hear phrases like “the *chum* is OK but one of their women is crap”. Therefore, the only source of respect

for a woman is the quality of her work, the title of a good master. The peculiarity of the situation is that this status is usually given in comparison with the other, bad or at least not so good a master as to who is the second woman in the group. This creates permanent competition between the *chum*-workers. This competition makes up one of the main elements of the woman's behaviour. The spheres of the competition are various and include the speed of *chum*-maintaining, the quality of food, the wisdom of resource spending, the cleanliness of their *chum*-side, the speed and quality of clothes sewing and so on. Since the competition must be fair, the women are usually unwilling to accept any help in their work. The most striking example of the competition is, perhaps, the bread baking. The ability to bake a good bread is, perhaps, the most basic for the Komi *chum*-master. The pot of bread-base and the duck wing used in the bread baking are supposed to be the most "female" things in the *chum* and are carefully stored in proximity to the God place. In migrations, a *chum*-worker carries the pot under her clothes to prevent the base yeast from dying. But the most important fact is that bread is the only thing a *chum*-worker can present for the members of the other side of the *chum* for tasting. The bread baking occurs usually in early morning. The oven is carefully heated and the both women insert their fill of dough baking shapes into it. Both should do this at the same moment "for none could later say, that the oven was differently heated for one of us". After that, each woman can do whatever she wants with her bread with three exceptions. It is prohibited to touch the bread of the other *chum*-worker, to fix the coils and to add new fuel into the oven. After the first portion is baked, the agreed portion of fuel is added to the oven and at the agreed moment the operation is repeated.

The female competition surely has an adaptive significance. It considerably increases the quality of work of a woman. The desire for respect also makes it possible to effectively expand the work of women upon the side-people. However, it does not add friendly feelings to the relations between the *chum*-workers. These relations are usually polite, but full of caution. It is supposed to be unfair to employ cursing in the relationship. However, the women neither tell jokes to each other.

The relations between men are totally different. It is supposed, that all of them should express friendly feeling to each other, even if they do not have them in reality. The absence of any competition is specially emphasised here. A good reindeer herder should not be proud of doing something better than others and especially speak about that. The most appropriate way conversation between the male reindeer herders is light, not insulting or joking. The topics capable of provoking uneasiness and conflict are completely excluded from the conversation. For example, it is supposed to be inappropriate to speak of sexual topics in the tundra. "Such topics are to be discussed in the village, not here" – explained one of the reindeer herders to me, "the village is a place to express pride and to curse each other. The tundra is a place to respect each other." Therefore, the main peculiarity of the male behavioural strategies is the deliberate avoidance of conflicts and competition and strengthening the friendly relationships in the group.

## **Conclusions**

Now, as the basic facts about the Komi social relations and behavioural strategies have been outlined, it's time to make some general conclusions about them. As the previous analysis has shown, the Komi reindeer herding group is a quite complex structure. Furthermore, this structure is unique in many aspects. Its dual organisation and the dual structure of relationships (male and female) employed in it makes it totally different from the social groups common among the neighboring population.

In its present-day form, the Komi reindeer herding group can be seen as a product of a long-lasting development having, in itself, some kind of mixture of traits emerging in different times and situations. Some of these traits including the most basic ones, such as the two-family structure, do not have a clear function in the modern situation. However, as I tried to show in this paper, this does not mean that they did not have some functions in the past. Some other traits are still functional today. The main point is, however, that all these traits create a coherent system being able to adapt itself to such basic changes in the surrounding social reality as the collectivisation and

the *raskulachivaniye*. The fact of this adaptation shows, that the system is not only quite flexible, but also sufficient enough to satisfy the changing needs of the Komi population.

The reason of the uniqueness of the Komi social system can be easily found, if we would remember the history of Komi reindeer herding. Actually, this system is a product of adaptation of formerly settled collectives of agriculturalists and hunters already lacking clear clan relations and perhaps even classical large undivided families (the standard ways of grouping among the nomadic peoples) to the nomadic way of life. The adaptation of this kind posed some serious problems connected to the recruiting of the labor force, fixing conflicts and so on. The salvation the Komi reindeer herders found is as simple as all geniuses do. If the minimum labor force could be provided only by two elementary families, these families should be united into a coherent structure. The common living place could be the best way to reach this coherency. The specific male and female relationships could make this system the most effective. The result responded to all the challenges the situation posed. The Komi cannot help that they already did not have something and had to live with what they had.

However, the modern situation, as it seems, poses the problems that the salvation of these are on the limit of the power of the Komi reindeer herder's social system. What the communist reformations were unable to do is done by the unavoidable processes of modernisation and changing demographic situation. Now nobody can say if the Komi social system will be able to adapt to the changes as it did once, will it be transformed to something new or collapse. The examples of successful accommodation of the side-people tend to show, that transformation is the most possible scenario. However, further research is needed before we can make justified conclusions about that.

At the end of this paper, I would like to remind the reader, that this work is of preliminary character. Further research can change some statements of this work or even prove it completely mistaken. I would like only, that this further research will be done and I am ready to accept any corrections they could make to my picture.

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Photograph 1. The actual chum. Photograph by Kirill Istomin 2000.



Photograph 2. The social *chum*. Brigade no. 7. Sizyabsk division. Photograph by Kirill Istomin 2000.





Photograph 3. A *chum*-side. Photograph by Kirill Istomin 2000.



Photograph 4. The iron oven in its ordinary position. The four teapots are shown. Photograph by Kirill Istomin 2000.



Photograph 5. Inside a Komi *chum*. Photograph by Kirill Istomin 2000.

## **Komi Hunter Ethics at the End of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

**Vladimir Lipin, Art Leete**

Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, hunting has had a marginal importance in the overall economy of the Komi people. Yet there are still people involved in it until the present time, and for some hunters, it is the main source of income. There are also traditional rules of hunting ethics passed on to us, although not all the hunters follow them. It can be said that the ideal of ethical hunting has been maintained, yet in real life this invokes fundamental conflicts. Here, the centre of controversy is between changing attitudes and traditional hunter morality.

The examples, which we shall present here, are based on materials collected from hunters living in the Ust-Kulom region of the Komi Republic. Evidently, they cannot be measured from the point of view of ultimate truth. Yet no doubt they communicate the centuries-old and nowadays attitudes of Komi hunters.

Traditional Komi hunter ethics have been based on beliefs in the supernatural dangers which may threaten a hunter for the breach of these rules or for any action not in correspondence with these rules. *Porcha* meant the lack or insufficient game, the stray hunter, a broken hunting gun, the dog has caught some illness. The hunters' artel was lead by a "master" possessing magic powers, whose task was to protect the artel members against the magic spells of other artels (Sidorov 1997: 41–49).

For Komi hunters, the main problem was the large number of hunters in the 19<sup>th</sup> – beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in relation to insufficiently few good hunting grounds. This created tension among hunters and was a basis for violating hunter ethics (Konakov 1983).

For a breach of hunter ethics the traditional “forest rules” are applied, which allow the victim to exact quite severe revenge against the accused. One could burn down the hunting lodge of a thief or violator of the hunting ground, leave him tied to a tree trunk in the forest. Sometimes the thief was left with his hair fastened to the tree trunk. His knife was taken away, so he could not unloosen himself. Another punishment was to kill him. The thief was then burnt together with the hunting lodge, or a poisoned pie was left in the lodge. Those who come there, have the right to take everything with them. When it was known that a poacher was around, then the pie was left there. Also, sometimes a long batten was pricked through his sleeves and he was then left into the forest. Those who carry out these punishments, considered equitable by other hunters, were never reported to the police. During the Tsarist period, judges were not eager to investigate such cases, because hunters and other locals would not report them anyway.

Nowadays, a similar solidarity rule between hunters and not reporting one another to the authorities is also valid. Some hunters are illegal and, for the authorities, they are poachers. Many hunters do not obtain any gun licence, and those who have one, have permission to kill less game than they actually do. And all this is kept as an “open secret”.

Vladimir Lipin: *The militia realised that a hunter R<sup>1</sup>, is a poacher. They caught a hunter Z and started questioning him. Z tried to think what to say and how to save his friend. Then a hunter K came out of the forest and said:*

*“Don’t you know R is dead?”*

*Militia: “What?” ·*

*“Yes, we buried him between the three cedars. We could not report it to anybody, because we have been in the forest all the time.”*

*If dead, then dead, the militia thought, and went away.*

Within the last 20–25 years, the hunter traditions have undergone some downgrading. 20 years ago, they still kept them. Since the end

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<sup>1</sup> Names of hunters are not provided, because, theoretically, this information could be used against them.

of the 1980s, hunter traditions have been constantly disappearing. Nowadays, hunters are attacked for any breach of hunter ethics. Sometimes nothing happens to them. When, on a free hunting ground, someone builds his hunting lodge too close to someone else's, it is burnt down. They do not say anything – for example, we do not like you here. And when the poacher is in there, nothing happens. When he leaves the lodge, they set it on fire. And then everybody gets to know about this, and he gets an appropriate nickname.

Those who have hunting grounds, whether close to the settlement or further away, try to follow traditional hunting rules. Because so many people have cars nowadays, it very often happens, then, that people venture onto someone's hunting ground. Also, there are so many tracks – for transporting timber, just created, for electric power lines. A thief need not go to someone else's ground, he just goes along the electric power line track for about 100 metres and turns into the forest. The line track itself may be as long 10–20 kilometres. Then he turns around and moves on. The electric line track may have a number of hunting paths crossing it. And he takes the game out of a trap there.

Hunting grounds are obtained by inheritance or by occupation of unused land. These actions are in accordance with common law. Other hunters then recognise the new owner and this is what ensures his rights.

Vladimir Lipin: *When I was in the army, someone made a hunting track near mine. I left him a warning: he did not react, but kept on hunting. Then I vandalised his traps. Then he vandalised my traps. I do not know who he was. This happened a number of times. We vandalised each other's traps. Then finally he stopped it. Did not vandalise traps or hunt. Perhaps he realised that I have more rights. Someone told him that it was my ground. I picked berries there for many years and saw that for 10 years no one had tracked there. Then I occupied this track and marked it with my signs.*

Yet poachers are not so tolerant to withdraw after a polite request. They have developed their own morality that justifies taking into their possession everything they come across in the forest.

Vladimir Lipin: *Once I caught a man on my track. That was enough: they steal all the time. In the morning I took the gun and sat there. And I see: the man is coming with his son. But I had a hazel grouse caught there. He saw the bird and took it, without turning around. I took my gun out and said:*

*"Come on, put it back there!"*

*But he starts arguing:*

*"Who are you?"*

*"Look, put it back there! It was me who set the trap not you! Put the bird back right there where it was!"*

*He did not, stood there. "That is enough, man, I would rather not see you here again," I said. Then he started remonstrating:*

*"Is this forest yours?"*

*I said:*

*"I set the trap, not you. I have been here for years. You just come and take. If I set it, how can you come and take it?"*

*He started to argue. He was not even worried. I had the gun and he was not scared. As long as I did not shoot, it was the same. Reprimanded, as if I did not have a gun at all. When I shot in front of his legs, it was much better. He put the bird back in the trap and ran away.*

Considering the local hunters' identity, ethical setbacks among hunters themselves form even a more serious problem, as compared to poachers from outside the community. Once some hunters from Ust-Kulom wanted to take a bird from someone else's track. They justified that it would go bad anyway as it was lying there.

Vladimir Lipin: *They know the rule that you must not take, yet they want to. I told them that I would not think badly of them, but they themselves caused that. They did not have any traps or tracks, they had just guns. Their ground was next to mine. I thought my own friends took my bird. They took heed of what I said, and did not take these birds with them. Otherwise they would have probably done it. Actually, when you see a bird lying on the ground on a strange track, you hang it up the tree and cover it, so that game would not get it. And set the trap again. At least, I and my brother did so in Parma,*

*where Z allocated a hunting track to us. It crossed other tracks. Every time we found there some birds and we placed them on trees. As with elderly people, who find a bird when picking berries, they place it on a tree. My grandmother stated that in earlier times, when you were hungry, you were allowed to take the bird away. In return you then left there your sign (pas) on birch bark, or anything that you had with you. Also, you could later when returning to a village go to the hunter and give something in return.*

Some problems involving mechanisms of occupying hunting grounds and punishments for breaching hunter ethics have then persisted for centuries. Even nowadays, hunters feel that in the forest common law is superior to the laws set by the authorities. The fact that hunters do not report to the police the prisoners who have escaped from prisons and live in the forest only confirms the above statement. Prisoners then live in hunting lodges and use hunters' supplies. Yet they must also follow the hunter common law. Should they breach it by, for example vandalising hunting lodges, hunters apply their laws to prisoners, too. This may even end in the killing of an escaped prisoner.

In addition to prisoners, according to hunters, also other people who have gone into the forest for a longer period, are to follow hunter ethics. Not long ago a Komi hunter and an escaped prisoner lived together in the forest. Then the hunter fell ill and was not able to hunt. While being forced to live on supplies, both their own and other hunters, they moved from one store to another. Then they came to the carriages of logging/forest workers. It was during the weekend and the workers were at their homes. The hunter knew that the workers must have some food supplies in there, and according to forest rules, he thought they could borrow from them. The door was locked. This made him angry, as normally doors are not locked in the forest. They then broke the lock and entered the carriage. The hunter was even more shocked when he saw that all the cupboards were also locked. He could not understand that the workers also hid food from one another. They broke the locks of all cupboards and lived a few days in the carriage. When the workers returned, the hunter fired in



front of their legs and gave a lecture about decent behaviour in the forest.

In a present-day Komi society, hunters are surrounded by the aura of mysticism. They say, for example, that there was a hunter who went into the forest in 1925 and came out for the first time in 1970s. Then he received a culture shock and he was taken to a mental home. The storyteller admitted that the man should not come out of the forest at all. This probably involved some exaggeration, however, Komi for-ests basically enable hunters to live there, so that they only go to large settled areas 2–3 times a year.

Nowadays, the hunting morality enables some manipulation with the elements of the common law and traditional worldview. On the other hand, the aspect that different elements of traditional hunting are used indicates that these traditions have persisted pretty well.

Vladimir Lipin: *A man from Ust-Kulon used strange hunting tracks. And our neighbour probably noticed him. I have two neighbours. One of them probably picked mushrooms and saw that the man was stealing there. The one whose track it was did not know anything. The neighbour then left it as if the trap was vandalised by some animal not a human being.<sup>2</sup> I was 14 when I heard that. And the neighbour asked:*

*“How is life? How is your hunting track? Any take?”*

*He said: “Not very rewarding. When I go there, game and birds all are eaten up. There is not much in the traps. Or: the traps catch well, but the take does not preserve/stay there.”*

*The other says: “Bring me a vessel with some water in it. You have got a bowl made of copper. Bring it here. Be sure there is some water in it. I will see who has done it.”*

*The first neighbour says: “Are you crazy? Are you really going to look at this bowl, there is only some water in there?”*

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<sup>2</sup> When a crow vandalises the take caught in a trap, it would not take it along but pecks it near there. When a hunter has been there, only a pile of feathers remains of the hazel grouse. When some animal has taken it, it first takes the bird to some distance and eats it there. This can be traced, because with dragging the bird, some feathers are here and there. Small animals cannot take it very far, and therefore the bird must be somewhere near the trap.

*The one without the prize thought it was some joke. Yet he brought the bowl. The neighbour looks at it:*

*“Look, I see who that person is. I go and tell him, and he himself will bring everything back. In case he has not eaten them up.”*

*Then he went to the thief. In about half an hour, the thief from another street brings a wood grouse and some black grouse, saying:*

*“I was picking mushrooms. I saw they were almost going bad. So I took them.”*

*He did not say he stole them. Said that he picked berries. But why had not he returned them so far? Yet finally he did. Later I asked the neighbour who had looked into the bowl:*

*“How you did it?”*

*He said he had seen that man taking the birds in the forest. He just went to that man and said:*

*“I looked into the copper bowl and it indicated it was you. You were there in the bowl.”*

*He got scared: “I can’t believe it! How come?”*

*“As we were looking at the mirror, we saw you taking two black grouse.”*

*In fact, he just scared the thief. And the thief brought everything back. It was quite long ago, in 1979. Nowadays, he would not scare anyone like that.*

Besides manipulating, diverse magic traditions connected with hunting have been passed on to us and are used in real life. For example, you should never pride yourself on a good catch, so as not to lose the hunter’s luck. According to hunters’ beliefs, a boasting hunter would not get any captures again. When someone has got a marten, for example, he says he’s caught a squirrel. The take is considered to be fatal. They got what they did. They don’t talk much about it. Yet there are some loudmouths among hunters who tend to overestimate their take. One of them, called V, was taught the following lesson by his fellow hunters. Another hunter crossed his hunting track and saw there a hazel grouse in the boaster’s trap. Then that hunter took another grouse out of his bag and put into the same snare. Then V went home and told everyone the story about two birds in the same trap with tears in his eyes. Everybody laughed and could not believe it.

V thought, however, he told a true hunting miracle for the first time in his life.

Also, in order to avoid the loss of hunter's luck, you are not allowed to use swear words when hunting. Even in a state of excitement.

Vladimir Lipin: *When a child, I ran to the take. There was the swamp and pine woods across it. And I saw a black grouse sitting there. I shot it, and it was still alive. "Damn!" I screamed and ran to it. And the bird got lost in the middle of the swamp. One should not speak like that.*

The hunting may be interrupted when everything goes wrong from the beginning.

Vladimir Lipin: *Once we went hunting with K. We were skiing there, when all of a sudden K said he had forgot to switch off his kettle. So we had to go back. I asked why we went back. There was half a kilometre to home, you just see if any smoke was coming out of the roof. If not, it was OK. No, he demanded that we should return home. We did. The kettle was switched off. Yet we did not go hunting again. When it goes wrong at the beginning, you would not go hunting at all. He said this would be the same with hunting.*

When getting into a hunting lodge, first of all a hunter speaks with the lodge. When he leaves it, he says: "Thanks for receiving me!" A Komi hunter may also get some magic help from his dead ancestors. They are asked to come into the forest and "point" the take. They serve tea for the dead, ask the dead relatives to help them.

YU (b. 1927): *Sometimes you get so tired in the forest that you just can't go on. Then you don't speak, but you think: "For God's sake, help me, my parents!" Each hunter has an individual prayer. Although he would not speak up, you can see he gets better. When he is dead tired. I notice that, and so do other people. Especially when you are really tired.*

According to YU, in earlier times, after killing a bear, they held a service in the church. Hunters also had icons and crosses in their

hunting lodges. A local hunter called MV had an icon of St. Serafim Sorovski. The icon depicts bears praying to Serafim Sorovski. He was canonised in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He lived in the forest and tamed some bears. In Komi, September 14<sup>th</sup> is bear day, or bear feast-day. The day is also called the Semyon Day and it is a church festival. That time also the bears' season in heat starts. They start looking for a mate.

Nowadays hunting also gives some emotional balance. Forest life is sharply contrasted to city life.

Vladimir Lipin: *When I moved to the town, then at first I could not... When I went to the forest, then it was as if some poison. When I am at home, I cannot even think, I feel bad here. Then by time I got used to it. But when I came to the town for the first time, I fell ill. I just can't help, I come to the town and I can't get used to it. In the forest it is peaceful. Some emotional balance, you know.*

YU: *When you come from hunting, you feel great, you have made an effort, you know. You have a month-and-a-half long beard.*

Vladimir Lipin: *You just go there and live. That is the place where you can feel yourself as a human being to the most.*

Nowadays the proportion of superstition in hunter ethics has decreased considerably, while relatively more practical rules are followed, the aspect which is directly related to the individual preferences of hunters and no signs of pressure from community morality can be detected. Yet the continuation of traditional hunter ethics is among the most important aspects of the Komi hunters' identity.

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*Vladimir Lipin, Art Leete: Komi Hunter Ethics at the End of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*



Photograph 1. Komi hunter Yevgeni Chalanov.  
Photograph by Art Leete 1996.

Photographic Collections of ENM (Fk) 2546: 25.



Photograph 2. Yevgeni Chalanov covering a pinemarten's trap. Photograph by Art Leete 1996. Fk 2546: 29.



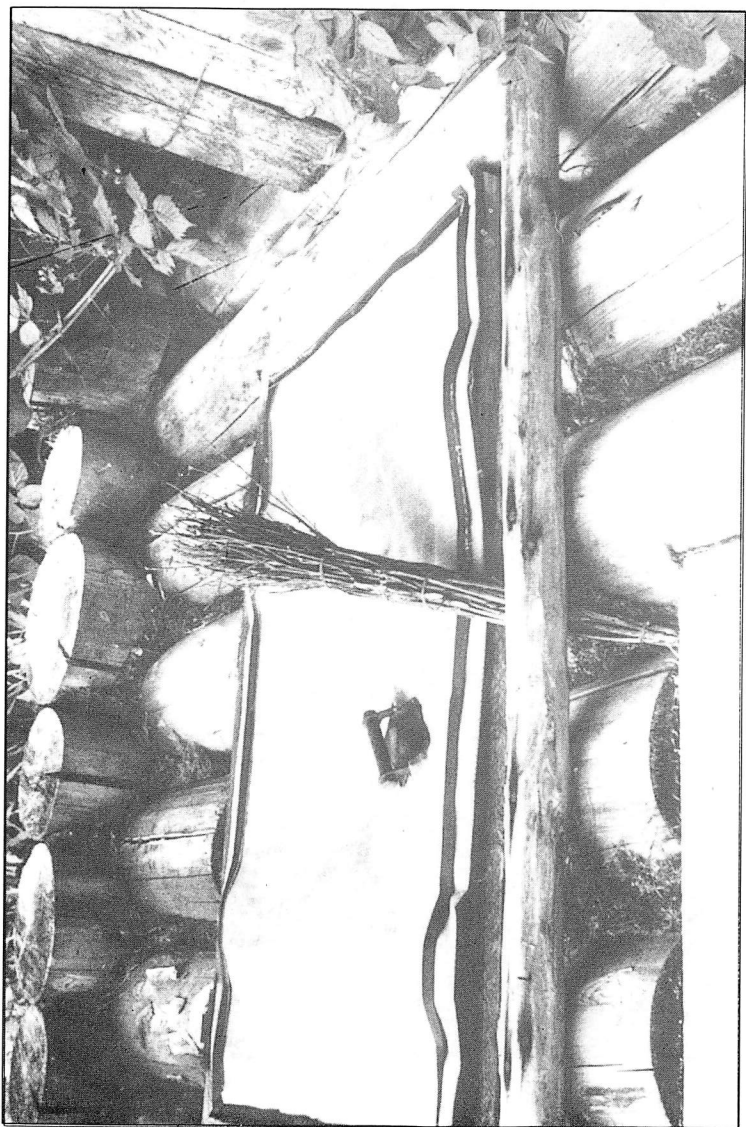
Photograph 3. Trap for pinemarten.

Photograph by Art Leete 1996. Fk 2546: 30.



Photograph 4. Trap for hazelgrouse. Photograph by Art Leete 1996. Fk 2546: 21.





Photograph 5. The way of locking the hunting lodge.  
Photograph by Art Leete 1996. F# 2546: 23.



Photograph 6. The hunting lodge of Yevgeni Chalanov. Photograph by Art Leete 1996. Fk 2546: 24.



Photograph 7. Making tea on campfire.

Photograph by Art Leete 1996. Fk 2546: 27.



Photograph 8. Komi hunter and ethnologist Vladimir Lipin.  
Photograph by Art Leete 1999.



Photograph 9. Komi hunters Yevgeni Lipin and Vladimir Lipin.  
Photograph by Art Leete 1999.



Photograph 10. Komi hunters Yevgeni Lipin and Vladimir Lipin.  
Photograph by Art Leete 1999.

# Reindeer as the Moulder of the Ethnic Identity of the Yamal Nenets

Liivo Niglas

The goal of this paper is to analyse the nature of the identity of the Yamal Peninsula Nenets and its formative factors. Although the investigation of Nenets identity has never been the direct topic of my research, some ideas have emerged during my fieldwork and I would like to point them out in this paper. In this respect, I am of the opinion that the self concept of the Yamal Nenets about themselves and their place in the surrounding world is to a large extent connected with the reindeer. This becomes especially obvious when analysing the attitude of the tundra Nenets who deal with reindeer herding towards their fellow natives who live in settled villages. At this moment, it is pertinent to mention that the Nenets call themselves *nenaj nenyts*, which means “a genuine human being”. It seems to me that according to the tundra Nenets, they start gradually losing their “genuineness” after settling in a village.

This communication is based on the information collected during ethnographic fieldwork which was carried out in the seventh brigade of the Yar-Sale reindeer herding state farm in the Yamal Peninsula (1996–1999). I have also been in close contact with the members of other brigades and briefly with the herders of neighbouring state farms and therefore I believe that the cultural phenomena touched upon in the present paper are characteristic of the Nenets of the Yamal region as a whole. The beliefs of the village Nenets, being important from the point of view of this report, originate mainly from the inhabitants of the state farm centre, Yar-Sale. It should be specified that the majority of the Nenets living in Yar-Sale have close connections with reindeer herding, either, by means of their relatives

living in the tundra, or by working in the state farm. Consequently, it is not possible to draw conclusions, on the basis of the following paper, about, for example, the Nenets of coastal villages, deriving their subsistence mainly from fishing.

In the case of the reindeer, we are dealing with an animal on which the life of the people in the tundra is totally dependent, in the direct meaning of the word. The very lifestyle of the Nenets depends on this animal. Besides fishing, hunting and the catching of sea animals, the traditional means of subsistence of the Nenets has also been nomadic reindeer herding. Although reindeer herding has remained as an important field of activity among the majority of the Nenets groupings, the Nenets living in the Yamal Peninsula can be regarded as the real reindeer people. Firstly, Yamal is a region where more than half of the representatives of the indigenous population are engaged in reindeer herding. In January 1991, 51.7% of the 7701 Nenets living in the peninsula, were involved in reindeer herding, thus creating one of the largest and most compact group of reindeer herders in the whole world (Pika, Bogoyavlensky 1995: 62–64). Secondly, until the present day, the traditional Nenets reindeer herding is cultivated in the Yamal region – “classical large scale herding” (Krupnik 1976). This term, when expounded, means that reindeer herds are immense, consisting usually of several thousands of animals and their herding implies constant movement to fresh pasture land. Because of migration throughout the year, the family members with all their household possessions also move together with the herders. If, before the introduction of state farm rules at the end of the 1930s (see Golovnev, Zaytsev 1992: 70–71), the main economic unit was a patrilinear extended family, consisting of several nuclear families, then, in the state farms that have remained until today, the reindeer-herding group consists of the families of 7–9 herders. The task of the brigade is to take care, throughout the year, of the state farm herd comprising of three-four thousand reindeer. They come to the state farm centre only a couple of times a year – in spring, to join the planning meeting and to replenish supplies and in autumn, to take the animals to the slaughterhouse. Thus, in the case of the Nenets living in the tundra, we are dealing with real nomadic herders whose life is to a large extent spent among the reindeer in the tundra. Reindeer



herding is not only an economic activity that provides a livelihood. In addition to its important role as a source of subsistence and food, the reindeer is the only means of transportation for its nomadic herders, both for the fulfilment of the work tasks of the herders and for moving camp to a new location. Reindeer skin is also an indispensable material for sewing overcoats and covers for conical tents.

During the course of my research, I have come to the opinion that the importance of the reindeer does not limit itself to being the only guarantor of material welfare of the Nenets. The reindeer has also a great role in structuring the mental world of the Nenets. I have stated the way, in which a certain group of people perceives, interprets and arranges their surrounding world, to be the world view (Niglas 1997a: 10). One of the most important components of the ruling world view in society is the self-identification or identity of a human being, which consists of the answers to the questions: Who am I? In what way am I different from the others? What are my rights and obligations? etc. Or, as the introducer of the term 'world view', Robert Redfield has written: "Self is the axis of world view" (1962: 270). What, then, is the essence of the Nenets identity?

On the basis of the information collected during fieldwork, there is a reason to suppose that an important component of the Nenets identity is the connection between a man and the reindeer. It seems to me that being a Nenets, i.e. being different from the non-Nenets, anticipates close contact with this animal. This is acknowledged by a widespread opinion that "genuine Nenets" live in the tundra together with their reindeer herds. Such a conviction is first revealed in the scornful attitude of the tundra Nenets towards their fellow natives who live in villages "like Russians". In reply to my question to the Nenets about the reasons for moving into settlements, the herders have often explained that the people who live in villages are these who cannot cope with tough weather and work conditions in the tundra. Also, the Nenets, who work in villages, are generally regarded to be idlers and freeloaders. The attitude of the herders towards the vet assistants, who are appointed to work at the brigades, but who often stay in the state farm centre, is sporadically scornful. At the same time, the Nenets, who live in villages, usually regard their tundra fellows with respect. The high prestige of the reindeer herders

among the village Nenets is expressed in joyous and painful nostalgic childhood memories and in the proud listing of relatives-acquaintances who work in one or another reindeer herding brigade. Whenever possible, settled Nenets try to get to the tundra, dressed in traditional clothes, in order to participate in a couple of exchanges of camps or to catch the reindeer with arkans. Those who have inherited or received the reindeer from their relatives, are especially keen on going to the tundra. Presumably, in connection with the collapse of the Soviet economic system, the prestige of the reindeer herders in the eyes of village inhabitants has increased even more during recent years. In a situation where many representatives of the indigenous people in settlements have no jobs, the meat brought by the relatives from the tundra, is often their main food supply and sales article.

The important role of the reindeer in moulding the Nenets identity is testified by the fact that a large part of the system of taboos and customs, regulating human behaviour and therefore, also the way of thinking, is directly connected with the reindeer. Everyday activities of the Nenets are restricted by a great number of various behavioural norms and taboos. An especially large number of taboos is used for the regulation of women's behaviour, as, because of menstrual blood, women are regarded to be unclean and, therefore, dangerous to fellow citizens (see Niglas 1997a: 22; 1997b). The aim of a large number of customs of the nomadic Nenets herders is the safeguarding of the welfare of the reindeer and their protection from evil forces. Even such an innocent activity as watching the reindeer without any concrete reason can provoke the death of the animal. Here, again, the distinguishing between the "genuine" and village Nenets becomes evident, the behaviour of the latter differs remarkably from that of the herder. The importance of observing taboos and the scornful attitude of the tundra Nenets towards village people is probably best characterised by the explanation of an old herder about the reasons for the puniness of the reindeer. Namely, he was convinced that the weak health and bad resistance of the herd animals does not proceed from the overload of the Yamal pasture lands, according to scientists (*Priroda...* 1995: 399–400), but from the fact that village women step over the horns of the reindeer, scattered near the state farm slaughter house. In accordance with the beliefs of the Nenets,

things connected with the reindeer, when getting under the feet of a sexually mature woman, immediately become impure and, for this reason, they affect negatively also the living animals. Consequently, during their everyday activities, people have to continuously take into account the connection of their behaviour with the safety of the reindeer and all this is likewise reflected in the Nenets identity.

One part of a man's identity is also his relationship with the supernatural world – his religious convictions and their application in shaping one's life. Here, again, the reindeer has an important role. For the Nenets, the reindeer is "pure" and for this reason, they are the main sacrificial animals. In the animalistic religious system, intrinsic of the Nenets, sacrificing is the most important way of communication with supernatural powers. In the Nenets worldview, profane and religious are tightly interwoven and even the routine slaughter of the reindeer, with the purpose of obtaining meat, constitutes a sacrificial rite. In addition, several "sacred" animals, connected with concrete deities, are distinguished within the herd and special ways of behaviour are prescribed for dealing with them. Women, for example, are not allowed to touch some of these animals, they are not harnessed and their horns are not sawn. Within such a "magic worldview" (Wax, Wax 1962), all things and phenomena are alive and linked with each other. Sacrifice and the taking care of sacred animals is, similarly to the following of behavioural norms, an instrument for a human being, at least to some extent, to check the omnipresent Power. The purpose is to maintain one's place in the world and, thereby, one's identity. In a settlement where there are no reindeer, the supernatural world is also at a more unreachable distance and is becoming more and more "Russian". I have heard an old Nenets woman say that those who do not have the reindeer, do not have the (Nenets) gods either.

Consequently, the role of the reindeer as the moulder of the Nenets identity is really immense. This is fully understandable when taking into account the importance of this animal in the everyday life of the Nenets – in the tundra, the reindeer provides people with food, outdoor clothes, lodging, means of transport and also with the possibility to communicate with supernatural powers. Or, as the Nenets themselves prefer to express this: "We live here (in the tundra) only

by the grace of the reindeer”. The connection of the tundra Nenets’ identity with the reindeer becomes obvious in comparing them with their settled fellow natives. According to the Nenets who permanently live together the reindeer, these people who live in villages are about to lose their “genuineness” – this part of the worldview, developed during generations, which gives an answer to the question: Who am I?

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# Arctic Descriptions of the Wind

## An Example of the Relation of Man and Natural Forces in the Northern Sámi Oral History

Marjut Huuskonen

Through the ages, man has described his relationship to nature by means of naturalism, realism, mythology and fantasy. In the following, I shall examine the ways of oral and written tradition to describe one element – the wind. These descriptions introduce characteristics and meanings of the wind for man. How is this theme dealt with by two representatives of different cultures? How does the narrator use different elements of tradition, how does the writer of memoranda work his own narrative? The main stress of the analysis is on the interaction between the mythological and colloquial-historical narration.

The representatives of two cultures are here Stuurra-Jovvna Jomppanen and Jaakko Fellman. Stuurra-Jovvna Jomppanen (1794–1874) – one of the Sámis of Finnmark, who settled down in the village of Nuvvos (Nuvvus)<sup>1</sup> after the boundary block 1852. The boundary line between Norway and Finland, which came into effect in 1852, can be considered as one of the decisive factors of change. In Deatnu (Teno) Sámi tradition he represents a good narrator and a hunter of wild reindeer. A contemporary of Stuurra-Jovvna Jomppanen, Jaakko Fellman (1795–1895) acted as a minister of Ohejohka (Utsjoki) and Anar (Inari) parishes during the years 1820–31. In his memoranda, Jaakko Fellman described his experiences in Ohejohka and Anar. The natural conditions, way of life of the people and Sámi mythology were the subjects of his descriptions. Also Stuurra-Jovvna Jomppanen was attracted by these subjects, which became

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<sup>1</sup> The first place-name is in Sámi, the second in Finnish.

central in his narration. I shall now go into these descriptions and narratives examining their characteristics. I concentrate on the descriptions, whose scene is Rásttgáissá, the sacred mountain of the Sámis.

### The Great Wind and the Sámi Wind God

The wind is important for man. For thousands of years the wind has been the source of energy. However – the wind has never been for man only a source of energy but also an object of many beliefs and myths: it has expressed the anger of ancestors or gods, it has been the missed messenger or the antagonist of man. In Sámi mythology there is also a wind god, who often appears on the skins of drums. The wind god was an important divinity for a Sámi, who wandered on the fields and mountains and sailed on the water. Many sources of livelihood like hunting and fishing were dependent of the direction and strength of the wind. In the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the relation of man and the wind drew attention even in politics, when the war fortunes of Sweden-Finland caused astonishment in Europe. One of the explicable reasons for that was thought to be the Sámi and Finnish sorcery. The *noaides* were believed to be able to tie up and release the wind and so to help the war activities. Later on, Johannes Schefferus' work *Lapponia* (1672), which concerned also Sámi mythology, tried to dispel these rumors.

In Sámi mythology there appears the air and wind god called Bieggagalles or Bieg'gollmai. He was believed to live in the rocks and precipices and to be able to cause storms both in the fields and on the water. There were sacrifices made for him, that he would calm the harmful winds and be favorable to the wanderers. The information about the sacrifices is poor. It is known however, that animals, small wooden boats and spades or paddle like things had been made as a sacrifice to him. According to some information witch brooms had been placed on his altar. (E.g. Holmberg 1915: 74–76; Itkonen 1948: 309; Haavio 1971: 156–157, 169–170, 173–177.)

## A deer hunter and a priest exposed to the fury of the elements

### The priest

Rásttigáisá, the giant of Finnmark, is a 1067 meters high mountain, that attracts one's gaze when travelling in the Deatnu river valley. Jaakko Fellman has described Rásttigáisá in his memoranda *Antecningar under min vistelse i Lappmarken I–IV*. From his parsonage in Ohcejohka Jaakko Fellman could see the snowy top of Rásttigáisá, which excited him both as naturalist and as a preacher: "When there was calm and beauty in the valley, the storms could rage at the Gáisá-mountains. In the autumn, the winds from Gáisás brought the first feelings of the onset of winter. Rásttigáisá was also said to be the sacred mountain of the Sámis."

Jaakko Fellman's first journey to Rásttigáisá was interrupted by a snowstorm (Fellman 1906 I: 394). Later, he was enchanted by this mountain. He described the coming of spring to Gáisás with ecstasy: "When the snows are melting on the mountain sides the water pushes its way under the huge snow masses, it rushes over the rocks, twigs and swamps, foams and steams as waterfalls towards the Deatnu." On one of his later journeys, Jaakko Fellman describes his experiences in the mountain as follows: "It takes time, patience and good powers to step on the half of the ball – so appears Rásttigáisá from the North side. A staff in your hand must help you forward between the rocks, across valleys, mounds and meanderings, partly running brooks and drains. On the top of the field there is a little plain. Here, when glancing over the region, arouses not the smiling, charm, but imposing and solemn feeling" (Fellman 1981: 161–162).

During his travel in the mountains of Anar and Ohcejohka Jaakko Fellman came to see personally the hardships caused by storm and wind. In many places in his memoranda, he describes the power of wind and the hardships which he met on his travels:

"The one, who has carried out fieldwork, cannot think of the hardships, with which one has to meet in snowstorms. There is not a signpost, there is only snow and ice to see in front of you. Reindeer do not have strength enough to go on. The Lapp does his best, skiing and wading ahead, but every little while he falls into pits and hollows" (Fellman 1981: 229).

“But little before that (departure) day, the North pole had opened its wind sacks and emptied them with such a rage, that there appeared cracks on the snow cover, and the soft snow, which was thus revealed, was whirling and flying. On the 14<sup>th</sup> day, the even more violent storms and whirlwinds were lashing the surface of the earth” (Fellman 1981: 218).

“It seemed that the storm is still growing stronger, booming and murmuring was heard from outside and my guest was very satisfied, when he had obtained shelter. Just when he had climbed the side of the mountain to the valley of Ohcejohka, the mountains had started to murmur and the snowstorm to rage” (Fellman 1981: 246–247).

In Jaakko Fellman’s descriptions, the storm is sometimes the opened and emptied wind sack of the North Pole, sometimes the storm itself – when hounding the soft snow – is lashing, raging and growing stronger. The words Jaakko Fellman uses in the context of these descriptions are the same, which are used when expressing anger and its outbursts. Many words express auditory perception. The descriptions are also accompanied by an exact analysis of the consequences – what does happen to the snow, how does man survive?

### **The hunter**

In the chain of tradition, Stuorra-Jovonna Jomppanen is connected to a special type of narrative. He is often said to be the original performer of these narratives, and from time to time it is possible to follow the transmission of tradition from one generation to the other. So is the case, for example, of the family of Katekeetta in Dalvadas village: Erkki Katekeetta (1892–1977) who narrated about Stuorra-Jovonna Jomppanen in the 60s, had heard these narratives from his father old Erkki Katekeetta (1841–1915). The father told the same narratives to Pedar Jalvi, a Sámi writer and folklore collector, in 1914, and stated that he had personally heard them from Stuorra-Jovonna Jomppanen (SKS, Pedar Jalvi 1914: 23). Keeping in mind the emphasis, that Stuorra-Jovonna Jomppanen has been the performer of the narratives connected to him, I draw a parallel between him and Jaakko Fellman.



Stuorra-Jovvna Jomppanen was one of the last “wild reindeer” hunters of his time. The traditional hunting culture was forced to disappear in the 18<sup>th</sup> century also in Finnmarken, where the transition to reindeer husbandry took place later than in other Sámi areas. The pressures linked to the resettlement forced the Sámi to change over from hunting, fishing and fallowing to nomadic or semi-nomadic reindeer husbandry. These models of livelihood were to be found also at the 19<sup>th</sup> century Ohcejohka. The settlement history of Deatnu-river valley describes well the period of transition that stemmed from the interaction between these forms of livelihood and Finnish settlement and eventually led to the formation of permanent villages. The boundary line prevented the periodic nomadic lifestyle of the reindeer Sámi of Ruija to Finnish territory (SKS, Pedar Jalvi 1914: 41; Saressalo 1982: 12–19). In this period of transition, Stuorra-Jovvna Jomppanen redeemed his place in the community as a narrator, who could connect the traditions and mythology of past times to the life of his own time and to his imaginary world. The fights between Stuorra-Jovvna Jomppanen and the forces of nature are described in these narratives. Most of the narratives concentrate on wild-reindeer catching. Stuorra-Jovvna Jomppanen’s hunting journeys headed across the Deatnu over to the highlands of Norway, where deer are known to have survived up to the present century. Ancient deer pit-traps and remains of fences at the Deatnu-river valley itself inform us of large-scale deer hunting carried on in the area. They have, together with turf huts and sacrificial sites, formed a hunting area. Traditional deer hunting was divided into autumn and late winter hunting. Many of the hunting modes were communal. Jaakko Fellman has described the deer hunting pit-traps and trappings set on the riverside and the hills of Ohcejohka. According to him, deer hunting was not practiced after the 1750s (Vorren 1965: 513–528; Itkonen 1948: 9, 12–16, 20; Aikio 1985: 58–59; Fellman 1906 IV: 59–60). An examination of Stuorra-Jovvna Jomppanen’s descriptions of deer hunting journeys supports Fellman’s statement: hunting was not any more a communal extensive practice. Stuorra-Jovvna Jomppanen represents a lonely deer hunter, who by skiing on the mountain, lying in wait and using his wits, gets his catch. In 1914, Ivar Helander

related from Buolbmága (Pulmanki) one of Stuorra-Jovvna Jomppanen's adventures to Pedar Jalvi:

“Once again Jovvna was skiing in that famous Rásttigáisá . All of a sudden there burst out such a violent storm, that it by force took his hat. When the weather grew worse, he started to ski along with the wind, because there was no use to complain for the storm grew even harder. He tied a scarf around his head so that he would not freeze. He had been driven along on skis already for a long, long time and there seemed to be no end to it, and he had his worries about meeting his death in such a snow storm if he would still travel on. Because of that he threw himself down on the snow to rest and to wait the weather to improve” (SKS, Pedar Jalvi 1914: 34).

In the narratives about Stuorra-Jovvna Jomppanen, the realistic description is interlaced with exaggeration. As Pedar Jalvi has stated – “the funnier he narrated the bigger reward was given” (SKS, Pedar Jalvi 1914: 41). So also in the above-quoted description of the storm the tension is heightening towards the end:

“It was in vain to wait, the weather was still growing worse. It even grew so bad, that he had to tie the other end of the lasso to the stone so that he could stay there while holding the lasso. But at last he had to tie himself down because he could not hold on any more, for the storm seemed to grow still stronger. At last it grew so strong, that it lifted him up into the air to the end of the lasso, where he had to fly like a rag the whole night. The only fear that troubled him was the fear that if the rope would break, all was lost but fortunately it held. The next day the storm started to die down and so it calmed. And so also he got again to walk onto the ground from between the sky and the earth” (SKS, Pedar Jalvi 1914: 34). Stuorra-Jovvna Jomppanen is the active hero of these narratives. Like in the narrative quoted above the storm and the wind are described by using repetition: grew strong, grew hard, growing stronger, grew so huge, grow still stronger, grew so strong. He associates the wind with terms: weather, violent storm, snow storm. The words stress the power of the wind, but do not characterise it with such anger as Jaakko Fellman. In every stage of the storm there is also a description of those consequences, they cause to the hero. The mythic place

Rásttigáisá and the means of narration – repetition and exaggeration – transfer the colloquial-historical narration to an other stage.

Jaakko Fellman has addressed his words to his reader, who “has not done the mountain trip” and so can’t know, what difficulties the storm, the wind and the snowfall can cause for the traveller. Stuurra-Jovvna Jomppanen spoke to his listeners and perhaps got a reward for his narration. The narration of both men has been transmitted to the coming generations – Jaakko Fellman’s memoranda edited by his son, Stuurra-Jovvna Jomppanen’s narration by oral transmission.

### **When that girl went, she created a great snowstorm**

In July 1826, Jaakko Fellman wandered with his friends to Rásttigáisá and made a lot of observations of mountain plants: from the birch zone to the top of Rásttigáisá there is introduced the whole variety of mountain plants. Uppermost, there thrives a Northern plant, which Jaakko Fellman named *Saxifraga bulbifera*. But even higher than it rises the ancient divinity of Sámis, Rásttigáisá (Fellman 1906 I: 393), of which Jaakko Fellman recorded the following information:

“At the foot of the mountain Sámi people had, in olden days, worshiped the weather god Saara or Sahra, who even today is believed to be able to bring about storms, if someone dares to mention by name this holy rock or dares to speak of it with disrespect to him” (Fellman 1981: 163).

Jaakko Fellman recorded the Sámi mythology. According to his opinion, the air god Saara or Sahra is the divinity who rules the storms and bad weather. (In his comments to Fellman’s manuscript Lars Levi Laestadius argues that Fellman has here mixed the wind god with the female goddess Sarakka.) The sacrificial site was situated in the neighbourhood of Rásttigáisá in Saraskáidi and there was also in the mountain itself a cult place with two big stones. In another place in his memoranda, Jaakko Fellman mentions also Bieggagalles or the wind god, who lived in high rocks and precipices. Bieggagalles was believed to be able to cause storms both on land and on water, and sacrifices were made for him so that he would calm the winds (Fellman 1906 II: 88–89, 146, 153).

What do narratives told by storytellers in the 1960s tell about Stuorra-Jovvna and the wind god? In many of the narratives connected to deer hunting the scene is set out in Rásttigáisá as in the narratives of Stuorra-Jovvna and *gufihtar*, the underground being:

“Stuorra-Jovvna had there (in Rásttigáisá) a turf shelter, where he lived when hunting deer, and also lay in wait. Once the old man was hunting and when returning, he heard from the hut – someone is yoiking there. He had himself told to his son, that it was a *gufihtar* girl. Very beautiful and wealthy. So, he got her, but he lost her. He did not understand how to preach to her in a way so that she would have stayed as a wife. He had intended to take her as his wife, but he lost. And when that girl went, she made a great storm. So the old man started to ski downhill and for three days and nights he rushed down. And when he came to the valley, he bumped into the big birch. It split. Three pairs of skis came from it. And then he skied downhill and came to Lávddeskaidiin, a little above Bados (Paatus) on the Norwegian side. There is a big ravine, along it he speeded. There that fine fellow had a hut, where they lived” (Ola Sammeli Rasmus, TKU/A/68/221, 20–21).

In narratives told about Stuorra-Jovvna the storm is not caused by the wind god but by the *gufihtar* girl. This kind of theme is found also from the old mythology, but instead of *gufihtar* girls it is told in old sources about ancestors living in the fields and mountains. These mountain people were believed to live a happy and wealthy life. They were said to consist of ancestral families, who could also act as protectors of their living relatives. The intercourse between the living and the mountain people was possible. Anyhow – the intercourse was not always friendly but on the contrary the mountain people could cause illness and other troubles for the living. An unexpected storm could also be a sign of the anger of mountain people (e.g. Holmberg 1915: 19–20, 22–25; Bäckman 1975: 100 ff.).

How are the mythological elements used in narratives about Stuorra-Jovvna? The hunting journey to Rásttigáisá gets a new tone, when the *gufihtar* girl appears. The girl is yoiking in the hut and when leaving she makes a great snowstorm. The storm changes the dimensions of the following happenings: especially the time gets a dimension other than in everyday life. Stuorra-Jovvna skis downhill

three days and nights. The crash with the birch and the getting of three pairs of skis is a final stop, a turning point after which life continues as previously.

**And you don't believe, when I tell,  
but I tell the truth**

The tradition relates that Stuorra-Jovvna Jomppanen died in a snow-storm in Rásttigáisá at the age of 80 (Sainio 1966: 60). Jaakko Fellman gave up his post in Ohcejohka and Anar at the age of 36, when the Northern conditions had ruined his health.

Jaakko Fellman's descriptions of Rásttigáisá consists of both pictures of the landscape – what kind of appearance it makes to the eyes of the spectator – and strong personal experiences of nature. These are accompanied by exact perceptions of nature, its different phenomena, plants and animals. The descriptions about the wind and the storm have plenty of auditory perceptions. Side by side with this naturalistic view, Fellman states the information he has got about the Sámi mythology. The naturalistic worldview gets to its antithesis the mythological worldview and the description gets a dual character. In Fellman's own experiences, the wind is almost a personal power, against which the smallness of man is shown.

The narratives about Stuorra-Jovvna Jomppanen lack the antithesis between the description of nature and mythology. This antithesis is burst along with the coming of historical and fictitious elements. In the narratives, a small man grows unbelievably strong, patient and clever opponent of nature. Fantasy and exaggeration are concentrated on the descriptions of man and his actions. The phenomena of nature are depicted with realism. This all is placed in a mythological framework. It is difficult to think about this kind of mythological framework without thinking of the hero of these narratives. The voice of Stuorra-Jovvna Jomppanen is audible in the narration. We could speak about myth technique the way of mythicising the colloquial-historical narration. An excellent tool for this is the narrative technique of the *máinnas*-genre, where mythological narration is connected to colloquial-historical narration. In Stuorra-Jovvna *máinnas*-narratives exaggeration and fantasy forward the

narration. The subject of these narratives is the meeting with some supernatural or enormous power – may it be the great wind or the *gufihtar* girl.

Samuli Aikio has stated that *máinnas*-genre mostly deal with different kind of beliefs and deities. Especially *máinnas*-narratives for children approach in their fantasy the fairy tales of analytical genres (Aikio 1985: 86–87). The interview material collected in the Deatnu-river valley in the 1960s and 1970s has some information about the ethnic genres. In these interviews *máinnas*-genre is described as a fantastic fairy tale, lie, exaggeration. However – the narrators of *máinnas* are considered to be especially talented narrators and honorific names like *máinnaskonagas* ‘story king’ or *gied’degeas-ák’ku* ‘seer-woman’ may be given to them (Huuskonen 1998).

The narration of Stuurra-Jovvna Jomppanen has been the object of consideration already for five generations:

“HN-P: There are lots of stories about Stuurra-Jovvna?”

OSR: There would be many, if I only would remember. I don’t know how many.

HN-P: He must have been good at telling stories?

OSR: So he was. People say he was a dreadful adventurer. Like it was here and everywhere those wild-reindeer. Such an adventurer-fellow he was. Of course he told also too much. So I think, when he climbed downhill three days and nights and when he crashed into the birch and took three skis from it. It seems to me that there are a little too many lies, but so I have been told” (Ola Sammeli Rasmus. TKU/A/68/221, 22).

A good narrator has been and still is respected in the Deatnu-river valley, and it is not a simple thing to make an estimation of his narratives:

“OR: I would have already told, if I had known. I have heard nothing else than that Stuurra-Jovvna was a liar.

OSP: Liar he was not but he spoke in parables (with metaphors).

OR: There is a proverb: Stuurra-Jovvna’s stories. It must be a tar liar” (Olavi Rasmus and Ola Sammeli Paltto, TKU/A/70/25, 7).

“MM: I wonder if someone has got a *gufihtar* girl as his wife?”

OSR: Along *máinnasit* it may happen, but I don’t give any worth for those *gufihtar-máinnas*, which people in the old days have told. I

don't give any worth. They only had the habit of meeting in the evenings and to talk of many things to pass the time and they lied to each other. So it is" (Ola Sammeli Rasmus, TKU/A/69/83/26).

The members of community estimate the forms of narration. The narratives told long ago get afterwards a different stress than at the moment of narrating. Especially narration with the main stress on mythology can be problematic for the later listeners. When mythological narration has lost its ritual position in community, this is extremely difficult: this is found out easily also from the estimations of the 1960s and 1970s.

### **At the turning point**

In his narratives Stuurra-Jovvna Jomppanen took up a position between narrative traditions and connected the elements of mythological narration with the colloquial-historical narration. Partly this was also his task in a community, which was living in a period of transition in the structure of its means of livelihood. Hunting and fishing and its ideological basis were breaking down and getting new forms, whose direction nobody could exactly know. The colloquial means of narration were not enough, when this historical event was desired to be recorded in the memory of the community. The interaction between mythological and colloquial-historical narration is well seen in the narration of Stuurra-Jovvna Jomppanen. How does this interaction effect to both narratives? Yuri Lotman writes about this situation:

"... if there arose a need to keep in mind, to record into the consciousness of generations a memory of some especially notable event – a heroic deed or a crime – it seemed to be natural to draw upon the help of this same collective memory, which has caused the recording of mythical texts. In the quality of its expression, it caused the everyday consciousness to change to correspond the syncretic structure of ritual and the contest of that historical episode was mythicised" (Lotman 1995: 58).

When living on the extreme limits of the existence the border between believable and unbelievable, between realism and fantasy, between nature and mythology is moving. The environment is not

described only by information but by narration. There where Jaakko Fellman's descriptions are tuned by naturalistic or mythological information and personal experiences, Stuurra-Jovvna Jomppanen interprets the environment on basis of both Sámi mythology and belief world and his fantasy. And the wind is no more only a wind...

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**The Workshop “Changing Ethnic Identities”,  
held within the 41<sup>st</sup> Conference of the Estonian  
National Museum “‘Ultural Identity of Arctic Peoples’  
in the Exhibition Building of the ENM on 15 April 2000.**

Participated: **Kjell Olsen** (Alta), **Gábor Wilhelm** (Budapest),  
**Ildikó Lehtinen** (Helsinki), **Tatyana Sem** (St. Petersburg), **Irina  
Karapetova** (St. Petersburg), **Karina Solovyova** (St. Petersburg),  
**Yelena Pivneva** (Moscow), **Yelena Martynova** (Tobolsk), **Tatyana  
Minniyakhmetova** (Tartu), **Eva Toulouze** (Tartu), **Art Leete**  
(Tartu).

The discussion was based on the following papers, e.g.:  
**Marjut Huuskonen** (Turku) “Arctic Descriptions of Wind. An  
Example of the Relation of Man and Natural Forces in the Northern  
Sámi Oral History”,  
**Liivo Niglas** (Tartu) “Reindeer as a Moulder of the Yamal Nenets  
Identity”.

**Art Leete:** First, we are going to discuss the two texts and later on we  
will go on with the discussion of more general aspects of Arctic Cul-  
tures. Liivo Niglas has obtained his ideas about the overall impor-  
tance of reindeer among the Yamal Nenets during his fieldwork trips  
to these regions, and these ideas are his personal impressions. I have  
argued with him that earlier sources (Yevladov and Chernechov) do  
not indicate the central role of reindeer among Yamal Nenets. Liivo  
Niglas has suggested that the present role of reindeer might have  
developed in the recent past. With the Nenets living in the tundra  
areas in greater isolation from administrative and economic centres  
(government financial support decreasing, helicopter traffic rare, ra-  
dio stations not functioning etc.), their general approach is not open

to new ideas (including movement to large settled areas), people are disappointed about *perestroika*.

**Irina Karapetova:** Yevladov, Chemechov, Zhitkov and others who have been to Yamal, for them it was obvious that reindeer are the central feature in that culture and provide them with everything that they need in life. This is how it was and how it will be.

**Tatyana Sem:** Reindeer are not as central as it is in the Tungus people's worldview. This is strange.

**Irina Karapetova:** Why? One of the most important gods created reindeer.

**Tatyana Sem:** Exactly, the one who created reindeer does not exist in reindeer. This characterises their worldview.

**Irina Karapetova:** By no means. They are nomads after all.

**Tatyana Sem:** I agree with this. Yet they perceive reindeer differently.

**Irina Karapetova:** The attitudes of Nenets to reindeer have not been reported as extensively as in the Tungus-Manchu people. Nowadays, it helps to maintain their unique lifestyle. Their self-perception, as being special people, is based on reindeer herding. Yet, for the Eastern Khanties, reindeer herding is not such an essential activity. Unlike the Nenets, in these areas, it is a symbolic activity. For Nenets, however, this is a part of life without which they cannot survive.

**Tatyana Sem:** Worldview and sources of living are two different things.

**Irina Karapetova:** This is related to other aspects and should be viewed in that context.

**Tatyana Sem:** It is, but there is no one-to-one relationship. We can make a typological analysis and compare different attitudes of Northern peoples to reindeer rearing.

**Irina Karapetova:** Normally, we view people's lifestyle as a whole and as such we cannot take a part of it and consider it separately. We have everything as a complexity of items. Yugan Khanties, for example, who traditionally had 15–20 reindeer, not more than 30, but normally 5–10, have also maintained this kind of attitude to reindeer. In an area around the Tromyugan River, people have normally more reindeer. Around the Pim River, there are 1–10

reindeer, 20 at the maximum. Reindeer were mostly used for sacrificial and transportation purposes. That is it. They were not killed for fur or other practical purposes. For that, wild reindeer were used. This has also come down to the present time. At least what concerns the areas around the Yugan River. It is the furs of wild reindeer that are used for making clothes. This is evident.

**Art Leete:** With Anzori Barkalaja I was in the area around the Pim River and Khanties normally had 10 reindeer there. They said they had really few reindeer and therefore could not be used for economic purposes. Yet reindeer are very important for them. They said they felt fine when they had some. Reindeer are for the soul. And sometimes you can visit your brother.

**Irina Karapetova:** This has always been the case among the Eastern Khanties. An engine may break down, not a reindeer. Reindeer are the most secure. The Eastern Khanties keep them for the soul, yet in Northern areas they are essential in every aspect.

**Yelena Martynova:** In Eastern regions, people make a distinction between real Khanties who have reindeer and Ostyaks who do not have reindeer and who live like Russians. Real Khanties should have reindeer, even if only 10.

**Tatyana Sem:** That is the same among the Evenks. The Evenks are those who hunt. The Tungus live among Russians. This is the way of self-determination.

**Yelena Martynova:** Around the Kazym River, real Khanties are said to be those who have reindeer and live in *chums*.

**Irina Karapetova:** In the areas around the Kazym River, reindeer herding is still an essential livelihood. Unlike that, in the Pim region, they make an enclosure and keep reindeer in there. Yet in the Kazym region, traditionally, herds have not been very large.

**Yelena Martynova:** Coming back to the text by Niglas, we can compare identities of Northern Khanties and Nenets. Northern Khanties think Nenets have bigger herds. They think this even if their herds are also large. And I have heard Khanties saying that reindeer rearing has come to their area from the Nenets. And because Nenets raise reindeer, the people are more developed and have higher intelligence. And Khanties themselves admit this. A woman told me that reindeer rearing spread to them from the people called

*Tsoras* living in the north from the tundra region where Nenets live. That Nenets were developing while Khanties were uncivilised and primitive. As Khanties did not have reindeer before, they obtained reindeer from Nenets and thus became more civilised. This indicates that reindeer rearing is also related to a general level of development in society.

**Irina Karapetova:** I have also a tale to tell you. The forest Nenets Yuri Vella told us that Khanties are hard working but Nenets are thoughtful. When an engine of a boat breaks down, a Khanty dismantles the engine and puts it together, again dismantles and puts it together. A Nenets takes a seat, leans back against the battens of a *chum*, unless his wife says that everybody else has left for picking berries, except for the two of them sitting there. Then he goes to the engine, mends it quickly and drives.

**Yelena Martynova:** Khanties have family names that have their origin in Nenets. Khanty women consider *Ur-ne*, a Nenets woman to be more energetic and agile. I know a Khanty woman, a good acquaintance of mine, who lives in Voikar village, Shuryshkary region. She states “You are like a Nenets woman”. When a Khanty woman does something really quickly, they say she does it like a Nenets, because Khanty people are slower. This is because Khanties go fishing and think all the time, whereas Nenets are nomads.

**Irina Karapetova:** This is obvious. They have to pack their things quickly and set off. This is inherent in a nomadic lifestyle.

**Yelena Martynova:** On the other hand, they say that Nenets women do not want to get married to Khanty men, because they are more well off as reindeer herders, and such a marriage would not be a prestigious one. Also, Khanties have more taboos. Nenets women just cannot marry Khanty men. The status of Nenets women is not so restricted.

**Irina Karapetova:** I do not think so.

**Yelena Martynova:** Northern Khanties do. I would not say that either, but this is their opinion. Khanty women get married to Nenets men, this is prestigious and their situation there is more permissive. Yet Nenets women would not get married to Khanty men.

**Irina Karapetova:** While among Nenets people, we were held back every moment: do not go over there, do not step there, do not

touch this. We were in Kolguyev and Tarkey-sale tundra. Nowadays, Nenets are also becoming more tolerant.

**Gábor Wilhelm:** Sámi have rich colourful diverse folk costumes. And they have reindeer in the north. And in the Northern areas, forest Sámi have a clear picture of a pure Sámi which is definitely nomadic.

**Kjell Olsen:** But I just wonder if that Sámi picture is created from outside because when you read descriptions you see that coastal Sámis are a kind of declining species. And these Kolt Sámis, they are the worst. And then you have the noble savage, the reindeer herder in the interior. So I wonder if that was a particular Sámi idea, or is it something you have found in these descriptions. It is very typical to see these in the descriptions from the 16–17<sup>th</sup> centuries. They talk about the real Sámi, the heroic noble savage and those who have been too much in touch with modern culture on the coastline. And then you have the Russian part, these Kolt Sámis who are the worst.

**Gábor Wilhelm:** But I have to reply to this point, I think it is connected to that dimension in which we have to draw the frame we are using for explanation. For example, different case studies. Because, as far as we know, regarding social interaction, this plays a very important role in the context situation. And, of course, this kind of reindeer herding has a very long history. If you take the situation in the 15–17<sup>th</sup> centuries, it was quite different, as we know. And it was much more visible in the forest Nenets and so on. So it has a noticeable history we can follow back and of course it has also these connections with the state, with other ethnic fibres. One of the most important factors is the question of control. So, if you can control your environment, your way of life, it is not so important whether you are a hunter, fisherman or a reindeer herder. But, if there are some more powerful agents in this situation and you have to contrast yourself to these people who are richer, more powerful and so on, these very symbolic things – markers become very important.

There are no reindeer in Hokkaido Island in Ainu, but hunting is very important as a symbolic means. Their life does not depend on hunting, of course. They do it illegally. But it has a very important symbolic significance to define their personality. It is the same among the Indians in North America etc. So hunting can also play a similar role as reindeer herding in different situations.

**Irina Karapetova:** This is with every ethnic group that some are considered to be worse. Bulgarians have some inhabitants in Gabrovo. Russians have also theirs. Nenets became a separate people only because of reindeer herding. This has to be borne in mind. Ainu people have lost their traditional culture completely. And they may think that once they were good hunters and they are known for this. Therefore it is symbolic for them. For Nenets people, reindeer rearing is part of their life not a symbol. Most Nenets continue to exist as a ethnic group because of reindeer. This is their principal livelihood.

**Gábor Wilhelm:** Yes, of course, these activities have a different importance in the culture and economy. And of course it is not always this simple. It is dependent on many factors and for example, for some peoples, fishing is very important, but fishing is very rarely a marker of richness or importance or nobility etc. So, my last point about this article is that this view of Liivo is a little bit narrow, because we have to make a larger framework. He says something that is of course true. But if he was to explain that, I think that is not enough to say that people think that reindeer are very important because they are very close to reindeer. So it is not a real explanation. But if you take this framework, the history of the economy, today's situation, no money, state farms now, etc. so it is something that could exist etc.

**Irina Karapetova:** This is the whole world. This is all simple with Ainus. They have got hunting, robes, made of nettle fibre cloth decorated with certain patterns, bear feasting. They maintain it on a folklorist stage and this is what unites them. Folklorist level of culture unites them. They do not have a traditional culture. We consider things from two completely different viewpoints. We cannot compare them.

**Gábor Wilhelm:** If you look at reindeer herding, and at its history, it never plays more of a main role than today. This is the fact because they had also fishing, they hunted seals in the Yamal Peninsula and also in the North Sea. But then began the period of tax collecting by the Russians and this kind of big herding is the consequence of tax collecting, because they had to collect resources to pay that. And another reaction is the trapping by Khanty people. I am saying that it is always a reaction to a more powerful factor. The

relationships with Russians are very important, for example, the system of tax collecting and it changes in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, for example the attitude to the state, the privatisation etc. And if you have a real choice to change your economy, what happened in the Yamal region between fishing and reindeer herding and hunting that was very important. It disappeared after some time. It is another situation if you are in a very constrained frame of choice – either to go to village or town, or to have reindeer. It is a very bipolar situation and it is much more constrained. And I am thinking of the factors in the explanation.

**Irina Karapetova:** They are not able to find their place in this New World, if they have no education and interests. All this ends in drinking. They feel that reindeer rearing is an axis that helps them to feel themselves as valuable people who can do something really well and live on it.

**Tatyana Sem:** I am saying that in the 1970s, a sociological inquiry into the social statistics and attitude to the traditional lifestyle of northern people was carried out in Novosibirsk. This revealed three or four separate groups. Firstly, those who accept the European lifestyle and adopt this. Secondly, those who feel unsure about their behaviour and are therefore most badly affected by it. And thirdly, those who return to a traditional way of life. In this respect, by now this has not changed much. These three groups are still there. We are speaking of the factors affecting identity. They are belonging to and the creation of the future model. Up-to-date standards and what are people's expectations. Not very long ago, this was related to characteristics of ethnic identity. We recognised that Ainu people, as with any other people, the most important is to identify affiliation. For Ainus it means hunting or fishing. It means type of clothing and ornaments, and religion – funeral customs, folk calendar festivals. And all that forms identity. Examination of Yukagir and Evenk peoples, i.e. the peoples living on hunting and reindeer rearing, indicates that reindeer basically determine their daily routine, despite that hunting takes up more time. However, they prefer to identify themselves as hunters. In their worldview, reindeer are wild and hunted, rather than tamed and herded. Let's recall neolithic (late Stone Age) stone paintings, for example, where we can see the cosmic hunt for reindeer that

is the symbol of the whole universe. Nowadays, this is also there in Tungus shamanism. It also persists in folklore. Is it also in West-Siberian peoples that reindeer are the central figure for them?

**Yelena Pivneva:** Look at drawings by Nenets children, for example. What is the underlying idea there? Reindeer.

**Tatyana Sem:** It is related to livelihood after all.

**Yelena Pivneva:** Yet what their worldview is based on?

**Tatyana Sem:** It has different components. I wonder if reindeer are so fundamentally central in the traditional worldview of West-Siberian peoples?

**Yelena Pivneva:** Depends on the people. It is in the Nenets.

**Tatyana Sem:** How about the re-acquired reindeer rearing in Khanties?

**Yelena Martynova, Irina Karapetova, Karina Solovyova, Yelena Pivneva:** What do you mean by re-acquired? It just had different forms before.

**Yelena Martynova:** In earlier times, reindeer have played a different role. Nowadays, reindeer herding also indicates traditional lifestyle. In mythology, a horse is actually the most important. Even a bear is not that important. All heroes ride on horseback.

**Tatyana Sem:** Is not it that this basic layer hinders the more recent transfer to the reindeer as the central symbol in their worldview?

**Ildikó Lehtinen:** I think Gábor has put it very nicely. When we speak about identity, we always consider contemporary life. Yet his idea is that, through time, the ethnic identity and worldview of Yamal Nenets have changed. That is the idea. We all understand that it is evident in their mythology and children's drawings. An important aspect is that their identity has changed. Liivo Niglas has only examined contemporary factors. Yet they should be looked at in a wider context.

**Irina Karapetova:** Earlier, people hunted wild reindeer, from Norway through the Southern areas of Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug across Siberia. Yet they were not Nenets or Khanty that have formed only recently.

**Ildikó Lehtinen:** And then later reindeer are at the centre of their life – this is the life that reindeer are used in most spheres.



**Yelena Martynova:** Nowadays Nenets are reindeer herders, yet this was not the case before, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

**Irina Karapetova:** Anyway, their whole life is related to reindeer. They used to be nomadic people.

**Idikó Lehtinen:** The life of Nenets people has also involved reindeer rearing in earlier periods, yet they did not have so many reindeer in so large quantities as they do now. Reindeer have been at the centre of their life and an important component of their identity, however.

**Irina Karapetova:** Nenets people are nomads, while Khanties are half-settled: they are completely different cultures.

**Gábor Wilhelm:** I think it is a different thing to look at the economy from a historical perspective and it is quite a different thing to speak about ethnic symbols, and if you look at them, they are in most cases very simple. Costumes, reindeer rearing, hunting, fishing etc. – they are very simple things and it is easy to communicate between different groups, between hunters, reindeer herders and so on. And if you look at culture, it consists of millions of things, and only some are taken as symbols. It could be anything, for instance it could be shamanism.

**Tatyana Sem:** Hunters have reindeer as the world tree. This is their attitude to the world. This is so in East-Siberia, in Evenk and Yukagir peoples.

**Irina Karapetova:** But it is different in West-Siberia.

**Yelena Martynova:** It is the world river that is the symbol, not the world tree. In Khanty and Mansi peoples, everything is connected with the river. Upper World is around the upper course of the river and Underworld is around the lower course of the river. The tree is not an important factor in their worldview. Everywhere, the guardian spirits – hosts of rivers are the most important creatures.

When speaking of symbols, diverse aspects should be considered. There are internal and external symbols. Considering the written sources about Ob-Ugrians, we may have an impression that Crow Day is an essential festival for them. It is on the 7 April. I have studied this festival particularly. And it was obvious very quickly that none of Khanty or Mansi festivals fall on a certain date. This is held before the summer fishing season starts and involves making

sacrifices to water spirits, in order to have a better catch. Similarly, there is a festival before the winter hunting season. Yet this festival is held on a certain date – 7 April. All Khanty and Mansi festivals are without dates. Depending on when spring starts, also sacrifices to water spirits are made, similarly in winter. Depending on when winter starts, also a sacrificial ceremony is held, in order to guarantee hunting success. Yet according to the old calendar, the Crow Day falls on 23 March, which is the Annunciation Day<sup>1</sup> in the Christian World. Basically, it is a pagan festival, but is held on the Annunciation Day. I have been told many times that on that day, the wife of the Supreme God got a message. There are diverse story lines – whether she will give birth to a son or spring will come. This indicates that there is another festival behind this spring festival. Also, not all Khanty and Mansi peoples celebrate the Crow Day. There are those who have not heard of that day at all. Bear feasting is considered as the central cultural symbol till now. In Khanty and Mansi cultures, this bear feasting is the most important. It even seems to me that when speaking of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this festival did not have that central importance, as is attributed today. The kill was marked and a ritual was performed, yet this was not regarded as so important.

**Ildikó Lehtinen:** Considering material cultural heritage, clothes have also become meaningful particularly in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This means that there were differences between clothes of different groups, yet this century it became symbolically particularly important. This is not only in Siberia, it is also in Hungary and elsewhere.

**Gábor Wilhelm:** And even folk costumes can have internal or external symbols. Some signs and motives in them are only for the members of the group. It is if she is married or not etc. But the costumes, such as Setu costumes, bright colours and so on, it is for external observers for people outside the group. It has another, symbolic meaning.

**Ildikó Lehtinen:** I meant that it is 20<sup>th</sup> century that clothing became a symbol of ethnic identity. There have always been differences in clothing, yet it was only recently that clothing became a

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<sup>1</sup> Festival of the Christian church year, celebrated on 25 March. On that day, angel Gabriel announced to the Virgin Mary that she would bear the Son of God, to be called Jesus.

symbol of ethnic identity. It is only in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that clothing of Khanty, Mansi and Nenets peoples became clearly distinguished. This was not the case in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**Irina Karapetova:** In earlier times, diversity was greater, now it is gradually moving towards uniformity. Yet the clothing of Nenets is clearly different from that of Khanties.

In Ainu people, the above mentioned factors are the only ones presently consolidating ethnic unity.

**Yelena Pivneva:** But the people who live in towns or large settlements and identify themselves as Khanties do not wear traditional clothes any longer, if only as festive clothes. On what is their identity based, then? Which are the weighty consolidating factors that differentiate them from other peoples?

**Irina Karapetova:** This is a new topic. Moldanova<sup>2</sup> has written about it. She differentiates the Khanties who live in towns, large settlements and who follow a traditional lifestyle.

**Yelena Pivneva:** Yet, which are the consolidating factors then? This is even more important then, we have contacts with it. This is a new stage as traditional culture is fading. We understand that identity was based on traditional sources of living, clothing etc. And now a question about the means of the maintenance of identity arises.

**Irina Karapetova:** This is dependent on how people identify themselves, whether Russian, Finn or Estonian.

**Tatyana Sem:** Nowadays ethnic differentiating factors have become ethno-consolidating. They have moved to another level of mentality, from exterior to interior. It can be food, language or perhaps some elements of mental culture, not clothing, although it can be there in accessories and ornaments.

**Art Leete:** Now we should probably turn to the paper by Marjut Huuskonen. While the paper by Liivo Niglas dealt with reindeer, the present one by Marjut Huuskonen examines the environment. In Arctic cultures, the environment factor is considered a very important one. The environment where these peoples live determines the specific features of Arctic cultures, peoples' mental and psychic

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<sup>2</sup> Tatyana Moldanova, a Khanty ethnologist.

properties. Such ideas are there. And in this case, it is connected with the wind in particular.

**Tatyana Sem:** Here a hero's fight with the chaos has been displayed, and his mastery over chaos. Also, there is a transformation ritual, the wind as a sanctuary element, connected with shamanism. He ties himself to the stone, which signifies Sámi ancestors. And he rises high in the sky. Nanai people have also a counterpart to it. This is pure folklore, yet the idea is absolutely identical. The hero fights with natural elements in the form of three suns. But the wind is a shaman's assistant. During the ritual, the wind helps the shaman to move to another stage, new quality, so that he could help people. I see here direct counterparts. This is very interesting. Because here there is the Sámi attitude where shamanism has become witchcraft. There are influences from the outside. Sámi people have ancestor worship, but in Nanai people ancestor worship has mingled with shamanism. They are, then, two different world views, yet in both cultures people identify themselves with the sacral world through the image of natural element, here the wind.

**Ildikó Lehtinen:** There was an interesting methodology that was used for the examination of aspects related to nature. The wind is something very abstract, hard to deal with. It is interesting that Marjut Huuskonen has two different sources about the relationship between man and the wind, yet it is hard to say how to move on with this material. For Northern peoples, however, the wind is a very important phenomenon.

**Yelena Martynova:** Khanties have also a god of the wind.

**Tatyana Minniyakhmetova:** We (Udmurts) have also a god of the wind. And there is also the gale and its host. And there is a weak wind and its host. Sometimes the wind is a very necessary phenomenon and there are special chants and songs for turning to the hosts, in order to have the wind blowing. Evidently, it is the same in the tundra belt that sometimes the wind is wanted and sometimes not.

**Tatyana Sem:** The wind is the symbol of sacredness. I was able to recall some more conceptual ideas related to the wind. In Nanai people, the wind is the creator of the universe. The wind takes some foam from the prototype ocean with it, and on the basis of that the earth and everything else are created. This conception might seem

somewhat archaic, that same idea is also there in China. The Chinese worldview involves similar idea and activities. Yet this is a wider phenomenon. Ainu people also hold an idea that water creates foam and foam creates islands. In traditional thought, the wind is the symbol of the germ of movement and activity. Therefore, it would definitely play an important part later on. Also, the wind is a very indicative aspect. We can feel it. And it plays a part in the use of natural resources. In traditional cultures living in Northern areas, undoubtedly peoples' lives are dependent upon nature. So is the land one of the components of the sacral world. It has also driven the idea of the fertility cult and has given ground to many peoples' traditional festivals and customs. It is dependent upon the vital survival of nature. This can be seen in many peoples, if reindeer herders, hunters or fishermen. It involves an extremely wide scope of issues. Perception of the world alive is also held nowadays. And it has not been neglected in Siberian peoples, even among the intelligentsia. Our perception of the world is closely connected with the scientific paradigm. Yet when we think back, philosophy, science, arts and religion, they all have an identical source of existence. Our civilisation should also return to that source, yet on a different stage of mythological consciousness. The world is trying to absorb the experience of Arctic civilisation.

**Ildikó Lehtinen:** The wind was extremely important in the Ancient world. It is already there in Homer's "Iliad". Yet Arctic and Ancient worlds are completely different things.

**Art Leete:** What Fellman says is more related to the European literary tradition. It is not connected with Sámi mythology. The idea of it probably is to compare these two approaches.

**Kjell Olsen:** It is interesting that you still find this kind of division in Northern Norway. In the Southern part you do not think about the wind, but in the Northern part you always talk about the weather. In the Southern part you talk about the weather, but in the North you say "He is strong today", you have a personal relationship with the weather. And this way of oral storytelling has also been transmitted to the present day. Particularly about what you did in the mountains, when fishing. The weather was a very important part of these stories. This is something that is not there in the Southern part. But it is not

particularly Sámi tradition today, it is a North-Norwegian tradition, this way of talking about the weather.

**Art Leete:** Let us consider the issue within a wider context, not just the wind aspect. Probably you all have considered the connections between Arctic cultures and the environment.

**Yelena Pivneva:** It is of no doubt that nature is a predominant factor for Arctic peoples. Traditional lifestyle involves earning the means of a livelihood which in turn involves nature. People used to live in balance with the resources in their surroundings. Traditional economy and even population corresponded to natural resources.

**Art Leete:** To be more specific, there is a film director named Arvo Iho, and he has made a film “The Observer”. And this film is about a woman who lives all alone on a lonely island somewhere in the North. There is a nature preserve, and a young Estonian man goes there. And the film is about how they spend summer there. The man observes birds there. An important aspect there in the film is the impact of nature on their psychic stability. The woman lives alone far in the North and this has brought about some mental disorders. And I do not think the producer has made this idea up. The idea that people living in Northern areas are not quite normal is quite widespread.

**Yelena Pivneva:** Not abnormal but different. Let us consider attitude to time, for example. In fieldwork trips, I have repeatedly experienced it: you make an appointment with a Khanty. Yet never ever have any of them turned up in time. They live in a totally different system of time and space. They do not have any idea about punctuality. This is just one aspect of their distinctive way of thinking in connection with nature.

**Irina Karapetova:** What about distances? You just go and go. Whenever you ask a Khanty ‘how much is the distance’, he says ‘a kilometre’. There is a kilometre wherever you want to go.

**Art Leete:** I have also experienced their attitudes to time and space. Once Russian workers dropped us with Khanties somewhere in the forest. From that point, we had to go on to a seasonal settlement. The driver asked the Khanties: “How long do you have to go from here?” – “Yeah, two kilometres, but it may be ten kilometres for Russians.”

**Yelena Pivneva:** Why cannot Northern peoples get used to the work in factories and plants? They are not able to work in a closed area, with a determined rhythm. This may be connected with the influences of environmental conditions.

**Art Leete:** In his diary, Kannisto has numerous accounts saying that Mansi people cannot work with him. There is an example: Kannisto starts working with an informant at 8 or 9 in the morning. They work until 10 o'clock in the evening when Kannisto lets the informant go home. Kannisto himself writes scholarship applications to Helsinki throughout the whole night. At 7 in the morning he goes to sleep and at 8 the Mansi comes and they go on with the work. And then at 3 in the afternoon he has noted that he feels a bit tired and let the Mansi go home. And then he wonders why Mansi do not want work with him. Even for me, this would be hard work indeed, not to mention Mansi.

**Tatyana Sem:** Not long ago, while dealing the materials on identity, I got hold of very interesting accounts. Lopatin has noted that Nanai people are interesting, smart and clever people, yet he considers them to be lazy. Why? Because they spend a lot of time doing nothing and do not care about farming. When they are interested in the work, they are able to work day and night. And do everything quickly and neatly, but then it should have some connection with sources of livelihood, e.g. fishing, trading. This indicates that their relationship with reality is intuitive. First they think things over and adjust to situations and only then act. I have also experienced this while studying in the Department of Northern Peoples, Pedagogical University named after Herzen. Students have come to study there from various Northern areas, some of them have come there immediately after secondary education and some pursue their second higher education. They need some encouragement. I have realised that according to the concept of socio-economic development of the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug (compiled by representatives of European and native cultures), Khanty and Mansi peoples, i.e. peoples who live in this region, display unusual thinking. This means that they have abstract and concrete imagery, thought combined. I agree with it, yet I would not put this so radically. Nobody would doubt in the rationality of logical thought, however, the artistic atti-

tude of their thought is evident. In general, perception through associations is more characteristic of Northern peoples. This is the reason why their folklore and thought are well developed. This does not involve economy. Very often we speak about the dependence of worldview on the economic situation. Yet there is another, controversial idea about the influence of worldview on nature. Here the situation is as follows: if teaching at school is based on the logic of abstract thought, this will be somewhat difficult for the majority of native peoples in the North. This is nothing to do with their intelligence: it is their distinctive character that should be taken into consideration. Therefore, conceptual subjects should be combined with music and arts subjects. In the Department of Northern Peoples, this approach was already applied in the 1930s by Bogoraz. And it is also used in our days and it gives excellent results, very good specialists graduate from the university. At present, the department has a strong philosophical and cultural approach that enables students to have a better overview of their native culture through better general academic background on the one hand, and see problems within one's native culture on the other, and also combine the two approaches. The latter speaks of the thought and attitude of Northern peoples in general. It might be true to speak about Northern civilisation as a distinctive one.

**Yelena Martynova:** Again thought and associations. This reminded me of a different situation that happened to me in 1991 when there was still the Soviet Union. We were talking about symbols and determining them in Northern peoples. Yet I have also experienced the opposite situation when Northern peoples saw us through symbols. In Ovgort village around Synya River, Shuryshkary region, I was not able to put down any magic words, as many locals could not speak any Russian. In these areas, traditional culture is still alive. Everybody suggested that I should go to a woman whose family name was Pyrysyeva. They said that she knows them very well and can also speak to them in Russian. So we went to her. Her husband had died lately. I did not dare go for some time – she had the mourning dress. Finally we did. She turned out to be very kind, but her Russian was not so good. She had an *itryma* at home. It is a wooden figure of the dead person with national costume and it is kept at home



for 40–50 days. We asked her questions and she answered. We asked if we could see the doll. She took it out. I asked what was actually there. She said five jackets and a *malitsa* (coat made of reindeer fur). Anything else? Then came five cloth ribbons. I asked what was next. She then wanted to explain it to me, as it seemed to her I could not quite understand what it really was. She then wanted to explain it so that I would get the nature of it. Then, suddenly, she asked me:

"Have you been to Muzhi (centre of the region)?"

"Yes."

"Did you see the *ittyрма* of Lenin?"

This is the monument to Lenin. I was shocked. She said that Russians are a big nation group, they have large metal resources, and thus they have a large *ittyрма*. Khanty people are a small nation, and consequently they have a small *ittyрма*. For them, the *ittyрма* of Lenin symbolised the whole Soviet system. This indicates that they perceive the world through symbols.

**Tatyana Minniyakhmetova:** Our way of thinking is also somewhat different. Should anybody insult or humiliate me, for example, I am not thinking that I am insulted or humiliated. I am thinking about that person, how he has made me think so badly of him. I am thinking that he has humiliated himself. From that time on I would think of that person as inferior to me, because he humiliated himself and insulted himself.

**Yelena Martynova:** He himself probably did not realise that. But it is easier for you.

**Tatyana Minniyakhmetova:** Yes, it might be so. It is really easier for me, because then it is him who is bad, not me.

As what Yelena Pivneva said that a Khanty would never come in time, the Udmurts do not have the concept about the right time either. When they say that it is 1 o'clock in the afternoon, for Udmurts it is just the afternoon. But with Tatar and Bashkir peoples, they would not come at all if you do not call them three times. This is their tradition. It can be that Khanties have also some custom behind it.

**Yelena Pivneva:** This is just the attitude to time.

**Tatyana Minniyakhmetova:** I do not think this is just the attitude, this can also be the tradition. How do you know what they have behind it?

**Ilidikó Lehtinen:** This is from nature, I think.

**Irina Karapetova:** They live in the forest, go somewhere if they wish and talk to their neighbor.

**Yelena Martynova:** Need not go to work at a certain time.

**Art Leete:** As with us. We were at the Khanities in the forest with Anzori Barkalaja and young Danish lady Auli Valta. Then a Khanty from another seasonal dwelling area came and invited us to visit him on Monday. And he left. And we started to think which day we were actually having. Anzori said that he has become a Khanty and does not care about time. Auli Valta started to count days in the calendar, as Europeans do. She counted how many days we had been in the forest and when we had come there. Then she said that it might be Saturday. Then the Khanty said:

“As women have not come back from the town, it must be Friday then.”

It can be that the Khanty who called us to visit him also had the European attitude to time here. I do not think he cared what day it was really.

**Tatyana Sem:** It comes out, then, that we do not speak about Northern peoples only, but also about other peoples and ourselves. Also, it comes out that, through the examination of Northern peoples, we also learn about ourselves.

**Art Leete:** The present discussion that started with the natural phenomenon has now taken us to the issue that is not directly related to the wind. Although the discussion was initially based on the two texts about reindeer and the wind, we evidently covered a wider range of subjects here. Within the conference and the present workshop, we have discussed diverse aspects of the identity of Arctic cultures, also by the examination of them against Southern cultures. This was not my purpose that the researchers who have come to participate in the conference would discuss such a wide range of identity aspects. Yet the reports and discussions held within the conference revealed many aspects (e.g. material culture, reindeer herding, hunting, mythology, shamanism, worldview, literature, language, folk art, environment) that are related to identity. And in combination, these aspects create a viewpoint stating which issues are important for a particular worldview or identity.

*Translated by Epp Uustalu*