EDUCATING FOR ETHNICITY: LOCAL CULTURAL VITALITY AMIDST THE
CHALLENGES OF A GLOBAL ECONOMY IN POST-SOVIET SAKHA REPUBLIC
(YAKUTIA)

by

Susan Michelle Hicks

B.A. University of Pittsburgh, 2003

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

The School of Education in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

University of Pittsburgh

2005

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

This thesis was presented

by

Susan Hicks

It was defended on

July 26, 2005

and approved by

Dr. Maureen Porter, Associate Professor, Administrative and Policy Studies

Dr. Robert Hayden, Professor, Anthropology

Dr. Christina Paulston, Professor Emerita, Linguistics

Thesis Director: Dr. Maureen Porter, Associate Professor, Administrative and Policy Studies

EDUCATING FOR ETHNICITY: LOCAL CULTURAL VITALITY AMIDST THE
CHALLENGES OF A GLOBAL ECONOMY IN THE POST-SOVIET SAKHA REPUBLIC
(YAKUTIA)

Susan Hicks, MA

University of Pittsburgh, 2005

This thesis examines ways in which indigenous educators in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia), an autonomous republic of the Russian Federation, maintain, revive and transform indigenous linguistic and cultural traditions in the contexts of the Russian Federation and the increasingly global economy. Through an analysis of a revival of ethnically-based education in the Republic, I argue that indigenous educators promote Sakha ethnicity in a way that also actively works to maintain harmonious relationships with the Russian Federation and the globalizing economy. First, educators present Sakha ethnicity in a global context, comparing the Sakha ethnicity to that of more established nations such as the French, Germans, British, and Russians in order to assert the distinctiveness of the Sakha ethnic group. In doing so, however, educators simultaneously promote the importance and value of Russian language and culture, safeguarding against the possibility of destructive Sakha "nationalism" that could spur a tension with continued Sakha participation in the Russian Federation. Second, educators actively work to break down a historical dichotomy between "traditional" and "modern," which associates Sakha culture with the traditional and Russian/European cultures with the modern. In this way educators embrace "modernization" and a global economy and retain the relevance of the Sakha ethnicity.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

PREFACE

I would like to thank a number of people for their assistance on this project. First and foremost, I would like to thank my committee members for their continued support and willingness to work with me over the summer when this was not required of them. I would especially like to thank and acknowledge the contributions of my committee chair and advisor, Maureen Porter for reading multiple drafts of the thesis, for suggesting key ways in which to formulate my thoughts, and for providing moral support as I struggled to finish writing in the limited time necessary.

I would further like to thank my contacts in Russia, especially Sardana Nikolaeva, who acted as cultural guide, research assistant, translator, and friend for me throughout my time in Russia. Without her help, I never would have gained the quick access to and deep rapport with the teachers and administrators in Nyurba that I was able to gain. I would also like to acknowledge the assistance of Dr. Clavdia Fedorova and the staff at the Office of International Programs of Yakutsk State University, who arranged interviews with and helped me make contacts with government officials, academics, educational leaders, and cultural figures in Yakutsk. I would finally like to thank all of the teachers at Nyruba School Number One, and everyone else who kindly gave of their time, expressing their thoughts and opinions.

1. EXPLANATORY NOTE

This final masters' project is written in the form of a journal article with supplemental materials, rather than in the sequential chapter format. As such, the journal article is presented first, followed by an extended literature review, methodological essay, and appendices. The journal article is written with the *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* as the intended journal.

Writing this thesis in the format of a journal article with supplemental materials has meant that I cannot expand upon and explore to the extent that I would like to be able to the many interesting and complex ideas that resulted from my data collection and analysis. Nevertheless, I found this format to be beneficial as it retains most of the components of a sequential chapter thesis but also results in an article that I am able to submit for publication. Furthermore, the process of writing a journal article has introduced me to the challenges of writing for a specific journal, including keeping within a given page limit, gearing the content to a specific audience, and working with a format standard for the field of anthropology and education. As my intention is to continue as a doctoral student and eventually as an academic in the field of anthropology and education, having this experience and practice with the challenges of writing for publication will be particularly important in my future career.

2. JOURNAL ARTICLE: EDUCATING FOR ETHNICITY: LOCAL CULTURAL VITALITY AMIDST THE CHALLENGES OF A GLOBAL ECONOMY IN POST-SOVIET SAKHA REPUBLIC (YAKUTIA)

> We all know that we will die some day. But each of us does his best trying to live as long as possible, since we are biological in essence and are given the sense of self-preservation. The same thing is with every ethnic group, every society, every nation having the sense of self-preservation. –from an interview with Evdokia Fyodorovna Vasilieva, co-author of English-Sakha textbook "Beneath the Nine Heavens."

2.1.   INTRODUCTION

Russia, or more accurately, the Russian Federation, is not a mono-ethnic nation-state, but rather a conglomeration of distinct regions and ethnic groups encompassing a wide range of linguistic and cultural traditions. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 gave non-Russian ethnic groups new opportunities to (re)claim and (re)construct independent identities. One of the most interesting, albeit rarely discussed, cases of such identity reconstruction is the case of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia). In this article I present indigenous (Sakha) educators' attempts to maintain the relevance and viability of the Sakha ethnicity through a revitalization and transformation of ethnically-based education. I argue that in promoting Sakha ethnicity, educators also work to maintain stable and harmonious relationships with the Russian Federation and the globalizing economy.

The decentralization of the Russian educational system, which followed the Soviet Union's collapse, resulted in a proliferation of programs and curricula designed specifically to cultivate ethnic pride and to reverse linguistic and cultural shift among non-Russian populations

(e.g. Graney1999, Bloch 2004, Heikinnen 2001, Smith 2001, Robbek 1998). These educational programs can be seen as examples of what Kolstø (2004) terms "ethnic consolidation," or identity construction that "takes place in a group that is not coterminous with the total population of a state" (9), and as part of regional sovereignty struggles. However, Kolstø (2004) contends that the current administration of the Russian Federation, led by Putin, in contrast to the previous Yeltsin administration,[1] focuses on the unity of the federation, promoting a unified all-Russian (*rossiski*) identity. As Kolstø further argues that ethnic consolidation is "likely to be perceived as [an alternative] to state-centered nation-building" (9-10), Putin's unification rhetoric puts pressures on ethnic and regional educators to avoid ethnic consolidation that may pose threats to federal nation-building.

In addition to the pressures posed by membership in the Russian Federation, the economic pressures of globalization create an environment in which information technology, science, math, and foreign languages, especially English, are becoming increasingly higher priorities within the educational system. As a result, cultural programs are being relegated to lower and lower priority levels. These strains pull indigenous education in Russia in multiple and interesting directions, as indigenous educators strive to preserve cultural and linguistic independence while conforming to the standards and economic demands concomitant with membership in the Russian Federation and the larger, international community.

One of the primary vehicles through which non-Russians attempt to maintain linguistic and cultural distinctiveness is that of national schools (Smith 2001). National schools today are those schools designed to provide members of non-Russian ethnicities with culturally-relevant education in their native-language. Importantly, the concept of national schools goes back to the

---

[1] Yeltsin is reported to have told republic leaders to, "take all the sovereignty you can swallow" (in Kempton 1996: 590).

early Soviet nationalities' policy and ethno-federal structure of the Union (see Hughes and Sasse 2002, Khazanov 1995, Simon, 1991, Slezkine 1994, Smith 2001). Early Soviet education was to follow Stalin's philosophy of "national in form, Soviet in content," whereby the peoples of the Soviet Union were supposedly granted the external accoutrements of ethnic identity alongside a universal communist ideology (Martin 2001, Slezkine 1994 Smith 2001). This meant that nationals would attend school in their native language with other members of their ethnicity. In the Sakha Republic (Yakutia), the "national schools" which resulted from this system have formed the starting of educators' attempts to revive Sakha language and culture.

In this article, I examine the ways in which Sakha educators and administrators, through a revival and transformation (*vozrazhdenie* or *obnavlenie*) of national schools in the Republic, negotiate the viability of Sakha ethnicity in the context of the Russian Federation and the international community. The article presents three major areas of analysis. First, I explore the ideological basis for the revival and renewal of national schools, presenting the macro-level goals and ideals of educational administrators and cultural activists. Secondly, I explore one Sakha national school in-depth, examining the attitudes of teachers and administrators to Sakha ethnic revival. I also highlight core strategies they employ to build cultural and linguistic pride among their students. Thirdly, I present larger political and economic challenges to implementation and sustainability of native-language education and ethnically-oriented programming in the schools. Ultimately, I argue that Sakha educators, on a republic and local level are actively working to maintain, revive and transform Sakha language and traditions so that they may be relevant, useful and even advantageous.

2.2.   THE SAKHA REPUBLIC (YAKUTIA)

"The Sakha Republic (Yakutia)" is the full, official name of one of 21 ethnically-based autonomous republics. These polities, which have the greatest degree of autonomy of all the 89 constituent territories of the Russian Federation, have their own legislatures, heads of state, and the ability to maintain diplomatic relations with foreign governments independent of Moscow. Even the name of the Republic itself, which came about after much discussion and debate in the early 1990's (Balzer and Vinokourova 1996), reflects the multiple identities of the titular Sakha, that ethnic group for whom the Republic is named. Sakha is the autochthonous term members use to describe themselves, whereas Yakut is the Russian term for the Sakha. Thus, the name "The Sakha Republic (Yakutia)" puts primary importance on indigenous self-identification, but retains the Russian terminology, symbolically reaffirming a connection with Russia.

The Sakha Republic (Yakutia) is an enormous, albeit sparsely populated territory located in Eastern Siberia (Figure 1), encompassing almost one-fifth of the territory of the entire Russian Federation but with a population just over one-million. The Sakha speak a Turkic language, identifying themselves ethnically with the Turkic groups of Central Asia. The Sakha are not, however, a majority in "their" republic. They comprise just over one-third of the population, with ethnic Russians comprising about one-half, and several indigenous "small-numbered peoples" and recent immigrants from other parts of the Soviet Union comprising the remainder (Kempton 1996).

Despite its small population, the Sakha Republic is a key economic region in the Russian Federation, giving it strategic significance to the federal government. The Republic produces

Figure 1: Russian Administrative Divisions
(Courtesy of the University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin.)

98% of Russia's diamonds, 21% of its gold and 100% of its antimony (Kempton 1996: 589). A significant portion of Russia's coal, tin, fish, timber, furs, and natural gas also come from the region (ibid). Much of the sovereignty struggles of the early 1990's were dominated by diamond profit-sharing arguments, resulting in the Sakha Republic controlling around 20% of the diamond profits (see Kempton 1996). Thus, despite the natural wealth of the Republic, Moscow's control over the industry profits mean that finances are stretched. Furthermore, ethnic Russians and other recent immigrants dominate the mining industry and thus, the economic stratum of Sakha society.

Control over industry is one of the key factors at stake in regional vs. federal sovereignty struggles.   Successful nation-building at the federal level would mean a more secure bond between the republics, including the Sakha Republic (Yakutia), and Moscow and thus, secure federal control over profits, especially diamond profits.   As mentioned above, Kolstø (2004) argues that ethnic consolidation movements often are perceived as threats to federal nation-building projects.   As such, a successful ethnic movement could entail a threat to Moscow's control over the Republic's resources, making the stakes of ethnic revival much more complex than simply linguistic or cultural preservation (Balzer and Vinokourova 1996, Kempton 1996).

The role of the educational system in the ethnic revitalization movement, then, is particularly crucial as the federal government, the republic government, and even local governments have control over different components of the system.   Leaders of the ethnic movement have concentrated on the revitalization of national schools in the republic.   Currently, there are 426 national schools in the Republic, predominantly concentrated in the Sakha dominated rural areas.   Operating within the context of federal nation-building pressures and local ethnic consolidation pressures, Sakha national schools have the complicated task of promoting student self-awareness as both Sakha and as citizens of the Russian Federation.

Further complicating the task of the national schools is Sakha participation in the global economy.   The collapse of the Soviet Union combined with the autonomous status of the Sakha Republic (particularly the ability to make direct economic and diplomatic ties with foreign polities independently of Moscow) has resulted in greater participation in the global economy on the part of the Republic and its citizens.   This participation entails the increasing importance of foreign languages, information technology, science, and math, and decreasing the priority of other subjects, including culturally-oriented ones like national culture, art and music.   In

addition, a historical dichotomy between "traditional" and "modern" persists, which associates modern with Russian and European languages and cultures, and traditional with Sakha language and culture. Educators must overcome these two key dichotomized issues in order to maintain the viability of Sakha ethnicity in the increasingly global, modern economy.

2.3. METHODOLOGY

This research arose from an earlier project in which I participated regarding indigenous revival in the Peruvian Andes, exemplified in the proliferation of school-based indigenous dance programs in the highland areas (Porter and Hicks, submitted). Having been awakened to the complex issues of ethnic revival and graduating from university with a concentration in Russian studies, I embarked upon an exploration of similar issues in the context of the former Soviet Union. The former Soviet Union is a particularly good place to explore these issues because of the history of ethno-federalism and the ethnic nature of secessionist movements in the post-Soviet era.

I was fortunate in making a number of contacts prior to my arrival in Russia, which greatly contributed to the ease in which I was able to conduct my research once there. I was able to make contact with a professor at Yakutsk State University, who is herself intimately involved in the cultural revival movement. I was further privileged to have received a personal invitation from a teacher who had been an exchange student in Pittsburgh to visit her town in rural Yakutia and to stay with her and her family there. Both of these contacts allowed me almost immediate access, in the case of the former, to the ministry of education and to leaders of the ethnic movement in Yakutsk, and, in the case of latter, to teachers and schools in Nyurba, the town in which I conducted the second stage of my research.

From February to May of 2004, I lived in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia), collecting data on the educational system and, in particular, on post-Soviet educational reforms relating to

revival of indigenous culture. I divided my research into two stages. First, I spent about 4 weeks in the capital city of Yakutsk (Figure 2 and Figure 3, APPENDIX A APPENDIX AAPPENDIX AAPPENDIX A) to obtain an overview of ethnically-oriented education in the Republic. Yakutsk is the only large city in the Sakha Republic and indeed in the broader region of Northeastern Siberia. It has a diverse population of over 300,000, consisting of Sakha, Russians, and various immigrant ethnic groups. In addition, a handful of tourists, travelers, foreign researchers, consultants, and businesspeople are visiting the capital at any given time, providing a small but visible international presence, largely absent in the rest of the Republic.

I conducted the first stage of my research in Yakutsk in order to understand the official position of the current administration of the Sakha Republic toward the cultural revival movement as well as the specifics of republic-level educational policy. I was also able to garner an understanding of the official and publicly proffered ideals of the movement through writings of and discussions with its leaders. To these aims, I collected public policy and curricular documents and had an extended discussion with the Minister of Education of the Republic and two other officials at the Ministry (see Appendix **B1**). I also conducted semi-structured interviews with two professors of Yakut Language and Literature at Yakutsk State University, the main university of the republic, as well as with 2 leaders of the cultural group, *Sakha Omuk*, and with 2 authors of Sakha language textbooks. In referencing the above interviews, I do not use pseudonyms as the interviewees all requested that their real names be used.

In addition to these interviews, I had the opportunity to have frank and open discussions about the issues of cultural revival with 3 groups of teachers. These groups were teachers of various different ethnic groups from all over the republic who had come to Yakutsk for a week-long in-service training at the Teacher Retraining Institute. Speaking with such a broad range of

9

teachers allowed me to glimpse the array of perspectives among Russian, Sakha, and other teachers in the Republic. I also had many informal conversations with Sakha artists, writers, and performers and observed multiple cultural events, such as a reindeer herders' festival, a Sakha epic poetry contest for high school students and the opening of an ecological park for children. Finally, I had some opportunities to visit schools in the capital and to have informal conversations with teachers and students at these schools. These school visits allowed me to minimally observe and document the way in which educational reforms were being implemented in this large, cosmopolitan city.

These site visits provided a significant contrast to the patterns of the smaller, more rural city I spent the majority of my fieldwork researching and exploring. I conducted the second stage of my research in the city of Nyurba, the administrative center of the Nyurba *ulus* or district. It is located in an area widely considered to be the cultural heart of the Sakha region. Friends and consultants in Yakutsk and in Nyurba both emphasized that only here could one witness "real" Sakha culture. Nyurba is technically called a city, but the population is only around 7,000 and it has few of the characteristics typically associated with cities, such as any indoor plumbing or paved roads (see APPENDIX A: Figure 4 and Figure 5). Despite being a small town in the middle of Siberia, 6-8 hours by car from any other major population center, many Nyurba residents had internet access and mobile phones. Nyurba youth listened to American and European pop music, wore Nike shoes and followed the exploits of Brittany Spears in the newspapers. This combination of identification as a cultural heartland and the obvious presence of the global economy made Nyurba an ideal place to explore the challenges of maintaining Sakha ethnic viability in a modern, global context.

In Nyurba, I focused my research on an in-depth study of one school, Nyurba School Number One. I chose this school because it is a) the largest school in Nyurba, b) a Sakha "national school," meaning it is designed specifically for ethnic-Sakha students, and indeed all of the students are ethnic-Sakha, and c) easily the oldest school in the town by at least 100 years with a history that chronicles the changes in the educational system throughout the entire Soviet period. The combination of these factors made Nyurba School Number One a good place to examine educators' attempts to maintain, revive and transform Sakha cultural and linguistic traditions.

In conducting the research, I volunteered at Nyurba School Number One, teaching a class of advanced English students. This was particularly advantageous to my research because it allowed me to be in the school everyday and to experience first-hand what a typical school day is for teachers at the school. It also provided me with a good way to meet teachers and allowed them to feel more comfortable with me as a fellow teacher rather than as a foreign researcher. Bloch (2004) in her research among Evenki, another indigenous Siberian community, also takes a position as an English teacher, noting the importance of establishing a "locally meaningful identity" (12).

In addition to informal conversations with teachers and students, I conducted formal, semi-structured interviews (see appendices **B2**, **B3**, **B4**) with administrators and teachers of history, Russian language and literature, Yakut language and literature, national culture, technical education and of two classes designed to help Sakha females and males adjust to adulthood, *kyys kuo* and *urung wolan*. Most of the interviews were conducted in the Sakha language with a senior English teacher translating into Russian and English, as most of my interviewees were more comfortable expressing their ideas in the Sakha language. A couple of

11

the interviews I conducted in Russian, most notably with history teachers and teachers of Russian language and literature, as these teachers felt as comfortable with Russian as they did with Sakha language, their courses being conducted more or less entirely in Russian. The focus of this phase was the analysis of the intentions, goals and strategies of educators in implementing culturally-relevant education. Future study that incorporated the perspectives of students would be able to get at the complex negotiations and actual outcomes in addition to the intended teaching.

With the exception of interviews with administrators, I conducted all the interviews in Nyurba without a tape recorder and so, quotations from teachers that I use in this article are generally paraphrases rather than exact wording. The teachers all preferred not to use the tape-recorder and I respected their wishes as interviews may otherwise have been much less frank and comfortable. Most of my interviewees grew up during a time in which speaking about ethnic difference could be perceived as nationalism, an extremely taboo sentiment, the reasons for which I explore below. While ethnic difference is freely spoken of in public discourse today, most of my interviewees were initially hesitant to speak frankly about the issue and were uncomfortable with the tape-recorder. To protect the identity of these teachers, in referencing their interviews, I do not use personal names at all and instead refer to the teachers by their role, such as "a Yakut language and literature teacher." Thus, where names are used, they are real names.

Another important component of my fieldwork was classroom observations. I focused on observing Yakut language and literature, national culture, and *kyys kuo* and *urung wolan* class sessions. I was also taken on tours of all the classrooms, was able to observe and photograph student projects, and to conduct informal conversations with teachers and teacher aides from a

range of disciplines. Many of the classes I observed were conducted in Sakha language and, thus, the majority of the time, I had an English teacher with me, translating what the teacher and students were saying. I wrote down as much as possible from the translation and from general visual observations of classroom behavior. For example, one key observation I noted was that "culture" courses (national culture, *kyys kuo, urung wolan*) were taught more informally than were the more traditional "academic" courses, such as Russian language and literature and even Sakha language and literature, being led without textbooks and with much more student participation.

Finally, another significant portion of my data is in the form of field notes. While in the field, I kept a detailed journal of my activities each day. Most significantly, I recounted informal conversations with teachers and with my students during the course of the school day. In addition, I kept a reflective journal, in which I explored and analyzed my daily observations, building a coherent picture of patterns I noticed. Both of these journals proved to be particularly significant during data analysis in clarifying the ideas that came out in interviews, in aiding my understanding of the broader structure of the school and the approach of teachers and students to education generally, and in accurately recalling events and conversations.

2.4.   THE NATIONAL SCHOOL: ETHNIC IDENTITY VS. NATIONALISM

In 1990, led by then President Mikhail Nikolaev, the Sakha Republic (Yakutia), formerly the Yakut Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR), declared sovereignty, developing its own constitution, flag, and other trappings of statehood, but it ultimately remained a part of the newly formed Russian Federation.   This declaration of sovereignty, however, gave significant momentum to a budding Sakha revival movement. The Sakha language was declared an official

language of the Republic, alongside Russian. Shortly thereafter, the traditional Sakha summer solstice festival, *ysyakh*, outlawed during Soviet times, was declared a state holiday and is again probably the most important holiday in the Republic. Most significantly, perhaps, the educational system was reorganized with the explicit goal of promoting the use of Sakha language and preserving Sakha culture.

One of the major changes in the educational system of the Sakha Republic since the collapse of the Soviet Union, has been termed "*vozrazhdenie natsional'noi shkoly*" or the "revival of the National School" (Zhirkov 1992), a concept initiated and conceptualized in the Sakha Republic by the first minister of education of the Republic, E.P. Zhirkov. "National," in this context refers to the non-Russian ethnic groups of the Russian Federation, the Russian language defining ethnic groups as nations. Therefore, "National schools" in the Sakha Republic today are those schools designed to help indigenous, non-Russian peoples' cultures and languages survive and flourish in a state dominated linguistically and culturally by Russian. In theory, then, the language of instruction is an indigenous, non-Russian language and ethnically-significant programming comprises a good portion of the curriculum of these schools. In the Sakha Republic, such schools have been created for Evenks, Evens, Yukagirs, Chukchi, and, most abundantly, for the more numerically dominant Sakha (Robbek 1998).

While national schools were initially created by early Soviet leaders (Martin 2001, Slezkine 1994, Smith 2001), later Soviet administrations were much less supportive of native language education (Bilinsky 1962, Smith 2001). In the Sakha Republic (Yakutia), this reduction in support for national schools coincided with a period of rapid industrialization and massive immigration that had begun in the late 1940's with the discovery of the mineral wealth of the Republic, especially diamonds. As a result of immigration, the percentage of ethnic Sakha

in the republic fell from 83% in 1926 to 46% in 1959 (Lynn and Fryer 1998: 574). The combination of this change in the population balance and the lack of central support for native language education resulted in native language education being drastically curtailed in the Republic. Textbooks were no longer published in native languages and schools were required to use Russian as the sole language of instruction from the seventh grade on (Khazanov 1995). In practice, however, the Sakha language was never entirely abandoned as a language of instruction even in the upper grades. Especially in villages where the entire population was ethnic-Sakha, teachers and students continued to communicate in their native language in school and out. Just the textbooks were written in Russian.

With the political liberalization of the 1980's, a Sakha ethnic movement began to flourish (see Balzer 1995, Balzer and Vinokurova 1996). Cultural organizations formed and previously persecuted cultural leaders, writers and artists were rehabilitated as ethnic martyrs. Traditional Sakha names became popular again for children born during this time, and more people of mixed ethnicity began identifying themselves as Sakha (Balzer and Vinokurova 1996). This ethnic revival was not without its tensions, however. Balzer (1995) and Khazanov (1995) describe a number of small incidents of violence between Sakha and Russians that occurred in the 1980's. While Balzer argues that the media characterization of these as instances of "ethnic conflict" is overblown, Khazanov emphasizes the importance of these instances as manifestations of deeply rooted interethnic tensions that had the possibility of erupting in larger-scale violence.

The contemporary educational system seems to be reacting against this possibility of ethnic conflict, attempting to quell any latent Sakha "nationalism." Nationalism is still a word with intensely negative connotations for both the Sakha and Russians with whom I spoke. For instance, a contemporary popular Sakha hip-hop song that announces repeatedly, "I am Sakha"

(*Min Sakha bin*), has critics deriding it as "nationalistic," and fans claiming it simply encourages pride in being Sakha.

The controversy around this song illustrates the principle that one can acceptably be proud of being Sakha, but it is unacceptable to promote nationalism, as "nationalism" implies a dislike of and antagonism towards Russians in addition to a discontent with the continued political participation of the Sakha Republic in the Russian Federation. Sakha discomfort with nationalism must be viewed in the context of the former Soviet Union. First of all, a legacy continues today of a Soviet ideology that condemned "nationalism," and embraced "friendship between all peoples." Second, Sakha are confronted with the example of another post-Soviet "nationalism" (i.e. Chechnya), which has resulted in disastrous inter-ethnic violence. Third, Sakha political leaders have continued pressure from the federal government and from the majority Russian population of the Republic to avoid promoting separatism. Thus, Sakha educational leaders, especially being in part answerable to the federal government, try to avoid secessionist sentiments and any possibility of interethnic violence. As such, official rhetoric promoting the importance and value of Sakha-ness is almost always paired with similar acknowledgements of the value of Russian culture.

Almost all of the official rhetoric associated with the revival of national schools and Sakha culture generally is also couched in terms encouraging friendship and mutual respect with Russians. In his book "UNESCO at the Icecap" (*UNESCO na Polyuse Kholoda*), former president Nikolaev, (2004) argues for the importance and development of national education. In doing so, he refers to a "pure declaration" between the peoples of the Russian Federation "to live in friendship" (131). He further upholds the importance of Russian Orthodox missionaries as harbingers of education, emphasizing the importance of Christianity to Sakha culture alongside

16

the value of Shamanism. He even suggests making 2011 the year of Lomonosov, an important Russian writer, lamenting that "Russian prominent people rarely enter the orbit of UNESCO" (Nikolaev, 2004: 132). This insistence on recognizing the value of Russian culture and the link between Russian and Sakha cultures on the part of Nikolaev, one of the most important figures in the revival of Sakha language and culture, is indicative of the strong rhetoric aimed at minimizing inter-ethnic strife in the Sakha Republic.

I found that my consultants, both ethnic leaders and teachers at the national school, in promoting national schools, cited greater educational efficiency and the right of every nation to perpetuate itself as arguments for national schools, but steer clear of superiority claims. Sakha ethnic leaders continually referred to the "great Russian nation," or the "wealth of Russian language and culture," emphasizing a long friendship between Russians and Sakha. Lynn and Fryer (1998) also note the emphasis on the "long 'organic' link between Russians and Sakha" (582) in popular discourse. One teacher of national culture refused to answer such questions as "what kind of impact has Russian language and culture had on the Sakha language and culture?" (see appendix **B3** and **B4**), repeating again and again that Russians and Sakha have been friends for centuries and will continue to be so. No one seems to be suggesting even the possibility of a monolingual/monocultural Sakha society in the future. Rather, teachers of Sakha language and culture expound on the benefits of bi- and multilingualism and the importance that Russian culture has had for Sakha. Thus, whether or not the "true" feelings of my consultants differed from the outward statements they would make to me as an outsider, the statements are indicative of the broader rhetoric and discourse within the Sakha ethnic movement emphasizing friendship and mutual respect with Russians.

2.5.   NATIONAL SCHOOL REVIVAL

The reorganization of the educational system at the republic level to promote the development of Sakha national schools coincided with decentralization moves at the federal level, which encouraged the development of national schools for non-Russians. In 1991, the federal government established the Institute on National Problems of Education with historian Mikhail Kuz'min as director (Kerr 1994). Kuz'min envisioned a reorganization of the concept of the national school as one that did more than simply preserve language but instead promoted "the formation of a national consciousness which looked not only towards the past but also to the future" (Sutherland 1999: 89). With the 1990 declaration of sovereignty of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia), Sakha President Nikolaev and the minister of education, Zhirkov, embarked upon a revival of national schools in accordance with Kuz'min's vision.

Zhirkov himself was integral during the early 1990's in elaborating a vision and theoretical basis for the revival of national schools in the Sakha Republic and his writings are still widely cited today. Looking toward the future, Zhirkov (1992) argues that national schools and especially mother-tongue education provide a foundation for a more democratic society, that children will learn better and more effectively if taught in their mother tongue, and that it will ultimately aid in the perpetuation and continued vitality of the Sakha ethnicity. Thus, along these lines, as Minister of Education of the Republic, he developed and implemented, "The Conception of revival and development of the national schools of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia)" (1991), the plan for the development of a revived system of national schools in the republic.

Zhirkov enumerates the three principles of democracy, educational efficiency, and ethnic perpetuation in his widely cited article "To revive the national school" (1992). The first of his principles is that, "It is important and necessary to guarantee the real possibility of choice of

language of instruction," (ibid.: 10) meaning that parents have the right to choose in which language their children will study. In emphasizing choice, Zhirkov embraces a democratic model of education, steering away from early Soviet arguments regarding national education that revolved around the question, "in which language ought students study?" This was a question that often resulted in nationals whose first language was not "their own language" being forced to study in that language (Slezkine 1994: 428-429). Instead, Zhirkov insists upon student/parent choice. Former President Nikolaev also asserts "the right to be educated at school in your native tongue" (2004: 24) and praises the tendency of the Sakha Republic toward versatility in education, "where every child can choose from an educational program the kind of school and type of educational establishment he/she would like to attend" (ibid: 24). Finally, Vera Semyonova, a prominent proponent of native-language education and a key consultant of mine throughout my time in Yakutsk, stated in an interview, "The right to choose—that is the cultural revival."

This issue of choice is connected to a larger concern with developing a democratic society. Zhirkov anticipates that this choice would require the development of democratic organizations at a micro-level. He envisions parent-teacher associations, student collectives and unions in every school choosing the language of instruction, claiming that, "This will be one of the essential conditions and steps of democratic school life, broadening the real rights of individuals" (Zhirkov 1992: 11). This is connected as well to the way in which educational reformers at the federal level framed the decentralization process in the aftermath of the Soviet Union's collapse. Webber (2000) provides a detailed discussion of the democratic visions of these reformers, who encouraged educational decentralization and diversification in the name of creating greater opportunities for choice and a sense of ownership for citizens.

Zhirkov's second principle is that "the mother-tongue is a beneficial and natural basis for the development of the thinking capability and common sense of a person" (1992: 11), meaning simply that not only is the mother-tongue the natural pedagogical medium but that studying in the mother-tongue is, in fact, advantageous for the mental development of children. He relies on academic studies that suggest that learning subjects such as mathematics and physics in one's native language is important for full comprehension and understanding. It can provide a more solid foundation when the students later convert to Russian. Combining this with the first principle, Zhirkov argues that mother-tongue instruction is important and positive, but ultimately the choice must lie with parents and their desires for their children.

While generally focusing on the more abstract ideas of preserving and reviving Sakha language and culture, my consultants, especially those connected to the cultural movement on a macro-scale, also insisted on the practical benefits of native-language education as a tool for effective mental development. This insistence on the practicality of native-language instruction stands in marked contrast to the attitudes of many Sakha. Even those who allow a need for national schools for the purposes of preserving Sakha language and culture do not necessarily agree that native language education is beneficial for individual Sakha students, arguing instead that it creates a barrier to economic success by decreasing their ability to speak Russian. In group discussions with teachers at the Teacher Retraining Institute in Yakutsk, my main contact there and head of the foreign language section of the Institute, Vera Semyonova would always ask ethnic-Sakha teachers if they found it more effective to teach in Sakha or in Russian. One young Sakha teacher, who had herself studied at a national school, claimed that she had a language barrier when she came to college and felt herself at a disadvantage for having studied in her mother-tongue rather than in Russian. Vera responded vehemently with the argument that

the teacher must have quickly overcome that barrier (and indeed she admitted that she had) and was probably better off in the long run for having developed her ability to think in her native-tongue. Furthermore, I was asked as a relatively high status foreign anthropologist (despite my attempts to minimize this perception) by Vera in this situation and by others in similar situations, to verify the assertion that studying in one's mother-tongue is more effective for mental development than studying in a language that is not the home language.

Zhirkov's third principle is that, "The function of the mother-tongue as a language of instruction is an essential factor in preserving and developing the national language and national culture, and most of all in the self-preservation of the nation" (1992: 11-12). Although this is the more abstract goal of the perpetuation of Sakha ethnicity, this phrase was resoundingly echoed by everyone I interviewed and in many informal conversations as well. Whereas the first two principles are accompanied in Zhirkov by two paragraphs of supporting evidence and analysis, Zhirkov states the third principle without any explanation or elaboration. In every single one of my interviews with cultural leaders and with teachers in Nyurba, the importance of preserving Sakha nationhood was an integral theme, although my consultants also rarely elaborated on it, even when I pressed them to. This suggests one of two things: a) that this is a slogan, repeated again and again among Sakha without much reflection on what it means or why ethnic preservation is important, or b) that preserving nationhood for Zhirkov, as for my consultants is something unquestionably positive, akin to preserving life itself.

The notion of equating preservation of ethnicity with the preservation of life itself is reflected in the interview quotation with which I opened this article. The Sakha, especially those promoting the preservation of Sakha ethnicity, see the Sakha ethnic group as a biologically constituted entity and thus, deserving perpetuation as any life would. Framing the perpetuation

of nationhood this way also reaffirms the respect accorded to Russians and other ethnic groups in the world as it implies that they are simply other biologically determined nations, trying to perpetuate themselves as well. One teacher, knowing that my native language is English, very seriously advised me not to forget my native language and to make sure that my children know it as well. With the domination of English in the contemporary world, this admonition seemed unnecessary at best, but her statement underscores the fact that she, as did many others with whom I spoke, saw the American nation as simply another nation, like the Sakha nation, trying to survive and perpetuate itself in the world.

With the principles discussed above as the ideological basis for national school development, Zhirkov (1992) further outlines the specific steps through which effective national schools could be created in the republic. The main steps are: a) translation of the current best textbooks into Sakha, b) translation of methodological materials into Sakha, and c) the creation of original textbooks and methodological materials in the Sakha language. The creation of original materials is important in order to reflect the unique cultural background of the Sakha people and thereby effectively transmit information in a manner more easily comprehended by Sakha students. Along with this comes the necessity of training teachers to be able to teach in the Sakha language and to be able to teach Sakha national culture.

In the early 1990's, with Zhirkov as the Minister of Education, a number of measures were taken toward implementing these steps. The Sakha philological department at Yakutsk State University (YSU) was expanded in order to train specialists who could aid in the broader implementation of these cultural education goals, a number of textbooks were translated, and even a few original textbooks were created in the Sakha language.

However, as the political climate evolved away from concerns over ethnicity and economic resources became scarcer, the funding began drying up and the ideological commitment of republic authorities to indigenous education began to waver. Zhirkov was replaced as Minister of Education, textbooks already written were not printed or halted during printing, and the number of students entering the Sakha philological faculty at YSU decreased. This is not to say that the current administration is any less committed to the preservation of Sakha language and culture, but rather that practical challenges and other considerations have arisen to complicate the process. It is amidst these challenges that I journeyed to my specific field site, the city of Nyurba, to observe and examine the way in which educators at one particular school are working to maintain, revive and transform Sakha language and culture despite these challenges.

2.6.   NYURBA SCHOOL NUMBER ONE

What I have presented thus far are the goals for the national schools as envisioned by the first minister of education of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia), as they were expressed almost 15 years ago. From the interviews I conducted with leaders of the revival movement, their goals are generally the same today. Of course, intervening financial and political challenges have made the full and effective implementation of the national schools more difficult. However, educators throughout the Republic remain committed to Zhirkov's original goals and to the eventual success of national schools. In promoting the preservation of Sakha culture and language, educators must find ways to create a common sense of ethnicity for their students that makes sense in the context of the Russian Federation and in the global economy. Educators, through curricular design, textbooks, and teaching strategies are working to find a delicate balance that

ensures the continued stability of the region, economic success of their students, and the preservation and revitalization of Sakha ethnicity.

According to Minister of Education, Gabysheva, as of March, 2005, there are 426 national schools in the Sakha Republic, primarily located in villages and small cities, where the Sakha language is still the primary language of communication. Every national school has the right to choose its own structure with regard to language of instruction, so every school is slightly different in that respect. Nyurba School Number One, like many other schools, uses Sakha language as the primary language of instruction through the seventh grade, largely converting to Russian in the eighth through eleventh grades (the school system in the Sakha Republic only has eleven grades). I say "largely," because teachers and students there all speak Sakha as their mother-tongue and thus, teachers often use a mixture of Sakha language and Russian in the classroom despite exclusively Russian textbooks and teaching materials. The shift to Russian is motivated partly by the lack of materials available at this level in the Sakha language and partly by the widespread view that using Russian exclusively in the later grades will ease the transition to university, where courses and coursework are conducted almost entirely in Russian.

In the following sections I will examine a number of courses required at Nyurba School Number One through which teachers aim to develop ethnic consciousness. First, like all Sakha national schools, Nyurba School Number One has a strong program of Sakha language and literature. They also teach a required Sakha national culture class, independent of language and literature, which is offered by many national schools but not all. Nyurba School Number One further requires students to take one of two additional courses, *kyys kuo* and *urung wolan*, for males and females respectively, which are designed to prepare students for adult life as Sakha

individuals. Finally, teachers of other subjects attempt to incorporate aspects of traditional Sakha culture into their courses to the greatest extent possible. Thus, an important part of technical education classes is the production of traditional handicrafts, physical education courses include learning traditional Sakha sports, and music and art classes require students to study traditional art forms and motifs in conjunction with Russian and European ones.

2.6.1. Learning Sakha Culture in a Global Context

In my first observation of the national culture course at Nyurba School Number One, the teacher began the lesson with the question, "What are the three major world religions?" The answer was "Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism." He then asked the question, "What is the religion of the Sakha people?" This question confused the 7th graders (and me) a bit, and each of the three major religions were thrown out as possible guesses. The correct answer, to my surprise, was "Christianity." I was surprised because I had heard many times since my arrival that the Sakha had their own traditional religion, sometimes described as shamanic, other times as pagan. However, as the teacher explained, the Sakha adopted Christianity in the 19th Century. Therefore, Christianity was the correct answer.

The lesson, ultimately, turned out to be a lesson on the religion of the Sakha people prior to the adoption of Christianity. However, this was not religious education. The teacher never talked about the gods of the Sakha as if they actually existed, but rather as just one belief system of many in the world, constantly comparing it to the three major religions. The teacher first briefly discussed the central tenets of the three major religions and then, explained in-depth the levels of heaven and the pantheon of Gods in traditional Sakha religion, prefacing explanations with, "The Sakha believe—."

The above description illustrates a number of ways in which educators at Nyurba School Number One negotiate the construction of Sakha ethnicity. First, by emphasizing the adoption of Christianity by the Sakha, the teacher was able to do a few different things. He was able to avoid excluding Christian Sakha from the Sakha ethnic group. There are many Christian Sakha, albeit not large enough a percentage to use Christianity as a defining characteristic of ethnicity. While he described the traditional religion as "Sakha," by recognizing the adoption of Christianity by the Sakha, he was further able to circumvent the fact that few, if any, of the students actually practiced the "Sakha" religion or even knew anything about this religion. This was apparent in the complete lack of knowledge most of the students displayed in response to the teacher's questions about the characteristics of the religion. In this way, he was able to present the *heritage* of the Sakha religion as something that defines the Sakha, while avoiding the necessity of contemporary Sakha participation in that religion. In addition, emphasizing Christianity also served to acknowledge Russian influence on the Sakha and the long history of interaction and cooperation between the two cultures.

The above description also illustrates how educators construct ethnicity through contextualizing Sakha culture as one culture among many. By discussing the three major religions in the world initially, the teacher was able to place traditional Sakha religion in the context of major world religions. The aim of contextualizing Sakha culture as one culture among many is echoed in the recommended curriculum for the national culture class published by the Ministry of Education. For instance, the authors of the curriculum suggest presenting the work of Sakha fine and performing artists in comparison with world art, emphasizing that Sakha artists have produced art of "world standard" (published in Zhirkov 1992). In addition, the larger secondary school curriculum for national schools includes curricula for a class on Russian

culture and one on World culture. The curricula for these two courses, while not as well developed and extensive as the one for Sakha culture, are analogous to the curriculum for Sakha national culture with sections discussing folk customs and beliefs, folk art, modern art and architecture, etc. Despite the fact that I was unaware of either of these two classes being taught at any school in the Republic, the intent appears to have been for students to receive Sakha culture as one culture among many, each having its own merits.

Contextualizing Sakha culture as one culture among many serves two ends. It asserts the nationhood of the Sakha among the established nations of the world through implicit and explicit comparison of Sakha culture with Russian, French, or British culture. In addition it serves to minimize the possibility of destructive "nationalism" through encouraging the respect of other cultures, including Russian.

Finally, educators at Nyurba School Number One work to build up those elements of Sakha culture that make it distinctive. An explanatory note that prefaces the published Sakha national culture curriculum explains, "Only those peoples who have their own language and distinctive culture, national awareness, and spiritual roots may escape assimilation and remain as a nation" (in Zhirkov 1992: 142). Thus, the Sakha, like Russians, Americans, English and French, perpetuate their own distinctive culture. The teacher in the above description used the heritage of the Sakha religion as one example of the distinctiveness of Sakha culture, pointing out that it has characteristics of other major religions, but, ultimately is unique and distinct. The national schools, then, have the role of making sure Sakha students know those elements of their heritage that make it distinctive.

2.6.2.   Maintaining Sakha Language in a Bilingual Society

In my interviews with Yakut language and literature[2] teachers at Nyurba School Number, the teachers all expressed uncertainty and concern over how to teach the language. The fact that all languages are continually evolving and incorporating aspects of other languages not withstanding, the teachers recounted learning in university how to speak the Sakha language "purely." By "purely," they meant learning how to speak without recourse to inordinate numbers of Russian loan words. However, these Russian words have become an integral part of the language in everyday conversation and their students often do not know the original Sakha words. As one teacher expressed, "Now we have new words, too many new words from the Russian language. It is difficult to teach just in Sakha because the children use both languages so much. Sometimes it is difficult to know which words to use."

Despite this difficulty, the teachers are trying to teach the more "pure" form of the language. For all of the teachers with whom I spoke, the preservation of language is integral to the perpetuation of the Sakha ethnicity and maintaining its distinctiveness from Russian is crucial to this preservation. Furthermore, there is a traditional belief in the magical power of language that makes retaining (and reviving) the "purity" of the language especially important. An illustration of this belief is a well-known fable, which explains that the Sakha people have large heads because they love their language very much. Another Yakut language and literature teacher, in response to my concluding request for additional comments about the revival movement, said, "The Yakut language is an ancient language and it will live still. Language is

---

[2] This class, in official documents and in conversations was always referred to as "Yakut" language and literature, rather than Sakha language and literature at least when these documents and conversations were in Russian. I speculate that this is for one or both of the following reasons: 1) In the Russian language, the word Yakut is declinable unlike the word "Sakha" and thus makes more sense grammatically when people are speaking Russian and/or 2) This is a relatively old course and insistence upon using the word "Sakha" in the Russian language in place of "Yakut" is a relatively new practice and has not become enormously widespread.

the main thing, it is our wealth, that is why we must study our language more…It has many connections with other languages, other peoples. The Sakha people have always loved their language and we want to speak more purely."

Language teachers further expressed a remarkable acceptance of and satisfaction with their bilingual society. Despite the emphasis on speaking purely, when I asked teachers directly about the impact of Russian language for Sakha culture (see appendix **B3**), all of them said that, ultimately, it had a positive influence. If teachers suggested that Russian loan words caused problems with teaching the language, they qualified it by insisting that knowing two languages only made Sakha students that much more capable and able to succeed. The idea expressed by one such teacher encapsulates these seemingly contradictory sentiments,

> For the language, [Russian] is negative because it interferes with the teaching of Sakha language as there are so many loan words. However, the Russian language is necessary for us, for development, for understanding between the different nations. It is negative only in teaching.

For this teacher, as well as for the others with whom I spoke, Russian has become an integral part of their society and culture. In several informal conversations with teachers, I pushed them to imagine a world in which Sakha people spoke only the Sakha language. I always received a negative reaction to this idea. The teachers want their students to be equally fluent in both Sakha and Russian.

On top of the value of bilingualism, teachers argued that learning their native language more "purely" helps students to learn other languages, including Russian, more effectively. As another teacher expressed,

> The Russian language does not interfere with the studying of Yakut language. Whoever learns his own language well can learn the others…I think that each language helps the other to become richer…the person who loves his native language will be able to learn other languages more purely.

29

Thus, learning a more "pure" form of Sakha does not mean that students should not effectively learn Russian. In fact, by teaching pure Sakha, the students' native language, teachers see themselves as helping students in their eventual use of Russian.

The value of knowing multiple languages is further evident in that all students are required to study English from the fifth grade, and a few study English from the first grade. Furthermore, everyone I spoke to was excited about and interested in learning English, greeting me enthusiastically with a "Hello!" everywhere I went. The desire to learn English could be explained through the economic importance of English in the world today, and does explain, in part, the choice of English as the sole foreign language at Nyurba School Number One. However, other schools with more resources require students to study English, French, German and sometimes even Japanese, Korean, or Chinese. It was not uncommon to meet people who were fluent in four, five, or even six languages.

Sakha language teachers deal with the challenges of maintaining the importance of Sakha ethnicity in a society dominated by Russian through two primary means. First, they attempt to teach the "pure" form of the language, separating it from the Russian language. Second, they promote the importance of bi- and multi-lingualism, arguing that knowing both Sakha and Russian gives Sakha students an added intellectual advantage. Expressing enthusiasm for bilingualism downplays dissatisfaction with Russian linguistic dominance in addition to maintaining the importance of the Sakha language.

2.6.3. Breaking Down the Traditional vs. Modern Dichotomy

In making the Sakha ethnicity relevant in the globalizing economy, teachers at Nyurba School Number One work to break down the dichotomy between the traditional and modern, where Sakha is associated with "traditional" and Russian (and European cultures) with "modern."

Based on my fieldwork, I believe this is exemplified in a couple of key courses. First, Nyurba School Number One requires students to take one of two courses: *kyys kuo* or *urung wolan*. These two courses translate, respectively as "Beautiful Girl," and "Strong Young Man" and are designed to socialize girls and boys into their roles as Sakha women and Sakha men, focusing on integrating traditional and modern conceptions of what it means to be Sakha. Second, in courses, such as technical education, teachers encourage the use of modern technology in creating traditional handicrafts and in other aspects of traditional Sakha culture.

The curricula published by the Ministry of Education of the Sakha Republic for *kyys kuo* and *urung wolan*, focuses largely around negotiations of individual identity in the modern world. For instance, one section in the *kyys kuo* curriculum, suggests that girls have a conversation about what it means to be a modern woman (published in Zhirkov 1992: 130). A further topic of conversation is "To be like everyone else, or to be yourself?" (ibid.) There are also sections regarding the bodily development of females, relations between family members, and about falling in love.

Importantly, however, all of these sections recommend the use of Yakut poetry and literature to help illustrate messages and include discussions of traditional Yakut dress and customs relating to the given topics. For instance, another section of the curriculum is entitled "Yakut ethical norms of behavior." The author explains this topic as: "Traditional and modern understandings about honesty, shame, female modesty, expectations of female behavior and moral qualities" (ibid: 131). Combined with the title of the section, which emphasizes the ethnic nature of ethics, the curriculum implies that Yakut is not simply equated with the traditional but rather that Yakut can also be modern as well.

I saw firsthand attempts to break down this dichotomy in my classroom observations. For instance, I observed a session of *Kyys Kuo* about traditional Sakha bridal dress. The main topic for the session was how wealthy Sakha brides dressed in the past, what the different parts of the outfits symbolized, etc. However, the teacher continually brought in questions such as, "Could someone wear this type of outfit today?" With this particular question, a discussion ensued with many of the girls claiming one couldn't, fashions have changed and that one would be ridiculed. Others claimed that one could wear such an outfit as an expression of ethnic pride, citing the recent appearance of some traditional Sakha weddings in Nyurba. This type of discussion was common, exhibiting a strong attempt on the part of teachers to both emphasize the existence of the dichotomy between traditional and modern and to find ways of combining elements of Sakha traditions with the modern world.

In the technical education class at Nyurba School Number One, teachers also exhibited an effort to break down the traditional/modern dichotomy. There is no general curriculum for this course and teachers and schools determine the skills they want their students to learn. At Nyurba School Number One, this course includes applied technical skills such as radio technology, auto-mechanics, computer programming, woodworking, and metalworking. Teachers there have managed to integrate an ethnic component into the course through explicitly teaching students how to make traditional Sakha handicrafts and encouraging ethnic themes in student projects.

First, in the woodworking section of the class, students learn how to make tables and chairs, but they also learn how to make *chorons* and other traditional wooden dishes, now only used for decoration and in certain ritual events (see APPENDIX A, Figure 7 and Figure 8). In addition, the classroom I observed had a large mammoth tusk, from which students create small ivory sculptures, another traditional Sakha craft. In making the wood dishes, the teacher

emphasized the importance he places on the correct symbolic design of the dishes, insisting that the students make exact replicas of dishes made in the past. Despite this partial insistence of tradition, they readily use lathes and other mechanized devices to help with polishing the works.

In the metal-working class the ethnic component was rather less overt. Students in this section of the course were encouraged to design their own projects. The student projects ranged from metal sculptures of ducks, to jewelry-making machines. One project that had won awards both locally and in the republic as a whole[3] was a machine for making *korchok*, a Sakha whipped cream dish. The student had preserved the traditional style of making the dish, which uses a special instrument for hand-whipping, but mechanized it, avoiding the very long and tiring process of hand-whipping. This way, the dish turned out exactly the same as if the cream had been hand-whipped using this instrument but did not require the exhaustive effort. Many other projects similarly integrated modern technology with Sakha traditions.

In addition to the above courses, teachers from other disciplines find ways to incorporate Sakha culture into their classes, making Sakha ethnicity a vital part of students' everyday experience. For instance, physical education teachers teach traditional Sakha sports in their classes. Also, music and art teachers incorporate an interesting mix of Sakha, Russian, and international art forms and motifs into their courses, encouraging students to try their hands at a range of different forms, styles and techniques (see Appendix A, Figure 7 -14). All of this creates an atmosphere in which Sakha students are bombarded every day with the message that they are part of an ethnic group with a distinctive language, set of customs, and heritage that are alive and relevant in the modern world.

---

[3] Students are encouraged to participate in contests in order to master such crafts and to win acclaim for themselves and their school. Areas of competition range include technical inventions, artwork, and performance of Sakha poetry, music, dance and theater (see APPENDIX A: Figure 7-14).

2.7. CHALLENGES TO CULTURAL REVIVAL IN THE SCHOOLS

Despite these successes, significant obstacles to full and effective development of national schools are growing. Lack of financial resources and the ensuing priority decisions that must be made create significant problems when it comes to implementing strong national schools. Further, new federal standards and university entrance requirements are making absolute mastery of Russian imperative for students and have led to decreased support for native language instruction in the general population as well as among school administrators. Finally, integration into the world economy has increased the priority level of technical fields and foreign languages, especially English, resulting in decreased relative priority for ethnic education overall.

Since the abandonment of socialism and the collapse of the Russian economy in the 1990's, school systems throughout the Russian Federation have had much less money to work with. Educational decentralization, in addition to a current lack of federal support for ethnically-oriented education, has resulted in the republics shouldering the entire financial burden for creating the new infrastructure needed to implement such programming. As diamond profits, the Republic's primary source of revenue, go predominantly to the federal government, the Sakha Republic has few other resources from which to draw. Therefore, financial decentralization has meant that few of Zhirkov's recommendations for an effective revival of national schools have been fully implemented. Even the first step of translating textbooks and teaching materials into the Sakha language has not been completed, much less the creation of original materials in the Sakha language. In the excitement of the early nineties, a number of textbooks were begun and even completed, such as the English textbook (taught from the Sakha rather than the Russian), *Beneath the Nine Heavens* by Vera Semyonova and Evdokia Vasilieva. However, as with *Beneath the Nine Heavens*, funding evaporated and printing stopped for many of these books,

with hardly enough copies in circulation to be used on a wide scale. In Nyurba School Number One, students often do not have enough copies of their Russian-language textbooks, much less Sakha materials, and have to share or leave the textbooks at school so that different classes can use them simultaneously.

The funding crunch has far wider implications, too, in addition to resources not being widely available. Although leaders of the revival movement insist that effective national schools prepare Sakha students for modern life more successfully than equivalent Russian-language schools, others claim that native language education impedes effective mastery of Russian and creates problems for students when they inevitably have to speak Russian for participation in the larger society. Without effective materials and infrastructure for native language education, students receiving this education are going to be at a disadvantage giving credence to the detractors' perspective. Furthermore, national schools in the Sakha Republic are largely confined to rural areas, which have even greater funding problems. Opponents of native language education can easily point to the seeming greater success of the Russian language schools in the republic, even though these schools are typically found in larger cities and have greater financial resources to begin with. This creates a societal attitude against national schools and native language education, making parents believe their children will be better off going to Russian schools. This can result in a slippery slope, whereby national schools become increasingly marginalized and receive fewer and fewer resources.

Another, related issue is new stringent federal standards and university entrance requirements that in emphasizing other subjects, deemphasize the importance of knowledge of Sakha language and culture. A new series of Federation-wide exams for university entrance has been implemented called the National State Examinations (NSE). Each student wishing to enter

university must take three exams. One must be the Russian language exam, one must be on the subject in which the student wishes to specialize, and the third can be of their choice but should be related to their specialty. The students who score the highest on their exams receive government funding to study. Students who do not receive these scholarships cannot typically afford to go to university and so competition is tight.

This has created a ripple effect at the high schools. First of all, not just mastery of Russian but exceptional facility with the language is necessary since all students must take the Russian exam. Students for whom Russian is a second language are naturally at a disadvantage, whether they study in Russian language schools or in national schools, as they compete against native Russian speakers. Second of all, proficiency in one area has become extremely valuable. In response, some schools, including Nyurba School Number One, have implemented profile classes, in which students choose the track they want in the 7th grade (in some schools even earlier), and have intensive study of this subject. In Nyurba School Number One, the tracks are very broad: humanitarian or technical. In other places in the republic, schools have specialized even more, such that students have intensive study of single subjects, such as English, biology, or math. This system creates little room for the continued importance of culture classes such as those I describe above. University students can specialize in Sakha language and literature and thus, take the Sakha language and literature NSE. However, as the economic benefits of specializing in Sakha language and literature are not very high, only a small percentage of students actually choose to study the subject and thus, only a small percentage take the exam.

Finally, with post-Soviet integration of Russia into the world economy and a new sovereignty that permits the Sakha Republic to interact directly with other polities, pressures to prepare students for international participation have mounted. For instance, foreign languages

are integral to the educational system. This is not surprising given the above discussed value of multilingualism. However, English was recently declared the third official language of the Sakha Republic and, therefore, every student in the entire Republic must study some English. Many students study other foreign languages as well. At one national school I visited in the capital city, in addition to the usual Russian, Sakha and English, secondary school students were required to study French and German, with Japanese offered as an after-school option. With all of this emphasis on foreign languages, it is difficult for the schools to maintain in-depth provision of native language education.

Furthermore, schools feel an intense pressure to "modernize," in an international context that defines modernization as Russification and/or Europeanization. Incorporating computers and other technology into the classroom is necessarily expensive and takes a large part of the financial resources of the republic. When such technology is associated with Russian and European culture, it is difficult to maintain the value of Sakha culture as a contemporary, modern, and valuable culture. It is in response to this problem that teachers' attempts to break down of the traditional/modern dichotomy become integral. By convincing students that being Sakha is not incongruous with being modern, educators try to maintain the viability of Sakha ethnicity in the global economy.

In my discussion with the Sakha Minster of Education, Gabysheva, I heard many positive things about the necessity for native language instruction and the importance of the educational system as a site of culture revival. However, two days after this discussion, I discovered that the Ministry is removing all financial support for national culture classes, requiring schools that want to continue teaching them to find the financial resources elsewhere. Surprised, I returned to my tape recording of our conversation. I realized that despite her support for cultural revival within

the interview, she had also emphasized technology and integration with the first world. The Ministry's decision to remove funding for national culture classes does not indicate that the leaders do not value these classes. It is simply that the Ministry had to reprioritize the distribution of valuable financial resources.

In addition to all of the above issues, there is the simple fact that students at national schools are trying to accomplish everything students at Russian language schools are accomplishing as well as master Sakha language and culture. As I mentioned above, the Ministry of Education publishes 7 recommended curricula, 4 for national schools and 3 for Russian language schools. In each of the curricula for national schools, students have more courses and spend more time at school than those in the Russian language schools. It is not surprising that many educators and officials feel that Sakha students have a greater educational burden than Russian students. When the Sakha language and culture has little perceived practical, economic value in the larger society, it is difficult to retain strong support for this greater burden. The challenge for educators intent upon maintaining the importance of Sakha language and culture then is to redefine what it means to be Sakha so that Sakha ethnicity is perceived as relevant and practical in the future.

2.8. CONCLUSIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

The revival and renewal of the national school in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia) is an important example of the ways in which minority ethnicities of the Russian Federation are working to reconstruct their identities in a state dominated linguistically and culturally by Russian. From establishing school museums (Heikinnen 2001) to rewriting of history textbooks (Graney 1999), and redefining the experience of residential schooling (Bloch 2004), ethnic groups throughout

the Russian Federation are using local educational systems in various ways to establish ethnic unity, distinctiveness, and relevance in the context of the Russian Federation and the global economy. The Sakha attempts are important for the way in which Sakha educators negotiate these factors, as they endeavor to maintain the relevance of Sakha ethnicity in the face of all the challenges described above.

Sakha educators have a number of different factors to juggle in designing educational programs geared specifically to promote Sakha ethnicity. First and foremost is the simple economics of their situation. All levels of government are stretched financially and the Sakha educational administration has little resources to devote to cultural programming that is deprioritized relative to building strong science and mathematics programs. In addition, a large part of their attempts to assert themselves on the world-stage, somewhat independently of the Russian Federation, require an emphasis on foreign languages. While most everyone in theory supports the idea behind national education, few would list it as the number one priority of the educational system.

Second, the Sakha Republic is a part of the Russian Federation and, while enjoying a good degree of autonomy, is required to comply with certain Federal standards that do not emphasize local languages and cultures. Many of the classes and topics that emphasize Sakha ethnicity are taught in addition to a relatively standard curriculum. Federal examinations and even university acceptances and scholarships depend upon deep knowledge of subjects, seldom including native language and culture. Thus, Sakha language and culture necessarily take second place to Russian and even to the encroaching importance of English.

Despite these obstacles, however, the movement is still alive and strong in the Sakha Republic. Despite the Sakha government removing funding for national culture classes,

39

individual schools are diverting precious local resources to implement the programs anyway. There seems to be an almost palpable fear among Sakha educators that the Sakha language will disappear in the near future and with the language, the Sakha nation itself. For those with a strong sense of membership in this nation, this possibility is disastrous, tantamount to the death of the individual. Thus, administrators and teachers continue to teach in the Sakha language and champion traditional folk arts as well as the existence of a distinctive Sakha world-view.

However, because of the many challenges they face, educators have to promote Sakha ethnicity as compatible with the Republic's participation in the Russian Federation and in the global economy. Thus, Sakha nationhood is asserted in comparison to other, established nations including Russia as a way of both establishing their distinctiveness and working against destructive "nationalism" that might challenge the continued Sakha membership in the Russian Federation. Furthermore, national school teachers emphasize the value of bi- and multi-lingualism and take pride in the extraordinary ability of their students to participate in Sakha, Russian, and international arenas. Finally, educators work to break down a historical attitude that excludes Sakha from "modern" in order to promote the relevance and viability of Sakha ethnicity in the modern world. Promoting Sakha language and culture in these ways allows Sakha educators to celebrate the distinctiveness, unity, and importance of Sakha culture without posing threats to political and economic relations with the Russian Federation and the international community.

3.   LITERATURE REVIEW: EDUCATION AND ETHNICITY IN THE SOVIET UNION AND THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

3.1.   INTRODUCTION

In a recent campaign speech, Russian President Vladimir Putin professed the need to recognize the "common values" of all peoples living in the Russian Federation. His use of the term *rossiski* (all Russian citizens) rather than *russki* (ethnic-Russians), suggests an attempt at building a Russian nation with a common civic identity that transcends the ethnic identity of the different groups living within the state (Kolstø and Blakkisrud 2004). However, the decentralization of the 1990's has led to a number of ethnic revitalization projects that pose challenges to the development of a cohesive *rossiski* identity. These projects become particularly important in the educational system as schools are important vehicles of socialization and identity formation. In this literature review I analyze the existing literature on the legacy of Soviet educational policy, post-Soviet educational reform in the Russian Federation, and contemporary challenges regions and ethnic groups in the Federation pose to federal nation-building projects.

The contemporary tension over local versus federal identity construction is part of an ongoing process of federal vs. regional/Russian vs. non-Russian power negotiations that began with the organization of the Soviet empire as a federation of ethnically-based republics. In the early stage of the Soviet Union, Soviet authorities gave primacy to non-Russian ethnic groups in "their" territories as part of their policy of "National in form, Soviet in content." As the economic and political importance of the Russian language and culture increased throughout the twentieth century, commitment of the Soviet leadership to "national forms" dwindled and "bourgeois nationalism" became increasingly suspect. In many cases, Soviet persecution of

41

nationalism was interpreted as a form of ethnic persecution or forced Russification. With the relaxation of central control in the 1980's and the advent of *perestroika* and *glasnost*, ethnic and nationalist movements gathered steam. All of the union republics of the Soviet Union, such as Georgia, the Ukraine, and Kazakhstan have now broken away to form their own nation-states. The ethnically-based republics and territories of the Russian Federation, for example the Sakha Republic (Yakutia), Tatarstan, and Bashkortostan still remain tied to Moscow, although with increased sovereignty. The only Russian Federation Republic to have attempted full independence was Chechnya and that struggle is still underway.

From "national schools" that provided native-language education to non-Russians in the 1920's and 30's to the centralized curriculum that presented a uniform Soviet "content," the educational system of the Soviet Union played a central role in transmitting the ideology of the central state apparatus. The collapse of the Soviet Union allowed educational reformers to transform the system, making room for alternative view points and ideologies. The reformers who drafted the 1992 Law of Education of the Russian Federation aimed to shift the educational system away from the traditional society-centered approach toward a more child-centered approach which focused on how to mold society and education to meet the needs of individual students. Through decentralization and democratization, the reforms gave much greater control over the educational system to regional and local administrations.

This decentralization further has allowed regional and ethnic elites greater control to use the educational system to refocus loci of identification around regions or ethnic groups. This refocusing naturally presents a number of challenges to Putin's efforts at nation-building described in the opening paragraph. Pål Kolstø (2004) has suggested that two, often complimentary processes present the biggest challenges to the federal project. In these

42

processes, "regional nation-building" and "ethnic consolidation," as Kolstø terms them, regional and ethnic elites promote the unity and primacy of a region or ethnic group. Educational systems have a key role to play in these identity negotiations as they are highly authoritative vehicles of socialization, representing to each new generation "a sanctioned version of human knowledge and culture" (Lisovskaya and Karpov 1999: 527). They can help to refocus the locus of identification around a region or ethnic group, participate in federal nation-building projects, or play a significant role in creating a balance between federal, regional, and ethnic allegiances. The experiences of various ethnically-based republics in the Russian Federation illustrate each of these possibilities.

This literature review is intended as an overview of the current literature regarding education and ethnicity in the post-Soviet Russian Federation and in the Soviet Union. This is necessary to contextualize my research on ethnically-oriented programming in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia), an ethnically-based region of the Russian Federation, in which educational leaders are negotiating the meaning of Sakha ethnicity within interlocking local, national, and transnational contexts. The review is divided into four sections. The first section presents a number of theories on the legacy of Soviet educational and cultural policy and ties these to the literature on the political situation of the Sakha Republic today. The second section examines the literature on post-Soviet educational reform from shortly after the collapse of the Soviet Union to the present. The third section presents the theoretical framework used by the authors of Kolstø and Blakkisrud (2004) for understanding the tension between nation-building efforts and ethnic and regional movements in the post-Soviet era. The final section presents a number of different case-studies of the various ways in which elites of polities within the Russian Federation have negotiated ethnic and regional identities and how these interact with federal

nation-building attempts. All of the sections serve to contextualize post-Soviet educational reforms and ethnic revitalization within the Sakha Republic (Yakutia).

3.2.   THE LEGACY OF SOVIET EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL POLICY

Many analysts see the roots of contemporary ethnic movements of the former Soviet Union in a contradictory Soviet policy of "ethno-federalism" in which the USSR was organized as a federation of ethnically-based republics and regions (Martin 2001, Simon, 1991, Hughes and Sasse 2002). Despite the negative press the Soviet Union has received in the West for its treatment of non-Russian ethnic groups, Martin (2001), Slezkine (1994) and Smith (2001) argue that early Soviet policy not only tolerated the development of ethnic identities but, in fact, encouraged it. Both Stalin and Lenin firmly believed that "Sovietisation" could only be realized through ethnic self-rule, whereby positions of prestige were occupied by members of the dominant ethnic group in a given locality and all ethnicities received public education in their native languages. This legacy continued throughout the Soviet period as non-Russian leaders retained political dominance despite population shifts that put ethnic-Russians in the majority. However, commitment to native-language education programs waned with the perceived necessity for a common language and identity for the entire Soviet Union.

The Sakha Republic (Yakutia), formerly the Yakut Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR), is one ethnically-based region of the Russian Federation, formerly the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (RSFSR) in which the Sakha (aka Yakuts) retained political dominance until the present, despite a population shift that resulted in Russians being in the majority. As with other places in the USSR, however, the value of Sakha language and culture decreased throughout the Soviet period as a result of Russification policies and the dominance of

Russian language and culture, generally. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, many Sakha leaders have been pushing for a revival of Sakha language and culture. This essay aims to analyze Soviet educational and cultural policy and how it has impacted the development of the Sakha ethnic movement in the Yakut ASSR and the Sakha Republic (Yakutia).

3.2.1. Early Soviet Policy

Early Soviet Policy "nationalities policy" was characterized by strong support and even preference for the non-Russian ethnic groups of the union. In the face of significant opposition within the Bolshevik Party, Lenin managed to include in the Bolshevik Party Program of 1917 a clause retaining the rights of ethnic groups to public education in their native language (Smith 2001). Furthermore, Stalin himself championed the rights of ethnic groups to at least a modicum of self-determination and pushed for the organization of the Soviet Union as a union of ethnically-based republics (Slezkine 1994, Martin 2001, Smith 2001). Jeremy Smith quotes Stalin at length in a passage that conveys well his commitment to these ideals:

> The real sovietization of these regions, their conversion into Soviet countries closely bound with central Russia into one integral state, is *inconceivable* without the widespread organization of local schools, without the creation of courts, administrative bodies, organs of authority, etc., staffed with people acquainted with the life and language of the population…this is precisely putting Soviet autonomy into practice; for Soviet autonomy is nothing but the sum total of all these institutions clothed in Ukrainian, Turkestan, Kirghiz etc. forms. (2001: 57)

Slezkine (1994), Martin (2001) and Smith all argue that both Stalin and Lenin believed that the assimilation of all the peoples of the Soviet Union required a recognition of ethnic identity, such that Soviet policy would be administered through the lens of ethnicity. As such, their official policy was "national in form, soviet in content," (national in this context referring to non-Russian ethnic groups rather than to the Soviet Union). Schools and local administrative organs were to

be staffed with individuals of the local ethnic group and official business was to be conducted in the local language, including schooling.

A large component of the Soviet ethno-federal policy was the creation and development of national schools (Slezkine 1994, Smith 2001), which were schools designed to provide members of non-Russian ethnic groups with instruction in their native language. This was part of the Soviet campaign to eradicate illiteracy and as such, written languages were created where there were previously none and textbooks published in as many as 104 languages throughout the Soviet Union (Smith 2001). In the Sakha Republic, national schools were created for the Sakha and many of the small-numbered ethnic groups that also resided in the territory (Robbek 1998).

The other major component of early Soviet ethno-federalism is what Terry Martin (2001), compares to contemporary affirmative action programs. If the regions were to be self-governing and led by people "acquainted with the life and language of the population," they would have to be staffed by members of the non-Russian ethnic groups. However, by and large these ethnic groups were not as well educated as the Russian population. To correct this imbalance, affirmative-action style programs were implemented in the 1920's for university admissions and for government jobs, with the aim of creating local and regional bureaucracies staffed with members of the locally and regionally dominant ethnicities (Martin 2001). Despite some ideological qualms on the part of some Bolsheviks, this resulted in governments of territories such as the Sakha Republic being staffed largely by members of the ethnic groups for whom the territory was named. Ethnic groups that did not have "their own" territories were supposed to be protected through a system of ever smaller autonomous territorial units, but in reality often disappeared or were subsumed by the larger ethnic groups (Slezkine 1994).

46

In the 1930's, Stalin declared that socialism had been achieved in the Soviet Union and, as such, many of the early policies benefiting non-Russians were reversed. Smith (2001) is quick to point out that this was not a complete reversal but simply a backpedaling on the trends that had pushed the development of ethnicity. Prior to 1938, ethnic groups supposedly received all their education in their mother-tongue under a policy that deliberately avoided establishing Russian as the dominant language of the empire. In 1938, a law was passed that required all schools in the Soviet Union to teach Russian at least as a second language[4] (Blitstein 2001, Smith 2001). Smith (2001) argues that this law "certainly has to be seen as a step towards the promotion of a single, Russian-led Soviet identity" (61) and Blitstein (2001) largely agrees with him. However, Smith qualifies his statement by emphasizing that the law in and of itself did not change the direction of Soviet policy and must be seen in conjunction with a number of other policy changes. Either way, he also notes that in 1934 school books were being produced in 104 languages and in 1955 only 59 languages were being used, pointing to a huge decline in national schooling after the late 1930's (61).

3.2.2. The Educational Reforms of 1958 and "Thesis 19"

The next major change in Soviet educational policy came with the reforms of 1958, which included a clause known as "Thesis 19." Thesis 19 declared that students in the ethnically-based territories were facing a burden in comparison to Russians as they were required to study three languages: the language of the territory, Russian, and a foreign language (Bilinsky 1962). Thesis 19 reduced the number of required languages to 2 for all students in the USSR and introduced the supposedly "democratic" idea of parental choice in language of instruction. This meant that

---

[4] This law was called: "On the compulsory study of the Russian language in schools of national republics and regions" (Smith 2001: 61).

parents (non-Russian and Russian) could choose for their children to study either Russian or the language of the territory in which they resided but they did not have to study both as they had in the past. This supposedly freed non-Russian students from having to learn Russian, but, Bilinsky and Smith both argue that in practice it simply resulted in releasing Russians living in ethnically-based republics from having to learn the local or regional non-Russian language(s). In addition, many non-Russian parents began choosing Russian over their native language due to the increasing social importance of the Russian language. Both Bilinsky and Smith argue that this policy was instrumental in further reducing the vitality of non-Russian languages and furthering the dominance of Russian (Smith 2001, Bilinsky 1962).

The years after the reforms of 1958 and before *perestroika* in the 1980's are confusing ones for the analysis of Soviet nationalities' policy. Smith (2001) points to the lack of official data and a plethora of anecdotal evidence from non-Russian regions that has produced an impression, especially among western scholars, of a period in which non-Russian ethnicity and language was actively suppressed by Soviet leaders, with non-Russian languages actually banned in some areas. However, both Smith and Slezkine (1994) argue that the Soviet leadership, at least officially, remained committed to ethnic pluralism and, as such, ethno-federalism remained as did national education, albeit greatly reduced from the days of Lenin and Stalin.

3.2.3.   Soviet Policy and the Sakha Republic

In the Yakut ASSR, the 1950's were a time of tremendous change in the republic. With the discovery of diamonds in the region, massive influxes of Russian immigrants shifted the population balance in favor of Russians. In 1926, the Sakha comprised 82.6% of the population. In 1970, they comprised only 43% with Russians comprising 47.3% and other immigrant nationalities comprising the bulk of the remaining 9% (Lynn and Fryer 1998: 574). By 1989, the

percentage of Sakha had been further reduced to 33.4% (ibid). Despite this change, Soviet ethno-federal policies kept ethnic-Sakha in the majority of positions of prestige in the republic. However, Russians dominated in industry. This, combined with federal-level Soviet policy that was more favorable to Russian language and culture, created an environment in which Sakha linguistic and cultural forms were increasingly less valued vis-à-vis Russian ones.

Different analysts report differing degrees of state-mandated Russification in the Yakut ASSR. Khazanov claims that "In the 1960's, the Yakut schools were ordered to teach only in Russian beginning in the seventh grade" (Khazanov 1995: 178). However, Smith (2001) writes that in the Yakut ASSR, "the national languages were in use up to the eighth grade" (64) and Kerr (1994) claims that throughout the Soviet period Yakuts continued to have education in their mother-tongue until the ninth grade (61-63). The degree to which mother-tongue education was in use in the Sakha Republic during this time is obviously not clear and is probably a combination of all three. However, the analysts all do agree that the amount of native language education that the Sakha received during this time was exceptional for non-Russian ethnic groups of the RSFSR, with only Bashkir and Tatar children receiving more, retaining native language education throughout primary and secondary education (Kerr 1994, Smith 2001). Both the Bashkir and Tatar ethnic revitalization movements have been explored in some depth. As the Sakha revitalization movement, especially with regard to education, has not been explored in particular depth and the Sakha maintained relatively strong ethnically-oriented educational programming, it is an important case to examine in the post-Soviet context.

The status of native language education in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia), both historically and in the present, is further complicated by other intervening variables. Smith (2001) points out the need to take into account the enormous differences between urban and rural

areas then and now. Indeed, Khazanov (1995) points out that in a region in which 95% of total ethnic Sakha claim to speak the Sakha language fluently, only 16% of urban Sakha school children do so. It is obvious that as cities developed in the republic, largely centered around mining, Russian became the dominant language in urban areas. And as the economy of the republic as a whole has become dominated by mining and cities are naturally the economic, political and cultural centers of the republic, Russian has become the language and culture of prestige within the republic.

With the relaxation of central control in the 1980's, the Sakha ethnic movement began to flourish again. A cultural organization from the 1920's, *Sakha Omuk*, was revived and persecuted cultural leaders were rehabilitated as ethnic martyrs. Traditional Sakha names became popular again for children born during this time, and more people of mixed ethnicity began identifying themselves as Sakha. In addition, Balzer and Vinokurova (1996) describe a number of small incidents of violence between Sakha and Russians that occurred in the 1980's. While Balzer and Vinokurova downplay the characterization of these as instances of "ethnic conflict," Khazanov (1995) emphasizes their importance as manifestations of deeply rooted interethnic tensions that have the possibility of erupting in larger-scale violence.

In 1990, the Yakut ASSR declared independence, eventually becoming the Sakha Republic (Yakutia), an autonomous republic within the new Russian Federation. Lynn and Fryer (1998) argue that Sakha political leaders have relied heavily on the ethno-territorial nature of the republic in establishing the sovereignty of the autonomous republic, pointing out that the Sakha festival *ysakh*, banned during the Soviet period, has become a state holiday and perhaps the most important state holiday of Yakutia. However, Balzer (1995), while recognizing attempts toward "Sakhaisation," argues that in order to stave off strikes and even the possibility of a north-south

division of the republic (Russians dominate more in the south), Sakha leaders have had to modify their rhetoric and convince ethnic Russians of their importance and place in the republic and in republic politics.

3.3. EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN THE POST-SOVIET ERA

Webber (2000) argues that in the 1990's, educational reform in the Russian Federation has been focused on breaking down the older Soviet ideology without particular concern to new ideologies that might arise in its place. Central to this was the trend of decentralization, which allowed regions and localities a much greater degree of control over the educational system and, thus, a greater influence over the ideologies propagated in it. However, in addition to decentralization there were some broader philosophical trends, such as a commitment to democracy and liberalization of the education system, which united reformers at the federal level. These reforms laid the groundwork and impetus for the reforms at regional and local levels and were important in the implementation of ethnically-oriented school programming. This section is an attempt to explore the perspectives of a number of scholars regarding these reforms and how the affected practical implementation at a regional or local level.

Prior to *perestroika*, from about 1975 to 1985, a primary focus of discussions about Soviet education was how to get students into manual labor jobs (Kerr 1994: 48). The educational opportunities of the Soviet Union had created an environment in which young people were choosing higher education and white collar professions rather than the more grueling manual labor jobs. Combined with a static population growth, this meant that there were not enough workers to fill these jobs (Kerr1994: 48, Jones 1994: 6). The push, then to steer students toward manual labor jobs was part of a larger attempt to "fit the student's personality to the

needs of the economy, rather than to reorganize the way things were done to fit the needs of the individual" (Jones 1994: 4).

With the advent of *perestroika* and *glasnost* in the mid-1980's, and the concomitant political liberalization, educational researchers, journalists, administrators, and teachers began to call for sweeping reforms to introduce a child-centered approach into the educational system. Dunstan (1994) characterizes the shift that took place as a shift from *vospitanie* (upbringing) to *obuchenie* (instruction). Where the former Soviet system had emphasized the school as a site of socialization, a place of "molding" the child into an ideal Soviet citizen, the new reforms tried to remove ideology from education, replacing it with instruction whereby students could choose their own path, developing according to their own interests and abilities.

In order to move towards this goal of child-centered education, political leaders in the newly independent Russian Federation implemented a series of reforms. Webber (2000) argues that they can be characterized by six interconnected movements, which he terms: decentralization, democratization, deideoligization, differentiation/diversification, humanization, and humanitarianization. These six movements were intended to help dilute the authoritarian power of the central state apparatus by moving power toward localities and regions and introducing the idea of educational choice into the system. In this way, the reformers hoped to educate each child according to his or her own abilities. However, a number of analysts argue that the rapid pace at which the reforms were implemented and the refusal of reformers to retain and build on any aspects of the Soviet system led to a degree of fragmentation and the rise of new, equally narrow ideologies (Khasanova 2004, Lankina 2002, Webber 2000).

A trend in educational reform all over the world, decentralization is a complex process. On the one hand, it gives greater control over education to regions and localities, theoretically

allowing the educational systems to more effectively address local issues, such as "economic and manpower issues, through cultural matters, to addressing the educational needs of ethnic groups" (Webber 2000: 64). In Russia, regions, and especially ethnically-based regions were able to address linguistic and cultural needs of non-Russian populations much more effectively, through targeted development of native-language schools and courses on native cultures. In the Sakha Republic (Yakutia), for instance, attention was focused on developing native-language schools for both the Sakha, the titular ethnicity, and the many small-numbered peoples of the North (Robbek 1998, Zhirkov 1992).

The other side of decentralization, however, is inequality and a fragmented school system (Webber 2000). In poorer regions, financial hardship prevents implementation of even basic reforms and often results in a decrease in the quality of education. For instance, Webber notes that, "In 1994 the expenditure per 1000 population in the Koryakskii Autonomous Region was some 20 times that spent in the Tyumen' *oblast*'" (2000: 70). In addition, many administrators trained during the extremely centralized Soviet system were not prepared to take on the responsibilities of educational reform and fund-raising after the rapid decentralization that occurred in the early 1990's (Webber 2000: 65). Finally, the center was not prepared to deal with the inevitable fragmentation that occurred as some administrators chose paths that were perceived as harmful to the cohesiveness of the educational system as a whole (Webber 2000: 66-67). As a result of these problems, the federal government has found itself fighting for a modicum of recentralization (Webber 2000: 67).

As an important goal of decentralization, democratization was a central component of the 1992 Law on Education. Decentralization opened the way for the devolution of central ideological control and created a greater sense of control for individuals with local level

administration being more accessible and representative of a given population. Khasanova (2004) and Lisovskaya and Karpov (1998) document the plethora of textbooks, especially history textbooks, that appeared during the 1990's as individual schools and teachers could choose the textbooks they used, allowing a greater choice in the history presented to students. Furthermore, in regions with diverse ethnic composition, educational systems can offer choices in language of instruction and in the cultural education offerings (see Zhirkov 1992).

Democratization does not come without difficulties, however. Khasanova (2004) emphasizes the negative side of the wide range of history book choices: many did not meet high standards and, in fact, replaced old Soviet ideology with new, sometimes dangerous ideologies. For example, she explains that one Bashkir history writer blames the Tatars for all the troubles of the Bashkirs, referring to the Tatars' "eternal malicious hatred" of the Bashkirs. Futhermore, Webber (2000) notes that a culture of "micro-level" awareness on the part of teachers, who are often completely unaware of larger political events prevents a wide-spread public discussion of educational change and innovation, thus inhibiting the very goals of democratization.

Deideologization has many of the same components to democratization. As suggested above, reformers were intent upon destroying a Soviet ideology that had more or less crippled the social sciences and humanities, but many analysts argue that they did not consider the potential for new ideologies to arise in its place. Khasanova's (2004) history book study described above is one example of research highlighting the rise in opposing ideologies that came to replace Soviet ideology in textbooks and schools. Kerr (1994) and Webber (2000) criticize the fact that old Soviet educational programs, such as the Pioneers, a boy-scout/girl-scout like program with the explicit goal of raising good communists, were scrapped entirely because of their Communist ideological basis, rather than reforming them under new ideological

guidelines. Students were left without alternative extra-curricular opportunities and, Webber argues, many have turned to crime or neo-Nazi gangs to fill this void.

Another way through which democratization was developed is through differentiation and diversification in education. Kerr (1994) and Dunstan (1994) both emphasize the range of opportunities now offered to students in the Russian Federation in comparison to the universal curriculum of the Soviet Union. They describe how schools offer programs that cater to a range of interests, ability levels, and personal characteristics in contrast to the Soviet philosophy that insisted on seeing equality as identicality. Students who are good at or especially interested in languages can take on intensive study from the 1st grade. Gifted students are provided with extra opportunities to develop their abilities. National schools provide culturally-relevant, native-language education to non-Russians.

Despite this range of new opportunities, Dunstan (1994) argues that too much differentiation can result in greater inequality and a decrease in mobility between generations. He argues that, "Abilities, especially above-average ones, tend to be highlighted when it becomes a priority to make the most of individual potential in different ways" (1994: 75). This means that attention is often focused on gifted and talented students at the expense of aid to average and below-average students. He further emphasizes that despite the existence of opportunities for intensive study of individual subjects, "no more than two in three of Russian pupils who are actively interested had access to them in 1991" (ibid: 95). This is due to fees and stringent requirements that prevent many students from taking advantage of the opportunities. Thus, supporters argue that differentiation and diversification focus attention on individual students and their individual abilities, while detractors point out that this often comes at the expense of fostering equality of access or of outcome.

Humanization and humanitarianization also were important components of the new reforms and are two trends that go hand in hand. By "humanization," Webber (2000), refers to the process by which subjects became more relevant to the everyday human experience, for example by moving away from strict Marxism. He points out that in literature classes, students began reading a broader range of moral and philosophical ideas than the narrow range of Marxist philosophy and ideology of the past. Another way in which humanization was pushed was through the humanitarianization of, or introduction of more humanities classes into, the school curriculum. Because of Soviet push towards industry and, as Webber argues, because of the heavy ideology that permeated the humanities, math and science had been heavily emphasized during the Soviet Union. With the collapse of Soviet ideology, reformers attempted to correct this imbalance through programs that pushed the humanities to a greater extent, in some cases, Webber argues, creating an opposite imbalance.

All of these trends have had important impacts for the non-Russian ethnicities of the Russian Federation. Decentralization has allowed ethnically-based republics to design their school systems with much greater attention paid to cultural and linguistic factors affecting their non-Russian populations. This has resulted in an increase in national schools all over the Russian Federation so that many more ethnic groups have access to schooling in their native language and some culturally-relevant educational programming. Simultaneously, however, it has resulted in much greater inequality between and within regions, such that cash-strapped republics like the Sakha Republic (Yakutia), have the entire financial burden of implementing culturally and linguistically specific educational programs and do not have the resources to do so effectively.

These reform trends interact with one another and create a new educational system with its own triumphs and tribulations. Jones (1994) emphasizes the ability of the new system to better respond to the needs of individuals and, despite initial shortcomings, argues that the reforms lay the ground for a more democratic, effective system of education. Webber (2000) on the other hand, while recognizing that there may have been practical reasons for the way in which the reforms unfolded, ultimately shows how the new system focused too much on breaking down the old system entirely, pushing the reforms too quickly, instead of building on the many positives.

These reforms had important implications for the education of non-Russian ethnic groups in the Russian Federation as well. Decentralization moved power away from the central state toward regions and localities, giving ethnic elites in these places greater input into educational design. Democratization and deideologization encouraged voices from a range of different perspectives, inviting ethnic perspectives into the educational scene. With trends toward diversification, ethnically-oriented education became much more desirable and possible. Humanization and humanitarianization paved the way for the introduction of new classes, philosophies and epistemologies relating to culture and language.

All of this opened doors for ethnic and regional elites to promote the unity and importance of ethnic groups and regional polities through the educational system. Some of the problems listed above combined with the threats to the unity of the federation posed by regional and ethnic movements have prompted the federal government, led by Vladimir Putin, to push for a modicum of recentralization with the ultimate aim of creating a sense of unity within the Russian Federation. The following sections explore the tension between regional and ethnic movements on the one hand, and federal nation-building attempts on the other.

3.4. NATION-BUILDING, ETHNIC CONSOLIDATION, AND REGIONALISM

Before examining specific instances, I will more fully explore the concepts of "ethnic consolidation" and "regionalism" as there are a number of competing theories about ethnicity and nation in post-Soviet Russia. Most analysts accept the basic deduction that contradictory Soviet ethnofederalist policies largely contributed to contemporary ethnic cleavages (Simon, 1991, Martin 2001, Khazanov 1995, Hughes and Sasse 2002). However, they disagree in whether or not these cleavages are nationalist or simply ethnic in nature. For this thesis, I am using Kolstø's (2004) framework for describing these cleavages, which clearly differentiates between key processes.

Pål Kolstø (2004), describing post-Soviet processes in the Russian Federation, delineates the differences between nation-building, ethnic consolidation, and regionalism or regional nation-building in Russia. For Kolstø, nation-building is: "the societal, cultural and political processes that together bring about a common identity among the population in a given polity" (Kolstø and Blakkisrud 2004: vii). When talking about nation-building in Russia, he is talking about processes that take place at the federal level by which members of various "nationalities" or ethnic groups of the federation come to feel a common sense of identification over and above that which they feel towards their ethnic group.

Ethnic consolidation, on the other hand, is, "identity construction [that] takes place in a group that is not coterminous with the total population of a state" (Kolstø 2004: 9). In ethnic consolidation, attempts are made to differentiate a given ethnic group to create a common sense of identification among members. Thus the contemporary ethnic movement in the Sakha

Republic would be one example of such attempts at ethnic consolidation as ethnic leaders push Sakha language and Sakha cultural forms.

Finally, in regionalism or regional nation-building,

> Republican leaders sometimes justify their claims to local sovereignty by reference to the alleged need to protect and develop local traditions and local values. They point out cultural traits and traditions that they claim distinguish the local population from people living in other parts of Russia. (ibid: 9)

Regional nation-building, then, is nation-building writ-small in which regional elites construct a common sense of identification for all citizens of a given regional polity. For instance, as I will explore in more detail below, regional elites in the Novosibirsk *oblast*, emphasize a non-ethnic Siberian regional identity that is based on population traits that come out of living in the harsh Siberian climate (Moiseev 2004).

Ethnic consolidation and regionalism can be different processes as in the above two examples or they can converge as when "local traditions and local values" become coterminous with a given ethnic group. Thus, in Bashkotostan, republic leaders justify their claims to local sovereignty by reference to elements of Bashkir ethnicity, such as their fluency in the Bashkir language (Gabdrafikov and Enikeev 2004). As such, the justification and source of Bashkortostani sovereignty becomes the distinctiveness of the Bashkir ethnicity, despite the large non-Bashkir population living in the region (Gabdrafikov and Enikeev 2004, Graney 1999). In this way, the process of ethnic consolidation aids in regionalism or regional nation-building.

Importantly, Kolstø argues that regionalism and ethnic consolidation are not necessarily forces opposed to federal nation-building:

> There need not be any conflict between strong ethnic or regional identities and a shared, unified national identity: A strong national identity may develop precisely on the basis of pronounced subnational identities. (2004: 9)

For Kolstø, there is a possibility that these projects can work in concert with federal nation-building projects for a salad-bowl image of the nation. This is easy to see in a nation such as the United States when southerners (regional) or African-Americans (ethnic) have pronounced, sub-national identities, but these identities do not necessarily conflict with the image and unity of the larger American nation. Similarly, in the Russian Federation the existence of Tatar or Siberian solidarity and distinctiveness does not necessarily preclude the possibility of a unified *rossiski* nation of peoples, which includes Tatars, Siberians, and Russians who have feel that they have more in common with one another than they do with other peoples outside the Russian Federation.

Nevertheless, Kolstø does also emphasize that more often than not, ethnic consolidation and regionalism tend to work against federal nation-building:

> Ethnic consolidation and regionalism are much more likely to be perceived as alternatives to state-centered nation-building. Many ethnonationalists and regionalists see it as their goal to reduce the importance of loyalties that link the individual to entities other than the ethnic group or the region. In practical terms the political programs of ethnic consolidation and regionalism therefore tend to weaken the process of national consolidation. (9-10)

Thus, in the Russian Federation, regional and ethnic projects have the potential to work with federal projects but more often than not are perceived by federal authorities and by local authorities as challenges to federal nation-building. In the following section, I will explore some specific regional and ethnic projects as they as they relate to the larger questions of ethnic revitalization in the context of membership in the Russian Federation. This allows me to contextualize identity construction projects in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia) among the different strategies employed by other ethnic groups and regions.

3.5. ETHNIC CONSOLIDATION AND REGIONALISM IN POST-SOVIET RUSSIA

In post-Soviet Bashkortostan officials have given primacy to the Bashkir ethnic group (Gabdrafikov and Enikeev 2004, Graney 1999), for instance mandating that the president know Bashkir and Russian, and thus almost guaranteeing that the president will be an ethnic-Bashkir (Gabdrafikov and Enikeev 2004: 101-102). This suggests that regional elites have justified Bashkortostani sovereignty on the basis of the Bashkir ethnicity, indicating a process of regionalism that is heavily tied to ethnic consolidation. However, ethnic-Bashkirs only comprise 21.9% of the population, less than both Russians and Tatars living in the republic (Gabdrafikov and Enikeev 2004). This minority status forces Bashkir leaders to make a number of concessions to other ethnicities within the region, weakening the link between Bashkir ethnicity and the Republic of Bashkortostan. In contrast to neighboring Tatarstan, Bashkortostani authorities have not gone so far as to mandate the learning of Bashkir language for other ethnic groups and they provide a wide array of materials and instruction in other languages, especially Tatar and Russian (Graney 1999). Furthermore, the language of multiculturalism and civic identity is still strong in Bashkortostan, mitigating perceptions of Bashkir nationalism, something of which Tatarstan, with its majority Tatar population does not have to be as conscious (Graney 1999).

In Tatarstan, on the other hand, authorities have been much more brash in tying regionalism to ethnic consolidation. For instance, Tatar language schools have exploded throughout the republic. In the capital city alone, more than 30 new Tatar national schools have been opened since 1991 (Graney 1999: 620). As Graney explains, quoting the Ministry of Education of Tatarstan,

> The new conception of Tatar national education envisions a unified system of Tatar-language education from pre-school through to post-graduate education which would 'cultivate a Tatar world-

view' and would be 'organized on the idea of strengthening the
Tatar people and their national rebirth.' (620)

Graney further notes that 45% of the Tatar children in the entire republic attend such Tatar-language schools and that study of Tatar language is mandatory for all non-Tatars in the republic. This clearly portrays a commitment on the part of the authorities to establish the Tatar ethnicity as a clearly-defined, dominant group within the republic.

In the Republic of Komi, while the nationalist movement did succeed in obtaining sovereignty with the Finno-Ugrian Komi ethnicity as the initial justification, the leaders of the nationalist movement did not succeed in obtaining primary influence in the post-Soviet government (Shabaev 2004). This is partly because of the clear majority of Russians in the Republic (57.7%) and their resistance to a strictly ethnic definition of the polity (Shabaev 2004). Despite a significant nationalist movement in the early 1990's in Komi, Shabaev argues that by and large ethnic consolidation did not proceed apace with such projects in Bashkortostan, largely because there were few symbolic elements differentiating the Komi from the Russians, as Komi are eastern orthodox, phenotypically indistinguishable from Russians, and have a long history bound up with Russians. While Komi language is still quite distinct from Russian language, being a Finno-Ugric language rather than Slavic, all Komi speak Russian and many Komi do not speak the Komi language fluently. Nationalist sentiments that do exist, however, appear to be based to a large extent on economics as there is a significant economic disparity between the mostly rural, ethnic-Komi and the city-based Russian population. In Shabaev's survey, Komi who felt that ethnic-Komi ought to have special rights felt most strongly about this with regard to economic rights rather than cultural or political rights.

In the Novosibirsk oblast, Sergei Moiseev (2004) argues that regional elites have pushed for regional autonomy on the basis of a separate *Sibiryak* (Siberian), identity. The vast majority

of residents are ethnic-Russians and are thus not differentiated from other polities on the basis of ethnicity. Instead, Moiseev contends, leaders argue that Novosibirsk residents have a special moral and cultural quality they have developed through their history as pioneers in the harsh Siberian climate. These arguments go back to the Siberian regionalist movement of the 19th century, in which Siberian intellectuals argued that the Russian settlers in Siberia were being exploited by the Russian center and, in fact, constituted a different (not to mention more pure) breed of Russians through their separation from the corruption of the cities (Watrous 1970, Bassin 2004). Significantly, the Novosibirsk oblast was not able to win its bid for republic-hood, as were other, ethnically-based territories. Moiseev (2004) argues that this is due to the difficulty of justifying regionalism on a non-ethnic basis.

Finally, analysts examining the Sakha Republic (Yakutia), largely agree that ethnic-Sakha leaders use ethnicity as a justification for sovereignty but, because of the minority status of Sakha and Russian control of industry, political leaders must recognize Russian cultural rights in the republic as well (Balzer and Vinokurova 1996, Kempton 1996). Marjorie Balzer discusses the "Sakhaisation" (Balzer 1995) that republican leaders pushed after the collapse of the Soviet Union. She emphasizes the need for leaders to "foster a republic-wide psychology" by convincing Russians of their ties to the Republic (Balzer and Vinokurova 1996: 106). Lynn and Fryer describe the construction of an official history that "emphasizes the long 'organic' link between Russians and Sakha" (1998: 582). In this process of ethnic consolidation, like in Bashkortostan, ethnic leaders have pushed for the development of Sakha-language schools and educational programs, but have refrained from requiring Russians to learn Sakha (Balzer and Vinokurova 1996), instead focusing on the choice of language instruction as a right of all people (see Zhirkov 1992: 10-11). Thus, like Bashkortostan, republic authorities have tied together

ethnic consolidation and regionalism to some extent but have refrained from making ethnicity the sole basis of regional sovereignty.

As is clear from the above examples, regional and ethnic elites in the post-Soviet Russian Federation have used a variety of strategies in positioning themselves vis-à-vis the Russian center. Regional elites have pushed for greater sovereignty throughout the Federation and ethnic groups have used ethnic consolidation to justify regional nation-building. The most successful bids for regional sovereignty appear to have been those cases, such as in Tatarstan, where regional elites were able to rely heavily on ethnicity in making those bids. Even in the republics such as the Sakha Republic and Bashkortostan with the titular group in the minority, the titular ethnic groups have been able to position their ethnicity as a justification of regional sovereignty and to assert a degree of primacy despite their minority status.

Within this complicated balancing act that the republican leaders are playing, the role of the educational system is key. The school system has the potential to help define how future citizens of the Sakha Republic and of other ethnically-defined republics see themselves ethnically, as members of a multiethnic republic, and as citizens of the Russian Federation. In addition, the increasing participation of the Russian Federation and the Sakha Republic in the global economy presents new challenges and opportunities for self-understandings. As such, continued research into schools' roles in societal and individual self-definitions is crucial. Such research will aid in our understanding of the effects of globalization and nation-building on local communities and community members' perceptions of themselves.

4.   METHODOLOGICAL ESSAY

4.1.   BACKGROUND

My initial interest in this study came about as a result of a number of different factors. First, I had participated in an earlier study led by Dr. Maureen Porter, regarding indigenous revival in the Peruvian Andes, exemplified in the proliferation of school-based indigenous dance programs. Participating in that study introduced me to the complex issues of ethnic revival in education and encouraged me to do further research into them. Second, I had recently graduated from university with a concentration in Russian studies, and thus an interest in, language ability appropriate for, and a degree of background knowledge necessary for conducting research in the Russian Federation. Finally, I developed a friendship with a teacher from the Sakha Republic (Yakutia), Sardana Nikolaeva, who was studying as an exchange student in my graduate program with me. My discussions with her provided the impetus for my particular interest in the Sakha Republic and, ultimately, provided an important contact for me during my research.

I began this study by reviewing three sets of literature relating to ethnicity and education in the Russian Federation. First, I examined a number of different analyses of post-Soviet ethnic group participation in the Russian Federation. The framework provided by Kolstø (2004) proved to be the most effective for organizing and bringing together the various case-studies I was reading. This framework identifies and defines the three key processes of ethnic consolidation, regionalism, and nation-building (see Literature Review section on NATION-BUILDING, ETHNIC CONSOLIDATION, AND REGIONALISM) and ultimately provided me with an effective way to approach ethnic revival in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia).

65

The second set of literature I reviewed related to the history of Soviet "nationalities" policy, especially with regard to education. This helped me to understand the range of perspectives on the legacy of this policy for current understandings of ethnicity in the Russian Federation. In particular, I was able to contextualize the development of so-called "national schools" in the Russian Federation, a concept that proved to be central to ethnic revival in the educational system of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia). For an in-depth exploration of this topic see the literature review section on THE LEGACY OF SOVIET EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL POLICY.

Thirdly, I examined literature regarding the history of educational reform in the Russian Federation since the collapse of the USSR. This provided me with a context for understanding the structure of the Russian educational system and for pinpointing some of the consequences of educational reform for ethnic revival in the federation as a whole. For instance, decentralization has moved a degree of curricular control from the central Ministry of Education in Moscow to republic and other regional ministries. This allows for regional administrators to focus greater attention on developing ethnically-oriented programs in their schools (see literature review section EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN THE POST-SOVIET ERA).

In addition to these three broad areas, I also read as extensively as possible the English language literature on the Sakha Republic (Yakutia), especially that which related to the educational system or ethnic revival. While relatively little has been published in the English language, I was able to gain some understandings of the broader demographic and political trends of the Republic and many of the issues at stake in Sakha ethnic consolidation.

4.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

Qualitative research is inherently a fluid process and I intentionally left my research design open to changes and additions, which ultimately proved beneficial. My original research design focused on understanding the internal functioning of the educational system through an examination of the structure, curriculum design, and in-school implementation. However, upon arriving in Yakutsk, it became apparent that I needed to examine another vital influence on the educational system: that of outside actors, cultural figures, non-governmental organizations and academics, and the pressures they exerted on the educational system to engage in ethnic consolidation. Thus, while my original intent was to interview three types of individuals, teachers, educational administrators, and ministry of education officials, I had to broaden this to include interviews with the above listed actors.

Understanding the structure of the educational system involved determining how many and what types of schools exist in the Republic, how students in the Republic proceed through school (e.g. primary school, secondary school, number of grades), and the demographic distribution of students (e.g. the number of Russians vs. Sakha, which schools they attend, etc.).

When examining the curriculum, it was important to understand the broad range and types of courses students are required to take, paying particular attention to those courses that are especially relevant to ethnic consolidation projects, such as history, culture, language and civics. Also, it was important to understand what material is supposed to be presented to students in each of these courses and how it is supposed to be presented. Examining curriculum implementation involved understanding how teachers and administrators interpreted the objectives and how this material was presented in classes.

I employed three primary tools for data collection in the above listed areas: qualititative interviews, observations of schools and classrooms, and readings of curricular documents and classroom materials. Interview data included transcripts of semi-structured interviews with educational officials, leaders of the cultural revival movement, school administrators and teachers (see Table 1 for a detailed list of interviews conducted). I observed class sessions for Yakut Language and Literature, National Culture, and *Kyys Kuo*, a course intended to socialize Sakha girls into their roles as women. I was further taken on a tour of a technology education classroom.

My review of curricular and public policy documents included 3 types of documents. First, I collected 7 sets of guidelines (*uchebnii plany)* published by the Republic Ministry of Education for the numbers of hours students in each grade should study each subject and those guidelines adopted by the school in which I conducted intensive fieldwork. Second, I collected topical recommendations (*tematicheskii plany*) published by the Ministry of Education of the Sakha Republic for all of the "culture" subjects, including Yakut Language and Literature, National Culture, and *Kyys Kuo* and *Urung Wolan*. Third, I collected a variety of educational policy documents issued from the Republic Ministry of Education, including press releases, conference materials, educational evaluations, statistics, etc.

In addition to all of the above sources, a significant amount of my data came from field notes. While in the field, I kept a detailed journal of my activities each day. I recounted many informal conversations I had that related to education or ethnicity, I took notes during classroom observations, and described events that I attended and other experiences and observations relevant to my research. Additionally, I kept a reflective journal in which I explored and

Table 1: Interviews Conducted

Positions of Interviewees	Number of Interviewees
Educational officials (including one with Minister of Education of the Sakha Republic)	3
Professors of Yakut Language and Literature at Yakutsk State University	2
Leaders of *Sakha Omuk*, prominent NGO for the promotion of Sakha language and culture.	2
Authors of Sakha Language textbooks	2
School Principles	1
Teachers (total individual)	10
Yakut Language and Literature	6
National Culture	1
Kyys Kuo/*Urung Wolan*	1
History	1
Russian Language and Literature	1
Technology Education	3
Groups of Teachers at Teacher Retraining Institute	3 groups

analyzed my daily observations, building a coherent picture of patterns I noticed. Both of these journals proved to be particularly significant during data analysis in clarifying ideas that came out in interviews and also in aiding my understanding of the broader structure of the school and the approach of teachers and students to education generally.

4.3.   SETTING

From February to May of 2004, I conducted fieldwork in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia), collecting data on the educational system and, in particular, on post-Soviet reforms relating to revival of indigenous culture. I divided my research into two stages. First, I conducted research

in the capital city of Yakutsk speaking with high-level educational officials, cultural leaders, and academics in addition to conducting literature searches at the YSU library and collecting curricular and policy documents. The second stage of my research was conducted in the smaller city/town of Nyurba, located in the cultural heart of the Republic. There, I did ethnographic research, interviewing teachers and administrators, observing classes, and participating in a typical school day.

4.3.1.   Yakutsk

The city of Yakutsk is located on the banks of the Lena River in central Yakutia and has a population of about 300,000. This was the most advantageous place for me to conduct the first stage of my research because it is the capital city of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia) and is the largest city in the Republic. As such, I had ready access to the Ministry of Education and other government offices, I could easily contact academics, cultural figures, NGO's, and other important individuals, and attend a wide variety of cultural events, such as a reindeer herders' festival, a Sakha epic poetry contest for high school students, and the opening of an ecological park for children. I made it a priority to visit as many of these cultural events as possible as they allowed me to get a feel for how Sakha culture is publicly presented and to meet individuals interested in Sakha culture. In addition to the above advantages of doing fieldwork, I had some opportunities to visit schools in the capital and to have informal conversations with teachers and students at these schools.

This stage of the research was important for three reasons. First, I was able to become familiar with the official and publicly proffered ideals of the cultural revival movement through writings of and discussions with leaders of that movement and through observing public presentations of Sakha culture. Second, I was able to garner an understanding of the official

position of the current administration of the Sakha Republic toward the ethnic revival movement as well as the specifics of republic-level educational policy. Finally, through discussions with teachers and brief tours of schools I was able to minimally observe and document the way in which educational reforms are being implemented in a large, cosmopolitan city. The latter provided a significant contrast to the patterns of the small, more rural city in which I lived and conducted fieldwork in for my remaining in-country research time.

4.3.2. Nyurba

I conducted the second stage of my research in the city of Nyurba, the administrative center of the Nyurba *ulus* or district, living with a local English teacher, Sardana Nikolaeva, and her family. The city is located in an area widely considered to be the cultural heart of the Sakha region, my consultants in Yakutsk and in Nyurba emphasizing that only here could one witness "real" Sakha culture. Nyurba is technically called a city, but the population is only around 7,000 and it has few of the characteristics typically associated with cities, such as any indoor plumbing, paved roads, etc. It is 6-8 hours by car during the winter from any other major population center and reachable only by plane from April to December as the winter ice roads across the rivers naturally disappear during the summer months. Despite being such a small, remote town in the middle Siberia, many Nyurba residents have internet access and mobile phones. Nyurba youth listen to American and European pop music, wear Nike shoes and follow the exploits of Brittany Spears in the newspapers. The combination of identification as a cultural heartland and the obvious presence of the global economy made Nyurba an ideal place to explore the challenges of maintaining Sakha ethnic viability in a modern, global context.

I focused my research in Nyurba on an in-depth study of one school, Nyurba School Number One. I chose this school because it is a) the largest school in Nyurba, b) a Sakha

"national school," meaning it is designed specifically for ethnic-Sakha students, and indeed all of the students are ethnic-Sakha, and c) easily the oldest school in the town by at least 100 years with a history that chronicles the changes in the educational system throughout the entire Soviet period. The combination of these factors made it a good place to examine educators' attempts to maintain, revive and transform Sakha cultural and linguistic traditions.

4.4. OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES OF CONDUCTING FIELDWORK

In conducting ethnographic fieldwork, I had to overcome a number of hurdles. First, was the necessity of gaining access to consultants in a large, cosmopolitan city in a relatively small amount of time with having few prior connections. The second was to obtain the necessary curricular and policy documents in a decentralized, often disorganized bureaucratic system in which actors at different levels of the system are unaware of the activities of other levels. The third challenge which I had to overcome was the necessity of quickly obtaining the trust of research participants with the ever present legacy of the Soviet Union, which discouraged political discussions of any sort and discussions of ethnicity in particular. Finally, much of my research necessitated my participation in and observation of events which were conducted in the Sakha language, which I did not understand at all. In this section, I will detail these challenges and describe how I was able to overcome them.

My first task upon arriving in Yakutsk was to begin making contacts with educational officials and people who could help me obtain the necessary policy documents that I needed. As I described above, I had one invaluable contact in Yakutsk, Dr. Fedorova , who, with the assistance of her office staff helped me to make initial contacts at the Ministry of Education and at YSU. However, it soon became apparent that I was not going to be able to rely on them for

every single one of my contacts. Meetings I made through them were usually formal interviews scheduled for precise times during normal business hours. While these interviews were necessary and interesting, I felt it was necessary to make more informal contacts in order to have greater variety in data format.

Initially, I was able to use my status as a native English speaker, a highly valued status and rare in this cold region of the world, in order to make some contacts. English teachers at universities and colleges in the city upon hearing of my presence in the city, enthusiastically invited me to speak with their classes so that they would have the opportunity to practice their English and hear a native speaker. At first, I approached this as a kindness I was doing for these teachers. However, it became quickly apparent that these talks were invaluable opportunities for me to make contacts with teachers and to have frank and open discussions about ethnicity with teachers and students in my native language.

One contact, in particular, who I met through such talks proved to be especially beneficial. This was Vera Semyonova, who was an English teacher and head of the foreign language section at the Teacher Retraining Institute in Yakutsk. She invited me on three occasions to speak with groups of teachers who had come from all over the Republic for in-service training. It turned out that Vera was not only a high-status educator, but she was an active proponent of native-language education and had co-authored a textbook to teach English to Sakha students that used the Sakha language as the first language rather than Russian. As a favor to me and because of her own interest, she encouraged the teachers with whom I spoke to engage in discussions and debates about the value of native-language education and their own experiences with it. This allowed me to hear a number of different narratives from teachers who had been taught themselves in the Sakha language, who taught in the Sakha language, and who

had deliberately chosen not to teach in the Sakha language. Furthermore, my contact with Vera opened doors to meetings with other leading proponents of native language education and Sakha cultural revival, generally.

The second major way in which I made contacts outside of Dr. Fedorova's office, was through attending public events, even and perhaps especially events conducted entirely in the Sakha language, despite not understanding the language. First of all, my necessity to ask others what was going on gave me reasons to approach and talk to people. Second, my presence as an obvious outsider at these events, which naturally were attended almost exclusively by ethnic-Sakha, attracted curiosity. The anomaly of my interest in such events and my willingness to attend despite not understanding the language, aroused so much excitement from some that I was able to gain access to important cultural figures, I otherwise would not have been able to meet. One example of such a situation was a public celebration of the work of a famous Sakha craftswoman. Another woman who attended the event, a well-known writer in the Republic, after hearing my research topic, took me by the hand and introduced me to almost everyone at the celebration, which included an array of artists, writers, performers, and cultural advocates. From this, I received a number of invitations to dinner and to other social and cultural events, which ultimately provided many informal, enlightening discussions about the goals of the Sakha revival movement from prominent figures of that movement.

The second major obstacle in my research was the difficulty in obtaining public policy and curricular documents. I had naively assumed prior to my arrival that these would be neatly stored and available at the Ministry of Education and all I would have to do would be to ask for copies of them or make copies of them myself. However, this turned out not to be the case. First of all, I did not know how to ask for the documents I needed, partly because of a language

barrier[5] and partly because I did not know what documents existed. Furthermore, once I had determined which documents I wanted and how to ask for them, individuals at different levels of the system would often be unaware of their existence or they would not have access to them. In addition, the organization system was either too complicated or non-existent such that certain documents could not be found. As an illustration of the confusing nature of this task, I asked the princiPål of Nyurba School Number One if she had the curricula for courses at her school and after much searching around, her aides gave me a stack of binders for me to look through which I could hardly carry home with me. With the help of Sardana, I went through every single page in ever single binder and there was almost nothing that was even useful to me, much less relevant to the school curriculum.

The difficulty in finding these documents was perhaps the most complicated hurdle to overcome in my research. To overcome this obstacle, I took any public documents that my consultants would allow me to take and sifted through them with the help of Sardana, as in the above example. Having the help of Sardana not only made the job faster, but experience with the US educational system and with the Sakha educational system gave her the ability to be a cultural broker, helping me to locate documents that would be particularly helpful. Sardana also accompanied me to the library where we were able to find curricular documents published in other books, which I was able to confirm with Ministry of Education officials and teachers were identical to the official versions. As such, quotations from curricular documents in this thesis are cited as having been published in Zhirkov (1992).

---

[5] As an example, I mistakenly assumed that the first translation into Russian I heard of the English word "curriculum" was an exact translation. I ultimately discovered that the term for thematic guidelines of individual courses (*tematicheskii plan*) was not the same as the one I had been using to ask for them. The latter term turned out to describe only the weekly schedule of courses for each grade level (*uchebnii plan*).

I further was able to overcome this obstacle by relying on teachers in interviews and in informal conversation to describe the curriculum. For instance, I was unable to obtain a copy of the Russian Language and Literature curriculum for any grade level. However, in an interview one teacher patiently described to me the major topics that are required by the curriculum. This proved to be an advantageous way of obtaining the information because, I could listen to her commentary as she described it and I simultaneously found out how she taught the course and her opinions regarding it. By checking the information I obtained from her with others, I was able to confirm the accuracy of her statements. This method also worked because I ultimately discovered that many subjects do not have required or even recommended curricula associated with them.

The third challenge that faced me in conducting my research was gaining the trust of my participants. Most of my interviewees has grown up during the Soviet Union or with the legacy of Soviet policy in which political discussions of any kind are taboo, especially those related to ethnicity. Statements about ethnicity can easily be misinterpreted as "nationalism," a formerly persecutable sentiment. While ethnicity and nationalism are freely spoken of today in the public realm, many of my interviewees were still uncomfortable with the subjects. For example, one teacher of national culture and one Yakut Language and Literature teacher refused to answer many of my questions, with the response that Russians and Sakha have always been friends and will continue to be so—there is no problem. I did not intend to imply that there was a problem and other interviewees did not interpret my questions in this way. However, the reaction of these two teachers illustrates the enduring sensitivity of the topic in the post-Soviet era.

I was able to use a number of strategies in overcoming the sensitive nature of the topic with most of my consultants and to develop the rapport necessary for frank and open discussions.

First, I made the acquaintance of most of my consultants in Nyurba through Sardana, who already knew them well. This in itself gave them a reason to trust me much more than if I had arrived at the school alone and asked them to talk to me and answer my questions. Second, I agreed to teach some classes of English at the school. This gave a reason to be in the school everyday, allowed the teachers to grow accustomed to my presence, and allowed them to relate to me as a fellow teacher rather than a foreign researcher.

To further gain rapport, in conducting the actual interviews with teachers, I avoided using the tape-recorder because it made them uneasy. I was able, however, to use the tape recorder for all other interviews as they were typically conducted with people more used to speaking on-record. I also conducted many interviews in the Sakha language with an English teacher from the school translating into a mix of Russian and English for me. Conducting the interviews in Sakha presented some drawbacks in terms of fluidity of conversation but ultimately proved to be much more useful as speaking in Russian made the already shy teachers much more shy. They were much more ready to speak extensively when they could speak Sakha.

APPENDIX A

Visual Archive

Figure 2: Milk Advertisement in Yakutsk using traditional Sakha wood dishes to evoke Sakha ethnicity alongside plastic commercial packaging in Russian

Figure 3: Street in Yakutsk

Figure 4: The Town of Nyurba

Figure 5: The Muddy Streets of Nyurba in the Springtime

Figure 6: Nyurba School Number One

Figure 7: Traditional Sakha wooden dishes made by students at Nyurba School Number One

Figure 8: Traditional Sakha wooden dishes made by students at Nyurba School Number One
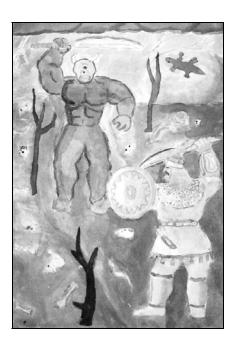
Figure 9: Student artwork depicting a scene from Sakha folklore

Figure 10: Student artwork depicting an *olonkhosut*, a singer of *olonkho*, traditional Sakha epic poetry

Figure 11: A student performing *olonkho* in a republic-wide student *olonkho* competition

Figure 12: Another student performing olonkho

Figure 13: Matryoshka dolls, a quintessentially Russian handicraft, in traditional Sakha dress exhibited at a student art exhibition for students of Nyurba School Number One

Figure 14: Sakha students produce handicrafts with an array of influences as illustrated by these exhibited at a local student art exhibition

APPENDIX B

INSTRUMENTATION

B1: Interview Questions for Ministry of Education Officials
(These questions are intended to be part of a semi-structured interview format and therefore will be used as a guide. Follow-up and clarification questions will also be used):

1. Name, position, role in ministry.

2. How long have you worked at the ministry?

3. Can you give me a brief description of how students in the Sakha Republic go through school? e.g. 6 years primary school starting at age 5, 4 years secondary school, etc.

4. Are there any significant differences for Sakha students than for Russian students? Is it common for them to go to separate schools?

5. How many Sakha language-schools are there in the republic?

6. Can you give me a brief overview of educational reform in the Sakha Republic since the collapse of the Soviet Union with particular emphasis on secondary schools?

7. What aspects of the secondary school curriculum does the Sakha Republic have control over, as opposed to the Russian state?

8. Could you compare secondary education in the Sakha Republic to how it is in other places in Russia?

9. Could you give me a brief overview of the most important aspects of the current secondary school curriculum, especially those that are controlled by the Sakha Republic?

10. Do you feel it is important to have classes on Sakha language and culture? Why or why not?

11. Do you think it is important to preserve Sakha language and culture? Why or why not?

12. Do you feel that Russians living in the republic have a responsibility to learn the Sakha language? Why or why not?

13. Do you feel that Sakha have a responsibility to learn the Russian language? Why or why not?

B2: Interview Questions for School Administrators

1. Name, position, role in school.

2. How long have you worked at this school? Have you worked in other schools?

3. Do you feel your school is typical of secondary schools in the republic as a whole? Why or why not?

4. Can you give me a brief overview of what classes are students required to take in each grade level, what classes they can take as electives, etc.?

5. Which of these subjects are required by the Russian Federation and which are required by the Sakha Republic? Are there some your school requires individually?

6. Which grades and which subjects are taught in Sakha language and which are taught in Russian?

7. When do students start using Russian language textbooks?

8. With regard to the language of instruction, are teachers free to use whichever language they like or are they required to use one or another language for particular classes?

9. As the director of this school, what is your attitude toward the teaching of Sakha language and culture? To using Sakha Language as a language of instruction?

10. What power do you have as the director of the school to encourage teachers to follow your preferences?

11. To the best of your abilities, can you describe to me how your school has changed over the past few years (e.g. with regard to language of instruction, the teaching of Sakha language and culture, etc.)

12. What impact have you felt from the introduction of the National Standard Exams?

13. Can you tell me about extra-curricular activities, clubs, etc. in which students participate, especially as they relate to Sakha language and culture?

14. How is your school reacting to the decision by the Ministry of Education to eliminate funding for the teaching of national culture?

B3: Interview Questions for Teachers

1. Name. Courses/subject(s) taught. Personal background.

2. How long have you been teaching? Have you taught the same courses the whole time? If not, what other ones did you? teach?

3. Why did you begin teaching subject x?

4. Why do you think it is important to teach subject x?

5. Can you tell me a little about what you do in class each day? What kinds of things do you teach? What is required that you teach? What other types of things do you include?

6. How much freedom do you have to change the material taught and what do you do with this freedom?

7. What kind of materials do you use in class (e.g. textbooks, newspapers, etc.)

8. The final thing I want to do is to piece together a history of the past few years that your subject has been taught. Can you think back to when you began teaching, or even when you were a student, and tell me what differences there are between now and then in the teaching of your subject? For instance, any changes in methodology or the required content of teaching?

9. Can you enumerate some of the obstacles you have encountered in teaching your subject? Things that have helped you?

10. In your opinion, what is the impact of Russian on Sakha language and culture?

11. Do you have any other comments for me about the questions I have asked or the teaching of Sakha language and culture?

B4: Interview Questions for teachers in Russian
(As opposed to the interview questions above, this handout was printed and handed to teachers at Nyurba School Number One before conducting the interviews so that they would have an idea of what questions I would be asking.)

Интервью для исследования темы «Возрождение якутской национальной культуры в системе образования в РС (Я)»

1. Фамилия, Имя, Отчество.

2. Какие предметы вы преподаете? Какие классы?

3. Сколько лет вы преподаете? Те же предметы или разные?

4. Почему вы начали изучать и преподавать ваш предмет? Объясните свой ответ.

5. Почему вы считаете что важно учить ваш предмет? Объясните свой ответ.

6. Можете ли вы рассказать немного о том, что вы делаете на уроке каждый день? Например, какие темы вы преподаете в каждом классе? Какие темы считаются объязательными, а какие вы можете выбирать сами?

7. Какие пособия, материалы вы используете на уроке? Например, учебники, тексты, т.д.

8. За время вашей работы в школе №1 были ли вы свидетелем каких либо изменений, произошедших в: а) политичическом состоянии РС (Я), б) статусе образования в РС (Я), в) условиях и требованиях к преподаванию, г) содержании учебного плана, д) содержании тематического плана обучаемого вами предмета. Если вы свидетельствовали вышеперечисленные изменения, как вы их восприняли как преподаватель и как вы можете описать их влияние на ваш предмет?

9. Какие препятствия или проблемы вы встречали пока учили ваш предмет? Что способствовало преподаванию вашего предмета?

10. Как влияет русский язык на якутский язык? Русская культура на якутскую культуру? Положительно или отрицательно? Почему вы так думаете, объясните свой ответ.

11. Есть ли у вас какие-нибудь замечания и добавления касающиеся: а) вопросов, которые я задавала, б) сохранение якутского языка, в) возрождения якутской культуры в общем, г) что еще вы бы хотели добавить.

APPENDIX C

IRB DOCUMENTATION

IRB Approval form.pdf

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Balzer, Marjorie
    1995   A State Within a State: The Sakha Republic (Yakutia). *In* Rediscovering Russia in Asia: Siberia and the Russian Far East. S. Kotkin and D. Wolff, eds. Pp. 139-159. New York and London: M.E. Sharpe, Inc.

Balzer, Marjorie, and Uliana Vinokurova
    1996   Nationalism, Interethnic Relations and Federalism: The Case of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia). Europe-Asia Studies 48(1):101-121.

Bassin, Mark
    2004   Inventing Siberia: Visions of the Russian East in the Early Nineteenth Century. The American Historical Review 96(3):763-794.

Bilinsky, Yaroslav
    1962   The Soviet Education Laws of 1958-9 and Soviet Nationality Policy. Soviet Studies 14(2):138-157.

Blakkisrud, Helge
    2004   Russian Regionalism Redefined? Nation-Building, Values, and Federal Discourse. *In* Nation-Building and Common Values in Russia. P. Kolstø and H. Blakkisrud, eds. Pp. 239-267. Lanham, Boulder, New York, Toronto, and Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Blitstein, Peter
    2001   Nation Building or Russification? Obligatory Russian Instruction in the Soviet School, 1938-1956. *In* A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin. T. Martin and R.G. Suny, eds. Pp. 253-274. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Bloch, Alexia
    2004   Red Ties and Residential Schools: Indigenous Siberians in a Post-Soviet State. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Dunstan, John
    1994   Clever Children and Curriculum Reform. *In* Education and Society in the New Russia. A. Jones, ed. Pp. 75-101. Armonk and London: M.E. Sharpe.

Forsyth, James
   1992   A History of the Peoples of Siberia: Russia's North Asian Colony 1581-1990.
           Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gabdrafikov, Ildar, and Aidar Enikeev
   2004   Bashkortostan: Preconditions and Prospects of Civic Integration in a Multiethnic
           Region. *In* Nation-Building and Common Values in Russia. P. Kolstø, ed.
           Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, INC.

Graney, Katherine
   1999   Education Reform in Tatarstan and Bashkortostan: Sovereignty Projects in Post-
           Soviet Russia. Europe-Asia Studies 51(4):611-632.

Heikinnen, Kaija
   2001   Ethnographical Activism as a Form of Civic Education: a Case Study on   School
           Museums in North-West Russia. *In*   Education and Civic Culture in Post-
           Communist Countries.   S.Webber and I. Liikanen, eds.   Pp. 109-123.
           Houndsmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Publishers.

Hughes, James, and Gwendolyn Sasse
   2002   Comparing Regional and Ethnic Conflicts in Post-Soviet Transition States. *In*
           Ethnicity and Territory in the Former Soviet Union: Regions in Conflict. J.
           Hughes and G. Sasse, eds. Pp. 1-35. Portland, Ore. And London: Frank Cass
           Publishers.

Jones, Anthony, ed.
   1994   Education and Society in the New Russia. Armonk and London: M.E. Sharpe.
—
   1994   The Educational Legacy of the Soviet Period. *In* Education and Society in the
           New Russia. A. Jones, ed. Pp. 3-23. Armonk and London: M.E. Sharpe.

Kempton, Daniel R.
   1996   The Republic of Sakha (Yakutia): The Evolution of Centre-Periphery Relations
           in the Russian Federation. Europe-Asia Studies 48(4):587-614.

Kerr, Stephen T.
   1994   Diversification in Russian Education. *In* Education and Society in the New
           Russia. A. Jones, ed. Pp. 47-74. Armonk and London: M.E. Sharpe.

Khasanova, Gulnara
   2004   Nation-Building and Values in Russian Textbooks. *In* Nation-Building and
           Common Values in Russia. P. Kolstø and H. Blakkisrud, eds. Pp. 269-299.
           Lanham, Boulder, New York, Toronto, and Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield
           Publishers, Inc.

Khazanov, Anatoly
    1995   After the USSR: Ethnicity, Nationalism, and Politics in the Commonwealth of Independent States. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Kolstø, Pål
    2004   Nation-Building in Russia: a Value-Oriented Strategy. *In* Nation-Building and Common Values in Russia. Pål Kolstø and Helge Blakkisrud, eds. Pp. 1-27. Lanham, Boulder, New York, Toronto, and Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Kolstø, Pål, and Helge Blakkisrud, eds.
    2004   Nation-Building and Common Values in Russia. Lanham, Boulder, New York, Toronto, and Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Lankina, Tomila
    2002   Local Administration and Ethno-Social Consensus in Russia. Europe-Asia Studies 54(7):1037-1053.

Lisovskaya, Elena, and Vyacheslav Karpov
    1999   New Ideologies in Postcommunist Russian Textbooks. Comparative Education Review 43(4):522-543.

Lynn, Nicholas J., and Paul Fryer
    1998   National-territorial change in the republics of the Russian North. Political Geography 17(5):567-588.

Martin, Terry
    2001   An Affirmative Action Empire: The Soviet Union as the Highest Form of Imperialism. *In* A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin. R.G. Suny and T. Martin, eds. Pp. 67-90. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Nikolaev, Mikhail
    2004   Unesco at the Icecap: In a world of spiritual values—on an equal basis. Trans. M.I. Yegorova. Yakutsk: Signar 5.

Moiseev, Sergei
    2004   The Lonely Hearts of the World: Nation-Building and Common Values in Novoskibirsk Oblast. *In* Nation-Building and Common Values in Russia. P. Kolstø and H. Blakkisrud, eds. Pp. 159-190. Lanham, Boulder, New York, Toronto, and Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, INC.

Robbek, Vasili
    1998   Language Situation in the Sakha Republic. *In* Bicultural Education in the North: Ways' of Preserving and Enhancing Indigenous Peoples' Languages and Traditional Knowledge. E. Kasten, ed. Pp. 113-122. Munster: Waxman Verlag.

Shabaev, Iurii

    2004   Peculiarities of Nation-Building in the Republic of Komi. *In* Nation-Building and Common Values in Russia. P. Kolstø and H. Blakkisrud eds. Pp. 59-88. Lanham, Boulder, New York, Toronto, and Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Simon, Gerhard

    1991   Nationalism and Policy Toward the Nationalities in the Soviet Union: From Totalitarian Dictatorship to Post-Stalinist Society. K. Forester and O. Forester, transl. Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford: Westview Press.

Slezkine, Yuri

    1994   The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism. Slavic Review 53(2):414-452.

Smith, Jeremy

    2001   National Schools and National Identity in and after the Soviet Union. *In* Education and Civic Culture in Post-Communist Countries. S.Webber and I. Liikanen, eds. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Publishers.

Sutherland, Jeanne

    1999   Schooling in the New Russia: Innovation and Change, 1984-95. Great Britain and USA: Macmillan Press LTD and St. Martin's Press, INC.

Watrous, Stephen

    1970   Russia's "Land of the Future": Regionalism and the Awakening of Siberia, 1819-1894. PhD, University of Washington.

Webber, Stephen

    2000   School, Reform and Society in the New Russia. Great Britain: Macmillan Press Ltd, New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc.

Zhirkov, E.P.

    1992   Kak vozrodit' natsional'nuyu shkolu: Shagi Respubliki Sakha (Yakutia): Stati and materiali. Moscow: Prosveshchenie.