

CHUKCHI COMMUNITIES OF THE BERING STRAIT REGION, A HUNDRED YEARS  
AFTER BOGORAS

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A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillments of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy  
in  
Anthropology

University of Alaska Fairbanks  
May 2023

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Dedication  
To *Lygooravetlyat*

## Abstract

The Chukchi are the Indigenous people of the farthest northeastern part of Eurasia, nowadays called Chukotka. It happens that, at the dawn of the 20th century, Chukchi culture became the focus of a landmark publication *The Chukchee*, authored by a luminary Russian ethnographer Waldemar Bogoras. Produced as part of the special series Publications of the Jesup North Pacific Expedition, this voluminous monograph, overwhelmingly, continues to be a go-to resource to learn about the Chukchi customs, spiritual beliefs, material culture, and way of life. As an Indigenous Chukchi scholar who, to my knowledge, is the first of my people to be earning a doctorate degree in anthropology, I find it valuable to present a contemporary ethnographic portrait of the Chukotkan communities, drawn from my lived experience and the field research conducted a little over a century past the time of Bogoras. Featuring insights from several towns and villages, this dissertation focuses mostly on the Chukchi communities of Neshkan and Enurmino located on the Arctic Coast of Chukotka. Traditional subsistence continues to be a great factor in shaping the identity and worldview of the Neshkan and Enurmino residents. Subsistence, however, is not the only source of influence that builds the sociocultural pattern of these communities. Today's Chukchi are complexly integrated within a global society that permeates even seemingly the most remote and isolated settlements with information technologies. The clash of influences gives rise to a complex pattern of human passions and life goals. Exploring the socio-economic, spiritual, and other cultural dimensions of contemporary Chukchi life, my research converges on the question: what are the modern-day Chukchi communities? By what means do these social units sustain a strong sense of distinct cultural identity as their members adapt to globalizing influences and environmental changes? Such questions are broadly applicable across social and historical contexts and offer fruitful grounds for considering anthropological theories of adaptation and culture in the largest sense.



## Abstract in Chukchi

L'ygoravetl'yat ynk'en avynval'yt varatte, nymytval'yt eygysk'ynek'ayan'k'ach Eurasiak. Chama k'utti emkykylinet lygevaratte nytvakenat Yekutyk, Kamchatkak ynkam Magadanyk. N'utku vetgavo tylgynat n'irek' nymymyt Nesk'en ynk'am Enurmyn 1990 givinitte ynken'it egyttagnety. Ynky lyg'oravetl'en nymytvagyrbyn mykyn, givik tantenmygma nyntyk'in k'ulinutele, chama amk'y givik n'argynen amalvan'ety n'elyrkylyn kemakvyrgyn. Ynk'ory notennymytvan kytalvan' nelgyi. Egtelyn'n'ok ytri gegyuletlinet rusimil vetgavyk, tann'yroolk'ylte nuuk ynkam ymyrenutti vagyrbo nelgynet kolenutele taykyette. Gygym goranymytvaigym Nesk'ek' ynk'enata tykelin n'utkekin vagyrbyn: min'kemil nynymytvak'emat n'utku val'yt royyryt, yrginet nenenet, ter nymyngykvatk'emat michiretylyt, r'agynnnyk'tein'etu nypirik, anynka'inet emnun, ky mink'yri nygrepk'inet ynkam nyputuretk'inet, ravagyrbyn nyntaaron'k'en. Gymnan tratatlyn'yrykyn pynlen - r'enut igyrkin lygoravetl'en nymnym: yam venlygi lygoravetl'o nratvank'emat alymy avetgavkyl'emat k'ynur yrginet ytylyt, ter an'k'agynnek'galerkurkyt ynkam t'erkurkyt? Tyvma gymygnutetumgin vagyrbyn ninelgigym nauken nin'eyvyn ynkam ninegiteigym min'k'emil nymigchiretk'in ynken nauken nin'eyvin ynk'am gymnin tyvye. Tytenmytkonat ynk'emat n'irek nymymyt: ter oravetlyat nynymytwak'emat, ter yarat, ter nyrkatkok'emat. Myggilivu tylgyn michir ank'agynnen'ytyl'en ynkam k'oragynretyl'en, k'eluk-ym yrgynan nymkyk'in oravetlyat nynk'ametvavk'emat. Ytri kynur yrginet yttyyutl'et nytaaron'k'emat ynkam n'enagnentytkokenat, nak'am taarogma nylg'evetgavkenat. Keliteykyk nanatenmytkorkegym Bogorasyn kaletaykye 100 givik galak lygoravetlen petyvagyrbyn ynkam igyrkinet nymymyt. Nemyk'ei tytenmytkorkynat lygoravetl'en ynkkam ykyrgavyl'emat ank'achormynymymyt. Kyttelen'ep murginet yttyyutl'et tan'yynnany ganymytvalenat. Ynk'ory sovetken vagyrbylyagyrbyn armamynga lygoravetlyat sovkhozte megcheratyl'o nelgynet. Ykyrgavylyt-ym apaakyl'emat givinik, ytri igyttegnyk an'k'agynnekgytyrkyt. Lygynymymyt-ym vytku plytkom sovetken vagyrbylyagyrbyn paninemil nymytvan'n'ogyat. Igyr lygoravetlen vagyrbyn kytalvan, n'elgi.

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## Acknowledgements

Writing a dissertation was for me both a significant milestone and a difficult process that gives rise to complex feelings. On some days I felt it was simply impossible to make the research correct and relevant, and the dissertation would never be written with the fulfillment of the necessary requirements. It is likely that most PhD students experience going from feeling grand about the prospective contribution of their work and seeing their “discoveries” as banal at best, serving only to confirm the conclusions of their predecessors. Daily painstaking work and communication with mentors, consultants and colleagues helped strengthen my confidence in continuing to work on this dissertation.

I am very grateful to my fellow villagers Neshkan and Enurmino. Growing up, learning, and finally helping govern and advocate for these communities are among the experiences that inspire this dissertation. Many of my neighbors were my mentors. To many others at one point or another I was a tutor. I can't be sure whose influence on my growing up was the most valuable. Those to whom I was close and did not have to prove anything, or those who were hostile to me and to whom I had to prove my ability to be knowledgeable and skillful enough to provide for my family and my community. I am especially grateful to those fellow villagers who worked hard to get through the crucial 1990s when communities were left to fend for themselves. They survived and helped those who depended on them. Their deep knowledge and strong character were a strong motivation for me. I owe my family the motivation to persevere in my work. They were sure that I was a professional researcher whose work is important for our communities and the Chukchi people to whom I belong. My parents and relatives, as well as fellow villagers, shared with me the Chukchi way of life, shared their knowledge about the traditional worldview, the place of humans in nature, and our rules of interaction. My mother *Gyrgoln' aut* revealed to me the world that only our ancestors saw, shared the secrets of their harmonious coexistence with *peoples* living in the neighborhood in the tundra, sea, mountains, rivers and lakes (she referred as *peoples* to all empirical entities and beings, as well as to those that cannot be seen); I believe the state of nature she described is analogous to what ecologists call homeostasis. My father *Netepkir* persistently and patiently taught me how to survive, living as a coastal Maritime Chukchi away from the settlements, either in a stormy sea, or in a blizzard in the tundra. My

uncle *Valgirgin* taught me the art of reindeer herding. He was my inspiration, telling stories about our kind of reindeer herders who successfully herded a large herd in pre-Soviet times and were able to give their families a prosperous life. My father-in-law *Notagirgin* and his wife *Teyucheivune* were my advisors during the most difficult years of the 1990s, when I had to lead the reindeer herding and hunting camps of the Neshkan and Enurmino communities. *Imelev* and *Ettine-Ilio*, who raised my wife, were for me a model of the Chukchi family, ideally adapted to life in the Arctic, despite the extreme fluctuations of social upheaval. My wife *Tlecheivune*, together with me, mastered the traditional knowledge of the Chukchi as a member of the Chukchi community and as a researcher. Her perseverance in achieving goals inspired me to achieve in my work and research.

My research is based both on the results of many years of field seasons in the Indigenous communities of Chukotka, and on the experience of joint work with my colleagues. These were both my direct co-researchers of Indigenous culture of the Bering Strait Region, such as Lyudmila Ainana, Irina Gyrgolnaut, Dina Keukei, Vladislav Nuvano, Irina Nutetgivev, Rodion Rinetegin, Sneghanna Tymkroltyrgina, Liliya Zdor, Gennady Zelensky, and elders and experienced villagers, such as Nikolai Ettytegin, Nikolay and Konstantin Ettyne, Nikolay Kalanto, Nina Kyttagina, Nikolai Koravie, Viktoria Owen, Nikolai Rovtyn, Anatoly Tynery, Valery Shaugie, Evgeny SivSiv, Mikhail Zelensky, and many others who provided me with valuable information about the traditional ecological knowledge of the Maritime Chukchi. My many years of collaboration with the leaders of the indigenous peoples of Chukotka and Alaska has become another learning ground that has given me knowledge about the Indigenous communities of the Bering Strait region, as well as their approaches to interacting with a global society. I gained a lot of experience working with elders and leaders of Indigenous communities, such as Charles Brower, Vladimir Etylin, Bivers Gologergen, Gennady Inankeuyas, Igor Makotrik, Delbert Pangowyi, Eduard Rypkhirgin, and Vladimir Susyp. My Alaskan colleagues Harry Brower, Andrew Crow, Craig George, Charles Johnson, Janis Kozlowski, and Vera Metcalf inspired me and encouraged me to explore the culture and wildlife of Alaska and Chukotka together.

Finally, I am grateful to those who gave me a university education. First of all, Dr. Sveta Yamin-Pasternak, Chair of my Advisory Committee, who has devoted herself so thoughtfully to academic mentoring while at the same time appreciating my Indigenous traditional knowledge.

Dr. Yamin-Pasternak's courses, her wise advice and recommendations, and her patience with my mistakes, her confidence in my ability to write a dissertation, have always inspired me. I am grateful to my Advisory Committee members Dr. Craig George, Dr. David Koester, Dr. Patrick Plattet, and Dr. Peter Schweitzer for their patience and guidance in helping improve my research skills. I will always remember the members of my Advisory Committee discussing my comprehensive papers and dissertation chapters, patiently pointing out weaknesses while genuinely rejoicing at my progress in research and dissertation writing. Dr. Robin Shoaps and Dr. Elaine Drew, in the anthropology courses I took with them, have made great efforts to ensure that I am well versed in several critical areas of our field and especially the research methods that have been pivotal during all stages of developing this dissertation.

The UAF Resilience and Adaptation Program (special thanks to Dr. Todd Brinkman), Graduate School, College of Liberal Arts, Institute of Northern Engineering, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and University of Alaska Museum of the North provided funding for my studies. Special editors of research journals *Etudes Inuit Studies* - Dr. Virginie Vaté and Dr. Dmitri Oparin, SENRI ethnological research - Dr. Nobushiro Kishigami, and the *Journal of Arctic Research* – Dr. Qu Feng were all worked patiently and meticulously to ensure the high quality of the research papers I submitted there. Collaborating on research papers with Dr. Stanislav Belikov, Dr. Shauna Burnsilver, Dr. Henry Huntington, Dr. Anatoly Kochnev, Dr. Vladimir Melnikov, Dr. Nikolai Mymrin, Dr. Julie Raymond-Yakoubian, and Dr. Abigail York, gave me invaluable writing experience and understanding of the power of synergy. Constant consultations and discussions with Dr. Igor Ilyich Krupnik have given me extensive knowledge and research skills in anthropology in general and the study of Arctic cultures in particular. My training in Indigenous museology would not have been possible without the patient teaching of Angela Linn, Senior Collections Manager for the UAF Museum of Northern Ethnology and History. Working on museum collections, getting information from TEK holders, and trying to intergrate those as part of the museology work has always been a difficult task, but it has greatly expanded my experience and skills in studying material culture. The UAF Writing Center has been a vital resource, as well as a source of inspiration. The generous, dedicated, competent tutors have always made sure that their editing marks were accompanied by encouraging comments that motivated me to write more and more. Dr. Cheryl Rosa of the US Arctic Research Comission was always a gracious coworker and I greatly appreciate what I learned from her. I'm

grateful to Dr. Rosa for years of collaboration on bowhead whale research, as well as on infectious diseases and microbial threats in the Arctic. I'm thankful to Gay Sheffield of the UAF Alaska Marine Advisory Program for her knowledge of the Bering Strait region, which she always shared with me, as a collaborator and colleague, and also in her role as a Co-I on the National Science Foundation Award 1418443, which helped support my field research and my subsequent work as a Graduate Research Assistant at UAF. I am deeply grateful to the National Science Foundation Arctic Social Sciences Program Directors Dr. Erica Hill and Dr. Anna Kerttula de Echave for their respect, appreciation, and support of my efforts as an Indigenous researcher, culture bearer, and subsistence rights advocate for my people and Indigenous communities around the Circumpolar North.

The University of Alaska Fairbanks is a great place to study, research, and live in a beautiful area located on traditional Dene' lands. The mindset and knowledge of the Indigenous peoples continues to ensure a meaningful relationship between humans and other beings, such as mountains, valleys, forests, rivers, lakes, and wildlife. I am pleased to state that science recognizes these achievements and seeks to direct its research toward a greater understanding of these relationships.

## Chapter 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Why Chukchi?

“The name of the Chukchee is derived from the Chukchee word čau'ču, which signifies "rich in reindeer." ... The Maritime Chukchee call themselves and other maritime people añqa'lit (sea people), from a'ñqa ("the sea"); or rama'glat ("seacoast dwellers"). In distinction from other alien tribes, both Reindeer and Maritime Chukchee call themselves li'i-yi'lilit ("those of genuine language"), also ora'wêlat ("men") or li'ê-ora'wêlat ("genuine men).” (Bogoras 1904, 11)

The Chukchi are the Indigenous people of the Northeast Asia continent. Chukchi is mostly located in the region nowadays called Chukotka. Small numbers of Chukchi also live in adjacent regions of Yakutia, Kamchatka, and Magadan. These locations of Chukchi settlements basically coincide with that described by Bogoras (1904, 17). Today more than half of the Chukchi still live in rural settlements and only a small proportion of the Chukchi live in reindeer camps (Khakhovskaya 2011, 112). The Chukchi were and remain the dominant Indigenous people in the region. They number 15,908 currently (Pupynina and Koryakov 2019, 86) while the first Russian Census in 1897 found about 11,000 (Klokov and Khrushchev 2010, 44; Pupynina and Koryakov 2019, 84).

Chukchi retained many of the distinctive cultural features of their identity, described by researchers at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, namely traditional subsistence, worldview, language, and art. Most of the Chukchi consider themselves adherents of traditional beliefs, but my observations rather indicate their apathy to beliefs. The rural Chukchi—because they are more subsistence oriented—retain traditional beliefs to a greater extent than the urban ones. Traditional subsistence contributed to the rituals that are part of the economic cycles of reindeer herding and sea hunting (Vate 2005, Oparin 2012, Klokov 2018; Kochnev 2018; Nuvano 2021). The villagers' claims to adhere to traditional beliefs are a surprising phenomenon in the persistence of Chukchi identity, given the brutal anti-religious persecution by the Soviet authorities (Abryutina 2007, 330; Raizman 2008). Observance of traditional rites is reflected even in regional official holidays. Public rituals reminiscent of those described by Bogoras (1904) accompany state-sponsored traditional competitions in skin boats, dog sleds, and reindeer

sleds. The Chukchi, like other Indigenous peoples of Chukotka, have some community members who are devout Christians (Yarzutkina 2016a; Oparin 2012).

A relatively large proportion of Chukchi—just over 30 percent—claim to speak the Chukchi language (Pupynina 2013; Pupynina and Koryakov 2019, 86; Kolomiets 2021, 123). However, according to Vakhtin (1998, 165), even in the 1990s, the Chukchi language, although the most linguistically stable in Chukotka, was already in danger. Nowadays, most Chukchi prefer to speak Russian. Even members of reindeer herding and hunting camps no longer use Russian-Chukchi bilingualism. It is more of a Russian language interspersed with Chukchi words and, in rare cases, sentences. The pattern is quite reasonable, given that young Chukchi born and raised in a Russian-speaking environment today dominates reindeer herding and hunting camps.

Today's Chukchi performing and visual arts, folklore, and literature reflect the reality of their ancestors a hundred years ago (Bogoras 1902; 1928). The arts have been reflecting on natural and cultural influences. The cultural mutual borrowings of the Bogoras era, due to the close proximity of the Chukchi and Siberian Yupiks (Eresko and Timonina 2020, 204-205), Chukchi and Koryaks, and Chukchi and Evens (Chernyshova 2014, 64-65) were increased by Russian and Soviet enculturation processes of the 20th century. Most of the current performers of traditional dances and makers of traditional art objects do not speak their native languages and do not do traditional hunting and reindeer herding the way their ancestors did. Cultural borrowings from other non-Indigenous peoples (Vukvukai 2012, 139; Chernyshova 2014, 66; Chernyshova 2019; Zhuleva 2020, 48; Shvets-Shust 2021; Zini and Khokhlov 2022, 99) have increased the variety of art forms and techniques, while at the same time diluting boundaries between them.

Adherence to the native language, traditional beliefs, as well as art of the ancestors is grounded on traditional subsistence. Sea hunters and reindeer herders today are the last groups of Chukchi where the native language and rituals are in demand (Oparin 2012; Kolomiets and Nuvano 2020; Nuvano 2021; Zdor et al 2021), similar to the customs described by Bogoras.

As members of a modern global society, the modern Chukchi are no longer limited to the two main occupations of the Bogoras era: reindeer herding and sea hunting. Only about 10 percent of the Chukchi population are employed in these types of subsistence. According to Gal'tseva et al. (2017, 92), 1000 reindeer herders work in reindeer camps and 310 hunters

(including Siberian Yupik in three villages) are members of subsidized sea hunting *obshchinas*<sup>1</sup>. The rest of the Chukchi are employed in jobs typical for remote Arctic settlements, such as educational and medical institutions, public utilities, and social services. A significant proportion of the Chukchi rural population does not work on a permanent basis due to the limited labor market. For this category of Chukchi, as well as for those who have a job, traditional subsistence remains significant for food and cultural needs, but shifts from reindeer herding and sea hunting to fishing and gathering plants.

I agree with Libby's (1960) assertion that the most outstanding feature of the Chukchi culture is their selective acquisition and adaptation of the cultural characteristics of other peoples for the sake of well-being and the preservation of their own identity. The history of the Chukchi people revealed the fact that they were able to borrow and absorb the available economic activities of neighboring peoples in the region. Researchers argue that the Chukchi—originally “wandering wild deer hunters” —borrowed sea hunting from the Siberian Yupik (Krushanov et al 1987, 31). Developed reindeer husbandry became possible due to the forcible capture of deer from the Koryaks and Yukaghirs (Vdovin 1965, 16), although Vdovin (1965, 15-16) does not deny the presence of insignificant reindeer husbandry among the Chukchi before their contacts with the Russians. Bogoras stated that Chukchi reindeer herding had a longer history than some researchers assumed. In his paper “Reindeer breeding” (1933, 226) he, citing a Cossack report, says that Chukchi had well established reindeer herding and that it began earlier than the 17th century. Krushanov et al. (1987, 34) believe that reindeer herding was mastered by the Chukchi earlier than sea hunting by Yupik. Traces of these borrowings were reflected in the Chukchi settlement with the Inuit on the eastern coast of (Menovshchikov 1971; 1972; Krauss 2005), south in the Chukchi-Koryak wars for reindeer and pastures (Nefedkin 2017, 35), and finally on peaceful nomadism west towards the Kolyma River to get new reindeer pastures (Meidel 1894, 98, 108).

The significant adaptive capacity of the Chukchi became the key to the economic growth of reindeer herding communities. Vdovin (1965, 16; Krushanov et al 1987, 55; Brachun 2009, 3) argue that it was the intensive development of the Chukchi reindeer husbandry that caused the expansion of the Chukchi to the south and west in the 18th century. By the same time, the

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<sup>1</sup> *Obshchinas* (Russian word that translates as “communities”) is a term for a type of self-organization of persons belonging to small peoples and united by consanguinity (family, clan)

Russian Empire had activated the military phase of the annexation of the Far East (Turaev 2013, 37). In fact, the Chukchi and the Russian empire clashed in colonization activity. The remoteness of Chukotka from central Russia, the high costs of maintaining military bases and operations, the lack of economic benefits from colonization wars, new geopolitical challenges, and last but not least, the stubborn resistance of the Chukchi forced the Russian Empire to seek peaceful ways to develop relations (Zuev 1998; Brachun 2009, 5; Turaev 2013, 44; Nefedkin 2017, 32). The result of the wars was the relatively independent position of the Chukchi camps, whose economic stability ensured the Chukchi expansion now on a peaceful basis. The Chukchi continued their territorial expansion, discussing with the Russian authorities the acquisition of pastures in exchange for social services for the peoples living there (Maidel 1894, 130).

Reindeer herding in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was also the backbone of Chukchi motivations for adaptive actions. The economic independence of the Chukchi reindeer husbandry and its nomadic nature contributed to the fact that some reindeer herding settlements of the Chukchi resisted the influence of the Soviet authorities until the middle of the 20th century (Zadorin 2008, Nuvano 2008, Nefedkin 2017, 33). While some Chukchi resisted Soviet influence, other Chukchi integrated themselves into the Soviet system of governing the region. The resettlement of the Chukchi reindeer herding camps and sea hunters of the settlements to large settlements and the industrialization of traditional subsistence, despite significant social changes, left room for the Chukchi adaptation mechanisms to work. Chukchi leaders (former and new) headed collective farms established from existing reindeer herding and sea hunting households and settlement economic units (Davydova 2019c, 44), as well as settlement tribal councils (Krushanov 1987, 152, 156). The pinnacle of the integration of the Chukchi into the Soviet system of governance of Chukotka was that, between 1932 and 1993, the Chukchi headed the supreme body of Soviet power in the region in eight cases out of nine (Abryutina 2007, 334). Even taking into account the fact that this position, being part of the Soviet strategy of "indigenization" and "Sovietization," was more formal than real (Meleshkina 2012, 326; 330), it is still a remarkable phenomenon that characterizes the Chukchi capacity to adapt. These circumstances raise a question on which I have not found discussion, but the significance of which is important in the context of the discussion of the Chukchi ability to adapt. Were the Chukchi forcibly absorbed into the Soviet system, that is, a global society, or once again they adjusted to a sharp turn in their lives?



Reindeer herding and sea hunting are still fundamental activities that maintain the clear boundaries of the Chukchi culture, inherited from the time of Bogoras research. The decrease in the number of reindeer herders and sea hunters during the 20th century was offset by an increase in the proportion of urbanized and *poselkovye* Chukchi (*poselkovye* is a Russian word that means “ones belonging to the settlement). The *poselkovye* Chukchi, although they live in rural areas, like sea hunters and reindeer herders, limit their life within the boundaries of the settlement. Today, the Chukchi intelligentsia, and primarily women, dominate local and regional governments and non-governmental Indigenous organizations. In other words, they set the trend for the lifestyle of modern Chukchi, providing regional and federal authorities with local feedback and needs.

This trend is characterized by a strong sense of Chukchi identity, sustained traditional subsistence providing food and cultural needs, developed art that combines Chukchi originality and global diversity, on the one hand, and at the same time, the blurring of the Chukchi language and, although not yet critical, but steady migration of the Chukchi to urban agglomeration. My field research conversations show that modern Chukchi, who may not be the same Chukchi of the era of Bogoras research, nevertheless clearly distinguish their Chukchi culture. To what extent the thoughts of the participants in the study coincide with my observations, I consider by examining the two Chukchi communities of Neshkan and Enurmino.

## 1.2. Why Bogoras?

Boas to Bogoras, April 22, 1905:

“I fully appreciate the excitement of the present time, and the difficulty in concentrating yourself on scientific work; but if events like the present happen only once in a century, an investigation by Mr. Bogoras of the Chukchee happens only once in eternity, and I think you owe it to science to give us the results of your studies” (Freed 2012, 362–363).

I consider Bogoras's research not so much for a comparative analysis of the Chukchi society between the pre-Soviet and post-Soviet periods as for tracking the cultural trends that designed the modern cultural pattern of the Chukchi community. Therefore, I look not only at his prominent publication *The Chukchee*, but also at the papers of other ethnographers and travelers who explored Chukotka from the end of the 19th century to the present.

Bogoras was not the only researcher who studied the Chukchi in the pre-Soviet period. Gondatti (Glebova 2013; Kolomiets 2020; Kolomiets et al 2020), Nordenskjöld (1881), Sverdrup (1978), and other researchers studied this people in the same period. However, Bogoras was the only one who wrote a comprehensive, detailed and well-documented ethnography of the Chukchi a hundred years ago. The Encyclopædia Britannica (n.d.) describes Vladimir Bogoras as “Russian anthropologist whose study of the Chukchi people of northeastern Siberia ranks among the classic works of ethnography.” Although Bogoras was not the first and not the only one who studied the Chukchi language in the 19th century (Burykin 2000, 17; Shepileva 2017, 46; Tkalich 2019, 720), he made a significant contribution to the Chukchi language documentation (Bogoraz 1899; 1900; 1934; 1937; Bogoras 1922). Mastery of the Chukchi language, although not fluent in his own opinion (Sirina 2010, 146), became a strong asset for Bogoras in his study of Chukchi culture, as well as in his efforts to develop Russian ethnography. Bogoras was among those frontrunners of Russian science who, in the 1920s, outlined the path for the ethnography of the Indigenous peoples of the Russian North (Mikhailova 2004, 24).

Public and scientific activities of Bogoras are covered in great depth and detail in articles by Kan (2007), Krupnik (1996); Krupnik (2017); Liarskaya (2018), Mikhailova (2004; 2016), Sirina (2010), Vakhtin (2016), and other researchers. There are also several articles (Freed et al 1988; Krupnik and Fitzhugh 2001; Vakhtin 2001) that discuss the Jesup North Pacific Expedition, in the Russian part of which Bogoras played a significant role.

The most remarkable characteristic of Bogoras as an anthropologist is his commitment to participant observation, fact gathering, and conversations with the original bearers of the culture under study. These key methods of field ethnography make those parts of Bogoras' publications where there is no theoretical discussion still in demand even after a hundred years. This is justified given the continuously evolving methods in anthropology, as well as the ethnographic training of Bogoras. He was at first self-taught (Mikhailova 2004, 9; Krupnik 2017, 10), then minimally trained by Boas (Mikhailova 2004, 15-16; Krupnik 2017, 13), and under the increasing dogma of Soviet Marxism during his Soviet career as a professor (Mikhailova 2004, 35-36; Krupnik 2017, 25). Bogoras's ethnographic studies were so extensive and comprehensive that even Frantsov (Bogoraz, 1939, VII) and Vdovin (Bogoraz, 1991, 221), the leading Soviet ethnographers, armed with a communist ideology of hostility to other methodological approaches, recognized the great importance of his field observations.

In considering Bogoras's research in the context of the dissertation objectives, I traced the perception patterns of Bogoras and the Chukchi. Bogoras's attitude to ethnography, and to Chukchi culture in particular, went a long and thorny path from indifference to admiration, and finally secured him a solid position at the dawn of Soviet power and anthropology. The revolution and writing were Bogoras true passions (Mikhailova 2004, 3, 20), while ethnography was a forced, albeit exciting, occupation in order to survive in a 10-year Siberian exile (Krupnik 2017, 10). Studying Chukchi ethnography helped Bogoras not only survive in a remote exile, but also acquire a certain social status and a good position in the eyes of the Russian authorities (Mikhailova 2004, 9, 10). As soon as Bogoras was released from exile, the revolution and writing became his priority, while ethnography, together with the multi-volume *The Chukchee* "receded into the background" (Mikhailova 2004, 20). Significant efforts by Boas were required to force Bogoras to prepare the multi-volume *The Chukchee* for publication (Krupnik 2017, 22). Nevertheless, it was the publication of *The Chukchee* that became a milestone on Bogoras's path to being a leader in early Soviet ethnography, a prominent Siberian scholar (Vakhtin 2019, 442), and having a special place in the history of anthropology (Encyclopædia Britannica n.d.).

The significance of *The Chukchee* that Krupnik (2017, 8) calls a "masterpiece of almost 750 pages" is still beyond doubt. Reindeer herding, sea hunting, and plant gathering, and the beliefs and customary laws associated with these subsistence activities, are largely similar despite a difference of a hundred years. These circumstances are the driving force for

anthropologists studying modern Chukchi culture to go through Bogoras and other researchers of his time in search of causes, trends, and patterns. Although there were many researchers who studied Chukchi culture at that time, the essential argument in favor of Bogoras's publication is the well-structured information, written in the style of an encyclopedia. It is quite easy for any researcher studying any feature of the Chukchi culture to search for relevant information simply by browsing the contents of the publication.

To test the claim that Bogoras's research is in demand today, I checked a recent issue of *Études Inuit Studies*, in which the editors "intention is to highlight the vivacity and diversity of studies about this region" (Oparin and Vate 2021, 47). The journal issue contains 20 chapters, including an introduction, 16 articles and three research notes. In total, the authors referred to Bogoras 88 times in 10 articles. This is quite a large citation for a study published over a hundred years ago.

It is noteworthy that the Chukchi went through a similar path in their attitude towards Bogoras. It took almost a hundred years for the Chukchi themselves to go from indifference to Bogoras as one of the visiting explorers to using his research to learn the history and culture of their ancestors. When I started the section on the relationship of modern Chukchi to Bogoras, I assumed the vision of modern Chukchi about Bogoras is similar to the man from the Chukchi legends. He is a man who lived in the old true time, so the knowledge that he collected and preserved is true. The term true implies an original past culture compared to a much-changed present. This is how the elders in Chukchi communities usually speak of the younger generations, saying that they are no longer the same as they were in the past.

This widespread opinion was supported by my experience of discussing the issue with fellow countrymen. In one of the conversations in the WhatsApp group *Lygoravelyat*, I shared Libby's statement (1960) about the highly adaptive capacities of the Chukchi over many centuries. The idea of the hypothesis was that the Chukchi expanded their territories of residence and learned the most effective methods of survival from the peoples living there. The members of the group were so dissatisfied with the suggestion that the Chukchi did not invent reindeer herding, or sea hunting, or ironwork themselves, that they did not even notice that Libby did not question the ability of the Chukchi to invent anything, but rather spoke highly of the dynamism of the Chukchi culture. To prove to me that the hypothesis I presented was wrong, the members

of the group referred to Bogoras. They recommended that I carefully read his publications to find out that the Chukchi are a people with an ancient and highly developed culture. However, not all Chukchi are familiar with Bogoras's studies. One reason for this is that some Chukchi simply do not need book sources because they have traditional knowledge passed down to them by their parents. In general, the opinion of modern Chukchi about Bogoras is far from unambiguous.

The idealization of the past was the frequent statement of the members of the Chukchi community I've met, conditioned by the desire of its members to preserve their identity. It is the rapid changes in the Chukchi identity that have taken place in the post-Soviet decades that determine the demand for Bogoras's publications. Today's older generations of Chukchi were born and spent their childhood in a Chukchi-speaking environment that no longer exists. Traditional subsistence has since become the lot of a small percentage of Chukotka villagers. The traditions and rituals associated with the two key factors of that Chukchi identity are slipping away because there is no home that gives rise to this knowledge. In the context of narrowing the basis for maintaining traditional knowledge, books and media resources become only a source of information for maintaining the Chukchi identity.

My conversations with the villagers raised doubts about the general enthusiasm for the achievements of Bogoras. To understand how modern Chukchi refers to Bogoras and his study of the Chukchi culture, my colleagues and I conducted a series of short surveys. For the purposes of this survey, we used both a paper and an online survey, each consisting of nine multiple-choice questions (table 1.1). The interviewer before each interview gave the interviewees the following preface:

This is a study about the explorer Bogoras and his studies of the Chukchi in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. There are questions and answers to them. You can choose the appropriate option or answer in your own words. You can also combine your answers, that is, choose the appropriate suggested answers, regardless of their number, and add your thoughts to them. On the last question of the questionnaire, you can give your opinion and explanations in your own words.

Table 1.1. Bogoras and Modern Chukchi Questionnaire.

Questions	Answers Options
1. Have you heard (know) about Bogoras?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Yes</li> <li>- No</li> <li>- I don't want to answer</li> </ul>
2. What did you hear (know) about Bogoras and his research on the Chukchi?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bogoras explored Chukchi culture over a hundred years ago</li> <li>- Bogoras was a political exile in Chukotka</li> <li>- Bogoras was a wonderful researcher and writer who glorified the Chukchi culture.</li> </ul>
3. Do you like what Bogoras wrote about the Chukchi?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Yes</li> <li>- No</li> <li>- I do not know</li> </ul>
4. What do you like about Bogoras's research?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- About the Chukchi sea hunting?</li> <li>- About the Chukchi reindeer herding?</li> <li>- About Chukchi rituals and holidays?</li> <li>- About shamans and Chukchi beliefs?</li> <li>- About the Chukchi family and children?</li> <li>- About Chukchi food and clothes?</li> <li>- About the Chukchi laws?</li> <li>- About the Chukchi leaders and heroes?</li> </ul>
5. Do you think Bogoras's research is useful for the Chukchi?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Yes</li> <li>- No</li> <li>- I do not know</li> </ul>

Table 1.1 continued

<p>6. If Bogoras's research is useful, what is the benefit?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bogoras books tell about the history of the Chukchi people.</li> <li>- Bogoras books teach Chukchi beliefs and traditional knowledge.</li> <li>- It's just interesting to know the past of our Chukchi people, but now we have our own life.</li> </ul>
<p>7. Do you think today's Chukchi are different from the Chukchi described by Bogoras?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Yes</li> <li>- No</li> <li>- I do not know</li> </ul>
<p>8. If the Chukchi of Bogoras's time and the modern ones differ, then in what way?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Today's Chukchi live a completely different life. They have become like other peoples of the world: they like cinema, television, books, the Internet, holidays, work.</li> <li>- The life of today's Chukchi is slightly different from the Chukchi of Bogoras research: different clothes, language, entertainment, but the main thing remains the same: sea hunting, reindeer husbandry, fishing and food.</li> <li>- I do not know</li> </ul>
<p>9. If you have a personal impression of Bogoras, then tell us about it.</p>	

Dina Keukei (Figure 1.1) from the Tan-Bogoras Regional Library helped me conduct a paper survey among five Chukchi living or passing through Anadyr. Three survey participants were from the city of Anadyr (the capital of Chukotka), one from the village of Lavrentia (the Bering Strait region), and one from the village of Khatyrka (the coast of the Bering Sea in southern Chukotka). Three respondents work in municipal services, two in commercial companies, one is retired. None of them were either reindeer herders or sea hunters, either in the

past or in the present. Most of them take part in traditional subsistence, such as fishing and game hunting, in their free time.

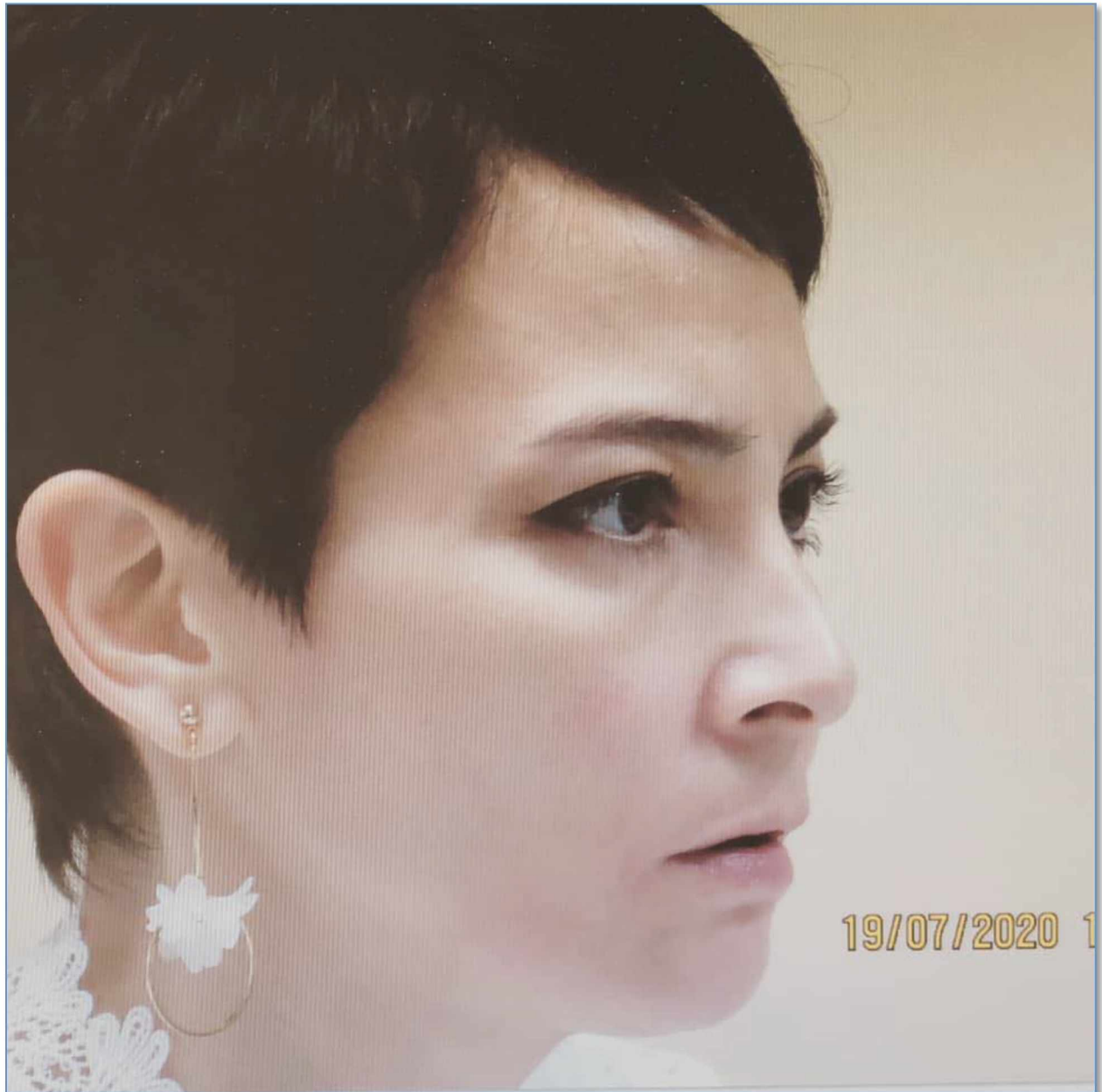


Figure 1.1. Dina Keukei, Anadyr, 2020.  
Photo provided by Dina Keukei.

All responding participants know that Bogoras was a researcher and writer. Only one person mentioned Bogoras was also a political exile. When asked what they prefer to learn from



the Bogoras study, a resident of Khatyrka emphasized the importance of knowledge about rituals, and a resident of Lavrentia said that he appreciated the descriptions associated with the activities of sea hunters. The other two replied that the whole study of Bogoras was worth knowing. It could also mean that they are not well versed in the details of Bogoras's research. All participants stated that Bogoras's research is useful for the current Chukchi. The main motive for this statement is the need to know the history of one's people. Only one participant reported that ancestral beliefs could be learned from the Bogoras study. In the context of the Bogoras study on the Chukchi, all participants chose the option that today's Chukchi are different from the Chukchi of the time of the Bogoras study. On the question of how the Chukchi of today and those described by Bogoras differs, only two said that they had a completely different life. Two more participants chose the option that, although the life of the Chukchi today and a hundred years ago is different, the traditional subsistence has remained the same. In response to personal impressions of the Bogoras study, the opinion was dominated by a detailed and accurate description of the culture of the Chukchi 100 years ago, which provided the Chukchi with a rich heritage.

Gennady Zelensky (Figure 1.2), my longtime research colleague, conducted a paper survey at my request among eight sea hunters in Lorino and seven sea hunters in Lavrentia. Mostly they were middle-age hunters. There were also a couple of elders and young ones. None of them wanted to answer a single question of the questionnaire. Then Zelensky asked the villagers to make at least a general comment. Only a few of the hunters stated that they knew about Bogoras but did not want to talk about his research. Most simply said they had heard of Bogoras but were vaguely aware of who he was. And a couple of those interviewed said they did not know who Bogoras was. Zelensky suggested that the answers of his interlocutors most likely indicated that none of them had read Bogoras's publications.

I also conducted an online survey in two WhatsApp groups in the villages of Neshkan and Enurmino. The WhatsApp group Neshkan (population over 600 inhabitants) had 267 members and the WhatsApp group Enurmino (population about 300) had 131 members. I planned to first find those interested in survey responses and then interview them in person. The question to the groups was: who can tell me who Bogoras is? I asked group members to respond to me in person or to speak out on the main group page.



Figure 1.2. Gennady Zelensky, Bering Strait, 2020.  
Photo provided by Gennady Zelensky.

There was a pause in the Neshkan WhatsApp group for several hours after my question about Bogoras. This group typically has up to 50 messages per day, or about three messages per hour. After a couple of hours of pause, one of the members replied that this group was not for such questions, but mainly about congratulations on birthdays and holidays. Then, without

receiving a response from anyone, the WhatsApp group resumed normal messaging. The Enurmino Whatsapp group exchanges about 20 messages per day, which is proportionate to almost half the population of Enurmino compared to Neshkan. The answer to my question—who is Bogoras?—came within an hour, which roughly coincides with the frequency of posting a message in the group of about one message per hour. One of the members of the WhatsApp group posted a screenshot of the Bogoras Wikipedia page on the group page. I asked this member of the group to tell in a private message a little more about Bogoras, but I did not receive a response.

My paper and online surveys, along with my conversations during in-person field research, indicate that the degree of modern Chukchi's interest in Bogoras depends on where they live and how they make a living. The Chukchi for whom the traditional ways of subsistence—sea hunting and reindeer herding—are a means of meeting food and cultural needs and a source of income are hardly interested in what Bogoras wrote 100 years ago about these activities and the worldviews associated with them. Urbanized Chukchi, for whom traditional subsistence is a means of outdoor recreation and adding local foods to their diet, are feeling disconnected from their original identity. To make up for this loss, these Chukchi get to know the culture of their ancestors through the volumes of Bogoras. At the same time, the everyday urbanized style of life fills them with other concerns and displaces anxieties about a changing identity. Therefore, for modern Chukchi, Bogoras's research is more of a source of historical information about ancestors and a means of maintaining a sense of belonging to the culture of their ancestors. This is the current reality, typical for today's society that is more integrated within the globalized world, of introducing new generations of Chukchi to the culture of their own people through digital sources of information that have replaced the previous ways of transferring Indigenous knowledge through practice and following the parental path.

I first heard about Bogoras's study of the Chukchi in the late 1980s. This was the time when I, like other Soviet people, got acquainted with the previously banned Russian literature of Mikhail Bulgakov, Ivan Bunin, Boris Pasternak, Vladimir Nabokov and others. During this time, I was writing a term paper on the history of the Chukchi in the 20th century, based on the publications of Soviet ethnographers such as Vdovin, Gurvich, and others. I felt that there was a gap in both the pre-Soviet and Soviet history of the Chukchi, but I did not find any available publications. Even though I did not find the study of the Chukchi by Bogoras, I realized that

there are also non-Marxist studies that describe the pre-Soviet culture of my ancestors. Later, in the 1990s, due to rare copies of the 1934 edition of *The Chukchee*, I read several poor-quality reprints of Bogoras's book. It so happened that I did the first complete reading of the *Chukchee* multi-volume Bogoras only in English when I became a graduate student at University of Alaska Fairbanks. The scope of Bogoras's work is impressive, and his contribution to the ethnography and history of the Chukchi is, without exaggeration, unique. His ability to collect a huge amount of ethnographic and linguistic material in short periods of travel over vast distances in off-road conditions is also impressive, which even today is beyond the capacity of most researchers of Chukotka. Bogoras's success in the study of Chukchi culture was based on his study of the Indigenous language, which in his opinion "is the best means for knowing the people" (Mikhailova 2004, 9). This is especially impressive given the fact that Bogoras himself admitted that his level of knowledge of the Chukchi language was not very good (Sirina 2010, 141, 146). Chukchi language enthusiasts know this fact. Chukchi elder and an expert on the Chukchi language, Margarita Belichenko, in one of the conversations in the *Lygooravetlyat* (Chukchi) WhatsApp group dedicated to the promotion of the Chukchi language, said,

“We must remember, referring to Bogoras, that he was not the original speaker of the Chukchi language. This also means that you should be critical of the texts he wrote down.” (Margarita Belichenko, 75 years old, Chukchi language expert, August 2020)

Despite this fact, as well as other inaccuracies in ethnographic descriptions, inevitable for a visiting researcher, the ethnographic observations of Bogoras are, one might say, a documentary snapshot of the era of Chukchi culture at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. Researchers have used *The Chukchee* to track the cultural patterns of the Chukchi communities and the reasons for their emergence.

### 1.3. Auto ethnography

#### 1.3.1. Family

*Gyrgoln' aut* (A woman above), my mother (Figure 1.3), was born in the early 1940s in an ordinary family reindeer herding camp in the southern tundra of Chukotka between the Khatyrka and Vaegi rivers. According to my uncle *Valgirgin*, their father *Lyatylkot* was from the *Ponty* clan, the *Viluneytann'yt* tribe (Vilunei Koryaks). *Lyatylkot* was the head of an *armachyran* (front

(main) house) in a camp consisting of brothers' families, which was typical of Chukchi reindeer camps (Bogoras 1909, 612). The family herd had about 2,500 deer, which indicated prosperity. *Gyrgoln'aut*' mother died at a young age, leaving her in the care of her father and several older siblings. In the early 1950s, the Soviet authorities nationalized the family reindeer and transferred the Zhdanov *kolkhoz*, whose office was in the village of Khatyrka. One of the older brothers was arrested for resisting the nationalization of their herd, after which his relatives did not see him. The father and the remaining brothers were forced to work on the *kolkhoz*, and the children were relocated to the Khatyrka boarding school.



Figure 1.3. Gyrgoln'aut and Netepkir, Neshkan, 1970s.  
Natalia Ivanovna and Yuri Petrovich Netepkir at the New Year Eve. Photo provided by Eduard Zdor

Although my mother was born and raised in a reindeer camp until she was about 10 years old, she never told me that she missed her childhood places. On the contrary, she always told me

about her experience of a new life and her expectations of a brighter future for herself and for the Chukchi. I can't imagine how difficult it was for her to adjust to her new life. My mother belonged to the first generation of bilinguals in her family. She studied foreign culture while in boarding school and college. Even as a paramedic and midwife for more than a decade, *Gyrgoln'aut* still had to learn "Russian" culture. Mother told me how for the first time in her life, at the request of her father, she cooked a chicken: "I pinched my nose because the smell was so unfamiliar and unbearable." Yet, mother was very passionate and added Russian dishes to our family's diet. For one of my first Russian-style birthdays, I invited my classmates to our house, and we enjoyed real chopped stake, dumplings, and pies the Russian way (I am not sure that these dishes were specifically Russian dishes, but they were definitely not Chukchi). At the same time, Mother was the one who explained the traditional knowledge of our people to me. For example, she talked about the traditional ways of cooking seal meat:

“The meat of a freshly harvested seal should be cooked longer, because eaters may have allergic reactions. The next day, the meat is already fermented a little, and therefore I can cook the meat in the medium-rare. After a few days, the meat is already so safe that you can only wait until the broth boils and that's it, this rare meat is ready to eat.” (*Gyrgoln'aut*, 50, Neshkan, 1992)

After graduating from high school, *Gyrgoln'aut* worked all summer on collective farm, fishing to earn money for travel to Debin Medical College in the Magadan Region. She worked as a paramedic and midwife until the age of 72 and wanted to continue working, but the hospital management said that it was no longer possible. *Gyrgoln'aut* entire medical career was spent in the Chukchi villages, although she was offered several times to move to the district towns or the regional capital for promotion. My mother's dreams of combining a comfortable urban life and preserving the traditional way of life of the Chukchi are quite common in the villages of Neshkan and Enurmino.

As I see it now, my mother was able to simultaneously maintain her adherence to Chukchi beliefs and adapt to external beliefs entering the Chukchi community, be it Soviet atheism or Christianity. During the 2016 field season, I stayed at my mother's house. This was the time I focused my research on the topic of Indigenous identity in the Arctic. In particular, I was concerned about whether the Chukchi would be able to maintain their identity in a time

permeated with modern technology and global culture. My mother and I discussed my conversations with the villagers, and somehow, I asked her opinion on this issue. She replied,

“The Chukchi were able to survive even when the Russian “senate issued a decree on the extermination and deportation of the ‘non-peaceful’ Chukchi” (Nefedkin 2017, 28) and do you doubt that we will not survive now?” (*Gyrgoln’aut*, 74, Neshkan, 2016)

I believe that it was her adaptability and resilience that caused her to always feel like a young girl dreaming of a brighter future for her and the Chukchi. I grew up under the influence of my mother's dream of a *svetloe* (bright) future for our people and her confidence in the Chukchi way of life as a phenomenon that should make us feel proud. A great contribution to my conviction was made by my mother's younger brother, *Valgirgin* (Living being) (Figure 1.4), a reindeer herder in his youth and then graduated with honors from a veterinary college. In addition to the fact that he devoted his whole life to reindeer herding for the Chukchi, I single out two of his achievements that influenced my life. He insisted that after I graduated from high school, I should go to the tundra to herd deer. *Valgirgin* told me the story of our family:

“Our father, *Lyatylkot*, from the *Ponta* family of the *Vilyunei Tannyt* tribe (Viluney Koryaks), together with his brothers, kept 2500 deer. The father was well known as *Ponta Liatylkot*. At the age of 22, he was a perfect zootechnician. Therefore, without doing his *bride service* [a cultural expectation for an aspiring young man to work for the family of his prospective wife] he married our mother *Iyumnen*. She and her brother *Lyauylo* had 2500 deer. *Lyatylkot* was also masterfully enterprising. His reindeer herd remained unchanged, which was difficult given the lack of grazing land and the herd's high productivity. He either exchanged all the surplus reindeer with coastal neighbors or sold reindeer for a start-up to new reindeer herders. Our older brothers dispossessed by the Soviet authorities died at the age of 45-55 in the tundra. Viin Atav!” (Alexander *Valgirgin*, 72, former Neshkan resident)

*Valgirgin* wanted me, if not to become a reindeer herder, then at least to gain experience in reindeer herding to continue the legacy of our ancestors. Time has shown that he was right. A decade later, he supported my decision to become the director of a reindeer herding *sovkhos*



[state farm]. Thanks to his knowledge, experience, and support, the Neshkan reindeer herding camps managed to survive at a time when the collapse of the Soviet system led to a downfall in the reindeer herding of Chukotka. By the end of the 1990s, only 100 thousand deer remained in Chukotka out of 400 thousand deer at the end of the 1980s. Therefore, several hundred reindeer herders were forced to move to the villages, left without deer. The key goal of *Valgirgin*' idea in the crisis years of the 1990s was to preserve the reindeer herding heritage of the Neshkan tundra. Neshkan reindeer herders coped with this challenge with incredible efforts. Today there are still three reindeer camps. Dozens of reindeer herders and their families continue the path of their ancestors' lives.



Figure 1.4. Valgirgin (right), Neshkan tundra, 1980s.  
Alexander Ivanovich Valgirgin. Photo provided by Alyona Valgirgina.

*Netepkir* (The man who came from Cape Netten), my father (Figure 1.3), was born in a small village of sea hunters on Cape Netten, an hour's walk from present-day Enurmino.



Throughout his life, *Netepkir* faced a dilemma between the desire to follow the natural path of a sea hunter and the burden of having to earn cash income. This bifurcation split *Netepkir* between cash work as a carpenter and sea hunting in his spare time. Our family always had walrus and seal meat. We also had reindeer meat, which he traded with reindeer herders for walrus rolls and seal oil. His sea hunting skills were so broad and deep that they were useful not only to our family, but even to the Neshkan community. In the autumn of the early 1990s, for the first time after several decades of absence, walrus again came to the rookery of the Idlidlia Island near Neshkan (Figure 1.5). The people of Neshkan were excited by this news. The villagers had the opportunity to provide their families with traditional food for the whole winter. Due to the long absence of the coastal haulout, only a few of the villagers knew how to hunt walrus in the coastal rookery. On that day, four villagers, including *Netepkir*, provided the whole village with walrus meat, using only spears for hunting, as in ancient times.



Figure 1.5. Idlidlia Island.  
Photo by Eduard Zdor.

*Netepkir* was a coastal Chukchi typical of our area, who had a combined traditional knowledge of sea hunting and reindeer herding. Since my father grew up in a coastal village that was Sovietized a couple of decades earlier than the reindeer camps, he found himself in a Soviet environment from birth. This meant that his beliefs were always hidden from view and he could

only afford to do what would not cause settling and persecution from the authorities. He observed, and I learned from him to observe the customary law of the Chukchi. I am not referring so much to outward signs such as rituals, but rather to traditions of hunting and distribution of hunting prey. *Netepkir* always generously shared what he got at sea with our neighbors, with relatives in Enurmino, and friends in the reindeer herding camp, without expecting gifts in return.

The sea was *Netepkir's* element, and it is thanks to him that I cannot imagine life without boat trips. When I was 9 years old, on a sunny summer day, my father and I were returning from fishing in a small-tarred wooden boat with a 12-horsepower outboard engine. Suddenly, a sharp wind blew from the Bering Sea. The water on the estuary instantly began to seethe; the waves were green-transparent, illuminated by the sun, with white crests at the tops. The spray periodically doused us, but my father resolutely drove the boat to the village. It was the first and, perhaps, the only time when my father on a boat trip not only showed what he was doing, but also explained how to maneuver a boat during a storm, saying “the waves are very strong and steep. So avoid direct collision with the waves, steer the boat at an angle to them, use the power of the water to guide the boat as if it were flying over the wave.” This incident happened many decades ago. After that, we sailed together many times in one or two boats and got into different bad weather, but I remember that lesson as if it were yesterday. My father, who grew up in a small village of sea hunters on the shores of the Chukchi Sea, was for me a standard of ultimate adaptation to the sea.

So, I grew up in a mixed tundra and coastal Chukchi family, which is typical for the coastal villages of the Chukotka Peninsula. On this land, initially traditions, and more recently Soviet orders, have created a close-knit mixed Chukchi community of reindeer herders, sea hunters, and urbanized villagers.

Liliya *Tlecheivune* (walking woman), my wife, was born and raised in Neshkan. Tlecheivune (Figure 1.6) was the eldest child in her family and the last newborn in Neshkan who was born in a *yaranga* [a traditional dwelling constructed of local building materials]. The day after her birth, she, the first patient, was taken to the newly opened local hospital. In her family, the tundra and coastal Chukchi mixed up due to marriages, which is a fairly common occurrence for the Neshkan community. *Teyucheivune* (Walking Salt), her mother (Figure 1.7), was from a

reindeer herding camp, and *Notagirgin* (A man who came out of the Earth), her father (Figure 1.7) was from the coastal Chukchi. Grandmother *Kiya* took *Tlecheivune* to be brought up when she was 8 months old to help her parents. Tlecheivune told me that her life attitudes, such as independence, perseverance, and patience, she gained from her grandmother *Kiya*.



Figure 1.6. Tlecheivune, Anadyr River, 2010s.  
Liliya Fedorovna Zdor. Photo by Eduard Zdor.

“Once, when I was 5 years old, I asked my grandmother *Kiya* to pull out the *k’ymliat* (a bone marrow). Grandmother was busy with household chores and advised me to do it myself. I began to act up and crying to demand from my grandmother to help break the bone. Then *Kiya* stopped her work, washed her hands, put the bone on a *talakvyn* (a stone anvil) and smashed it with a *rypen’y* (a stone hammer), and then pulled out the marrow. I stopped crying and expected a treat, but my grandmother defiantly ate the bone marrow and returned to work. It was a lesson, if I want to get things done, then I must do it myself” (*Tlecheivune*, 60 years old, September 2022).



Figure 1.7. Fyodor Notagirgin (left) and Elena Teyucheivune (2nd from right), Neshkan, 2000s. Photo provided by Liliya Zdor.

Grandmother *Kiya* died when *Tlecheivune* was 10 years old. *Ettyne-Ylio* (Dog-she), her aunt, and *Imelev*, her uncle (Figure 1.8), raised *Tlecheivune*, because by that time her mother



already had many children. *Ettyne-Ylio* was the elder sister of *Teyucheyvune*, and she had only two sons. *Notagirgin* and *Tlecheivune* were the first bilinguals in their family, while grandmother *Kiya*, uncle *Imelev*, and aunt *Ettyne-Ylio* spoke only Chukchi. *Imelev* was a very calm, confident, and respectable elder and experienced sea hunter. *Ettyne-Ylio* bred dogs for their family team, and *Imelev* was an experienced musher. They had probably one of the best dog teams in Neshkan.



Figure 1.8. Ettyne-Ylio (left) and Imelev (right), Neshkan, 1990s.  
Photo provided by Liliya Zdor.

*Notagirgin*, on the contrary, was a vigorous person. He was a local leader and managed to rise to the position of deputy director of the *sovkhos*, responsible for the logistics of reindeer herding and sea hunting, as well as additional departments such as fur farming and pig and cow breeding. *Notagirgin* was one of the best of the Neshkan, responsible for the survival of the Neshkan community in the famine-stricken 1990s. Together with *Valgirgin*, he supported my search for ways to survive the traditional economic activity of the Neshkan and Enurmino communities. We then worked in crisis business conditions, when there were almost no assets, such as fuel, machinery, and loans, to ensure the functioning of an agricultural enterprise with about 400 employees. Employees worked almost no cash wages, occasionally receiving small amounts of cash, but mostly deer meat, sea animals, and fish. In such conditions, management required a lot of experience and skill. Somehow, after another difficult meeting, when we finally found a solution to the problem, *Notagirgin* told me:

“You know, being a leader in the local community first requires the ability to balance. Balance between being tough and being gentle with people to inspire them to work. You must keep in mind the mindset and behavior patterns of each individual employee. Each of them should be treated according to its nature. At times you must quietly ask someone to follow the order. And at times you can publicly scold someone and loudly demand that they get something done, not to scare him, but to give a signal to others on what they are to do. Look carefully at people, evaluate them, and act in a way that benefits the entire community.”

(Fyodor Notagirgin, resident of Neshkan, 55 years old, 1996)

These were the people who shaped my childhood and youth. They were not only hunters and reindeer herders, and parents who raised children, but also responsible leaders who ensured the prosperity of the local community. Watching today the social life of Neshkan and Enurmino, I see the same difficult process of selection, struggle, and formation of local leaders. I touch on this topic further, discussing cases of conflicts between the leaders of the Neshkan hunting community and the municipalities of Neshkan and Enurmino. In some cases, these actors may turn out to be inappropriate and unsuccessful, but over time, the right people still appear. Which leads me to the conclusion about the high ability of the Chukchi communities to reproduce their leaders to ensure the well-being of the settlements.

### 1.3.2. Exploring Chukchi and Non-Chukchi Societies

My first teacher was Mikhail Martynovich *Krai*, a heavy-set Chukchi who taught us reading, writing, and mathematics using what I think was a conservative method of study that some call cramming. It may not have been the best way to gain knowledge, but thanks to *Krai*, most of my classmates were able to graduate from high school, and some of them also received university education. *Krai*, like most of the coastal Chukchi of that time, was eager for sea hunting. He hunted seals individually and, together with other Chukchi village officials, even created a special hunting team of the intelligentsia, as it was called in Enurmino. Andrian Omrukvun, my classmate, told me a funny story about how the “intelligent hunting team” turned out to be more successful than professional sea hunters.

My classmates in Enurmino were mostly from families of sea hunters. Those in Neshkan more often from families of reindeer herders, but also sea hunters. So, our children's games were connected with sea hunting and reindeer herding. We either threw a hook to catch an imaginary shot seal, or we lassoed deer antlers. We all excitedly dreamed about what we would be when we grew up. First and foremost, everyone wanted to be a gunner, mechanic, helmsman, and all-terrain vehicle driver. Of course, there were also games that were universal for children of any region, such as hide-and-seek, *lapta* (baseball), football and others.

We were the third generation of bilingual Chukchi in which conversations moved from the stage of dominance of the Chukchi language to the stage of dominance of the Russian language. In other words, this was the last generation that spoke the native language without an accent, but the native language environment was already shrinking, moving to hunting and reindeer herding camps. Although our generation heard Chukchi as their first language, kindergarten and elementary school became decisive in the dominance of the Russian language. Teachers at school demanded to communicate only in Russian. It didn't matter what their motive was—the need to understand what the children were discussing, or the wish to ensure a better assimilation of the Russian language among children—Russian was present in children's communication all day long, and in the evening for those who lived in a boarding school.

Generally, the boarding school has become the main means of involving the children of Neshkan and Enurmino in the global culture in the everyday sense. Russian multinational literature and history, world music, theatrical arts, and sports were both compulsory subjects and

additional extracurricular activities. Education in our villages was quite typical of Soviet education in any part of the country at that time (Biriukova 2019, 220). Moreover, while doing international work in the Arctic, I noticed that many of the educational and behavioral traits of my Indigenous peers, whether from Chukotka, Alaska, or Canada, have common features. These are subtle traits characteristic of the Indigenous peoples of the Arctic, which combine traits generated by traditional subsistence and urbanized life.

Reading was the main entertainment of my childhood, besides the stories told by older relatives during evening teas, because there was no television and children's programs were not on the radio so often. Through reading, I became aware of the life of the newcomers, so theoretically I knew other (not Chukchi) life quite well. When I traveled to the more southern, so-called “central regions of the country,” it was interesting to get acquainted for the first time with what I had read about a long time ago. The most typical example was my first encounter with tall trees and fruits growing in gardens. The last time I marveled at the reality of a fruit that I picked with my own hands and not bought in a store was a lemon on the street in Naples, where I participated in the meeting of the International Whaling Commission. Reading was my main source of information, revealing to me an unfamiliar world, as I considered not only its external side but also explored its inner essence.

Even my first official job in a reindeer herding camp after leaving school was accompanied by reading. I did what all young reindeer herders are supposed to do, which is herding the reindeer and watching what the older campers do to keep the traditional reindeer camp life going. Nevertheless, I enjoyed immersing myself in Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace* between shifts in the reindeer herd in the same way I read everything that I found in the army platoon library in the rare free time from service. In both cases, I believe I wanted to return to the world of my childhood heroes created by reading. The military service was, like for most of my classmates, one of my first real experiences of living in a different cultural milieu 24/7.

My living in a university dormitory with other students, along with the military service experience of co-existence with peers from other regions of Russia, became a time of immersion in other cultures. The peculiarity of this knowledge this time was that I observed not the faceless Soviet (Russian) society, but individual cultures. Now, unlike my childhood—in which we called Russians all newcomers to the village as if we lived in our own country, and newcomers were



guests from another country—I got to know cultures in person, and not by book. I learned at the ordinary level, not only about how it is customary to dress, eat, what and how to talk in the company of non-Chukchi, but also about who urban and rural residents are, that there are Jews and anti-Semitism, Africans and racism, and Chukchi and white supremacy. Along with the university history course, I thought I had gained enough knowledge about non-Chukchi society. This knowledge, combined with traditional knowledge, I applied in the 1990s, which were difficult for the survival of the communities of Neshkan and Enurmino.

In the 1990s, the economies of Neshkan and Enurmino, like thousands of other villages throughout Russia, were left to itself. Federal and municipal authorities were barely able to provide child and pension benefits. During these years I got acquainted with the capitalist economy. I was appointed director of what used to be called a *sovkhos*, and in those days they were called an agricultural joint-stock company.

To ensure the existence of this enterprise—and the survival of Neshkan and Enurmino, because the *sovkhos* provided about 80 percent of employment—our small team combined traditional and modern social organizations and economies. In the reindeer and sea hunter camps, we have placed emphasis on family organization and a return to traditional property ownership. The relevance of this strategy was reinforced by the fact that the dismantling of the USSR gave rise to villagers' hopes for the restoration of their former ownership of reindeer. We encouraged the elders and leaders to take responsibility for providing food to the villages, especially since there was little food in the stores.

Meanwhile, we tried to use several modern strategies for the development of the village economy. To this end, we first purchased thoroughbred foxes, but the fox fur market fell along with the entire Russian economy. We then focused on pharmaceutical antlers, but that market collapsed in the next couple of years. We also organized transport services for the transportation of goods around the district, but the demand turned out to be small. Ultimately, traditional reindeer husbandry proved to be the most profitable, and even if it was barely so, it made it possible to make ends meet. We were able to provide meat to several villages in the area and earn cash in return. Reindeer herding and marine hunting have been the backbone of the village economy and the core of identity preservation. For the sake of their survival, we reduced all other departments in the structural organization of the *sovkhos*. Almost half of the villagers lost

their jobs. In addition, inflation was so high that the prices of meat and fish produced by the *sovkhos* rose very quickly. Some elders came to the office and asked me to stop the price increase. They thought that our management decisions were our desire, and not a weak response just to ensure survival. This was my introduction to the capitalist economy, which was accompanied by merger, collapse, and compromise between different perspectives.

I started researching the Chukchi and the neighboring Indigenous peoples of Chukotka in the late 1990s. The purpose of these studies was to ensure that the cultural and nutritional needs of the Indigenous peoples of Chukotka were met. The incorporation of traditional knowledge into wildlife management, and the TEK bearers themselves into research contribute to the preservation of the culture of the Chukchi and Siberian Yupik. I have collaborated with biologists and anthropologists and participated in projects to monitor marine mammal migration and population estimates and related ethnographic research (Zdor and Belikov 2004; Zdor and Mymrin 2008; Zdor et al 2021; Zdor and Huntington 2021; Zdor 2021b).

Graduate studies at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, in addition to direct anthropological training, became a new chapter in my personal study of non-Chukchi society. Although I have traveled to Alaska many times discussing cooperative research and co-management of wildlife, it turned out that only the cultural characteristics of the region neighboring Chukotka proved to be a significant barrier. The acculturation shock was an indicator that my confidence in adapting to a non-Chukchi society turned out to be an illusion. I had to study again, as it turned out, a culture alien and unfamiliar to me. My strategy was simple: observe and copy the locals. I observed the typical everyday habits and communication style of the locals and carefully copied them. It took me at least a couple of years to overcome the cultural barrier. Only after that did the topics of everyday conversations become familiar to me and to some extent interesting.

After seven years at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, I still draw on the experience and perspective of my home society. Thanks to the internet, my connection with my communities is now continuous and ongoing on a daily basis. It certainly does not replace a direct in-person participant observation, but my general familiarity with the local ways helps contextualize the events being discussed online. Group discussions of successful walrus hunting, first summer or winter fishing, the appearance of sea ice, and other rural events covered in our community social

network, as well as my direct text and phone conversations with friends and relatives, foster my continued sense of belonging to my home. This is probably why I still look at and evaluate the events around me in ways like the perspectives of my fellow villagers. The usual terms and phrases for the perception of the observed event pop up in my memory, especially if it reminds me of my life in my native villages. Although I consider myself an atheist, in difficult situations I still believe in the sentience of living and non-living beings. It is probably not so far from the fact that today's Chukchi may not believe in what their ancestors believed and what Bogoras described, but they continue to observe the rituals of their ancestors. We believe that ancestral ritualism, at the least, does not do us harm and may indeed be of critical importance for the preservation of the identity and well-being of the family, community, and the Chukchi society.

#### 1.4. Overview of the forthcoming chapters

This dissertation text consists of seven chapters and an afterword.

Ethnographic materials and the methods of their collection and analysis used are described in the Second Chapter *Material and Methods*. The research setting contains a narrative of the settlements of Neshkan and Enurmino, the communities that are the objects of my research. I consider the location of communities, as well as the reasons for their choice by local residents, in spatial and temporal scales. Neshkan and Enurmino are the traditional Indigenous settlements of Chukotka, populated primarily because of sea hunting. In the past, the coastal regions of Chukotka were home to the Yupiget or the Yupik people who share their ancestry with other Inuit of today's Alaska, Arctic Canada, and Greenland. Currently, the Chukchi are the majority Indigenous population along the Chukotka coast. The peculiarity of Neshkan is that a large group of families of former reindeer herders who were settled down by the authorities in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century live here. The peculiarity of Enurmino is that a large group of families of former reindeer herders who were settled down by the authorities in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century live here.

I collected data using three methods: participant observation, interviews, and document processing. Participant observation has been an essential source of research information. I have observed and participated in local community, family, and individual events including hunting and fishing trips, family and community holidays, and street events. The peculiarity of the method of participant observation that I used was that I did this throughout my research activity

for almost two decades. Transcribed structured and semi-structured interviews, as well as field diaries, provided the documentary part of the study. The paper and online surveys were an effective method for clarifying the identified questions about the research topic. I collected quantitative information on American and Russian federal and regional government websites. To get a timeline perspective, I looked through the archives of regional and city newspapers and museums in Chukotka.

The analysis of the transcribed interviews and field diaries began with the division of topics that disaggregated datasets to identify dominant and marginal events and social trends. Where quantitative information was used in the analysis—for example, comparisons of patterns and amounts of food, as well as food sources—Excel spreadsheets provided a visual way to stratify interviewees and their information. Excel spreadsheets were also used to establish the chronology of events and community histories, as well as studies of the Chukchi communities, to establish a sequence in the timeline. Consultations of elders, experts, and researchers helped in the analysis of unclear issues, explaining their nature, and identifying causes. The most difficult part of the dissertation is the interpretation of data in the context of events and cultural patterns. Geertz's method of *thick description* was essential, although other methods of analyzing social relations such as anthropology of contradiction, mapping, and linguistic and social network analysis substantially complemented it.

The purpose of the Third Chapter *Social organization of Chukotkan villages and its impact on the socio-cultural characteristics of the Neshkan and Emurmino Communities* is to consider the formal social structure of the village and its impact on the common and unique social features of the local community. Formal social institutions, common throughout the Russian Arctic, predetermine the similarity of many cultural characteristics of Neshkan and Enurmino. The school is the main artist, painting the social portrait of both villages. The language environment and worldviews of the villagers are designed in the pre-school and school. The traditional economy subsidized by the regional government is also a factor contributing to similarities between villages. Both villages have hunting *obshchinas* that provide their residents with traditional food. The only significant difference between the villages is that Enurmino is a completely maritime Chukchi village, while Neshkan also retains a commitment to reindeer herding, albeit at a reduced level. Another common feature of both villages is predetermined by technological innovations, which have freed most of the villagers from traditional economic

activities, reindeer herding and sea hunting. Therefore, despite the commitment to traditional diet of marine mammal and reindeer meat, most villagers no longer directly engage in the harvesting of these foods. Together with the limited number of jobs offered by the local labor market, these circumstances force them to switch their subsistence activities mainly to fishing and plant gathering.

Chapter Four, *Subsistence Groups of Neshkan and Enurmino*, examines the social groups of the villagers, identified by the degree of their involvement in traditional subsistence. Sea hunting and reindeer herding are both a source of a significant share of food in the daily diet of the villagers, and a source of maintenance of their Chukchi identity. Social groups and their cultural patterns are shaped under the influence of villagers' involvement in various types of traditional subsistence. Reindeer herding and hunting camps, following the traditional ways of economic activity, apparently for this reason observe traditional rituals and, to some extent, are the last frontier of the Chukchi language milieu. Fishing, game hunting, and picking berries, along with mushroom picking (Yamin-Pasternak 2008), which was not common before, have now become outdoor recreation in addition to a means of subsistence. In these groups, there are fewer adherences to the traditional worldview. The villagers' mobility and modes of transportation also shape the cultural characteristics of the Neshkan and Enurmino communities. Stratification of modes of transportation and a comparative analysis of the characteristics of the mobility of villagers provided the study with a tool to determine the adaptive margin of the Chukchi culture in the studied villages. This approach has revealed information to identify current and suggest potential trends in traditional subsistence sense and its impact on the socio-cultural life of villages.

Chapter Five *Subsistence Groups and Transportation: Interpretations of Meaning and Social Status*, discusses the correlation of modes of transport and villagers' commitment to traditional subsistence. Ethnographic studies of the contemporary Chukchi community tend to explore certain key areas of local activity such as food, language, and traditional knowledge. My research does revolve around these topics, but I also want to reveal the perception of the villagers themselves about their life and what influences their identity. Therefore, this chapter has considered three internal perspectives on these issues: individual, family, and community. The traditional Chukchi economy and linguistic environment are the two main markers of the Chukchi mindset, which are influenced by such factors as education, cash economy, and federal

and customary law—that is, the confrontation of global and local influences. As part of the ethnographic fieldwork, my research partners and I asked the villagers to reflect on how they see their lives, what they believe in, and what they want for their future and the future of their children. The villagers, at first with surprise, and then some with great interest, reflected on themselves personally, on their families, and on the community to which they belong. The thoughts they shared, including aspirations and dreams of the future, pointed to the reasons for the strong foundation of their communities of identity, despite significant external influences and changes in the socio-cultural pattern of the villages. At some point, the reflections of the villagers led me to a dead end because the participants in the conversations seemed to contradict themselves. These contradictions prompted me to explore the causes of the phenomenon, which I consider in the final chapter of the anthropology of contradiction.

Chapter Six *Anthropology of Contradictions* discusses the meaning of contradictions in the sociocultural space of the modern Chukchi community and attempts to consider contradiction as a feature of a society and the human condition. Inconsistencies in the thoughts of the villagers led to discussions about what common everyday contradictions are, what their purpose is in the community, how they follow the rules, and finally how they either destroy or strengthen the social unit. Because the study is about tensions within a local social unit, such as the family and the isolated, remote, small Arctic village, it should be seen as a socio-cultural rather than a socio-political issue. Yet, logic and philosophy theories, such as Aristotle's law of non-contradiction or Marxist dialectics, have been used to some extent. To determine the extent to which the mentioned developments are applicable to the local communities of Neshkan and Enurmino, I superimposed their models on some social phenomena. Although significant results were not identified in the analysis, some conclusions conducive to the study of sociocultural phenomena were made.

Chapter Seven *So What is the Chukchi Community a Hundred Years After Bogoras?* summarizes my findings about the modern Chukchi community. It discusses the differences and similarities that can be observed within the Chukchi society and culture shared by the ancestors and descendants living approximately five generations apart, with powerful social upheavals, abrupt historical turns, and rapid unprecedented change shaping the experience of each generation. This turbulent period had a significant impact on Chukchi culture, but also revealed

the Chukchi's strong adaptive abilities to preserve their identity and pass on the legacy of their ancestors to future generations.

During my year of intensive writing, it became apparent that this dissertation needs an Afterword. On February 24, 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine. Although at that time I was already in the advanced stages of analyzing the findings of my research, which did not focus on the impact of Russia's war in Ukraine for my study communities and Chukotka as a whole, over the time of the dissertation writing the emerging and rapidly changing situation has been impossible to ignore, and doing so, I believe, would be wrong and disrespectful to many. Therefore, the afterword, which is the last section of this dissertation, captures my thoughts and observations connected with the Chukchi experience during the year following Russia's invasion.

## Chapter 2. Material and Methods

### 2.1. Research Setting

For my study I have used a research design developed by Merriam (2002) and Creswell (2014). To make a comprehensive ethnographic study of the contemporary Chukchi community, I used mixed research methods (Cresswell 2014, 32). I collected quantitative information about the population of the communities and their main occupations to make an extensive narrative (Merriam 2002, 9), and then conduct a qualitative analysis, and identify the characteristics that shape the socio-cultural pattern of the Chukchi community. For example, the dependence of most of the community I study on marine mammals, which provides a significant part of their diet, places great importance of traditional sea hunting. This phenomenon raises the social role of a rather small cohort of sea hunters and ensures the influence of their worldview on the cultural characteristics of the rest of the villagers. To provide quality information for analysis, I collected data from three main sources for the qualitative research method--interviews, observation, and papers (Merriam 2002, 12; Cresswell 2014, 240-241). My research has been greatly facilitated using case study design (Merriam 2002, 8). I studied the influence of different social groups in the village on the community as a whole and changed the focus from the big picture to a small family group and vice versa. The shift in focus revealed key details that explained the overall flow of social interactions in the community. The welfare of the villages I study is based on the mixed cash-subsistence economy, where a subsistence lifestyle such as marine hunting, reindeer herding, fishing, and gathering activities are a key function. The settlements are located close to each other and have long term economic, cultural, and family ties. They have similar histories of colonization, industrialization, and globalization of the Arctic regions. To make a comparison of these two Chukchi communities I have used structural and narrative analysis, case study, and phenomenology approaches. In each chapter of my research, I did an analysis of the collected information and their interpretation (Cresswell 2014, 32), through discussion and generalizing conclusions, outlining the phenomenon itself, the reasons for its occurrence, and the trends that it follows. The qualitative method of research considers a) how an individual experiences and interacts with his social world and b) how social and political contexts influence individual thinking and the social units in which they enter. Although the ethnographic material I collected



was quite unique in itself, the qualitative method (Merriam 2002, 15) of research was the backbone of my research.

For research, I chose those settlements that have not been studied much by anthropologists in recent decades. A review of the literature of the last three decades revealed that although anthropologists are studying various Chukchi villages, there are no publications about Neshkan and Enurmino studies in either English or Russian. A large amount of ethnographic material of the surrounding small settlements adjacent to the location of modern Neshkan and Enurmino was collected by expeditions in the late 19th (Nordenskjöld 1881) and early 20th centuries (Sverdrup 1930). Researchers Gondatti (Kolomiets et al 2020), Bogoras (1904, 1907), Sverdrup (1978), Vdovin (1965; 1981) and others made ethnographic portraits of other tundra and coastal Chukchi settlements, although they are quite similar throughout Chukotka, but more than half a century ago. My research contributes to previous research by describing two previously little-studied contemporary Chukchi settlements.

Orchestrating field expeditions to these remote communities can be challenging. This remote area is only accessible by plane and the already limited flights are often grounded due the fast changing weather conditions typical of the Bering Strait region. In comparison, Lorino, Uelen and Inchoun can be reached relatively quickly by alternative transport, by boat in the summer and by snowmobiles in the winter.

The limited availability of the settlement implies limited contact with the outside world. Of course, nowadays the internet, TV, and social media have removed most of the information and communication barriers. Nevertheless, limited face-to-face contact with the outside world contributed to the emergence of distinctive sociocultural features in Neshkan and Enurmino. For example, my Neshkan and Enurmino interlocutors hardly discussed the sale of subsistence products, not because they are supporters of the traditional distribution of subsistence products, but because they have no buyers. In contrast, the inhabitants of Lavrentia and Lorino have direct contact with district and regional cities, which have more cash consumers, and therefore the traditional distribution of subsistence products is partially replaced by the market one. The remoteness of communities determines the commitment of their members to the distribution of subsistence products in a way that is characteristic of traditional hunting-gatherer communities.

It turns out that neighboring local communities, separated by a couple of hundred miles, have varying degrees of adherence to traditional values. This also means that they have varying degrees of adaptation of the traditional way of life to the global society. This and other cases are phenomena related to my research interest.

Neshkan and Enurmino are villages with long-term and broad family and social ties. These two villages are a common example of the twin settlement model that emerged on the Chukchi Peninsula during the resettlement of small coastal villages and the settling of reindeer herding camps during the Soviet era. It is difficult to identify the real reason for the emergence of such a settlement pattern. Perhaps this happened by accident, but there are several reasonable explanations. It could also be a natural division of labor between reindeer husbandry in one village and sea hunting in another village. Perhaps it was also to save on qualified management and industrial personnel. For example, in Neshkan there was an office and a transport department of a state farm, which served Neshkan and Enurmino fox farms, sea hunting, and reindeer husbandry.

A similar picture is observed on the entire coast of the Chukotka Peninsula. After the collapse of the USSR, the twin settlements retained ties with each other due to their close distance. Although communities usually have contact with all neighboring villages, distance is a significant argument in favor of strengthening these ties. Here is the current location of the settlements of the Chukotka Peninsula from west to east along the coast, where a double settlement pattern is observed; Vankarem and Nutepelmen, then Neshkan and Enurmino, Inchoun and Uelen. Further along are Lorino and Yanrakynnot, although officially Yanrakynnot belongs to a different municipality. New Chaplino and Sireniki are separated by the district city of Providenia. Noonligran and Enmelen are close communities. Finally, economic and partly cultural ties traditionally link Konergino and Uelkal, although Konergino is a Chukchi reindeer-herding village, and Uelkal is a Siberian Yupik settlement.

Even though the Enurmino hunting community has traditionally had industrial and friendly ties with the nearby reindeer herding camp since Soviet times, most of the members of this camp are the heirs of those who were sedentarized in Neshkan. Neshkan is one of the few villages on the Chukchi Peninsula where reindeer husbandry has survived after the fall of the

USSR. In the Chukotka and Providensky districts, at present, reindeer remained in only 3 villages, although by the time of the collapse of the USSR there were reindeer camps in 6 villages (Antonov et al. 2018, 28). The relationship between reindeer herders, hunters, and the rest of the residents of Neshkan and Enurmino is currently one of the cornerstones of the modern subsistence-oriented ties of the Chukchi settlement. The Chukchi language, traditional beliefs, and the way of life were preserved the longest in reindeer camps. On the other hand, one of the features of Chukotka reindeer herding is the combination of the traditional way of life and the greatest integration of the subsistence activity into the cash economy. For example, the distribution of subsistence products is still done according to traditional methods. On the other hand, reindeer meat is a commercial product under the legislative and common law. This and other cases are salient in outlining the embedding of a global society into the Chukchi community.

Although I was lucky enough to live in several Chukchi settlements, I spent a significant part of my life in Neshkan and partly in Enurmino. Here I studied at school, worked on a state farm and a bone carving workshop, got married, and my children were born and raised here. My life experience motivates me to paint a real sociocultural picture of the villages where I lived. In my research, I want to reveal the ability of the Chukchi community to survive, as well as to ensure the well-being of community members who are my relatives, friends and foes, classmates and colleagues, partners in subsistence activity, as well as just fellow villagers. Combining the perspectives gained through university education and Chukchi subsistence culture, I discover in this study new explanations for certain sociocultural phenomena, life turns, and everyday routines.

Neshkan and Enurmino are Indigenous villages and are part of the Chukotka Municipal District, Chukotka Autonomous Okrug, Russia according to administrative legislation. Geographically, the settlements are located on the Arctic coast of the Chukotka Peninsula, which is the western part of the Bering Strait Region. The traditional Chukchi settlement in this area was dispersed. Small camps from one family to several dozen residents characterized these places (Nordenskjöld 1881, Kaltan 2008). See for example the map made by Nordenskjöld expedition (Figure 2.1). Scattered along coast settlements ensured secure survival of the local residents.

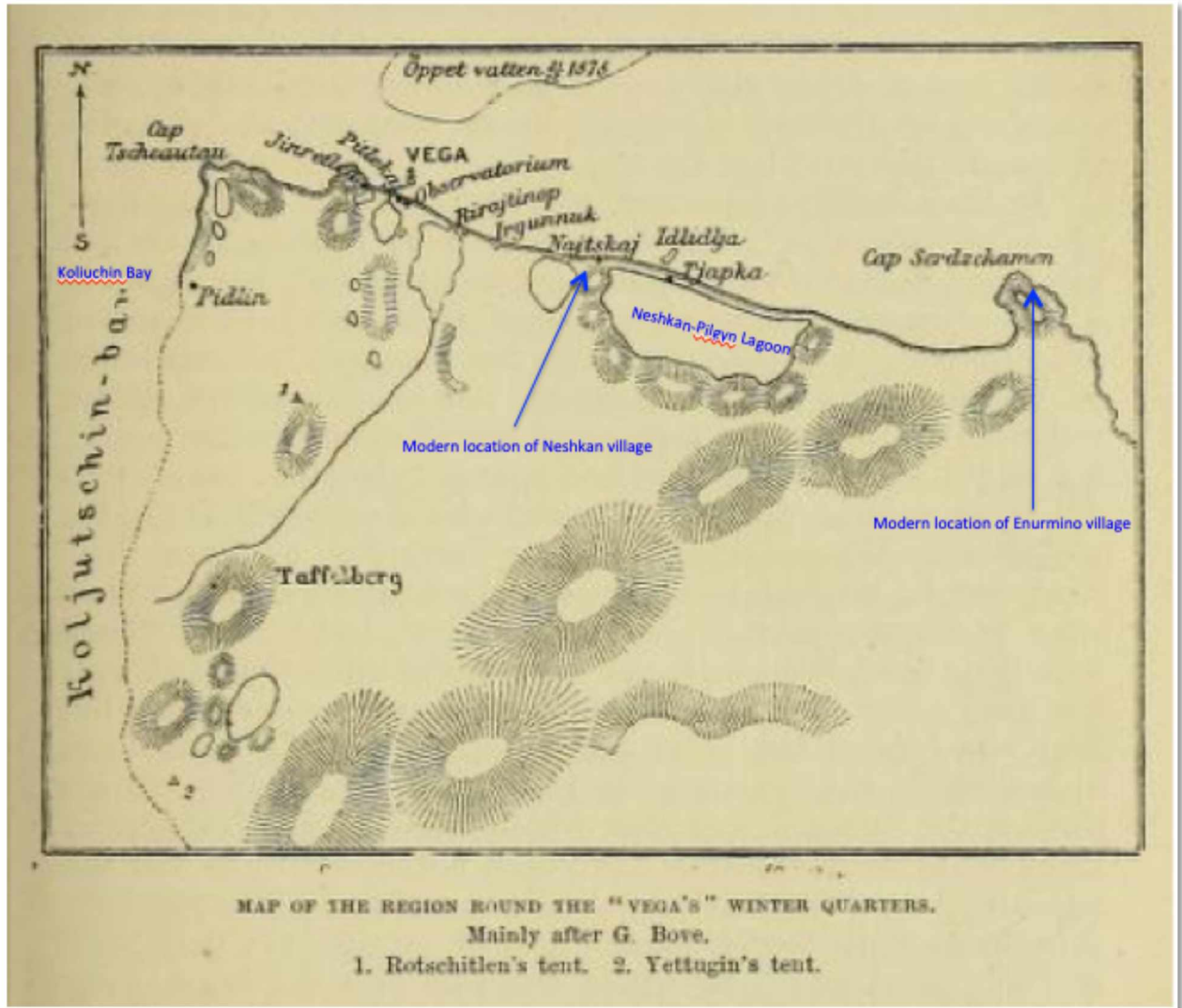


Figure 2.1. The map of the Chukchi Sea coast by A.E. Nordenkiöld. *The location of the modern villages of Neshkan and Enurmino are also marked on the map.*

The resettlement of small villages and the settled nature of the camps of poor reindeer herders contributed to the involvement of local residents in modern society and destroyed the pre-Soviet social organization of the Chukchi, which, according to Bogoras (1904), was based on boat crews and a reindeer herding family.

Neshkan (Figure 2.2) is a Soviet-style Arctic Indigenous village, built in the middle of the 20th century on long sand spit on the shores of the Chukchi Sea. According to Menovshchikov's

toponymic dictionary (1972), the Russian name of the village Neshkan came from the Chukchi name Nesk'en, who adapted the Siberian Yupik name Nesk'uk, which means the head of a seal. A low hill near the village, towering over a long sandy spit, from afar resembles the head of a seal over the surface of the sea. The nearby places of importance for the well-being of the village are Idlidliya Island, which is a walrus's coastal rookery, and a system of lagoons that provide villagers with a variety of fish throughout the year, and in the summer with geese and ducks.

The population of Neshkan, at about 600 people, exceeds the average population of villages in the region (Rosstat 2021). It is dominated by the Chukchi, whose descendants live in small reindeer herding camps and hunting hamlets along the coast from *Kolyuchinskaia* Guba in the East to Cape Netten in the West. The traditional subsistence economy continues to be of great importance in the life of the community. There are three reindeer herding camps (brigades) and about 30 reindeer herders, as well as two hunting units (brigades) and about 20 hunters. A brigade is a labor unit made based on a reindeer herding camp or the marine hunting boatcrew during the Soviet industrialization of the Chukchi traditional economy. Reindeer camps are part of the *Zapolyarie* municipal reindeer herding enterprise, whose head office is in the district town of Lavrentia. Hunting brigades are part of the Daurkin hunting *obshchina*, whose central office is also located in the district town of Lavrentia. There are nearly 170 children in the pre-school, kindergarten, elementary, and middle school. The village has a hospital, post office, and several grocery stores. Almost all housing is municipal, that is, there is no private or cooperative housing. Municipal agencies provide social services, housing, and communal services, electricity, and central heating.



Figure 2.2. Neshkan, 2010s.  
Photo provided by Elena Letyrgina.

Enurmino (Figure 2.3) is located on the shores of the Chukchi Sea, 50 km east of Neshkan. According to Menovshchikov's toponymic dictionary (1972), the Russian name of the village of Enurmino came from the Chukchi name Enurmin, who adapted the Siberian Yupik name Anushpik (Anurvik). Near the village is Cape Netten, which ensures successful harvesting for marine mammals all year round. Also nearby, at Cape Serdtse-Kamen (The Heart Rock), the world's largest coastal walrus rookery gathers every autumn. Soviet authorities relocated to this place nearby hunting hamlets formerly set on the coast from Cape Netten in the East to Cape Seshan in the West. The population of Enurmino is about 300 inhabitants (Rosstat 2021), dominated by the Chukchi. There are three hunting brigades and about 20 hunters total. Roughly 50 students are enrolled in pre-school, kindergarten, and elementary school. Enurmino also has a paramedic, post office, and grocery store. Almost all housing is municipal. Municipal agencies provide social services, housing and communal services, and electricity.



Figure 2.3. Enurmino, 2010s.  
Photo by Viktoria Tynecheivuna.

The places for the villages were chosen by the Soviet authorities on the basis of urban planning tasks, such as the availability of sufficient space for the construction of buildings and the supply of water and did not take into account the specifics of subsistence activity. Accordingly, hunters are forced to locate hunting camps on traditional hunting grounds closer to capes and marine mammal rookeries, and reindeer herders have to extend a lot of effort to

deliver equipment and food to their camps and bring reindeer herds to the village for slaughter. The villages are located close to each other and have long-standing economic, cultural, and family ties. The villages are ethnically homogeneous with a predominance of the Chukchi, the gender balance is approximately equal, and children make up about 30% of the village population.

The well-being of these villages is based on government subsidies. Regional and municipal authorities finance educational, medical, communal services, and traditional subsistence. Each village has a hospital or paramedic point, a kindergarten, a school, a library and a house of culture, a municipal grocery store, a housing, and communal and agricultural enterprises. A significant cash income for the village is the pension provision for elders and child and social benefits. The number of jobs is limited. Newcomers mainly occupy positions requiring qualifications, while the Indigenous people of the village tend to occupy low-skilled positions. This situation, quite typical for the Arctic Indigenous settlement, contributes to the emergence of social groupings in the village, differentiated by income and ethnicity (Kerttula 2000).

There is almost no private property in the village economy. Regional and municipal authorities have chosen the Soviet-type village administration and economies; as such they provide villages with institutions and enterprises to create jobs and preserve the traditional way of life and the identity of the Indigenous peoples. Limited jobs, the availability of wildlife, and well-preserved traditional knowledge make traditional subsistence an important source of nutrition. A significant part of the population of the villages is engaged in marine hunting, fishing, and gathering on their own.

The livelihood strategies of Neshkan and Enurmino residents fall on a spectrum of subsistence activities. Despite the proximity of the villages to each other and the homogeneity of the population, the natural and landscape conditions cause some differences in the livelihood approaches of the residents of Neshkan and Enurmino. Neshkan is surrounded by sea lagoons and low-lying summer pastures, therefore there are favorable conditions for hunting geese, fishing, and reindeer husbandry; while Enurmino is located next to sea capes, which are on the migration routes of marine mammals and therefore, sea hunting is a key source of well-being



here. Near Enurmino, there is also a rookery, which has been inhabited by walrus for ten generations every autumn, and in recent years, almost two-thirds of the Pacific walrus population has gathered here in autumn. However, the involvement of residents in traditional subsistence within these geographic specializations is heterogeneous. Within each village there is a range of participation due to the qualifications, skills, and personal qualities of residents. The availability of additional, less significant food sources, such as salmon migration routes, and small spawning rivers, vegetation, berry, and mushroom sites, is also important.

Long-term economic and family ties between villages are also a significant factor in the distribution of labor resources. Residents of both villages are constantly moving between settlements in search of work as well as for visiting, hunting, and fishing. Villages have close family ties with each other; marriages between residents of both villages are quite frequent. Residents of both villages determine the advantages and disadvantages of such transfers for themselves. For example, residents of Neshkan village consider Enurmino too small and boring, while residents of Enurmino consider Neshkan a place where there is too much alcohol and conflict. On the one hand, transfers strengthen the bonds between the communities of reindeer herders, hunters, and other social groups in the villages. On the other hand, conflicts inevitably arise, which are resolved with varying degrees of success and largely depend on the personal qualities of the group leaders.

The Soviet and now the Russian authorities have considered Neshkan the most problematic village for the management of the district. Due to the remoteness of the village, a lot of resources are required in comparison with other villages of the Chukotsky district. In addition, there are local natural phenomena in Neshkan. Small and regular earthquakes shake buildings and weaken them. For these reasons, local authorities prefer a rural resettlement program to village' development plans. Even though most of the villagers do not want to move, they must because the current condition of municipal housing is really terrible (Raymond-Yakoubian and Zdor 2020). Most of the residential buildings in the village were built during the resettlement era of the 1960s. Buildings are warped and crumbling. Several generations have been forced to live together in a 258 square foot apartment.

To make a “thick description” (Geertz 1973) of a modern Chukotka village, I also conducted a comparative study of two other villages in the Chukotka region. Lavrentia and Lorino—the largest Indigenous villages of Chukotka, where the Chukchi live—are located about 200 km south of Neshkan and Enurmino. The total population of Lorino is about 1000 inhabitants (Rosstat 2021), among which the Chukchi predominate. About 1,100 inhabitants live in Lavrentia (Rosstat 2021), and the Chukchi make up about half of the population. Some residents of Neshkan and Enurmino moved here in the hope of better living conditions after the collapse of the USSR. In both villages, in addition to the services indicated in Neshkan and Enurmino, there are high schools, much better medical and educational services, more and bigger grocery stores, and even meat and dairy processing enterprises. Lavrentia is a municipal district center with a small seaport and a runway for direct flights to the regional city. However, even in these relatively comfortable Indigenous settlements, the population number is slowly but steadily declining, indicating the continued migration of Indigenous people outside their native lands.

The focus of my study is on the daily routines and events of community members, their perception of events and processes, and the significance of these experiences to them. This includes reacting to unexpected events or information and understanding critical events and problems that arise. Special attention is paid to the role of elders and local leaders in transferring customary law, building hierarchies in communities, initiating change, and making decisions.

Before each interview, my co-researcher and I secured informed consent from the interviewee to participate in the study. For this purpose, the interviewer was provided with a detailed description of the study and the conditions for voluntary participation were explained.

## 2.2. Data Collection

In my study, I used three major sources of data: interviews, observations, and documents (i.e., audio, visual, and written materials). No preference was given for one data source over another because each source has meaning that enriches the understanding of the sociocultural pattern of today's Neshkan and Enurmino. Although many interviews have been conducted and I have participated frequently in everyday conversations in the streets and outside the villages, I still regret that there could have been more conversations with the villagers.

Throughout this text and in the publications that rely on the interviews, field notes, and photographs collected during my dissertation research, human participants are treated in accordance with the Research Protocol # 645244, approved by the University of Alaska Fairbanks Institutional Review Board, which stipulates that individual participants will be credited and acknowledged by name unless they desire to remain anonymous.

### 2.2.1. Participant Observation

Quite typical of ethnographic research, I used three data sources for my research, including observations, interviews, and documents. There are no dominants among these because each source holds meaning for my research to make a *thick* (Geertz 1973) description of the current Neshkan and Enurmino. Nonetheless, my many years of participating in observations in the communities became a guide and, to some extent, may have prejudiced me toward the list of my interlocutors and events that I wanted to visit for research purposes.

I grew up in the remote Chukchi settlements, and my experiences and observations within those communities have laid the groundwork for this study. Until the second grade I lived in the sea hunter village of Enurmino, and then our family moved to the mixed sea hunter and reindeer herders village of Neshkan. In those years, the life of the Chukchi villages was centered on traditional subsistence, provided by the Chukchi worldview, customary law, and language. The villagers shared with me their knowledge about the way of life of our ancestors. Tea conversations about the sea, weather, hunting, fishing, the ancestors of the coastal inhabitants, local fairy tales and legends, as well as creepy stories told by children to each other, have all shaped my worldview. I remember the long winter evenings after dinner, we sat in the kitchen, drinking tea and listening to the stories of the elders. Our grandfather *At'avchit* often told hunting stories. Somehow, he told us how he killed a polar bear using only a spear and a mitten. The hunter must remain calm and be brave, he said, in anticipation of an attacking polar bear. At the last moment, he tossed the mitten up to make the animal raise its head. At that moment, the animal's throat opened for a spear strike. Another time, our uncle *Nat'anom* told us a story about *Teryk'y*, a hunter lost in the sea, who became half animal, half man. In winter, *Teryk'y* comes to the outskirts of the village and grabs people. When we asked how the villagers could protect themselves from the *Teryk'y*, *Nat'anom* replied that the traditional spear is the only weapon for this purpose. What if people use a rifle, we asked? It's impossible, was *Nat'anom's* answer,

because *Teryk'y* has strong skin, impenetrable by a bullet. The skin is so strong, he looked around to find example, like the iron surface of a stove. On sunny summer nights, in order to drive children home, adults told us stories about how a big eagle from the surrounding mountains flies over the village and catches small children. Nevertheless, as we continued to play outside, from time to time we looked up at the sky above the village. In this way, ancient stories were given new details, and children were taught to live near the sea. Children's subsistence-oriented games, dogsledding, boating, fishing, and hunting were the foremost activities outside of school. For example, my father gave me a small-bore rifle for my first solo hunt when I was seven years old. I remember how my friend and I were happy that we had a real weapon. On that day, we got nothing, but this event is still in my memory.

Like many villagers of my generation, I mixed Indigenous and school knowledge. Some of my classmates became mechanics, builders, and teachers, but still joined those who went hunting and fishing, ensuring the community's adaptability to innovation. Newcomer methods of fishing and trapping were embedded into local subsistence and became part of traditional environmental management. Being the head of the Chukchi family, I, as other fellow villagers, taught my children and nephews to the current traditional subsistence, combined from the legacy of the older generation and modern influences. I wanted hunting and reindeer herding to continue to be the core of our communities' activities. I was proud to serve my communities during the harsh 1990s. I was in charge of a state farm in which reindeer husbandry and sea hunting were the main activities. My role that I identified for myself was to maintain a traditional lifestyle while looking for any source of revenue in the village to help support marine hunting and reindeer husbandry. We tried different ways of businesses by working with pharmacists, fur traders, or by providing transportation services. Together with other municipal enterprises, we were forced to look for any available ways to keep the villages alive. However, the time of Soviet-type industrial subsistence has passed. The villages had to change their configuration to survive and maintain their traditional existence. In this study, I analyze how the new social organization has ensured the resilience of these communities.

Some years later, I began to work with federal and international institutions to regulate the traditional subsistence of Chukotka. The regional level has provided me with new horizons for the social challenges that Chukchi communities face. I approach my advocacy work as a

researcher. I have been involved in sociological and ethnographic studies of the Bering Strait region since the 1990s and have collaborated with researchers from universities and other institutions in examining various aspects of the villages' life such as the abundance and distribution of marine mammals, the ethnography of these villages and community interaction with nature and society. This experience provided a wealth of information for analysis. The results of these endeavors have been published and continue to be published in reports for regional and federal agencies as well as in scientific publications (Kozlov and Zdor 2003; Zdor and Belikov 2004; Zdor and Mymrin 2008; Kochnev and Zdor 2016; Melnikov and Zdor 2018; Raymond-Yakoubian and Zdor 2020; Skhauge and Zdor 2021; Zdor, 2021a; Zdor et al 2021; Zdor, 2021b; Zdor and Huntington 2021). Today, studying anthropology at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, I am collaborating with representatives of the Bering Strait region not only as a community-based scholar and Indigenous activist, but also as a professional researcher. The combination of advocacy and research provides me with a new perspective, which I plan to use in this dissertation.

Alongside the insights from these prior experiences and ongoing research collaborations, my analysis include data from two field seasons in 2016 and 2017 carried during my graduate studies at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Most of the interview and observation data comes from Neshkan and Enurmino, with some interviews conducted in Lorino and Lavrentia as well. A total of sixty interviews were conducted, forty were transcribed in field notes, and twenty were conducted using a voice recorder. In 2016, I did field research in Neshkan and Enurmino as a university-trained anthropologist. My age as an elder, by the standards of the village, and my previous life in Neshkan and Enurmino were both an advantage and an obstacle for my field research. My peers and older fellow villagers willingly communicated with me, but the young villagers were somewhat constrained because they almost did not recognize me as a fellow villager. For those young people who did not know me at all, I was an outside researcher who lived too little in the village. So, they were hesitant to trust me with their thoughts and dreams. In addition, the only border guard in Neshkan spread rumors that I was collecting spy information. Towards the end of my field season, a group of border guards arrived in Neshkan and conducted interviews with villagers about my activities and conversations with villagers. It was already a time when paranoid suspicion became commonplace in Chukotka.

I visited three hunting camps (Figure 2.6) for participant observation: Akkani, Nunyamo, and Netten. Akkani (Figure 2.4) belongs to the Lorino's hunting *obshchina*. A significant part of the hunters are former residents or descendants of residents of the Akkani village, closed by the authorities in the late 1970s. The Netten hunting camp belongs to Enurmino's hunting *obshchina*. The Enurmino community has descendants of those who lived in hunting settlements on Cape Netten and were resettled in Enurmino in the mid-20th century. Nunyamo is the camp of Lavrentia's hunting *obshchina* (see Figure 2.5). It is located on the site of the former Nunyamo village, which also was closed by the authorities in the late 1970s.



Figure 2.4. Akkani hunting camp. Mechigman Bay, August 2005.  
Photo provided by Gennady Zelensky.





Figure 2.5. Nuniamo hunting camp. Lavrentia Bay, September 2020.  
 Photo provided by Gennady Zelensky.

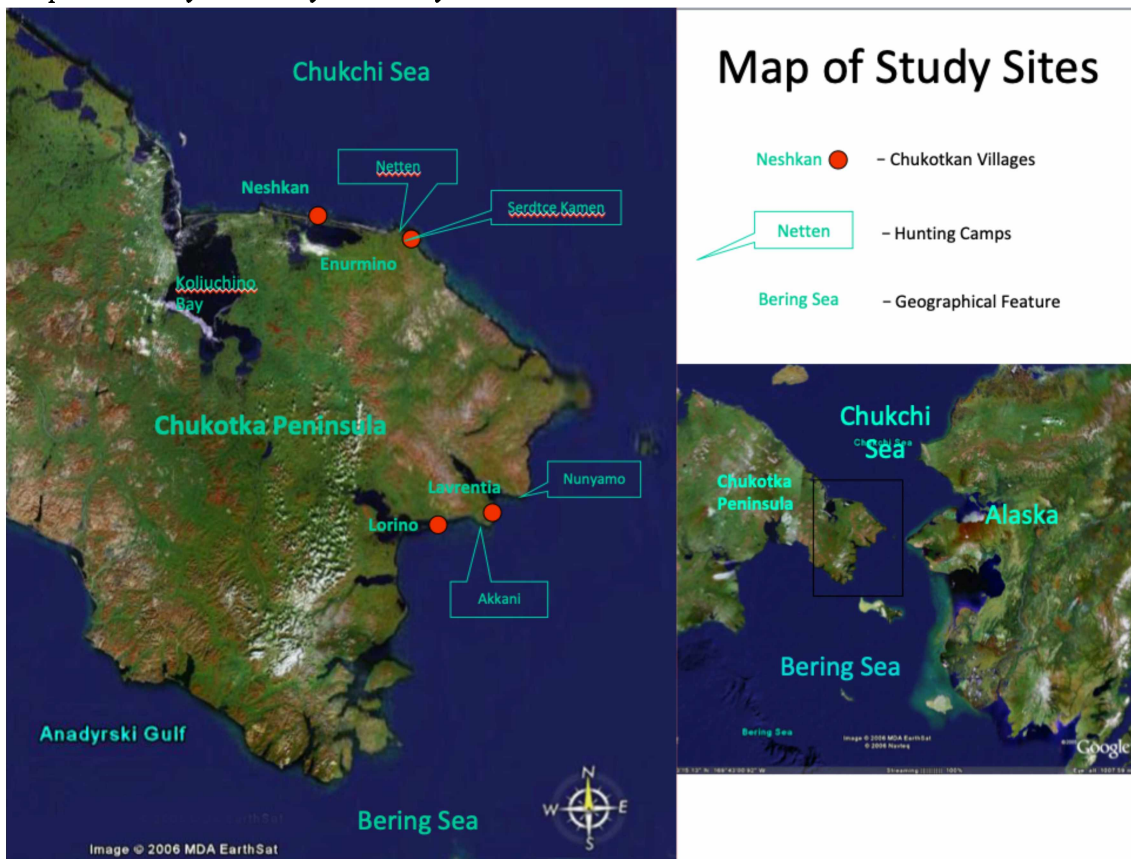


Figure 2.6. Map of Study Sites.

This *obshchina* is different from modern typical hunting *obshchinas*. State subsidies are not provided to this *obshchina* but hunters continue to hunt anyway, although other *obshchinas* without subsidies ceased to exist over time. What are the reasons for the resilience of Lavrentia's *obshchina*? Unlike subsidized hunting *obshchina*, a traditional social organization is used. That is, the boat team consists of relatives. As in pre-Soviet times, the captain is responsible for the acquisition and maintenance of the boat, motors, weapons, and hunting equipment. The changed worldview of the villagers is another factor contributing to the stability of the *obshchina*. Its members are former residents of Naukan and Nunyamo, who were forcibly resettled by the Soviet authorities, as well as residents of Inchoun, Neshkan, Uelen, Enurmino, and Lorino, who voluntarily moved to Lavrentia in the turbulent migration flow of 1990s. During these years, newcomers were forced to leave the region in search of a better life, while the Indigenous villagers left their villages and occupied vacant places in the district center. Here, former villagers had more opportunities to find work for themselves and family members. Cash income provided them with funds for subsistence, regardless of government subsidies. In other words, if the resettlement of the Indigenous villages in the second half of the 20th century was due to the violent decisions of the authorities, then the migration of Indigenous villagers in the 1990s was a decision based on adaptation. Voluntary abandonment of native places was not an exceptional phenomenon of the 1990s. In the pre-Soviet period, people moved because of reindeer herds' losses or unsuccessful seasons of sea hunting. These relocations have always been within the familiar socio-cultural environment. The migration of the 1990s is distinguished by the fact that the villagers integrated themselves into a new social reality, where the global values and the cash economy dominated. To ensure that I captured the diversity within villages and hunters parties, I selected various participants including hunters, reindeer herders, and the *poselkovie* of different ages. My participants were united by a commitment to a subsistence-oriented economy; interviewees have different sources of income, and traditional subsistence is a significant part of their lifestyles.

An additional source of information was the analysis of the local newspapers archives: scans of total 218 pages of the Chukotkan regional newspaper *Soviet Chukotka (Kraynii Sever* since 1993) and district newspaper *Zaria Kommunizma (Zaria Chukotki* since 1991), years dating from the 1960s to 2016, were collected during fieldwork (Figure 2.7).



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Недавно делегация от Чукотки возвратилась с Аляски, где находилась по приглашению Всемирного фонда дикой природы и Службы рыбы и дичи США «Умки-патруль», работающий в округе, приобрел значительный опыт в части сохранения маточных лежбищ тихоокеанского моржа, вблизи национальных северных сел, их уборки, что очень важно для предупреждения конфликтных ситуаций населения с белыми медведями. Корреспондент «КС» побеседовал с одним из координаторов «Медвежьего патруля», комиссионером Международной российско-американской комиссии по белому медведю, Сергеем КАВРЫ.



Сергей Кавры: «Вначале мы обезжизняем медведя, после чего надеваем специальный ошейник. В нем находится передатчик, он излучает радиосигналы, их ловит спутниковая система и определяет, где находится зверь».

**СУДЬБА УМКИ – В РУКАХ НАРОДА**

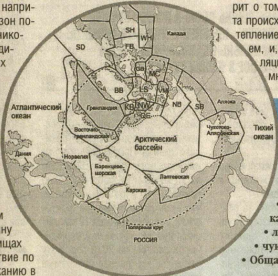
– Какова была основная цель поездки?

– Прежде всего, обмен опытом. Мы рассказывали своим американским коллегам, как «Умки-патруль» инициирует образовательные в селах Чукотки патрули, памятные природы, как, например, мыс Ванкарем, или «зон покоя», как на мысе Кожевникова. В нашу делегацию входили носитель традиционных знаний Владимир Кавры и хозяин ванкаремского лежбища Федор Тименягин, а также известный биолог Анатолий Кочнев. Все эти дни мы тесно общались с американскими коллегами, налаживали связи, которые в будущем могут помочь обеим сторонам представить общую картину происходящего на лежбищах и отработать взаимодействие по их сохранению и поддержанию в надлежащем порядке. Нам удалось побывать в четырех северных арктических селах Аляски: Пойнт Хоп, Пойнт-Лей, Вейнрайт и Барроу.

– Как известно, коренным жителям Аляски, в отличие от их чукотских сородичей, разрешен промысел белого медведя. Шла ли об этом речь при встрече?

– Собственно, добыча белого медведя коренными жителями на Аляске никогда и не прекращалась. В США есть два главных закона, определяющих сохранение и защиту белых медведей: «Закон об охране морских млекопитающих» и «Закон о видах, находящихся под угрозой». Эти законы разре-

шают добычу морских млекопитающих и добычу видов, находящихся под угрозой, при соблюдении определенных условий и если такая добыча не окажет на виды отрицательного воздействия. В России это «Красная книга», и популяция белого медведя занесена в категорию восстанавливающихся видов.



– Это очень популярная тема – острые дискуссии идут между учеными и коренным населением как в России, так и на Аляске. Некоторые биологи считают, что идет тенденция потепления. Но нас удивляет, что наука не подвергает это сомнению. Они не обсуждают широко вариант цикличности климата, хотя мировая практика говорит о том, что изменения климата происходили и раньше, т.е. потепление сменялось похолоданием, и, несмотря на это, популяция выжила и даже размножилась. Ведь всем по-

**ИЗУЧИТЬ И СОХРАНИТЬ ПОПУЛЯЦИЮ**

– А какова была численность белого мишки в результате последних исследований 70-х годов?

– Говорилось о 2 – 2,5 тыс. особей. Но эта цифра все равно не точная. Здесь надо обратить внимание на площадь льда – в 70-е годы лед покрывал все Чукотское море и в летний период. В данный момент говорят примерно о той же числен-

ности, чтобы коренные жители активно участвовали в наблюдениях, мониторинге и в целом в изучении популяции.

– Какими конкретно путями вы этого добиваетесь?

– Союз морских охотников Чукотки рассматривал несколько программ, а принята будет одна. Мы не настаиваем на том или ином конкретном выводе, а предлагаем при принятии подходов к решению данных вопросов оговаривать и обсуждать все нюансы климата, популяции, кормовой базы, антропогенное воздействие, присутствие загрязняющих веществ у животных и пути попадания их в организм и многое другое важно. Такие предложения есть от нас и от других зарубежных организаций, которые хорошо были восприняты коренными жителями Аляски при личных беседах. Наши наблюдения нужно обобщить, и тогда можно будет иметь общую картину. Мы даже идем дальше, говоря о необходимости открытия общего сайта, где будет база данных, куда на добровольной основе будут вноситься научные данные, традиционные знания, наблюдения коренных жителей – все то, что будет потом обобщаться и анализироваться.

*Справка «КС»*

**РАСПРОСТРАНЕНИЕ И ЧИСЛЕННОСТЬ БЕЛОГО МЕДВЕДЯ**

- Для российского сектора Арктики численность белого медведя составляет:
  - карско-баренцевморская – 3000 особей (численность карской части не известна)
  - лаптевская – 800–1200 особей
  - чукотско-алаянская – 2000 особей
- Общая численность вида оценивается в 21500–25000 особей.

дво. Конечно, Союз морских охотников Чукотки сейчас продолжает работу в направлении того, чтобы коренным жителям нашего округа также была разрешена добыча белого медведя. Право на традиционную добычу позволит возобновить культурные, духовные потребности коренного населения. Это важно и для того, чтобы молодежь знала, что значит в культуре коренных жителей Чукотки белый медведь.

– Мы рассматриваем белого медведя как общее достояние Чукотки и Аляски, поскольку этот зверь мигрирует. Как можно оценить его численность на обоих берегах?

– Это очень популярная тема – острые дискуссии идут между учеными и коренным населением как в России, так и на Аляске. Некоторые биологи считают, что идет тенденция потепления. Но нас удивляет, что наука не подвергает это сомнению. Они не обсуждают широко вариант цикличности климата, хотя мировая практика говорит о том, что изменения климата происходили и раньше, т.е. потепление сменялось похолоданием, и, несмотря на это, популяция выжила и даже размножилась. Ведь всем по-

ности популяции, но площадь льда заметно сократилась. Может, здесь нужно говорить о некотором давлении на морских млекопитающих? История говорит нам об исчезновении доисторических хищников в последней озерной. Может быть, добыча белого медведя смогла бы несколько сбалансировать ситуацию, но многие биологи смотрят на данный вопрос, по моему мнению, односторонне. Эта проблема скоротечна, и в данной ситуации нельзя учитывать лишь одну сторону вопроса и опровергать категоричных выводов. Тем более, что при этом игнорируются традиционные знания коренного населения. Мы добавляем

**РАВНОПРАВИЕ КОРЕННЫХ**

– Скажите, Сергей, сколько нужно времени на то, чтобы провести мониторинг и иметь четкое представление о численности популяции белого медведя?

– Мы давно прорабатываем вопросы финансирования, поскольку для изучения чукотско-алаянской популяции белого медведя нужны очень большие деньги. Они нужны, прежде всего, на амулет, про-

кладку маршрутов туда, куда нельзя добраться наземным транспортом. Также должен ходить и ледокол, использоваться вертолеты как с нашей стороны, так и американской. Нужно проводить мечение ошейниками, нужен повторный отлов. Проект «Умки-патруль», как и будущие наши проекты, призваны показать, что мы не только простые пользователи морских млекопитающих. Такие проекты должны быть популярны в коренных селах, потому что в большинстве своем они исходят от жителей, и при активном их участии. Даже такие проекты имеют определенные трудности. Но сейчас надо искать и привлекать поддержку федеральных, в лучшем случае – окружных структур, правительства и предприятий, которым не безразлична природа Чукотки. Понимая действительное состояние популяции и то, что это нужно нам, нашим детям и внукам, мы можем быть, получив такое право, мы придем к нулевой работе. Это серьезная кропотливая работа по переговорам между двумя странами. Сейчас есть межправительственное соглашение, но все дальнейшие решения должны приниматься на равноправной основе.

Межправительственное соглашение было подписано еще в 2000 году, и сейчас начинается более полное понимание наших прав. Мы стараемся эту необходимость донести до российских и зарубежных коллег. Конечно, мы несем большую ответственность. Сейчас надо довести до жителей национальных сел, которм, возможно, в будущем будет разрешена добыча белого медведя и то, что от них зависит соблюдение тех правил, которые будут с нашим участием разработаны и установлены. Нужно, чтобы авторитетные охотники сел вза-

Figure 2.7. Page of regional newspaper Kraynii Sever.

I found some articles describing social shifts and economic innovation, and how villagers and their traditional subsistence adapt to change. In particular, the collapse of the USSR increased the importance of traditional subsistence to help support villages and at the same time gave rise to hopes for the return of property rights to reindeer and pastures. The young Indigenous leaders were eager to enter the interregional and international market to profit from the traditional subsistence.

### 2.2.2. Interviews

Since I was absent from Neshkan for a long time, there was a different attitude of the villagers towards me. Relatives were happy with my return. Classmates and older fellow villagers were happy to talk with me after a long break. I had the feeling that for them I was somewhat of a guest from their past youth. Vasily Roskhinaut, when I first met him on the seashore, where he was fishing, looked like a very old man, despite the fact that he was not yet 60 years old. However, at our next fishing gatherings, he had already shaved, cleaned himself up, and looked fresher. I had a feeling that sitting next to me he felt the need to correspond to his real age, and not to the way his grandchildren see him. However, over two decades, several generations of villagers have grown up in the village. I felt certain barriers (psychological, emotional, age) that stood between us. The older ones vaguely remembered me. There was a feeling that they seemed to recognize me as a fellow villager, but still I remained an outsider. The young people greeted me as if I were a visiting business traveler and embarrassedly refused to communicate with me. The relationship was complicated by the fact that I was a researcher from a foreign university.

Rodion Rinetegin, my brother-in-law, Yuri, his son, and I hunted and fished together. Throughout these activities, we crossed paths with other villagers, talked to them, and shared news and stories. In this daily routine, the villagers again got used to me. However, because I still remained a visitor who returned to their native lands for a short time, the community had to find my exact place in its hierarchy. Moreover, this case was not uncommon in community affairs. This summer I saw at least a couple of former villagers who came to Neshkan for vacation to visit their relatives and to get subsistence activity they used to. It looks like this is becoming a typical situation for Neshkan.

In any case, I gradually became who I was here before, one of many, taking my place as a family member and fellow villager. Now that the villagers were meeting me on the streets, they were able to talk to me again, some just to say hello and some to discuss local news. One example has shown me how participation in subsistence—the most important activity for the village—affects the degree of trust in conversations. Once I met Maxim, one of the members of the municipal hunting *obshchina*. We greeted and I asked the common question: how is the walrus hunting going? He told me that since the day we met at sea during the hunt (this was a few days ago), they have not seen a single walrus again. Then Maxim shared the places where they went in search of walruses and other details of everyday hunting life.

Towards the end of the second week of my stay in Neshkan, I began to meet with my interviewees. Because I consider quantitative population data and qualitative ethnography data in my research, data collection and management procedures have been approved by the University of Alaska Institutional Review Board, Record ID 645244-8. Data includes personally identifying information, artifacts of interviews (voice and video recordings, photographs) and information extracted from interviews. A quantitative method for processing and analyzing information will supplement the study and will provide general information about the research participants households. The basis of this study was qualitative personal interviews. The field notes were written at the end of the conversation. To process the conversations, standard observation protocols were used, describing the participant portrait and reconstructing the dialogue.

An interview protocol includes a heading, the questions, probes to follow-up interviewee ideas, and final thank-you statement to acknowledge the time and knowledge of the interviewee. A mandatory part of the interview protocol was detailing information about the place and time of the meeting. Each interview meeting we started with an informed consent, detailing the purpose of the study and explanation of the terms of voluntary participation. During the introductory part interviewees were asked about age, family composition, sources and sizes of household monetary income, and the extent of participation in the subsistence economy (use of products derived from subsistence activities conducted by oneself, family members, and other community members).

A significant part of the questionnaire was related to subsistence activity such as animals, fish, plants species harvested, size and frequency of harvesting, harvesting methods and tools, processing and storage methods, and distribution of subsistence products. The native language was the underlying topic through all parts of the interview. The villagers were asked to describe and reflect on their use of their native language, as well as that of their relatives and fellow villagers. Interlocutors contributed to the subsistence-oriented vocabulary. Some of the villagers described rituals, shared legends, and sang songs in their native language. Because the study proceeds from the assumption that traditional subsistence is a key factor in ensuring the wealthy life of a community as a social unit, the reflection of the participant about his ancestors, beliefs, and family customs was discussed. The final part of the interview was focused on the participant's attitude towards preserving the identity of his family, local community, and Chukchi people.

The protocol included secondary questions, which set the task of verifying the veracity of the interlocutor's answers. For example, if the interlocutor claimed that he often speaks his native language, clarifying questions were then asked: when, with whom, and what was he/she talking the last time he/she spoke his/her native language. However, flexibility for free discussion was a key condition of the interview. Specifically, the interlocutor was free to interpret what he/she would like to say on a given topic, decline to comment, or say "I don't remember" or "I don't know." The idea is that interview questions do not imply an exact answer, but rather help the interviewee talk. It was much more important for the study to record the interlocutor's reflection about his/her life, family, and the local community. Therefore, most questions were accompanied by a request to tell a personal story on the proposed topic.

I wrote field notes after most of my interviews and a great many interactions between villagers during participant observations. There are also some written reflections based on the daily observations. My entire interviews were transcribed and some of them were described based on my field notes. My field notes were processed and in fact became a field narrative. In some cases I made video records. For example, I filmed the first walrus hunt a young hunter and also the ritual and distribution process accompanying this event.



I made a list of potential interviewees and attempted to meet them as often as I could. At first, I selected candidates for interviews mainly from senior villagers who are directly related to traditional subsistence. I used every opportunity to talk when I met them on the streets of the villages or while fishing. Their stories about life and the discussion of the village news helped me to identify my potential interlocutors. During our conversations, I also asked for advice about other villagers who could be useful interviewees. I wanted to find a range of typical villagers. However, different characters that construct a diverse community picture across the entire spectrum of relationships were also desirable. I had many conversations on the street and on the shore. It was early summer, the time of Arctic char fishing, and everyone came to the shore to get fresh fish. This was a very convenient place to meet whoever I wanted to talk about. Some of them were eager to talk, some were reluctant or just indifferent. These informal conversations, sometimes tea-talks about fishing, summer, and other everyday topics were helpful to specify potential interviewees. My goal was to get fairly equal age and sex balance of interviewees, although I prefer to firstly talk to the elder ones.

The preparation time was important also because many villagers are a bit nervous speaking to the voice recorder. For this reason, I tried not to start the interview immediately and instead of that we were talking for sometime without a voice recorder. Yet, because I had to officially declare the start of the interview and also to get the formal consent of the interviewee it was always a tense time in the early stage of the interview. So, the simple questions about age, education, job, subsistence activity, and household, which are easy to answer, helped me to go through this nervous phase. In most cases it was helpful, and we were able to go more smoothly through other questions. Moreover, I build my questionnaire on the ground of personal storytelling, not trying to generalize. There were some easy ways to get my interlocutors to talk. Every single topic we discussed, I asked my interlocutors to tell his/her personal or family stories which were remembered because they were scary or, on the contrary, very funny. When the interviewer became free in discussion, it was time for thoughtful reflection. I asked my interlocutors to share their views on vital community issues, from family challenges to issues of Chukchi identity.

Throughout the course of the research, every single interviewee formally gave informed consent to be interviewed and for personal information (including photographs) to be used for

the purpose of this study. At the end of the interview I asked permission to take photographs of the interviewee and thanked them for the interview and our time together.

In total, in the field seasons of 2016 and 2017, 62 interviews were conducted with residents of the Neshkan and Enurmino, including those currently living in other settlements. In my first field season as a university-trained anthropologist, I conducted 40 semi-structured interviews. It was a busy schedule and for this reason some of the interviews were of poor quality and short. I had enough time in Neshkan and Lavrentia for thorough discussions, but in Enurmino and Lorino my stay was too short. Due to problems with the boat engine, Rodion, my co-researcher, could not transport me by sea from Neshkan to Enurmino for a long time. Finally, one of my nephews picked me up and took me to Enurmino with a two-week delay. Rodion was never able to restore his old boat engine that summer.

With only one week left for the interview in Enurmino, I forced myself to talk to as many of the villagers as possible. So, a couple of times I even talked to two villagers on the same day. The first time it was my older cousins Lydia and Margarita. It was not difficult to have an interview with them, because as a child I spent many times at their homes. We knew each other well. The only difference was that now I was the one who questioned their lives as an outside researcher. Nevertheless, the schedule was so tight that many interviews were unfinished, and I asked Rodion to re-interview some of them. The following season, Rodion conducted 10 structured interviews in each village. He used my questionnaire and methodology.

The introductory part of the interview was to explain the objectives of the study and to obtain the informed consent of the interviewee. The consent procedure and the working voice recorder created a very formal environment and caused some hesitation at the beginning of the conversation. Therefore, the simple first questions, devoted to the quantitative characteristics of the interviewee's life, to some extent reduced the tension of the interviewee. I tried to find an emotionally significant topic in the interviewee's life that helped them relax and turn a formal interview into a friendly conversation. To this end, my co-researcher and I used the storytelling method. Following the topic of the interview section, we asked the interlocutor to tell either about some funny incident in their life or about unpleasant or even dangerous moments in their life. If the interlocutor enjoyed himself as a storyteller, then I did not stop him until he finished.

Only after that did we move on to another topic or interrupt ourselves until the next time. However, there were few such talkative interlocutors. Such reflections, on the one hand, gave the interviewee the opportunity to discover his own ideas about local life and its prospects. In addition, in the free conversation, additional aspects of community life were revealed, which significantly enriched the information in comparison with the supposed answers to the previously drawn up questions.

Typically, my interlocutors said what they thought, and this is what we expected from them. However, a person's mind is filled not only with what he/she sees and hears, but also how they perceive events. Therefore, when it seems that the interviewee is lying or inventing, in fact this is how he perceives reality, and their statements are still tied to the facts of everyday life. Together, this composition of the interviewee's facts and interpretations outlined the sociocultural picture of the community.

However, to confirm the statements of the interlocutors, we asked questions, the answers to which indirectly checked the answers and statements of the interviewees. For example, if the interviewee stated that he/she had only subsistence food in his / her diet, the question followed was what he/she had been eating for the last two to three days. Often this is not a lie, but the interviewee's idea of the topic under discussion. In listing their meals over the past day, some of them realized that tea, bread, and butter, or rice in soup were actually shop food and not traditional food. On the other hand, decades of mixing different types of food have created a new image of traditional cuisine. Bread, fried initially with seal oil and later with vegetable oil, are good examples of adapting an introduced product and turning it into a traditional Indigenous food. The situation was approximately the same with the language preferences of the villagers. Many interviewees stated that they are fluent in the Chukchi language. To test the veracity of this statement, a special section was used, where participants were asked to speak the Chukchi glossary about hunting and gathering activity or even tell legends in the Chukchi language. These questions sometimes caused difficulties and even a negative reaction from the interviewees, because in answering them, they understood that some of their statements were not based on real facts, but simply on their desires. In fact, these interviews unintentionally challenged the villagers' sense of self. Some believed they are living one way, and going through my questions, they had revealed it might not be entirely true.

Since the interview about my 2016 field season was done in field notes, it took the winter of 2016-2017 to process them. As interviews and other sources were processed, the *thick description* I created required clarifying information. The main idea of the interviews was still to make interviewees reveal what they observe every day, what they face, what they do, and what they think about their life and the community in which they live. I have refined the questionnaire to obtain deeper and more detailed information to describe the modern Chukchi community. I have added a section on the kindred lines of the interviewees and what they know about the kindredness of their neighbors.

My goal was not to build a kinship diagram in the Enurmino and Neshkan communities. From my experience, I knew that usually adult villagers are well aware of kinship lines that help regulate kinship relationships. Responses from young and middle-aged interviewees indicated that they remember their ancestors well up to the level of grandparents. However, beyond this level, as well as family lines in both villages, was hardly discussed by the participants. They either didn't want to share information or didn't know what to say.

In the final part of the interview, I was interested in what the interviewees think about the outside world and how they position their community in relations with the outside world. The villagers almost did not answer these questions, which can be interpreted as the fact that the outside world, despite the Internet and TV, is of little interest to the villagers, and the life of the community is rather closed.

I asked for the 2017 field season in Neshkan and Enurmino to be guided by Rodion Rinetegin (Figure 2.8), my longtime partner in hunting, fishing and research. I wanted him to conduct interviews with young villagers who were reluctant to give me interviews. It was also necessary to conduct repeated interviews with my interlocutors in 2016, whose stories needed further refinement and reinforcement. Rodion conducted his research in mostly structured interviews, although he also asked interviewees to tell stories from life.





Figure 2.8. Rodion Rinetegin (left) and Nikolai Rovtyn (right). Cape Netten, August 2017. Photo provided by Rodion Rinetegin.

In addition to Rodion's second field season, I regularly conducted interviews and consultations with residents of Neshkan and Enurmino, as well as other villages in the region. In particular, I consulted with Nikolai Rovtyn from Enurmino, Evgeny Sivsiv from Inchoun, and Nikolai Ettytegin and Mikhail Zelensky from Lavrentia. A striking feature of the modern type of communication that transcends space and time is WhatsApp. Residents of Chukotka prefer this

app because of the slow internet connection in the villages. WhatsApp provides a quality, low-cost connection for text, audio and video messaging and even phone calls. It used to take a lot of time, money, and effort to get an answer to a simple question. Nowadays, social networks such as Whatsapp have opened up the possibility of discussing topics online 24/7.

### 2.2.3. Documents

A supplementary source of information about the Neshkan and Enurmino communities was the analysis of the archives of local press. After researching newspapers from the 1960s to 2016, I scanned a total of 218 pages of the Chukotka regional newspaper *Sovetskaia Chukotka*, renamed *Far North* since 1993, (Figure 2.9) and the regional newspaper *Zaria Kommunizma*, renamed *Zaria Chukotka* since 1991 (Figure 2.10). I have selected a collection of articles describing social change and economic innovation in the Chukchi communities of Neshkan and Enurmino.

A special study was devoted to the study of ethnographic materials of the first scientific expeditions that explored the ethnography of the Chukchi in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. I carried out a special research project to study the ethnographic materials of the first scientific expeditions that explored the ethnography of the Chukchi in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Bogoras's volumes *The Chukchee* (1904, 1907, 1909), as well as the publications of Nordenskjöld (1881), Meidel (1894), Gondatti (1898), Bogdanovich (1901), and Sverdrup (1930; 1978) were the main source on the Chukchi communities inhabiting the lands around modern Neshkan and Enurmino in those days. Although only the Nordenskjöld and Sverdrup expedition directly explored the Indigenous settlements of the coast, where Neshkan and Enurmino are located today, studies of other Chukchi settlements of that time were also useful for use in comparative analysis.

The official statistics of marine mammal hunting and reindeer husbandry in Neshkan and Enurmino were used to complement the description of the modern village economy and its impact on the socio-cultural model of communities. Pro Chukotku (<https://prochukotku.ru/>), the information bulletin of the Chukotka government, was used as a source of information on providing Neshkan and Enurmino with traditional food and store products to find out the proportion of traditional food in the daily diet of villagers.



Он был первым

# РОВЕСНИК ВЕКА



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31 декабря 1999 года все Чукотка затаила дыхание в ожидании чуда. Здесь ждали рождения первого на Земле ребенка-2000. С подачи Президента РФ Бориса Ельцина именно в этот год наша страна отмечала миллениум. И не важно, что официально XXI век наступил лишь 1 января 2001 года. Мы встретили его на год раньше. И как встретили!

«...Событие здесь произошло великое и почти неправдоподобное. Все случилось по сценарию, который иначе, чем чудом, не назовешь. Я уже был готов «продумать» младенца-2000, для чего выяснял, как рожают в тундре, но жизнь еще раз доказала, сколь ничтожны наши замыслы и мечты звымысли, как недооцениваем мы молчаливые заговоры, ожидания и желания, которые способны воплотиться. Итак, в ночь на первое января в Лаврентия родился мальчик! Он появился на свет через пятнадцать минут после наступления Нового года», — напишет позже в своей книге «Посолонь» известный московский прозаик Валерий Писигин.

## «АЗ ЕСЬМ!»

Наверное, о первых минутах жизни Ромы лучше всех расскажет их очевидец — писатель Валерий Писигин:

«Первое, что увидел, войдя в небольшую комнату, — Валентина Николаевна, улыбаясь и смеясь, держит перед собой шевелящуюся и кричащую розовый комочек. Это и есть младенец-2000! Она бережно положила его на небольшой столик. Ребенок то заплакал, то вновь кричал. Это был не плач, не мольба о помощи, а настоящий крик, выражающий радость. Он и до сих пор у меня в ушах. Ничего более торжественного я не слышал. ... Когда я, обомлевший, не отрываясь, смотрел на это теплое и радостное создание, во мне несколько прозвучали строки из Евангелия: «Истинно, истинно говорю вам: прежде нежели был Адам, я есмь».

«Теперь можно уязвять. Все, что я задумал, все, чего желал, — совершенно. И больше того. Гораздо больше. Я со страхом думаю о том, как это изложу, какими словами? Ведь то, чему я стал свидетелем, настолько грандиозно, что, если и отпахусь, то либо написать, получится лишь бледная тень того, что произошло на Чукотке на рубеже веков и тысячелетий».

## НЕ ПО ДНЯМ, А ПО ЧАСАМ

Как складывается судьба человека, сообщения о рождении которого в свое время облетело все информационные агентства страны?

— Мальчик очень активный, — рассказала нам ведущий специалист по взаимодействию с главой сельского поселения Энурмино Наталья Григорьевна. — Живой, общительный, как все наши. Учился очень хорошо. Принимал участие во всех мероприятиях.

Родителях. Родители его очень любят. Об этом читателю, почему Наталья Григорьевна говорит о Роме в прошедшем времени. Дело в том, что в Энурмино Центр образования включает в себя детский сад и начальную школу. После ее окончания дети продолжают обучаться уже в интернатах, которых в Чукотском районе всего два — в селе Улаэн и непосредственно в райцентре. Вот и Рома, окончив в Энурмино четвертый класс, перешел в Лаврентия. Но уже в Лаврентия.

Мы поговорили и с мамой Романа — Эльвирой Юрьевной.

«Эльвира Роскином родилась в многодетной семье, точнее, в многодочерней: семь девочек и только один сын, к тому же — младший! Так что навыки женского труда у нее такие, каких не даст ни одно училище. Мама Эльвиры была мастерицей на все руки. Работала швеей в пошивочной мастерской, воспитательницей в детском саду и, кроме прочего, прекрасно готовила. К несчастью, она умерла в 1989 году. Отец Эльвиры — охотник. Эльвира вышла замуж и родила двух дочек: Сою — в 1991 году и Регину — в 1994. Муж — истопник в интернате, а отец мужа — охотник. Сама Эльвира работает поваром в школе».

Сегодня Эльвира Юрьевна осталась без работы, а найти ее в заплоярном поселении практически невозможно. Единственные средства к существованию — охота и рыболовство. Воспитывает детей, помогает мужчинам. Умеет и любит шить. Сын с удовольствием носит ее вещи.



## Анекдот в тему

Мама заинтересовалась у своего сынишки: — Что ты хотел бы получить на день рождения? — Лошадку, пистолет и три дня не умыться!



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## ЗДРАВСТВУЙ, ПЕРВЫЙ РЕБЕНОК 2000-ГО!

1 января 2000 года в 00 часов 15 минут в родильном отделении центральной районной больницы в Лаврентия появился на свет первый в стране новорожденный XXI века. Это мальчик, которого уже назвали Романом. Рост 56 сантиметров, вес — 3 килограмма 750 граммов. Родители ребенка Эльвира Роскином и Юрий Анкарольскы — жители Энурмино. Ромы привили акушер-гинеколог Светлана Геннадьевна Вострова и старшая акушерка родильного отделения районным Валентина Николаевна Порохова.

ПОЗДРАВЛЯЕМ ВСЕХ С РОЖДЕНИЕМ НОВОГО ЖИТЕЛЯ ЭНУРМИНО, РАЙОНА, ЧУКОТКИ, РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ, ВСЕГО МИРА!

«Народ и Власть». Пресс-бюллетень Советов депутатов и администрации Чукотского района. 7 января 2000 г.

— Растет он не по дням, а по часам, — гордится сыном Эльвира Юрьевна. — Большой, весь в отца. К Новому году сшила новый зимний костюм.

Нужно ли говорить, что Эльвира Юрьевна очень сильно скучает по сыну. Каждый вечер звонит в Лаврентия и подолгу разговаривает с Ромой. Искренне радуется его успехам: «Общительный, веселый, любит играть и в ленту, и в волейбол. Ходит на кружок баскетбола, занимается национальными видами спорта...».

Но телефонного общения недостаточно. И сегодня Эльвира Юрьевна всерьез задумывается о том, чтобы временно переехать в Лаврентия, найти работу и быть поближе к сыну.

## ЧТО НАМ СТОИТ ДОМ ПОСТРОИТЬ

«Проживает энурминская семья на улице Советской в маленьком домике, где есть толь-

ко кухня да комната. Двадцать лет стояло бесхозным основание, без крыши, пока Эльвира с мужем не решили его достроить. Удобства в домике минимальные. Зимой, а в Энурмино почти всегда зима, трактор подвозит лед, его откалывают, бросают в бочку, лед тает, и проблемы с водой нет. А чтобы воду нагреть, достаточно положить ведро на печку. Потом мойся сколько душе угодно».

К сожалению, за десять лет «квартирный вопрос» претерпел самые незначительные изменения. В 2002 году знаменитый домик сгорел, и семья получила стандартную квартиру площадью 24 квадратных метра.

— В таких квартирах живут все энурминцы, порой даже двумя семьями, — говорит Наталья Нутук, которая, кстати, до того, как стать ведущим специалистом, долгое время проработала главой сельского поселения. — И по-прежнему несбыточной мечтой всех жителей является строительство в селе бани...

Сегодня дружная семья вновь пытается самостоятельно улучшить жилищные условия, для чего пристраивает к квартире за счет кладовой еще одну ком-

нату. Возможно, уже в следующем году справит «новоселье». Нужно спешить — одна из дочерей ожидает ребенка, и Эльвира станет бабушкой, а наш Рома — дядей.

## «ОН ПРОСЛАВИТ ЭНУРМИНО И ЧУКОТКУ!»...

Но вернемся из Энурмино в Лаврентия, где в настоящее время находится герой нашего материала. О последних успехах Романа нам рассказал заместитель главы администрации Чукотского района, начальник управления социальной политики Николай Зиневков:

— Рома Роскином из Энурмино действительно учится в пятом классе в интернате Центра образования села Лаврентия. Учится хорошо, успешно усваивает программу. На праздник, конечно, ему готовят озорные. Но не потому, что Рома какой-то особенный — нас принято отмечать дни рождения всех воспитанников интерната...

В заключение нашего разговора мы попросили Николая Ивановича прислать нам последнюю фотографию мальчика. И накануне Нового года (и дня рождения Ромы) мы ее получили.

— Вы счастливы, что родился мальчик? — Да. — Знаете, что он первый младенец двухтысячного года на Земле? — Да, конечно... — Как вы его называете? — Ромой. Дед и муж так звали. — Кем он будет? — Не знаю. — Он прославит Энурмино и Чукотку...».

## МОРОЗ-ВОЕВОДА ДОЗОРМ БЕХОДИТ ВЛАДЕНЬЯ СВОИ...



ЭТО БЫ ВСЕ ДА В ДЕВЯТЫЙ!

Как отметили многочисленные гости Анадыря, супермаркет, хоть и невелик по сравнению с материковскими «супер-», но разнообразием товаров на самой дальней окраине страны, куда все завозится либо морем, либо авиацией, их приятно удивил.

Figure 2.9. Chukotkan Regional Newspaper Sovetskaia Chukotka, December 20102.

<sup>2</sup> Although the article is dedicated to Roman, the symbolic first newborn child of 2000, it is actually a page about the socio-cultural characteristics of the village of Enurmino.

## ЗЕМЕЛЬНЫЙ ВОПРОС

В рамках осуществления земельной реформы в июле текущего года Магаданским институтом «Дальингипрозем» была проведена работа по установлению черты сел Чукотского района и передаче включенных в нее территорий в ведение сельских Советов. На местные органы власти соответственно возлагается обязанность и контроль за рациональным использованием земли, за ее экологическое состояние. Люди должны иметь конкретные условия для жизни и трудовой деятельности.

Многие задачи стоят перед сельскими Советами в осуществлении их прав владения землей. На первый взгляд они будут казаться неразрешимыми, но придется в каждом конкретном случае находить оптимальный выход, чтобы не ущемлялись ин-

тересы землепользователей. Например, трудная ситуация сложилась в селе Уэльси с землями общегосподским. Село разграничено своим западным краем к полярной станции. Многие хотят решить проблему, а тут еще руководство «полярки» закрыло дорогу через станцию, по которой всегда ездили сельчане. Вот и конфликт. Вероятно, придется строить обходную дорогу. Так или иначе, руководству полярной станции и Уэльскому сельскому Совету нельзя уступать от решения этой столь насущного вопроса.

Многие сел нашего района начали получать участки под индивидуальное строительство. Гадать, что люди берут решение жилищной проблемы в свои руки. Не согласен с одним выделением тех участков, на которых расположены памятники культуры

ры. На окраинах, а порой и в центре сел, мы встречаем холмы — земляные вместе с обрушившимися скальными язвами. Это немыслимо. Берингоморской культуры морские рвовые, своеобразные памятники мужественному народу, обожавшему свою землю. Странно и кощунственно будет выгнать с современной земли, строящийся в Уэльсе прямо на смесиной землянке.

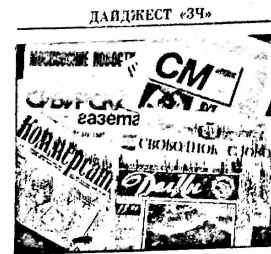
Задача по сохранности памятников особенно актуальна сейчас в связи с организацией международного парка «Берингия». Сельским Советам предстоит трудная работа над выработкой программы и подходов, направленных на сохранение культуры памяти предков, традиций. Ведь развитие туризма в будущем парке предполагает знакомство с местными достопримечательностями.

В связи с этим, в каждом сельсовете важно иметь четко разработанный, глубоко продуманный генеральный план

(проект планировки и застройки), в котором были бы определены земли для жилищного и промышленного строительства, производственной деятельности, историко-культурные назначения, благоустройство и размещения мест отдыха населения. Существующие планы необходимо пересмотреть и привести в соответствие с новым законом о земле (с учетом рекомендаций проекта международного парка). К этой работе целесообразно привлечь не только специалистов, но и широкую общественность, в том числе советы старейшин и местные отделения Ассоциации малочисленных народов.

Земельные участки в селах могут продаваться сельскими Советами для различных нужд в собственности, землепользовании и аренду. Со временем будет взиматься плата в виде налога за землю.

А. МАЗУР, землеустроитель Чукотского района.



### ПО МАТЕРИАЛАМ ПРЕССЫ

**НАРОДНЫЕ ДЕПУТАТЫ О БУДУЩИХ ЛИДЕРАХ СТРАНЫ.** По данным опроса Института социологии парламентаризма, депутаты назвали тех, кто, на их взгляд, будет реально влиять на политическую жизнь в ближайшие десятилетия. Это — Анатолий Собчак (25 проп.), Константин Лубченченко (24 проп.), Сергей Константинов (18 проп.), Пурсустан Назарбаев (11 проп.).

А 15 проп. опрошенных считают, что в 2000 году не будет ни СССР, ни поста Президента СССР.

**СЪЕЗД ПРОВЕЛ РЕВОЛЮЦИЮ.** «Наконец-то произошло то, чего долго ждали. Съезд обрел мужество и прошел революцию правовым, конституционным путем», — сказал в интервью корреспонденту ИТА корреспондент Комитета конституционного надзора Сергей Алексеев.

По словам Алексеева, с выделением Конституционного суда возглавляемый им Комитет сложит свои полномочия. «Я убежден», — сказал он, — что интеграция в Европе произошла на основе Рижского договора и Европейского суда. И у нас должны быть только экономическое соглашение и Конституционный суд».

**ДЕМОСКОПИЯ КОРРЕКТИРУЕТ ЕЛЬЦИНА.** Как заявил лидер движения «Демократическая Россия» Юрий Афанасьев, не все шаги Бориса Ельцина одобряют россияне демократами. «В частности», — сказал он корреспонденту, — мы решительным образом отвергли заявление Ельцина о возможности торгово-рыночных отношений, как не соответствующее принципам демократии. То же самое и в отношении закрытия газет. Я считаю, что это не та мера, которую должны проводить настоящие демократы».

К мнению Ю. Афанасьева присоединился писатель Фаина Искандер: «Есть такое выражение одного западного философа — «Справедливость — великая из става победителей». Это опасность надо избежать, чтобы человеческие страсти демократических сил не приняли слишком эгоистичный характер, чтобы демократы продолжали работать, не давая хода личным амбициям и в условиях победы. А это, между прочим, для человеческой души гораздо более сложное испытание».

**ЭТО УЖЕ НЕ СМЕШНО.** «Весной будут выборы Президента СССР, и все будет голосовать за меня», — заявил бывший кандидат в Президенты России Владимир Жириновский в интервью литовской газете «Республика». Далее лидер либерально-демократической партии сообщил литовским читателям: «Израиль — это русские земли. Я нас избрал. В пограничной зоне Смоленской области начну копать ядерные отходы, гарнизон Семипалатинска будет пиночек и как. Вы, литовцы, будете умирать от болезней и радиации. Русских и поляков — вывезу. И — господи, а — тырн! В Прибалтике литовцы, латышской и эстонской — не будет. Я буду играть, как Гитлер в 1932 году. Шампанское, которое мы пьем сегодня — это напитки ваших похорон».

**15 РОЛЕЙ СТАЛИНА ЗА 12 ЛЕТ.** Георгий Саакян, сыграв «Войну народов» в 15 художественных и одном документальном фильме, среди которых такие известные картины, как «Гитлер-42», «10 лет без права переписки», «Черная гора — эмблема нечести». В сентябре во Всесоюзном киноцентре в Москве состоялась презентация нового художественного фильма «И черт с нами», где Саакян опять появился на экране в роли Сталина.

Георгий Саакян (65 лет) по профессии инженер и в кино пришел совершенно случайно только в 1979 году. Этому способствовало его необычайное сходство со Сталиным — на курсе двойников Саакян занял первое место.

Фильм «И черт с нами» (режиссер Александр Павловский), съемки которого закончились на Одесской киностудии за 50 дней до начала репетиций, рассказывает о том, что могло бы произойти в случае совершения переворота и возвращения Сталина.

## НАСТАВНИКИ И ПРЕЕМНИКИ



Ветеранов древнего промысла тревожит то обстоятельство, что большая часть молодежи не стремится познать национальное искусство охотничьего морзяноробот. Они не помнят не только «досветские» лета, когда удачей промысла продолжал существование вестч стобинца. С годами жизнь местных жителей измени-

лась. Традиционный же обычай как таковой постепенно отошел на второй план. Этому в большей степени «способствовало» невниманием руководящей охотничьей морзяноробот. С каждым годом редет ряды опытных морзяноробот. Давно стали пенсионерами и ветераны промысла. И сегодня продолжают добывать

деления совхоза имени 50-летия Великого Октября ВИКОР ТАЕНОМ, МИХАИЛ КАЙОМ и ЕВРОП ТЫМБРОМБОЛЫ ТЕТТИН (на снимке). Но зовут их по-прежнему морская стигма, не сидит им дома. С малых лет начали они дело отцов и дедов. По-томственные охотничьи морзяноробот, они и сегодня продолжают добывать

Фото М. ЖУРАВСКОГО.



Figure 2.10. Chukotsky District Newspaper Zaria Chukotki, September 1991. Article *Nastavniki I preemniki* [Mentors and successors]<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Article describe traditions of the Chukchi marine hunting. In the lower photo, Pavel Roskhinom and Ivan Taenom (middle and right), young hunters at that time. Rodion and I interviewed them in 2016 and 2017.



For a comparative analysis of the daily diet of the studied communities, I also used modern ethnographic studies of the region (Kerttula 2000; Yamin-Pasternak et al 2014; Kochnev and Zdor 2016; Dudarev et al 2019; Davydova 2019a).

My own archive was also used for research purposes. Home photographs, videos, and personal diaries were a valuable source describing the daily life of Neshkan and Enurmino from the 1970s to the 1990s. For example, in 1997 I shot a video about walrus hunting in the Idlidlia Island coastal rookery and the traditional events that followed a successful hunt. Another valuable documentary film that I made in 1993 was the annual slaughter of reindeer, which attracted almost the entire Neshkan population. This event was so popular not only because in this way the state farm provided the village with reindeer meat for a whole year, but also because it is an opportunity for the villagers to remember their childhood, to taste the delicacies of the reindeer herding camp.

Since the 1990s video cameras have become commonplace in Chukotka villages, recording the everyday life. I filmed my family and relatives' interactions as well as significant village events. It was mostly walrus or reindeer slaughters, "zaboi." Some traditional rituals were filmed during those times. Obviously, many events were missed and preserved simply by my memories. Throughout my life, I have taken notes about the life in the village, the bitter and joyful events of the daily life of the members of the community. These notes are actually useful in research not so much because of the facts described in them, but mainly because, passing through them, a chain of various other events, their causes and consequences, emerge in memory. These notes are markers and milestones, reminders, and script, which make my perception of communities deeper and salient. Most likely this angle sometimes made a barrier to the true picture of social life of villages.

### 2.3. Data Analysis

I did my data analysis process in the following sequence: preparing and organizing data, conducting quantitative and qualitative analysis of data, refining the data in more detail, to move towards a deeper understanding of the data, presenting data, and interpreting in search of the true meaning of the facts to map out the overall socio-cultural portray.

Interviews recorded on a voice recorder in 2016 and 2017 were transcribed. I processed the field notes made during and after the interview and adapted it into a storyline. Notable events, such as a successful hunt or a long trip, were documented in field recordings, photos and videos were also processed and turned into narratives. Transcribed interviews, stories based on field diaries, audio and video recordings have been systematized by place and time. The interviewees were divided into separate groups by age and gender to reveal group attitudes towards the issues discussed.

For quantitative analysis, I structured field notes and audio transcripts. For example, I singled out groups of villagers according to the amount of food collected and consumed, the frequency of interaction of villagers with wildlife, the use of their native language, knowledge and rituals focused on traditional subsistence. Databases that included harvesting and consumption of traditional food were used. Quantitative records have been entered into the database. The information obtained in this way became available for comparative analysis. For example, the number of marine mammals caught and consumed confirmed the claims of the villagers about the composition of the daily diet, which, in their opinion, fluctuated between 50 percent of the subsistence food and 50 percent of the store food. These statements correlate with data on harvest in the village and food supply from local grocery stores. The archival materials of the newspapers were systematized by year, with an indication of the topics discussed. Together, these data formed for me a general picture of the modern Chukchi settlement, which I have presented here.

For a qualitative analysis of the Neshkan and Enurmino communities, I used the interpretive approach of Geertz (1973). I am convinced of the relevance of this anthropological method and there are several reasons for this. Interpretating the meanings of "first-order" (Geertz 1973, 15) involving a local perspective is one compelling argument for this approach. To "fix social discourse" (Geertz 1973, 19), I also do comparative temporal and spatial analysis. That is, I compare the results of my research with the ethnographic descriptions of Bogoras (1904) and other studies carried out in the region from the late 19th century to the present, as well as with current anthropological studies in other Arctic regions. Despite the very ethnographic title of the dissertation, it is not intended to provide an ethnographic comparison of modern Indigenous settlements and those that were explored at the time of Bogoras's research. I consider the tools

that villagers use in everyday life as a lens, a means to reveal who the modern Chukchi are and how they live in their remote settlements.

The interpretation of community's life is a complicated way to build a "thick description," which, according to Geertz (1973, 7), is "a stratified hierarchy of meaningful structures." Gathering facts is not enough for ethnographic research. By identifying the causes and motivations of the ongoing social interactions, the researcher is able to make a thick description in the Geertzian sense. In this way, the researcher gains access to information that identifies the distinctive and common features of cultures, finding patterns that explain different communities and their social practices, lifestyle, and worldview. Thick description therefore is something more than just building social framework and filling it with social details. Social relations and interactions are happening under influence of cultural features. Those features are meaningful to every single member of the community. So, the thick description means there is a need to include this perspective in the general pattern because that information is key to understand the cultural features.

It should be noted that the local co-researchers collected part of the field materials for this study from the settlements of the Chukotka Arctic coast. They conducted sociological surveys regarding typical harvest volumes for marine mammals, fish, terrestrial animals, plants, as well as their relationships with wildlife. My long-term co-researcher, Rodion Rinetegin made the largest contribution to this study. In 2011-2012, Rodion conducted sociological surveys in Neshkan and Enurmino, and in 2017 he conducted 20 ethnographic interviews in the same settlements. Rinetegin also facilitated my participant observation on sea hunts, fishing expeditions, and coastal trips. He allowed me to observe a ritual dedicated to the first walrus hunt of his son, Yuri. To summarize the involvement of local co-researchers in the development of this dissertation, it should be emphasized that the Indigenous lens has become a significant tool for the analysis of the current community sociocultural portrait.

To interpret the modern Chukotkan social discourse in a Geertzian sense and with the incorporation of an Indigenous perspective, a comparative analysis of the community along temporal and spatial scales will be conducted. Bogoras's study of the late 19th and early 20th centuries was chosen as a starting point for comparative analysis, because his research collected

a substantial amount of ethnographic material of the Chukotka Indigenous peoples and is the first and only kind of encyclopedia about the Chukchi. While numerous subsequent studies of the Chukotka communities have documented the process of change in Chukchi society, according to Krupnik (2017, 36), the publication of Bogoras is still the main source of ethnological information about the Chukchi and neighboring Indigenous peoples. As an Indigenous Chukchi anthropologist, who values the overall importance of holistic ethnography as a means to contribute to an understanding and cultural vitality of a people, I aspire to produce an account that will provide a sense of contemporary social-cultural life in Chukotkan communities a hundred years after Bogoras.

Throughout my thesis, I consider typical behavioral patterns of members of the Neshkan and Enurmino communities. These case studies reveal the characters of villagers and reflect their relationship to the world around them, thereby contributing to the drawing of current social trends. The personal experience of the interviewers has been a valuable source of data on the equipment and techniques used to maintain subsistence, subsistence techniques, and the processing of subsistence products. This approach contributed to the identification of markers for determining the socio-cultural characteristics of modern communities, comparable to the information that I received from the research from the Bogoras era. In my dissertation, I did not plan and did not make a direct ethnographic comparison between the Chukchi settlements of the Bogoras era and those that exist today. It was rather a discussion about the tendencies of the social characteristics of the Chukchi community, its abilities for resilience, and partly an attractive opportunity to take a socio-cultural picture in comparison with the first and therefore unique ethnographic descriptions of the Chukchi settlements.

Forty interviews done in my 2016 fieldwork were written based on my field notes. On average, each interview took an hour and a half. The written account of this field season is about 60,000 words. I transcribed 20 interviews conducted by Rodion Rinetegin in 2017. A total of 60 people were interviewed in four villages. Including 25 villagers in Neshkan, 21 villagers in Enurmino, nine villagers in Lavrentia, and five villagers in Lorino. Among them were 17 women and 42 men (Figure 2.11), divided by age categories (Figures 2.12), into seven young (under 30), 19 mature (from 30 to 44), 16 mentors (from 45 to 59), and 16 elders (over 59). On average, each of these interviews took an hour. The transcribed text is 135,000



words long. Over the next few years, I also conducted several interviews with Chukotkan people to complement my descriptions. I also went through interviews I conducted in previous years, mainly in the late 2000s and early 2010s.

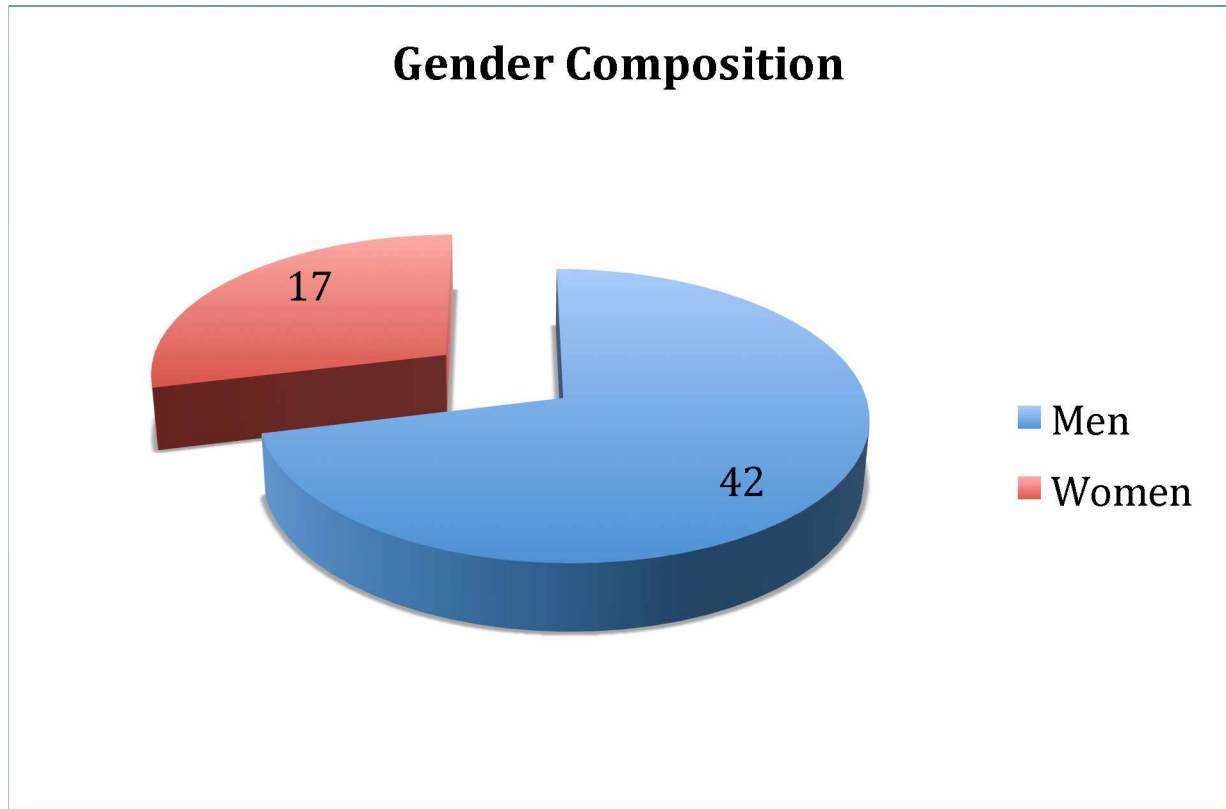


Figure 2.11. Gender composition of the interviewees.

The preparation of materials and their processing gave me information for an ethnographic description. I have identified several important topics to best fit the purpose of the dissertation. The description of ethnographic details was done through the interpretation of local phenomenology and case study. In considering the most notable cases, I compared them with similar facts that occur either in the past or elsewhere in the Arctic. Comparison with Indigenous communities in coastal Alaska made it possible to generalize patterns and current trends. It was my intention for the analysis to be done through temporal and spatial comparisons. I compared the preliminary conclusions obtained in this way with the conclusions made by researchers in the Chukotka and Alaska regions.

Quantitative analysis gave me information about households of community members, consumption of subsistence foods, and some social interactions. For example, the amount of collected and consumed products of existence, the frequency of interaction of villagers with wildlife, the use of their native language, knowledge and rituals focused on survival revealed the degree of direct dependence of villagers on the environment. In turn, these findings contributed to the understanding of communities' commitment to traditional worldviews, traditional knowledge and building social ties within communities and their interaction with external social groups.

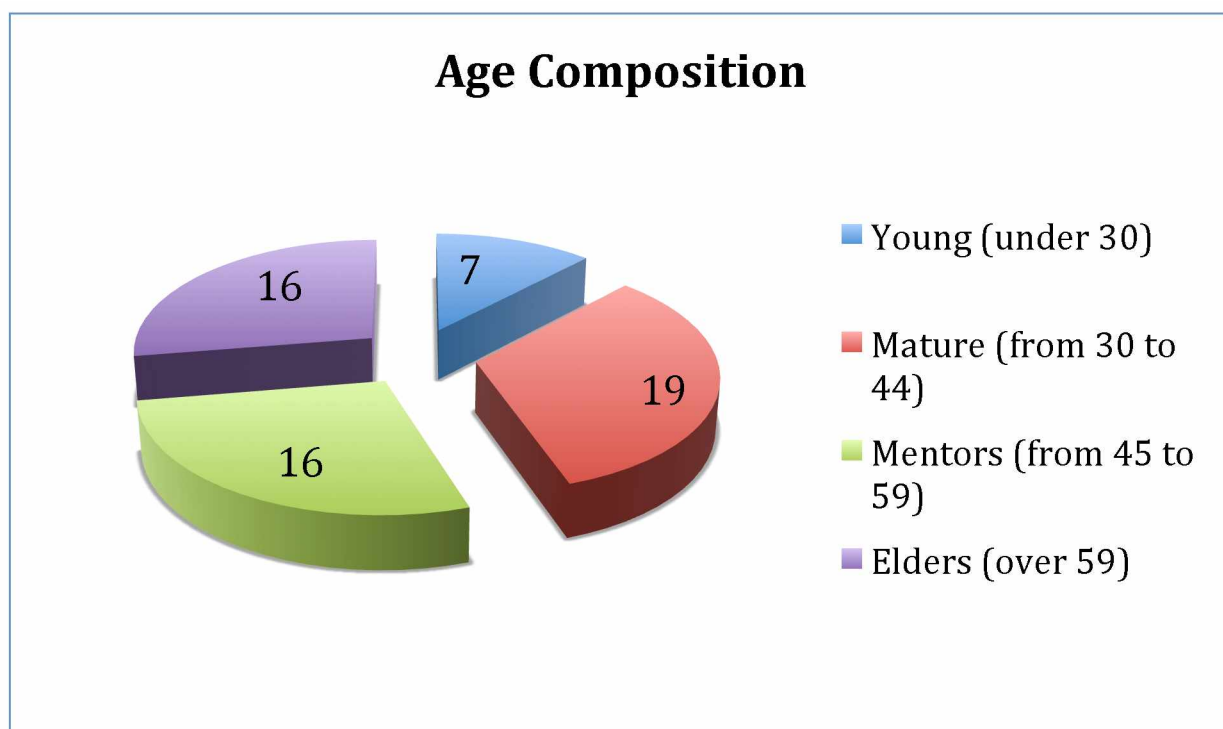


Figure 2.12. Age composition of the interviewees.

In the course of writing ethnographic chapters, discrepancies between thoughts, speeches, and actions in the social interactions and personal behaviors of modern villagers became evident. The contradictions of the villagers initiated the study of whether this phenomenon is typical for small closed Indigenous communities, or if it is common for a social unit. In other words, the social and environmental conditions of the Neshkan and Enurmino communities, contributing to the emergence of this phenomenon, were discussed.

While I was transcribing interviews and processing my field notes, questions arose that I needed to clarify with my interlocutors and the witnesses of the events I was observing. For example, kinship lines of reindeer camps and hunting communities helped to reveal migration processes, while current village diets and interethnic marriages shed light on community trends.

I wanted to be sure of a relevant description of the Neshkan and Enurmino communities, the interpretation of events, as well as an explanation of the reasons for their causes. Therefore, I contacted Rodion, my co-researcher, to clarify the questions that had arisen. I also consulted with many local experts from Neshkan, Enurmino and other localities in Chukotka. For these consultations, I used Facebook, Skype and WhatsApp calls and text messages, as well as email. My consultants not only provided verbal information, but also shared their own photos and videos. Viewing those, I paid close attention to people describing residents, their families, community groups, and the relationships that bind them. Their comments and notes clarified some of the details and even in some cases revealed the cornerstones of the modern Chukotkan community. For example, the distribution of subsistence products was divided into two parts. On the one hand, meat and fat are distributed in traditional ways, that is, they are divided between neighbors and relatives, coastal and tundra residents. On the other hand, commercially attractive products such as deer meat, walrus tusks, and hides of marine mammals have become a market product.

## Chapter 3. Social organization of Neshkan and Enurmino

### 3.1. Common features and differences between Neshkan and Enurmino

“The Maritime people are also much more hospitable than the Reindeer men. ... The people are well aware of this difference in temper between the Reindeer and the Maritime people, and the latter are quite proud of their superiority” (Bogoras 1909, 636; 638)

The coast of the Chukotka Peninsula has long been densely populated with small settlements, according to the observations of researchers (Nordenskjöld 1881, Gondatti 1888, Kaltan 2008). Sparsely inhabited reindeer camps were also densely distributed across the tundra, and kin related camps kept together (Meidel 1894; Kuznetsova 1957; Sverdrup 1978; Davydova 2015; Khakhovskaya 2016). Most of the marine hunters’ hamlets were stable, though some were temporary (Vdovin 1965). The emergence, size, and resilience of settlements depended on the availability of food sources: marine mammals, fish, birds, and edible plants. These statements are also true for the coast between *Koliuchino* Bay on the West and Cape Seshan on the East. Small camps located there became the population source of modern Neshkan and Enurmino. Mobility of small coastal camps provides local inhabitants the ability to seasonally migrate to areas with rich food sources. Harvesting strategies varied from location to location, depending on the regularity of the migrations of marine mammals and the variety and number of additional food sources such as marine mammal rookeries, bird colonies, and fish rivers and lakes. For example, the *Neshkan-Pilgyn* lagoon system provided local residents with a stable food source during the winter due to the abundance of tomcod, smelt, and krill, which in turn are an attractive food source for seals. Cape Netten and Seshan were huge food sources during the spring and fall migration of walruses. Fluctuations in climate, sea ice, and ocean also influenced resilience and mobility of local settlements. The Chukchi portable housing style (*yaranga*) also contributed to the social organization of the settlements. Mobile homes provided the ability to move along the coast and even between the tundra and the coast, both for individual families and entire settlements. Even today, some people move between coastal villages in search of jobs and families, and some elders live in separate dry huts or *yarangas* near villages, at least during the summer.

During the 20th century, these settlements were subjected to relocation by social rather than natural factors. First, the Soviet authorities in the middle of the 20th century resettled many small settlements (Krupnik and Chlenov 2007). Forty years later, the collapse of the Soviet system caused mass migration not only in Chukotka, but also throughout Russia. This was equally true for the Neshkan and Enurmino villagers, who not only resumed migrations along the coast between Indigenous villages, but also began moving from their settlements to neighboring Lorino, Lavrentia, Egvekinot, Anadyr, and even outside the region. This new type of migration caused a major shift in the socio-cultural characteristics of the Chukchi community. The absence of work, lack of quality education and medical services, and high prices for groceries in local shops has contributed to migration to the district and regional hub cities.

At the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, the migration of some residents of Neshkan and Enurmino to larger cities was also forced to some extent. They were looking for solutions to their personal challenges because they lost their jobs, stable income, and acceptable living conditions. These challenges have been compounded by the difficult choice between personal and community concerns. Or, in another way, between their identity, which belonged to the village, and the identity of their children, which is destined to belong to their new place of residence. Some residents of Neshkan argued that they would not move because their ancestors are buried here, so they have no way to leave this place. Other villagers want to move to new places because they are not satisfied with the living conditions in the village, old and cold houses, and expensive and mostly canned food. But the most important reason is that they want a bright future for their children. In any case, it was a painful but independent choice. Those who moved realized that they would lose their habitual life in which they acquired their knowledge, skills, and life attitudes. Moving from Neshkan and Enurmino meant a radical change in lifestyle and the transformation of hunters and reindeer herders into townspeople. Ultimately, this decision also turned out to be an adjustment to a rapidly globalizing society. For their children, the new place of residence was no longer someone else's, but rather a native one, cultivating a different outlook on life that to them felt natural and inherently theirs. This process is somewhat repeating the social changes that already took place during the local resettlement of the 1950s (Krupnik and Chlenov 2007). Resettlement, especially a rapid one, is undoubtedly a stress for the individual and a shock for the community as a social unit. On the other hand, the survival of the individual and the resilience of the community largely depend on the ability to adapt. I did a case

study on how the re-settlements affect the relocated residents and their next generations. Although I have spoken with a dozen different Chukotkans, I want to base my discussion on reflecting on the opinions of the two Siberian Yupik leaders on the resettlement of the village of Ungazik (Figure 3.1).

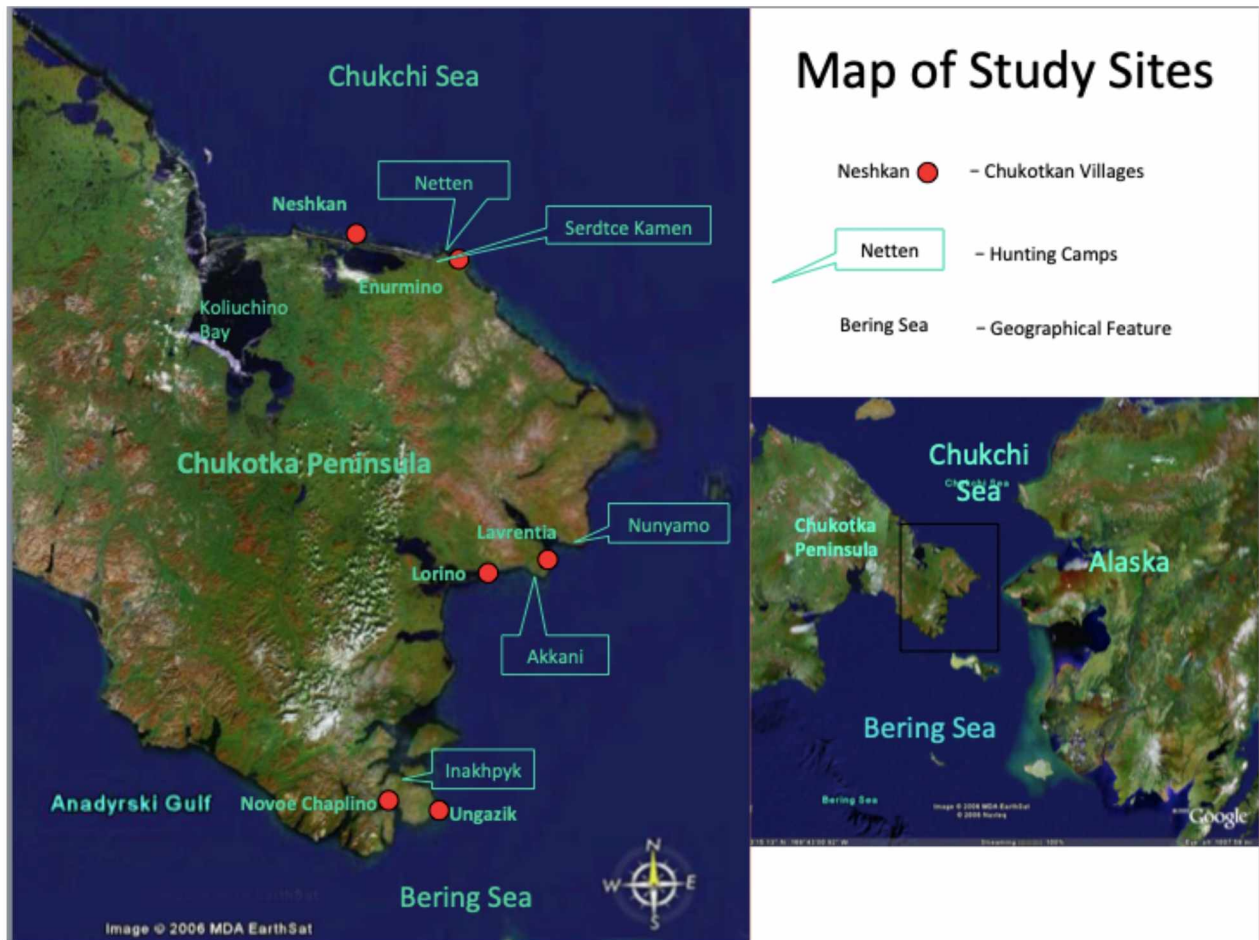


Figure 3.1. Villages Ungazik (closed) and Novoe Chaplino (exist), and Inakhpyk hunting camp.

I first spoke to Ainana (see Figure 3.2), the senior leader of the Siberian Yupik. She was born in the 1930s in the village of Ungazik, a Siberian Yupik name (the western name of the village was Chaplino). This settlement was closed in the 1950s, and the inhabitants were relocated to a newly built settlement, which was named Novoe Chaplino. Ainana said that, together with her fellow tribesmen, they were very homesick for their abandoned homeland. When in the late 1980s and early 1990s the authoritarian Soviet system was in the process of

destruction, they even had hopes of returning to their native village. She told me that the loss of connection with the motherland already leads to the loss of the identity of their people. In those same years, the former residents of Nunyamo and Naukan had the same dreams and thoughts.



Figure 3.2. Ludmila Ainana and Eduard Zdor. Tea conversation, Anadyr, April 2013. Photo provided by Eduard Zdor.

Despite the dreams, at present, only in Nunyamo in the summer and autumn season of hunting for walrus is life glimmering. Why is that? Why are there no real steps to return to the land of their ancestors? On the Alaska side of the Bering Strait, there has been no documented forced relocation of an Indigenous village. Only the inhabitants of King Island were forced, but still voluntarily, to relocate to Nome after the school in their village was closed (Braem 2004).



The community was forced to take this step because the future of the people depended on whether their children would have access to education.

This trend of arguments confirmed my conversation with Igor Makotrik (Figure 3.3), a chair of a marine hunting *obshchina* and member of the Siberian Yupik community. Igor was born in Novoe Chaplino in the late 1950s, a few years after the resettlement of the inhabitants of Ungazik. I asked him what he thought about the return of him personally and their community to their historical homeland. Igor answered me that he was born in Novoe Chaplino and that this is a good place to live. His opinion was not even influenced by the fact that he and his fellow hunters must base in the summer and autumn in the Inakhpyk hunting camp far from Novoe Chaplino.



Figure 3.3. Igor Makotrik (right) at the ChAZTO board meeting. Anadyr, January 2005. Photo by Eduard Zdor.



Both of my interlocutors were leaders of the New Chaplino community in different years. I believe that their opinion is representative and reflects both personal and community' interests. As contradictory as it looks, both Ainana and Igor may be right, both from a personal and tribal point of view. Both Ainana and Igor would like to live where they were born and raised. Both Ainana and Igor would like traditional subsistence, which is the core of preserving of their community identity, to exist for as long as possible. For Igor, the hunting camp of *Inakhpyk* is the place where he and other fellow co-villagers live and hunt while maintaining their commitment to the brotherhood of sea hunters. Members of their families can come to the camp and at least for some time live in the habitation in which their ancestors lived. In this way, Igor is trying to protect the identity of his community from the impact of the global culture that permeates the modern villages of Chukotka. This small case study only verifies that childhood is the cornerstone of building community and personal identity. Language, ways of socialization and other cultural features of the community shape the consciousness of a person, determine his worldview and sense of belonging to a member of the community. Ainana wanted to return the commonality of her childhood, while Igor thought about how to keep the identity of his childhood. Both of my interlocutors, despite their different desires, are concerned about preserving the identity of their community. Overall, this case study has shown me that changing the core identity of a community is an ongoing process and does not always mean its disappearance.

The Enurmino elders we spoke with also have a rather controversial view on this matter. They want the villages to survive, and elders explain this by the statement that if the current Indigenous villages are abandoned, the Chukchi culture will also disappear. On the other hand, they also want their children to get education, high-paying jobs, and even move to more comfortable settlements. These contradictions also arise in their other claims that they love their village, the native language, and the way of life, while at the same time they note that the Russian language, education, and life in the city are the best path for their children and grandchildren. The dilemma is further complicated by the fact that some of the villagers do not consider Neshkan and Enurmino to be their native habitation because their parents moved there from small camps and for them Neshkan and Enurmino are places where they were forcibly moved together.

These statements reveal contradictions between villagers' personal and community motives, which I will continue to discuss in this study. Community motivation has usually prevailed historically because, ultimately, community gain meant individual survival. The modern Neshkan or Enurmino resident, being at the same time a member of the Indigenous community and the global community, has found a choice. Now, to ensure the personal well-being of the villager, there is no need to follow the community goals. This means that the identity of the Indigenous communities has become even more fragile.

Before proceeding with the stratification of the Chukchi community, it would be useful to compare these two settlements. At the time of the general resettlement of Chukchi villages in the 1950s, Neshkan and Enurmino reflected two historically types of Chukchi coastal hamlets in terms of their population composition. According to the stories of the elders, the entire coastal camps of impoverished reindeer herders, combining reindeer husbandry and sea hunting, were resettled to Neshkan. Later, women and children from wealthy reindeer camps were also forced to move to the village. At the same time small coastal hamlets entirely dependent on sea hunting, were resettled in Enurmino. The preceding acculturation in the 1960s and 1980s and current sociocultural trends have determined many of the common features of these settlements. Full-time work, school, television, and the Internet unified the social life of both villages. Nevertheless, there are still some differences due to various factors, including the starting conditions of traditional subsistence.

The most characteristic differences between Neshkan and Enurmino are the size of the population and the available sources of traditional food. Neshkan is more than twice the size of Enurmino. In Neshkan, different types of fish are caught all year round, and in summer a reindeer herding camp roams nearby. Enurmino is located close to the migration routes of walrus and whales; every autumn a huge walrus rookery appears here. Population size and available food sources are the main sources of generating subsistence-oriented social groups and their coping strategies. Neshkan, due to its large population, has a greater number and volume of municipal services such as a kindergarten, a secondary school, power plant, and even a small hospital. Taken together, this means that there are more job opportunities than Enurmino, so Neshkan has several stable social groups, each of which has common features, goals and other conditions that contribute to the well-being of the community. Considering that newcomers

usually hold highly qualified positions in the village, this means that they are still able to influence the socio-cultural model of the village. With approximately 1/2 the population of Neshkan, Enurmino has less than 300 inhabitants. Each municipal institution that is required to serve the village has from one to several employees, and their influence on the socio-cultural model is certainly numerically insignificant. Sea hunting is the main occupation of almost the entire male population of the village. These circumstances determine the dominance of two large groups in the village, sea hunters and school staff and students. In both settlements, Chukchi make up the majority of the population. A slight difference between the villages is that in Enurmino there are only a few people who come from other regions of Russia, while in Neshkan the newcomers form a stable and to some extent isolated social group.

Both Neshkan and Enurmino villages have mixed cash-subsistence economies: full and part-time employment in educational, medical, social, and communal services, as well as in subsidized hunting *obshchinas* and municipal reindeer husbandry, together with social benefits and pensions, provide the villagers with money. Traditional subsistence provides employment for the unemployed, as well as about 50 percent of the diet of the villagers throughout the year. The methods of sea hunting and fishing are almost the same not only in these two villages, but also on the entire coast of the Chukotka Peninsula.

The population of Neshkan is divided into several clearly demarcated groups depending on their main income: reindeer herders, sea hunters, and employees of municipal service institutions, unemployed urbanized Indigenous villagers, and finally, newcomers. Although in Enurmino there is also a division into urbanized villagers and sea hunters, in comparison with Neshkan it is not so pronounced. The small population of Enurmino contributes to a sense of closeness, perhaps because there are almost no newcomers there, at least during the summer holidays. Of course, even in the seemingly homogeneous Chukchi community, there are various social groups. The traditional identification of social groups in Enurmino had kinship and landscape grounds. Members of the extended family group settled together. This concept was observed in the first years of the Soviet development of the village. Our family in Enurmino in the early 1970s lived in a group of houses where the house of my father's older brother Taenom was closest to the sea. Over time, the settlement of villages by newcomers from other regions of Russia, as well as native graduates of universities and colleges from other Chukchi villages,

changed this system. The villagers were now forced to settle in any available houses that the municipal government provided them. Groups of houses based on kinship have disappeared. Only the division into groups of houses has disappeared, depending on their location and landscape. Natural boundaries such as a lagoon, a river, proximity to and distance from the sea are typical reasons for segregation into a neighborhood group; for example, those villagers whose houses are by the sea or by the lagoon. In the 1990s, when the outflow of newcomers from the villages began, the descendants of the first owners of the houses made attempts to return to their parents' houses. In the summer of 2016, my old friend *Tondo* proudly told me about his return to his father's house. However, the houses were already so old that people preferred to settle in newly built municipal housing without regard to the heritage.

The technical development of traditional subsistence and its involvement in the Soviet agricultural industry, as well as the provision of 100% jobs, led to the emergence of social groups depending on the place of work. Andrian Omrukvun, the sea hunter of Enurmino, told me that, in Soviet times, if the urbanized Indigenous villagers, such as teachers and office workers, joined them on a hunt, the hunters called such a command "the boat of the intelligentsia." At the same time, the term *poselkovye* also appeared. Sea hunters and reindeer herders gave this name to their relatives and fellow villagers, whose life took place only within the boundaries of the settlement. In the 1990s, a small group of enterprising villagers appeared, but died out, who, like their ancestors in pre-Soviet times, were engaged in individual trade. The pre-Soviet group of Chukchi merchants was called *kavralyit*, which translates as Chukchi riding a sleigh to a trade fair (Nordenskiöld 1881). Following the trend of the 1990s in central Russia, they tried to call the new and failed group of Chukchi entrepreneurs "new Chukchi." This was a kind of stigma that implied the enterprise and use of the villagers and carried both approving and condemning notes. However, this group of villagers disappeared under the pressure of monopoly municipal trade, reindeer herding and sea hunting.

Attitudes towards sea hunting and reindeer husbandry created the main dividing line between Neshkan and Enurmino during the Soviet years. For the entire population of Enurmino, sea hunting was a central event. Village life revolved around preparation for the hunt, news from the hunt, and the butchering of harvested marine mammals. On the contrary, in Neshkan village life orbited around reindeer husbandry. During the preparation for seasonal events in reindeer

herds, almost the entire population of Neshkan was involved in the rhythms of the preparation for the activity as well as its outcomes. For example, dozens of children went to reindeer camps every summer. Many villagers were attracted to herding reindeer in the spring, when the reindeer herd doubles in a matter of days. The autumn reindeer slaughter attracted almost the entire population of the village, including small children. The post-Soviet Russian crisis of the 1990s changed the meaning of traditional types of Chukotkan subsistence. Reindeer husbandry fell into decay, while marine hunting became a key activity for the basic survival of the villagers.

After a relative economic recovery, the number of participants in this seemingly accessible form of subsistence activity decreased. Thanks to modern technology and electronic devices, a couple of dozen hunters are enough to provide the entire settlement with a sufficient amount of meat and fat. Currently, the villagers go ashore only to get their share of meat and fat. Most likely for this reason, the importance of hunting communities in the social life of the village has decreased. Morning hunter meetings are no longer at the heart of daily life in Enurmino. As in Neshkan, the hunters found themselves isolated from other inhabitants of the village. The likely explanation for this change is the gradual decline in the proportion of marine mammal meat in the diet of the villagers. Consequently, the diversification of food subsistence has changed the balance of the importance of social units in the village. In addition, sea hunting, which is an expensive activity (boats, snowmobiles, weapons, and gasoline), has become available only to a small group of hunters who receive government subsidies. Therefore, most of the villagers moved to accessible types of subsistence activities, such as fishing and gathering. In turn, the school and social services, being a guarantee of the socio-economic stability of the village, gradually supplanted the importance of sea hunters in the social life of the village. The school creates a large number of jobs and actually provides the children of the village with food all year round, while social services pay benefits and pensions to about half of the adult population in the community.

Boarding schools have also contributed to the spatial and sociocultural movements of communities. It would seem that Enurmino has a better chance of preserving the identity of the Indigenous community due to the small population, where the whole village lives like a big family. However, there is only an elementary school in the village, and children must move to Neshkan when they are 10-12 years old. The boarding school transfers this period of acquiring

traditional worldviews and skills of traditional subsistence to the adult period of the life of the villagers, which apparently, influences the socio-cultural traditions of the Indigenous villages. Neshkan, being a large Indigenous village, on the one hand, is divided into various social groups, not all of which find time to feed and, accordingly, tend to a more urbanized lifestyle. On the other hand, middle school provides children with a longer life with their parents and, accordingly, maintains their connection with traditional livelihoods and lifestyles. At about 16 years old, the students of Neshkan and Enurmino are forced to move to Lavrentia (boarding school in the district town) or Lorino secondary school. Schooling and then compulsory military service postpone the acquisition of traditional knowledge and skills, and to some extent, affect the adherence to family traditional subsistence. Therefore, having reached the age of 20-22, young people face a difficult choice: try to adapt to sea hunting and reindeer husbandry, which is based on parent-child training, (this is difficult without traditional training, and the market for subsidized jobs is limited), or get a job in municipal institutions, where the number of employees is also limited. The choice is really between being unemployed or simply moving to cities. Children, separated from their parents for many years, lose a strong connection with the home and ancestral occupation of their parents, which makes it much easier for them to move between settlements and industrial activities. Some go back to the villages, while others stay in the cities where they studied to work and get married.

The main language of communication in the villages is Russian. The Chukchi language is spoken mainly by residents over 50 years old and not even among themselves, but in communication with their elders, who speak Russian poorly. In both villages there are several young villagers, including adolescents, who speak the Chukchi language fluently, as they were raised by their grandparents, most often in a socially isolated reindeer herding camp. The rest of the Chukchi speak mostly Russian, weaving native words or short phrases into their conversation, which is typical for the Indigenous villages of the Bering Strait region (Schwalbe 2015; 2017; Morgunova-Schwalbe 2020). The worldview of the majority of villagers was formed under the cross influence of Soviet atheism and subsistence-oriented animism, understood here as the idea that everything that the villagers encounter during subsistence activity—animals, sea, tundra, mountains, rivers, lakes—is animated and alive. Accordingly, the villagers communicate with these beings as sentient beings and interact with them through a model of human relationships. Since the 1990s, families have appeared in which the Christian

worldview is practiced. Overall, it would probably be irrelevant for the communal worldview to assign a dominant line. Passing through the age stages and life difficulties, the villagers sometimes move from one group to another, and even mix their beliefs and worldviews. Based on this, it can be argued about a certain tolerance between groups. I will explore this issue in more detail in the chapter on what villagers think of themselves and their community.

Differences in rituals, processing, and names of traditional hunting equipment in both villages are insignificant. Some differences arise due to local and family characteristics, adherence to reindeer or sea hunting traditions, as well as due to a gradual shift in traditional knowledge because of the transition from the Chukchi language to Russian language. For example, Maxim, a member of the Neshkan hunting obshchina and a former resident of Enurmino, said that in Neshkan they call the toggle-head of harpoon '*vemek*' in the Chukchi language, while in Enurmino, the Chukchi name for it is '*tukken*.' Modern hunters Neshkan and Enurmino suggested that these were local names for hunting equipment. To some extent, they were right, yet the term *vemek* means that the harpoon head is made from the bone of an animal, while *tukken* is a harpoon head from any material (Inenlikei et al 2017), mainly metal.

Alcohol consumption is a common problem in both villages. High alcohol consumption affects the incidence of cardiovascular diseases among residents of both villages and contributes to both a decrease in living standards and a reduction in life expectancy. It destroys families, contributes to the phenomenon of single-parent families, early alcoholism, and high rates of adolescent suicide. It should be added that residents of the village of Enurmino claim that while residents of Neshkan drink all year round, residents of Enurmino drink only on holidays and on days when wages, benefits and pensions are paid. In my opinion, the situation does not differ much since the days of payments are scattered throughout the month. Lydia Taenom, a resident of Enurmino, told me that she rarely visits relatives in Neshkan and stays little there because there are a lot of drunks there. At the same time, she complained that her neighbors often drink alcohol. My observations showed that residents in both villages drink alcohol almost always when they have cash. The difference arises in the fact that in the more numerous Neshkan, more demand predetermines more supply. Alcohol can be bought legally and illegally in stores, as well as from neighbors.

Overall, these conditions, the proximity of settlements, as well as the mobility of the inhabitants of both villages and family ties, ensure the continuous mixing of both communities and, to some extent, their homogeneity. Despite the certain differences between Neshkan and Enurmino, they are part of each other. Therefore, I chose to explore them together as a community for my anthropological research.

### 3.2. Formal Village Institutions and Their Influence on the Community

Neshkan and Enurmino have several isolated and committed social groups, determined by the type of activity, source of income, and cultural characteristics. In these groups, boundaries are permeable, formal and informal components mix and influence each other. To obtain social support from the authorities, villagers use formal structures. People register marriages, births and deaths and their other civil status. This provides them with social benefits and is often a secure and significant source of income by local standards. Villagers rely on TEK, subsistence, and customary law to meet their cultural and nutritional needs. To this end, villagers prefer customary law to formal legislation, because it does not always take local specifics into account. For example, residents of Neshkan and Enurmino traditionally hunt molted geese. The *Neshkan-Pilgyn* lagoon system (Figure 3.4) provides habitat for a huge number of different species of geese. *Netepkir*, a hunter from Enurmino, told me that in his childhood they specially came there on skin boats to prepare goose meat.

“Half a dozen skin boats, crewed by families, sailed first across the sea from Cape Natten to the mouth of the Memin-Pilgyn lagoon. Then we sailed along the Memin-Pilgyn lagoon, and finally, in the narrowest place between Memin-Pilgyn and Neshkan-Pilgyn lagoons, we dragged the boats to *Main'ialk'yn*—the "rotten corner" of the Neshkan-Pilgyn lagoon. This area acquired this name for the characteristic smell of a shallow wetland system with a clay-peat bottom. This is where our boats camped.





Figure 3.4. Map of Neshkan-Pilgyn and Mamin lagoons and traditional geese harvesting spots

At dawn, women and children stood in a line and drove the moulting geese from small lakes into the tundra. The men then chased the geese and beat them with sticks. I was under 10 years old at the time, so I still couldn't handle a stick skillfully. Therefore, my peers and I had to keep the line. If we saw that some goose was only stunned and could run away, then we grabbed him by the neck and bit his head. Because of this, the children had a streak of blood and fluff from the corners of their mouths to their necks. It was an exciting hunt for us kids. We were proud to be able to hunt and provide food for our families. We used to return back with boats full of geese.” (Netepkir, 50 years old, Neshkan and Enurmino resident, July 1995)

Nowadays, according to the current legislation, these geese are subject to protection, even though the local residents themselves and even biologists believe that the local populations of geese are in satisfactory condition. Therefore, the residents of Neshkan continue to use subsistence resources based on traditional knowledge about the local ecosystem. Together, formal and informal structures, despite some collisions, balance a stable social system, consisting of several social subdivisions, within which there are specific forms of communication and behavior characteristics, both of the group and of the accompanying hierarchy.

With the collapse of the Soviet system, there were changes in the social hierarchy of the Chukchi villages (Schweitzer 2000; Davydova 2017). The former all-encompassing power of the director of the state farm (*sovkhos*) has been fragmented into several parts, in which the head of the village administration is formally the leader, but other actors are also present. A school, a grocery store, social services, a hospital, a utility company, a hunting *obshchina*, and sometimes a reindeer-herding municipal enterprise are typical institutions in a village on the Chukotka Peninsula. I have listed these institutions according to their importance in the daily life of the village. Every day, dozens of children and their parents are preoccupied with going to kindergarten and school. Likewise, every day, villagers go to the grocery store to buy freshly baked bread (other food is also in demand, but only bread is the subject of everyday purchase), share and hear the news, and make a deposit or obtain cash from an ATM. Other institutions are just as important, but not as relevant in day-to-day life. The reindeer herding municipal

enterprise, the marine hunters *obshchina*, the utility company, and the power plant, despite the importance of the services they provide, have more subtle roles.

### 3.2.1. School

According to Russian federal law (AO Kodeks 2012, 37), there are four stages of general [school] education in Russia, namely, preschool education [kindergarten]; primary general education [elementary]; basic general education [middle school]; and middle general education [high school]. In Enurmino, the school provides the first two stages, and in Neshkan, only middle general education is lacking. The number of children in Enurmino limits number of stages, while in Neshkan the last stage of education was reduced because the school building is outdated and does not accommodate the existing number of children.

Children spend a large amount of time in school. They study there, prepare homework in after-school groups, and eat in the school cafeteria from morning to evening. Some live in a boarding school. During the summer holidays, those students who do not go to reindeer camps spend time in a children's camp at the school. The boarding school is even a kind of shelter for children during the days of binge drinking in the village. Parents, especially from single-parent families, are in a sense comfortable with this situation since it eases the strained financial situation of the villagers. While fulfilling a socially useful educational and social function, the school also contributes to the complex contradiction that the communities of Neshkan and Enurmino face today. Children, being outside the family's Indigenous background, absorb only a culture different from their own and socialize in accordance with the standards of a global society. Therefore, they hardly recognize the dichotomy between local and global culture, or rather, it would be more accurate to say that global and local cultures, mixing, cultivate a new type of Chukchi identity.

The Indigenous teachers trained at the regional Anadyr pedagogical college teach mainly in the primary grades of Neshkan and Enurmino. In the senior grades of Neshkan School, most of the teachers are newcomers from different cultural regions of Russia. The Russian multi-ethnic culture, with a lot of Soviet heritage, is a common cultural core for them, local teachers, and for students. Because newcomers are the conductors of Russian culture in Neshkan, for local children they seem Russian, regardless of their real nationality. Adult local villagers pay

attention to the multinational character of the newcomers. My Neshkan interlocutors sadly noted that newcomer-teachers from the other regions of the country freely communicate with each other in their native languages. The villagers dreamed that their native speech would also be widespread in Neshkan and Enurmino.

Despite the decline in the role of the Chukchi language in Neshkan and Enurmino, local teachers and students still clearly distinguish themselves from newcomers. Identity is conditioned by traditional subsistence, food, and although a little brief, steady use of the Chukchi language. Local teachers and children continue to take part in sea hunting, fishing, and visiting reindeer camps. The craving for traditional subsistence is so great that Indigenous teachers prefer to spend their holidays in the village, although the school pays for their round-trip travel to a vacation spot anywhere in Russia. Local teachers use most of their salaries to purchase hunting vehicles and equipment. For example, Pyotr Netepkir, a hunter from Neshkan, explained to me that he quit his job as a schoolteacher because he wanted to hunt at sea.

In the 1990s, every villager took a vigorous part in hunting and fishing to provide family with food. Even children were involved in the process of obtaining food, not for learning, but as equal participants. Maxim Vaamcheivun, a hunter from the village of Enurmino, said that he attended school only until grade 3, and then his father said that he needed to provide his family with food, and they began to hunt together. Another interlocutor of mine, Andrei Notagirgin, a hunter from Neshkan, said that he attended school, but his studies were free to attend. When the weather was good, he was always with his father or went hunting in the sea on his own, because they had to feed their large family. So, the 1990s gave rise to doubts in the minds of villagers about the relevance of school education, not only because of the need to get food, but also because the collapse of the Soviet system, where there was no place for democracy. People realized that now they themselves choose the future for their children. Most of the Neshkan and Enurmino parents left everything as it is, but there were also such as the parents of Maxim and Stepan. During my two-month trip to the reindeer camps in the winter of 1997, I had many conversations with Kuky (Figure 3.5), the mother of a large reindeer herding family. Three sons, a daughter and a grandson lived in her yaranga. This camp firmly followed Chukchi reindeer herding traditions and was therefore the most successful in the Neshkan tundra in those years. We discussed the past and present of the reindeer camp extensively. She told me,

“Stepan is now only 14 years old, but he has been with us here in the camp for many years all year round. Therefore, when he goes into the herd of deer and a blizzard begins, I am not worried about his safety. It was not so with my older sons. When they were children, they were with us here in the camp only in the summer, and from autumn to spring they lived in the village. Then they did military service. Finally, when they returned to us, they were already over 20 years old, and I feared for their life for many years until they had experience.” (Kuky, 57 years old, Neshkan tundra resident, December 1997)



Figure 3.5. Kuky (left) and Stepan Tynekeu (right). Reindeer herding camp. Neshkan tundra, 2010s.  
Photos provided by Vladimir Puia.

One of the adaptation strategies of local communities caused by the events of the 1990s was the subsistence orientation of the school. The meals in the school cafeteria were complemented by local foods such as walrus and seal meat, as well as local fish species. The educational program of the Indigenous villages has been significantly expanded with subsistence-oriented classes such as bone carving and sewing, as well as training in hunting and fishing skills. Although the programs for teaching the Chukchi language in schools have not made significant progress and expansion, nevertheless, the elective classes of the native language have found more support from both parents and the school. One of my Neshkan interlocutors told me how pleased he was to walk around the village and hear how little children exchange

short remarks in Chukchi language. He was proud that the Chukchi language teacher is putting in a lot of effort to promote his native language at school.

The school generates a large variety of jobs in the village, and schoolteachers are the wealthiest group of villagers. Classrooms, the dining room, sleeping quarters, and ancillary areas require maintenance personnel and contract work. Nikolai, a resident of Enurmino, was proud to have a job as a stoker. The salary was insignificant, but stable, and the work did not take long, so he had time to indulge in his much-loved traditional subsistence and the means to purchase groceries from the local store. However, according to Yarzutkina (2017), the school has come to dominate the village not only because of the large number of jobs and students, but also because it organizes the main events in the village and provides premises for local events. Indeed, the social life and cultural foundations of Neshkan and Enurmino are shaped by the educational process and school activities that many villagers attend. The school hosts performances by local singers and dancers, theatrical performances, and sports events for children and adult villagers. This is especially true for Neshkan, where the local club [public cultural building] huddles in a small building rebuilt from a one-bedroom dry house. Therefore, the contribution of the school, along with the education of children, to the configuration of the socio-cultural pattern of the village is central. This is especially true against the background of the decline in the role of the traditional worldview of villagers, because in recent years, regular and year-round traditional subsistence has become the lot of a small group of villagers.

### 3.2.2. Hospital

The population size and remoteness of the settlement are the key criteria that predetermine the three main types of medical service provision in Chukotka. In small villages such as Enurmino, there is nothing but a paramedic-obstetrician [*feldshersko-akusherskii punkt*—FAP] with a paramedic at the head. Larger and more remote settlements, such as Neshkan have a small hospital headed by a therapist who diagnoses and treats minor illnesses and wounds (Kozlov et al 2012). Rare commercial flights and the poverty of villagers limit their ability to undergo medical examinations at the district and regional hospital. Therefore, the authorities are organizing medical expeditions, which include several specialized doctors, including a surgeon, pediatrician, ophthalmologist, audiologist, dentist, and others, to Neshkan and Enurmino to examine local residents. This is done to prevent diseases and provide early diagnoses. Because in Neshkan and

Enurmino, as in most remote Arctic villages, there are no hotels, the hospital for the duration of such expeditions turns into a hotel for doctors, as well as a wide-range medical center for examining villagers and identifying diseases dangerous to health and life.

Newcomers commonly occupy the position of a medical doctor at the Neshkan hospital, although there were also Indigenous medical doctors. Locals hold nursing positions such as nurse, paramedic, and midwife. This group of specialists is trained at the regional college. The hospital also provides other work for ancillary staff, such as orderlies and janitors.

A doctor or paramedic treats typical seasonal illnesses and minor ailments of the villagers. To diagnose and treat serious diseases, villagers must travel from the village to the district or district hospital. In emergency cases, medevac flights are carried out by helicopter. The rural health facility also provides disease prevention. To this end, a paramedic or nurse regularly visits chronic patients, pregnant women, and large families. The medical facility also serves the school. Sometimes a doctor or paramedic is forced to carry out medical operations using telephone consultations if bad weather prevents the evacuation of an emergency patient to a district or regional hospital. Typically, these are either work-related injuries or cut and stab wounds sustained during binge drinking.

Extraction of teeth is a frequent treatment in the village due to the lack of dentistry. One morning in my 2016 field season, I met a middle-aged married couple outside a village hospital. It turned out that the woman had had a toothache for several days, which they first tried to cure with home remedies, until the pain became so intolerable, and they had to go to the hospital. The next day, the man told me that the tooth had been safely removed in the hospital. The absence of teeth in older villagers is a characteristic phenomenon and a consequence of the lack of medical care, although the district hospital sends a dentist to every village once a year. Another common disease in Neshkan and Enurmino is what the locals call “black blood,” caused by cuts in the hands while butchering harvested marine mammals. In my 2016 field season, I saw a woman complain of sepsis caused by such a cut. She could not be treated in a Neshkan hospital, and she was forced to fly to the district hospital for surgery, where she spent almost a month waiting for the flight back home. According to the regional medical protocol, the birth of children is provided in the district hospital. For this purpose, women in labor are sometimes taken out a

month before childbirth, and they are monitored in the hospital for the entire period before and after the birth of children. Rare regular flights and frequent bad weather in this region contribute to the fact that the woman in labor sometimes spends several months in the district hospital.

This state of affairs determines another function of rural and district hospitals - social. The village hospital, in addition to treatment, also provides places for the sick or recovering villagers, since not all of them can afford themselves acceptable conditions of rehabilitation at home, such as care, nutrition, and hygiene. The district hospital is also a kind of social housing for the cured villagers who are waiting to go back to the village because they do not have money for a hotel and food. This primarily applies to pensioners and children.

The hospital in the Indigenous villages is a controversial subject among the regional authorities. The maintenance of a building with wards, examination rooms and a pharmacy, as well as medical personnel, including a therapist, a midwife, and a few nurses, is very expensive. Regional authorities today approve the strategy of a “socially-oriented budget” (United Russia, Chukotka 2021) as an indication of the history of the *sovietization* strategy of the region. While in Russia the number of hospitals has decreased several times after the collapse of the Soviet system (Cherezova 2019, 14), even the very expensive maintenance of rural hospitals in Chukotka does not stop the authorities from retaining most of them. Given the region's underdeveloped infrastructure — in two municipal districts of the Chukotka Peninsula, for many years, only one helicopter has operated commercial, cargo, and medevac flights between 10 settlements — and the challenging weather conditions in coastal Chukotka, the presence of a hospital in the village provides minimal stable medical care in the region.

### 3.2.3. Merchants

Typical of Chukotkan settlements is a grocery store that has government support to ensure the food security for the populations. Support may include low-interest loans, compensation for transportation costs, and reductions in certain taxes. Neshkan and Enurmino residents call these shops “state-owned,” although in reality they are private. Their “statehood” nickname is due to the wide range of food products and the relatively low and stable prices for those groceries that have government subsidies. There may be other stores—rather a vendor due to their small size—but they do business at their own risk. Locals called them *chastnye* (private,



in Russian). There are four stores in Neshkan and only one store in Enurmino. Three *chastnye* Neshkan shops sell clothing, footwear, and some canned and long-term storage food. Cigarettes and alcohol (primarily beer and carbonated alcoholic cocktails) are key commodities that keep stores profitable. In both villages, some individuals also sell cigarettes, clothes, shoes, and fishing and hunting gear, which they order by mail.

Small shops use every possible means to survive without subsidies. The flexible strategy of small shops is the reason why the villagers have an ambivalent opinion about them. For example, shops sell alcohol and cigarettes on credit. At the time of the paycheck, the owner of the store stands at the cashier's office building of municipal institutions and collects debts. The villagers sometimes call them robbers because they collect debts, leaving the hapless villagers with nothing to buy food. Debtors curse these shops but pay back the debts. Then they go there again to buy cigarettes and alcohol on credit. On the other hand, the flexibility of small shops is why the villagers are grateful for them. Anna, a resident of Neshkan, said that it was the flexibility of the small store that made it possible to buy all the necessary clothes and utensils for a dignified funeral of a relative.

Groceries and household goods are delivered to Neshkan and Enurmino by a vessel called *Gengruz* [General Cargo] during the *navigation* [local name for the shipping season]. Since most foods are designed for long-term storage, they are either canned or frozen. Potatoes and other root vegetables, as well as onions and garlic, are also brought by ship, but after a few months these products lose their quality. Therefore, the products of greatest demand are tea, sugar, bread, butter and vegetable oil, flour, pasta, and cereals (rice, buckwheat). Frozen chicken legs are a popular product due to their low cost and year-round availability. The most coveted everyday purchase is freshly baked bread. The federal and regional governments subsidize its production so that it is available to almost everyone. The price of a loaf of bread is around \$1.00. The so-called *svezhesti* [freshgood]—vegetables, fruits, dairy products, and eggs—are delivered to the village by helicopter or all-terrain vehicle whenever possible, but usually by federal holidays, in other words, rarely. Air delivery makes *svezhesti* expensive, and therefore the regional authorities also subsidize them. Reasonable prices and limited quantities are forcing the village authorities to ration the sale of fresh produce. There are times when a family has the right to buy only a few pieces of each type of imported fresh food. In accordance with regional law,

the state store sells licensed alcohol once a week. This regulation is intended to limit alcohol consumption in Indigenous villages, although the problem remains unresolved. The “state” store sells things, household goods, and furniture in minimal quantities, so “private” stores and residents order via the Internet, with delivery by ships once a year or by Russian post.

Subsidization of food products and the low paying capacity of the villagers contribute to the reproduction of the phenomenon of Soviet trade: trade according to "*blat*." This practice of selling limited goods to a certain group of people to obtain status or material gain is described in studies of the Soviet period (Kerttula 2000; Khakhovskaya, 2017).

The Soviet shortage of goods was due to inadequate federal production of food, clothing, and household items and artificial price controls. In the post-Soviet time, with deficits overall no longer being the case, Russian industry is experiencing a significant challenge is in the production of high-quality food (Prosekov 2018, 37). There are also political factors affecting pricing. In Russia, in 2010, a decree was adopted limiting retail prices for socially significant food products (Russian Government, 2010). In the recent few years, the import of high-quality food products has also been restricted in Russia (Federal Customs Service 2019) as part of the international policy of the Russian authorities. The Regional authority's strategy to control prices provided by regional subsidies for “socially significant food products” (Chukotka Government 2021) and the insufficient supply of food products are also contributing to the resumption of the phenomenon of *blat* (Russian term for receiving good or preferential treatment through an unofficial or corrupt connection).

The corrupt legacy of the Soviet era provides grocery workers with significant informal power. Although most of the products are sold to the public, sellers limit the villagers' access to the highest quality products or products are supplied to the village in small quantities. They sell a limited number of these products to themselves and to those who have *blat*. Access to the purchase of such food products is determined by the store manager and, to a lesser extent, ordinary sellers. The store manager can also secretly sell alcohol outside of the legal hours. This gives him tremendous power. The “state” store sells fresh meat and scarce fruits and vegetables to "the right people" (usually friends or politically influential people). Once, during field research, I went to a grocery store in the district town of Lavrentia. I asked the seller to sell the

piece of beef I liked that was in the display case, but she said that this piece was not for sale. I had to choose another piece of meat. The next in line was an employee of the district administration who bought this piece of meat. The seller and the buyer may have been friends, but that does not change the essence of selective trading of limited quantities of food.

Another factor contributing to the increased influence of trade workers is the limited circulation of cash in the countryside. Municipal offices usually send workers' wages in cash from the district town to the village on rare flights. For the same reason, the operation of the ATM is limited. The merchant terminal for processing credit and debit cards sometimes does not work due to slow Internet connection. Therefore, the villagers are forced to buy food “*pod zapis*’.” The seller records the purchase amount in a notebook and the buyer must bring the indicated amount on payday. Since such purchases are made outside the formal law, and largely depend on the personal decision of the store manager, his influence in the village is increasing significantly.

The power over the distribution of the desired groceries and merchandise makes the store manager a welcome guest in many homes. A so-called elite group of villagers gathers around this person. Most often, these are the heads of branches of municipal institutions from among the newcomers. In my 2016 field season, Nina, a newcomer municipal store manager, was the informal leader of the village. My interlocutors said that mostly only “bosses” (those higher-end administrative and managerial positions) gather at her house, and they make decisions that are important for the village without the presence of the formal head of the village administration, who at that time was a native villager.

#### 3.2.4. Utility Services

Utilities, along with municipal institutions of traditional subsistence, are places where the male of the villages of Neshkan and Enurmino is in demand. Work in the communal sector also requires qualifications, and therefore most of the jobs are available for a limited part of the villagers only. A remarkable fact is that many of the Indigenous villagers have a penchant for working as a mechanic. They work as heavy truck and tractor drivers, diesel operators, locksmiths, turners, and welders. The typical path for a villager to obtain qualifications is to serve in the army, as well as study in regional vocational technical schools. Another feature of

truck and tractor drivers is that if they serve a reindeer herding camp or a hunting *obshchina*, they take part in subsistence activities, and do not limit themselves to managing the equipment only.

The dependence of Neshkan and Enurmino residents on utilities is not high in the usual sense. This fact is not because they do not want these services. This is because Chukotka authorities can provide only a limited set of utilities in the villages due to their sparse population and remoteness. The main and critical services are electricity and heating. The rest of the services are provided as far as possible.

Personal coal stoves heat most of the houses in Neshkan and all houses in Enurmino. This implies that every household does the hard work to heat their apartment. In the fall, utilities dump 3-5 tons of coal near each house. Utility vehicles dump 3-5 tons of coal in the fall near every house. If autumn is rainy, then coal freezes and becomes a monolithic piece of stone. The inhabitants of the house spend a lot of time and energy during winter chopping off frozen coal and heating their stove.

The school, kindergarten, hospital, shop, and several two-story houses in Neshkan are heated with coal-fired central heating. In Enurmino, individual small coal-fired boilers heat similar establishments. The work in these coal-fired boilers is incredibly hard and harmful to the respiratory tract. Although villages' boiler houses use sheds for storing coal and jackhammers for hollowing out coal, the work is still very hard. Few villagers willingly take such work, only because of the limited number of cash sources. One of my Neshkan interlocutors said,

“One winter it was very cold and windy. Coal that season was delivered of poor quality, and it did not burn well. Nobody wanted to go to work in a coal boiler house, and my cousin was literally working hard. He came home from work from a coal boiler house and went to bed immediately after eating. After a few hours, he barely got up, had a snack, and went back to work. He didn't even have the strength to wash.” (Neshkan resident, June 2016)

Most of the houses in Neshkan and all houses in Enurmino are dry. There is no running water or sewerage. Since the utility company draws water from shallow lakes, water is supplied

to villagers' homes mainly at positive outside temperatures. After ice freezes on the lakes, the water carrier is forced to take water from the bottom of the lake and therefore the water is usually cloudy due to the suspension of sand and silt. But even in summer, the quality of water brought to homes is very low, because water is taken from the lakes without filters. Andrey Kaivukvun (Figure 3.6), a resident of Enurmino, complained about the poor quality of drinking water,



Figure 3.6. Andrei Kaivukvun, an elder of Enurmino. Enurmino, 2017.  
Photo by Rodion Rinetegin.

“Yes, we take water from the lake, dirty water; there are a lot of worms. Fellow villagers often poison themselves with this water. The kindergarten is sometimes

closed because children are sick with infectious diseases, because the water in the lake is bad. Although we are now filtering the water through cheesecloth, it still cannot be completely cleaned. At work, we had an unpleasant case with water. We have a 50-liter can of drinking water. Pavlik wanted to drink some water and saw something transparent moving in the water. Well at least he didn't drink the water. It turned out to be a long worm, four centimeters, probably. Here in the river, there is good water, and in the lake there is stagnant water and very bad.” (Andrey Kaivukvun, Enurmino hunter, 59 years old, July 2017)

Currently, the municipal authorities have installed seawater desalination stations in Neshkan and Enurmino. But the villagers are suspicious of the quality and taste of the desalinated water. In winter, villagers provide themselves with water by breaking off ice in the nearby lakes. This is hard work, considering that at least 200 kg of ice per week must be chopped and carried to the house on a sled while the villagers on foot. The lack of high-quality water supply services severely limits the ability of villagers to do laundry, dishwashing, and take care of other hygiene needs.

Utilities in Neshkan and Enurmino provide sanitation only for the school, hospital, and several apartment buildings. Therefore, residents of houses are forced to dump waste near their doorsteps during the winter. At the beginning of summer, after the snow melts, liquid waste drains or dries up naturally, and the remaining municipal solid waste is removed by the public service.

Because there was never running water for hygienic purposes in Neshkan and Enurmino, the hygienic needs of the villagers were satisfied in a public *bania* (Kerttula 2000, 70-71). A public *bania* with a sauna has become a common building in Chukchi villages since the early 1960s. The children from the boarding school were washed in the bathhouse; adults came there twice a week. It so happened that public baths in both villages burned down a couple of decades ago and for a long time there was no public bath in both villages. This forced some villagers to build private baths near their homes. However, the overcrowding of residential buildings due to compact housing developments limits this initiative. Finally, a couple of years ago, a municipal *bania* was built in Neshkan.

The small range of utilities makes life in Neshkan and Enurmino much more difficult. Local residents are partly resigned to this fact. For the newcomer population, this problem is an additional deterrent to work in the villages under contract.

The rest of the village groups can be divided according to economic activity and gender. The social service, the post office, the house of culture, and the library are important services in the life of the village, but the number of jobs is limited. In schools and hospitals, the majority are women, who are the backbone of the local intelligentsia, which is the most socially active part of the village. Women dominate the meetings of the villagers, setting the agenda and determining the future of the village.

### 3.2.5. Unemployed

Both settlements are home to a large group of villagers who do not have a job and lack prospects to find one. According to official statistics, this is 13.67% of the working population of the villages (Labor market 2017). In order to be included in the official lists of the unemployed, a rural resident must submit the relevant documents, so as not to get involved in bureaucratic procedures, most of the unemployed prefer not to do this. Therefore, the real unemployment rate is approximately two-to-three times higher, somewhere between 30 and 40 percent of adult villagers (Raymond-Yakoubian and Zdor 2020, 89). For this group, traditional subsistence is a means of support, as well as the meaning of life. Some villagers register as unemployed or low-income residents and receive social benefits that cover apartment rentals and a minimum set of grocery items. I will describe several of this group in the *Rodion hunting cohort* section.

Unemployed villagers are engaged in affordable traditional subsistence, such as hunting small marine mammals, fishing, and collecting plants, eggs, mushrooms, and berries. The term *affordable traditional subsistence* is defined here as an activity that does not require the purchase of expensive equipment, weapon, and transport. In other words, locals use the same equipment as their ancestors in the pre-contact era: nets, fishing rods, ice picks, and other harvesting gear for marine mammals, fish, and plants handmade from improvised material. *Obshchina*'s hunters sometimes take the unemployed with them on a hunt so that they can get their share of meat and blubber from the harvested marine mammals. The hunting *obshchina* also provide all villagers with a free share of the meat and fat of the whales and walrus brought ashore from hunting.

The meat is shared according to the rule "First come, first served." In this way, the unemployed villagers provide themselves with traditional food. However, villagers need cash to buy clothes and a minimum set of food, such as tea, sugar, bread, butter, and grain. Some unemployed people manage to have social benefits, others live with retired parents, or their wives have jobs or social benefits for their children. The children also eat at boarding school. A few of the unemployed villagers occasionally manage to find temporary, auxiliary, low-paid jobs in municipal services. However, they often lose their jobs after earning their first salary, because alcoholism is widespread in the village.

Some newcomers in highly skilled positions refer to the locals as parasites. One of my research participants claimed that, according to his personal observations, during the time that has passed since the collapse of the Soviet social and economic system (it was the time of compulsory employment), several generations of villagers have grown up who have never worked and do not want to work. This is a fairly common point of view of newcomers who cannot explain to themselves such an unusual attitude of villagers toward cash. Indeed, it would seem that all modern villagers were born in a socio-economic system where money is a universal equivalent, serving as a measure of the value of any goods and services.

Nevertheless, many Indigenous villagers, without denying the importance of money, have slightly different priorities. In organizing sociological and biological research projects in Chukotka, I hired sea hunters for various positions, including as independent researchers. The projects offered them appropriate monetary compensation to cover lost profits from missed sea hunting seasons. However, hunters, who have been fruitfully cooperating with our organization for many years, preferred to lose money and go hunting if the research season coincided with the harvesting season. In extreme cases, they agreed to research, but hunting still remained a priority for them. The obvious motivation for this behavior is that marine hunters and reindeer herders cannot imagine their life without traditional way of life and traditional food obtained by their own participation. Traditional subsistence is an activity practiced for many dozens of generations of the Chukchi peoples. This behavioral pattern, under the influence of many social and economic shifts over the course of the 20th and 21st centuries, still seems to be the dominant feature of the villagers.



There is one more motive that should be considered to understand why villagers are not always willing to go to work in educational and other municipal units, such as utility service and power plants: the work there is low skilled and low-income. In contrast, reindeer herding and sea hunting require high quality traditional knowledge and hunting skills, including navigation, mechanics, weather forecasting, sea ice, as well as ecological knowledge, ethology, and animal anatomy. A villager with such knowledge would not be highly motivated to change his status to a lower one in the social hierarchy of the village (Schweitzer 2000; Davydova 2017). That is, unemployment in the Neshkan and Enurmino, as in other Arctic Indigenous communities, is a somewhat different phenomenon than is commonly believed in modern urban society. Being an organic part of nature and living according to its rules is an imperative for many villagers of Neshkan and Enurmino.

## Chapter 4. Subsistence Groups of Neshkan and Enurmino

### 4.1. Stratification of Subsistence Groups

The modes of transportation and equipment are the key means that predetermine the type of subsistence activity in Neshkan and Enurmino. Boat, snowmobile, dog sledding, and walking make the spatial and temporal limits of the subsistence activity. Weapons, ammunition, and gear determine the types and amounts of wildlife available for prey. Together, these means of activity determine the types of subsistence activities, such as seasonal sea hunting, fishing, and gathering, and their productivity.

Using the types of transportation and equipment as a criterion, I categorized several subsistence groups typical of today's Neshkan and Enurmino. Municipal institutions, as well as individual villagers who own boats and snowmobiles subsidize hunters and reindeer herders. This limited group of villagers practices all types of traditional economic activities characteristic of the maritime Indigenous settlement described in the time of Bogoras (1904). Another small group of dog sled owners practice traditional winter economic activities typical of the maritime Indigenous settlement described in the time of Bogoras (1904). Most of the villagers do not have personal transport and were forced to confine themselves to fishing, picking greens, mushrooms, and berries near the village in the summer.

Since the traditional subsistence today is part of a mixed economy, access to funds for subsistence activity is now largely determined by the availability of finances, their sources and size. There are two main types of financing: government subsidies and villagers' personal investment. Government subsidies are designed to meet the minimum requirement for marine mammal meat for all villagers. Accordingly, for the purpose of subsidizing efficiency, the number of hunters and means of hunting is limited to the smallest possible number. Personal investments are designed to maximize the provision of marine mammal meat for the family and next of kin. As personal incomes in the village are low, the number of hunting teams that independently provide themselves with transport and weapons is limited. Thus, both types of funding limit the number of current participants in the subsistence activity. The remaining majority of the villagers are forced to shift from specialized sea hunting to fishing and gathering.

Each group has distinctive features, expressed in specific patterns of behavior, eating, and jargon. The main factor differentiating Neshkan and Enurmino subsistence participants from other villagers is that they are more committed to the traditional beliefs and knowledge of the Chukchi. This devotion is because this group of villagers spends a lot of time outside the settlement. They interact with wildlife and natural phenomena, the impact of which is beyond the jurisdiction of human society, or what is commonly referred to as *force majeure*. The members of this cohort follow the traditional knowledge and interaction patterns characteristic of the Chukchi of the time of Bogoras research. For the rest of the villagers, the village and its immediate surroundings are a safe space under the jurisdiction of human society, which symbolizes isolation from the wild.

Store-bought food has long been an integral part of the diet of sea hunters. Especially in the last couple of decades, due to the melting of sea ice, summer sea hunting has become increasingly unsuccessful and store food dominates the diet of the villagers. The diet of hunters and their families still contains a large proportion of traditional food compared to other groups of villagers. There are two main explanations for this eating pattern. Lifestyle and living conditions, namely hard work and prolonged exposure to cold and humidity, cause high calorie consumption. As our interlocutors assured, they can compensate for the huge energy expenditure only by consuming the meat and fat of marine mammals. Clearly, sea hunters are able to provide for themselves and their families all the needs for calorie consumption. For example, Evgeny Ikoop, a hunter from Enurmino, argued that every autumn he had to put 12-18 walrus meat rolls (about 1000 kilograms) into the ice pit for storage to provide himself and his relatives with food for the winter. For most villagers, getting such a share of walrus meat is simply not realistic. Research indicates that in hunting-gathering communities, hunting families have an advantage in the distribution of hunted animals compared to other families (Gurven and Hill 2009, 54). The revealed food habit observations confirm the quite evident assertion that a large proportion of traditional food in the families of sea hunter's backing the socio-cultural features of the traditional Chukchi settlement described by Bogoras. The hunters of Neshkan and Enurmino tend to follow the rituals associated with the harvest of marine mammals, which affects their beliefs and worldviews. Adherence to traditional knowledge encourages hunters and their families to observe customary law, which in turn leads to traditional patterns of social relationships. A large proportion of the marine mammal meat in the diet of the villagers builds

temporal and spatial fluctuations in social life, indicated by the methods, frequency, and place of eating, as well as the quantity and variety of the meat itself.



Figure 4.1. Valentin Ilyashenko, IWC Commissioner (left), Gennady Inankeuyas (center), Eduard Zdor (left) during ChAZTO Workshop. Lorino, July 2004. Photo provided by ChAZTO.

Another distinguishing marker of the Neshkan and Enurmino's subsistence participants is the steady use of the Chukchi language in the hunting activity. It should be noted that the language pattern is rather a combination of the Russian and Chukchi languages. Hunters over the age of 40 claimed to speak their native language regularly. After clarification, it turned out that they did not mean communication with each other, but mainly with the elders, for whom Russian is not the language of communication. In interaction with each other in the Chukchi language, they use short phrases of greeting, discussing the state of the weather, the sea, sea ice and other topics mainly related to hunting. These and other features indicate that the Chukchi language remains important for subsistence participants because hunting still depends on traditional knowledge. In this case, traditional knowledge acts as the rule for interaction with wildlife and natural phenomena, the skills of making and using transportation and equipment, and finally

rituals on which, according to the subsistence of the participants, life and success in hunting depend. Gennady Inankeuyas (Figure 4.1), a marine hunter from Lorino, told me that when hunting, the Chukchi names of equipment, parts of the boat, ice, and animals, as well as the team, are more convenient even for young team members who do not speak their native language. Our young interlocutors, hunters from Neshkan and Enurmino, confidently intertwined the Chukchi names of the current hunting equipment and sea animals in their life stories. At the same time, they found it difficult to name in their native language objects that are rarely used today in their subsistence activity, such as dog teams and fur clothes. Summing up a brief description of the language environment in the hunting community, I am inclined to believe that the current language pattern indicates the transformation of the Chukchi language into a kind of professional jargon.

#### 4.1.1. Subsidized Subsistence Enterprises

Sea hunting and reindeer herding are the core of the subsistence activities of the Neshkan and Enurmino communities, providing a significant part of their food and employment. During the Soviet era, these two types of activity became the subject of industrialization. The local *sovkhos* was a typical soviet state farm, which included reindeer herding, marine hunting, fox, cow, and pig farms as well as several auxiliary services. Reindeer herders had 16,000 reindeer (Antonov et al 2018, 61) grazed in eight reindeer herding *brigades* (camps) by about 150 herders. There were six marine hunting crews of about 60 hunters, who hunted marine mammals in the summer and trapped polar fox in the winter. There were two fox farms in Neshkan and Enurmino, employing about 30 workers. About a dozen cows and pigs produced enough milk and meat to provide for the needs of two villages. Zootechnician and Veterinarian department, the mechanical department, the seamstress shops and several other smaller divisions provided any services needed by the village. The electrical plant, village boiler house and even daycare were managed by the *sovkhos*. Almost the entire adult population of both villages worked in the *sovkhos*.

With the collapse of the Soviet system, the economy of the Neshkan and Enurmino villages was thrown back almost to pre-Soviet times, and the inhabitants survived mainly thanks to subsistence activities. In the context of the growth of the Russian economy in the 2000s and

2010s, the regional authorities built a mixture of socialist and capitalist systems in the Chukchi traditional economy, somewhat reminiscent of the so-called “mixed economy” (Wolfe and Walker 1987; Caufield 1993; Wenzel 2013, 2020). In this bizarre symbiosis of an industrial and yet kin-neighbourly hunting community, a market orientation and a renewed tradition of Chukchi food sharing, traditional Chukchi social organization and socialist “vertical of control”, Chukchi and global worldviews, Russian and Chukchi languages are mixed. Still, this phenomenon indirectly confirms Sahlins' (1999, vi) claim that the adaptation of technological innovations to a traditional way of life is common to all Indigenous peoples of the circumpolar region. The Chukchi and Siberian Yupik still recognize themselves as separate peoples, despite the uniformity of their lifestyle, nutrition, and the dominance of the Russian language, and reindeer herders and marine hunters regenerate their activities even though some of the traditional approaches are rejected (Davydova 2019c), some are gradually changing (Klokov 2018), and some are simplified (Zdor et al, 2010).

Today, three reindeer brigades (camps) are subdivisions of the municipal reindeer breeding enterprise *Zapolyarye*, which absorbed all the remaining reindeer camps in the Chukotsky district. Sea hunting units in Neshkan and Enurmino are branches of the *Daurkin* hunting *obshchina*. *Daurkin* became a kind of district corporation that subordinated all the former sovkhoses' sea hunting brigades on the Arctic coast of the Daurkin Peninsula, namely Neshkan, Enurmino, Inchoun, and Uelen. Another small marine hunting branch of *Daurkin*, after several decades of absence, was restored in Lavrentia, where the central office of the hunting *obshchina* is located.

*Zapolyarye* and *Daurkin* have regional subsidies that provide full-time work for hunters, reindeer herders, auxiliary units, and office workers. Regional support also covers the purchase of vehicles and boats, weapons, fuel, and ammunition. There are 10 boat crews in which 40 hunters provide marine mammal food for about 1000 residents of Neshkan and Enurmino. There are about 30 reindeer herders, including several women, grazing 7,000 reindeer (Antonov et al 2018, 61) in the three Neshkan reindeer brigades.

*Reindeer Herding Camp (Chavchyvan Nymnym)*

Reindeer husbandry in Neshkan reindeer camps is a hereditary occupation. Eight reindeer herding camps in the end of 1980s had about 70 people who lived in 16 *yarangas* and grazed about 8,000 reindeer. The continued decline in the number of reindeer in the Neshkan tundra in the 1990s forced reindeer herders to merge the remains of their herds. In this way, the former eight camps turned into three camps. Although the reindeer herders preferred to unite the camps on the kinship basis, its family basis was damaged anyway. Since there were fewer reindeer left in the united camps, some of the reindeer herders were forced to move to Neshkan and Enurmino. Irina Nutetgiev, about 50 years old, the former mistress of a yaranga in a reindeer herding camp near Neshkan, said that their camp brought together relatives from three former brigades led by Ettul, Vakatto and Tynarele. In these camps, about 50 reindeer herders and their wives grazed from 4,000 to 5,000 reindeer. Today there are only about 2,000 reindeer in this united reindeer herding camp, where five reindeer herders and four housewives live in three *yarangas* (housewife a title used in reference to an adult woman living and working in a reindeer camp).

The life of a reindeer herding camp is governed by the life cycles of the reindeer herd. Viktor, a veterinarian from Neshkan, said that they spend the whole year preparing for the annual reindeer herding cycles. Because of that the corral is perhaps the main production facility in the reindeer herding camp. Reindeer herders cultivate the herd in the corral. The facility ensures that every deer passed through its gates is counted, the herd is divided into several parts depending on need, and zootechnical and veterinary measures are taken. In late March and early April, reindeer herders divide the reindeer herd into the female part (*reqvut*) and bulls (*pechvak*). This is a key event in the reindeer-herding breeding season. It is very vital that pregnant female deer graze on the best pastures, and newborn calves manage to survive in their first spring in the valleys sheltered from blizzards. In September, the surviving calves are counted in the corral, veterinary medical and preventive measures are carried out, and the reindeer are separated into a *tovarnoe* herd for slaughter. Finally, in November, the *tovarnoe* herd is slaughtered in the corral. In this way, the corral ensures the construction of an optimal sex and age structure of the reindeer herd and its well-being.

In a Chukchi reindeer camp, the family is the cornerstone and traditional knowledge is the basic information for survival. The presence of all generations—elders, mature and young

reindeer herders, as well as housewives and children—contribute to the right balance of the community. During the Soviet era, geobotanists, livestock specialists, and veterinarians replaced the elders, and the children were taken outside the Neshkan camps, pulling the women out because of this. The severed traditional ties undermined the reindeer herding camp, which is still in crisis today. The elders hold the last vestige of the traditional reindeer herding camp. They help the camp leader to find optimal routes to ensure the well-being of the herd and avoid several dire scenarios. In winter, it is necessary to be able to predict icy conditions and take measures to move the reindeer herd as far as possible from the places of temperature and humidity fluctuations. In the spring, elders are responsible for identifying areas where there will be rich pastures and fewer snowstorms for the brood herd with newborn calves. In summer, it is necessary to find pastures, along with shrubs and bodies of water, with a lot of wind or glaciers to limit the impact of insects on the herd. Overall, deer should always be fed, watered, and protected from natural hazards such as predators, insects, and infectious diseases. These activities are backed by the experience and knowledge of many generations of reindeer herders, which are set out in the seasonal activities and rituals that supported them. The life of the reindeer herding camp is subordinate to this activity, and the key responsibility lies with the elderly.

There are few women left in the reindeer camps today. They are the core of the reindeer herding camp because they are responsible for maintaining the yaranga - the only living quarters and workshop in the reindeer herding camp. The winter yaranga coverings and the year-round inner bedroom coverings are made from reindeer skins. Like fur garments, these skins are vulnerable to moisture changes. To prevent the yaranga from turning into dust and rot, a woman must work hard doing regular and thorough cleaning, drying, repairing, and renewing. Since the sewing of yaranga covers and traditional fur garments is very labor intensive, the hostess is barely able to maintain the yaranga and sew and repair fur garments only for her husband. As a rule, a modern housewife is over 50 years old, because younger women no longer have the opportunity to learn the traditional Chukchi sewing skills.





Figure 4.2. Vasily Roskhinaut. Neshkan, June 2016.  
Photo by Eduard Zdor.

The scarcity of women has created another problem with a direct impact on deer grazing. Reindeer breeders must repair fur clothes and shoes on their own and renew them from time to

time. For these reasons, most of the young reindeer herders wear factory clothing and footwear. In the winter of 2019, I spoke with Sergei, a young resident of Neshkan. He and five more of his peers were invited to work in the neighboring village of Amguema in reindeer herding camps. Sergei had fur clothes that his grandmother had made for him. She also explained to him the rules of caring for fur clothes. The rest of his peers are forced to wear factory clothes and shoes. This greatly limits their participation in reindeer grazing in the winter, as there is a high risk to life. In winter, there are lingering snowstorms and blizzards in the Neshkan tundra. Visibility is difficult and the herders are forced to spend several days near the reindeer herd until the weather improves and then they can return to the yaranga. If there is no tent, reindeer breeders have to spend the night in the snow. Fur clothing provides the reindeer herder with relative autonomy and avoids frostbite.

Vasily Roskhinaut (Figure 4.2), an elder from Neshkan, told how he once got into a severe blizzard when he was returning from a reindeer herding camp to a village.

“I was riding a dog sled for a small snowstorm, which turned into a severe blizzard. The visibility was very poor, and I decided to wait it out. I stopped the dogs, put the sled on its side to protect me from the wind and lay down on the *epik'uvyt*, a deerskin bedding on the sled. The dogs lay down around me. Some time ago it was covered with snow and without the wind it became even warm. I moved periodically to make something like a den. The next morning the blizzard subsided, and we reached the village” (Vasily Roskhinaut, 62 years old, Neshkan resident, June 2016).

Today, young reindeer herders are literally tied to the yaranga because of their factory-made clothes, which do not ensure survival in the windy and frosty tundra. Therefore, when the herd is far from the camp, reindeer herders simply cannot graze the reindeer. The lack of reindeer herders in the herd leads to the loss of reindeer and a decrease in the reindeer population. An unguarded herd disperses in search of food or running away from wolves. The traditional reindeer herding camp is a single whole, where each member of each generation is an important link, the absence of which leads to the failure of the entire camp. The harsh living conditions in the tundra and the compulsory education of children at school determine the movement of

women and children from the reindeer herding camp to the village. The separation of parents and children negatively affects not only the family, but also the reindeer herding camp. My interlocutors said that a reindeer herding camp is “alive” only when all generations, from children to elders, live together. Each generation is an integral part of the cycle of making, preserving, and transmitting traditional knowledge and beliefs that contribute to the strength of the Chukchi reindeer herding camp.

So, what is the modern subsidized reindeer herding camp Neshkan? It has been greatly transformed on the shock path from Bogoras-era arctic pastoralism to a Soviet industrial enterprise and then a strange post-Soviet return to subsistence grazing. Until now, these camps have survived only thanks to regional subsidies and are able to provide only themselves with reindeer meat. In exchange for subsidies, modern reindeer herders are under pressure from “socialist” plans to increase the number of reindeer, the amount of meat and skins to be sold on the market. Most likely, it was the restored Soviet methods of reindeer herding that led to the fact that the Neshkan reindeer herding camps are no longer suppliers of traditional food. The only visible result of the subsidies is that the reindeer camps have become a kind of museum and generator of the Chukchi identity, traditional way of life, and the Chukchi worldview described by Bogoras over a hundred years ago.

### *Hunting Obshchinas (A'ttwa'tyirin)*

A notable sign indicating the muted rank of sea hunting in the hierarchy of the Soviet settlements of Neshkan and Enurmino was that sea hunters did not have their own working quarters in the villages. Their morning scheduling meetings took place in the *sovkhos* garage in Neshkan or the manager's office in Enurmino. After the meeting, the hunters went ashore to prepare boats for the hunt. Hunters harvested walrus in teams in summer and autumn, and individually caught seals in winter and spring. During winter, hunters also were engaged in trapping. If the weather conditions made it impossible to hunt, then the hunters were sent to the *sovkhos lednik* (ice pit) or *zheercekh* (blubber shop) to process the meat and blubber of marine mammals for the fox farms. Hunters processed the skins of seals for clothing, belts, and other needs of the *sovkhos*, mainly to reindeer herding camps. Hunters were often used as backing staff to support the reindeer herding camps, which were the core of the *sovkhoses* operations.

Hunters were often used as loaders to support the reindeer herding camps, which were the core of the *sovkhos*'s operations. Neshkan and Enurmino had six wooden whaleboats, a couple of small support boats, and about 50 hunters. The average annual harvest of marine mammals ranged from 150 to 200 walruses and from 600 to 1000 seals, depending on sea ice conditions and animal migration. Overall, despite the seemingly high demand for the meat of marine mammals for the fox farm, reindeer camps, and the nutrition of the villagers, sea hunters had the status of an auxiliary unit in the production process of the *sovkhos*.

The 1990s changed the social status of marine hunters. With almost no grocery in the local stores, sea hunting became the main food source in Neshkan and Enurmino, and sea hunters became respectable members of local communities. For the same reason many villagers were forced to hunt, although most could not afford it due to poverty. For sea hunting, transport, gasoline, and weapons are needed, the acquisition of which was, and is now, not affordable for most of the villagers. This caused to the resumption of dog sledding and traditional hunting methods such as spear hunting for walruses and harvesting seals with nets. Sled dogs have provided the villagers with mobility for hunting and fishing, as well as the distribution of prey between villagers and settlements. Although it would be possible to hunt seals and fish near the village, competition for harvesting places forced the villagers to use the available transport. This circumstance greatly increases the meaning of transportation, among which the most affordable was the traditional dog sled. In turn, the dog sled caused the traditional distribution of harvesting products. Neshkan, Enurmino, and reindeer camp residents could visit each other and even go to the neighboring districts. Konstantin, my interlocutor in Enurmino, said that he had to ride a dog sled 200 kilometers to Nutepelmen, located in a neighboring district, to buy tea, sugar, flour and butter at that local store. Another interlocutor from Enurmino, Andrei Kaivukvun, said that dog breeding in the 1990s was so popular that he even had 26 dogs to provide for the needs of his family (Figure 4.3). This is about twice the number of dogs in the average team of Neshkan and Enurmino.

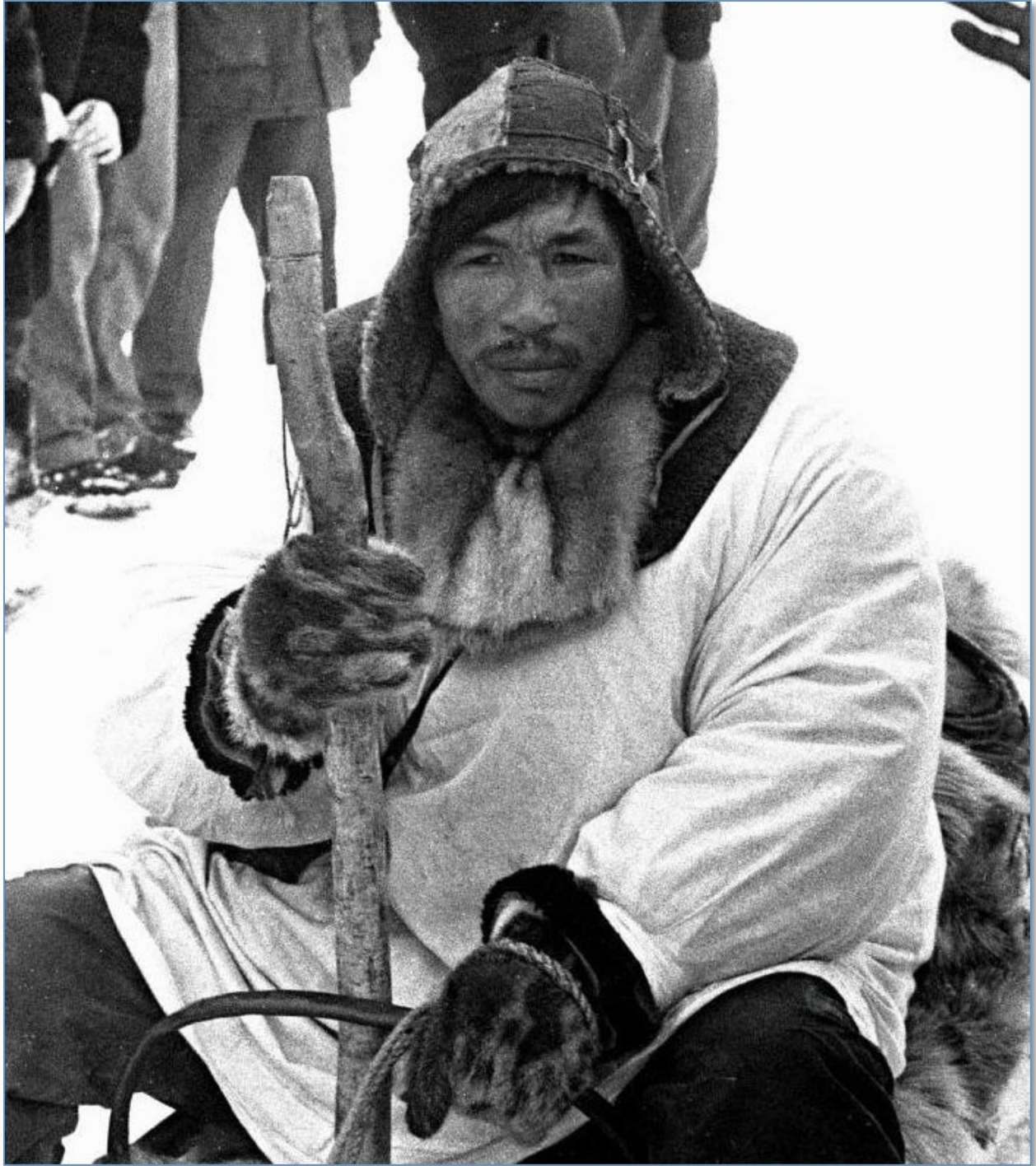


Figure 4.3. Andrei Kaivukvun and his dog sled. Lavrentia, early 1990s.  
Photo provided by Mark Ghuravsky.

“I had 26 dogs then I could completely change the sled if necessary. If I came home from Neshkan before dark, I could change dogs and then go fishing or

hunting. If I went on a sled somewhere [to a reindeer herding camp or to Neshkan], and my nieces took other dogs for a sled ride” (Andrei Kaivukvun, Enurmino hunter, 59 years old, July 2017).

By the 2010s, villagers' incomes had risen, and while the provision of food, gasoline, and ammunition had improved, the demand for dog sleds had declined. Certainly, low-income villagers in Neshkan and Enurmino continue their traditional hunting methods. Basically, these are villagers who hunt individually outside of subsidized hunting *obshchinas*. They catch seals with nets, go on a lance hunt for walruses at the coastal rookery, and occasionally they join the *obshchina*'s hunters. There are a very small group of villagers who can afford to buy a boat, a motor, and gasoline on their own to hunt. For the majority of Neshkan and Enurmino villagers, the only available way to get transport and weapons for sea hunting is the hunting *obshchina*, subsidized by the regional authorities. The regional authorities chose the option to support the hunting *obshchina* because of the Russian legislation. According to federal law (AO Kodeks 2000), the Indigenous *obshchina* carries out non-commercial traditional subsistence to protect their original habitat, preserve and develop traditional lifestyles, economic activities, crafts and culture. The federal government grants Indigenous *obshchina* the exclusive non-commercial use of traditional wildlife. The regional authorities intended to subsidize the *obshchinas*, hoping that they would provide the settlements with traditional food and generate a traditional way of life. In fact, the regional authorities resumed the Soviet model of the sea hunter economy. As in Soviet times, hunters are full-time paid employees. Regional subsidies also cover the purchase of boats, motors, gasoline, ammunition and even work clothing and footwear. Today the Neshkan hunting *obshchina* has four 6-meter boats, one 9-meter wooden whaleboat, and about 20 hunters. The Enurmino hunting *obshchina* has four 6-meter boats and approximately 20 hunters. Each branch has a building complex that includes an office, a recreation room, a workshop, fuel storage, and a pier. Every *obshchina* harvests from one to four gray whales, 100 to 150 walruses, 50 to 100 bearded seal and about 200 ringed seals annually.

My first meeting with the Neshkan hunting *obshchina* took place in the summer of 2014. We discussed the routine hunting complications that recur from year to year: lack of fuel, ammunition, and delays in the issuance of hunting permits for walruses and whales. Klava



Ettyrintyna (see Figure 4.4), a middle-aged woman, the leader of the *obshchina*, spoke more often than other participants. It was evident that the hunters trusted her.



Figure 4.4. Klava Ettyrintyna. Egvekinot, 2020.  
Photo provided by Eduard Zdor.

It was still unexpected to see a woman head of the hunting *obshchina*. I have known her for a long time. In the 1990s, she worked as a packer in a grocery store. Although the massive departure of newcomers from the village opened up many job positions for the Indigenous

villagers, it was still a significant upgrade for a community member in the village's social hierarchy. It turned out that many residents of the village respect Klava for her perseverance and responsibility. Her ability to lead the *obshchina* was also reflected in the fact that she was able to break the strong Soviet tradition of compulsory days off. Under her guidance, the hunters no longer made a difference between weekdays and weekends. I was told that now, with good weather and sea ice conditions, hunters go out to sea to hunt, regardless of the time of day or day of the week. An eight-hour workday and two days off, backed up by weekly, government-sanctioned booze, finally ceased to matter to the hunting *obshchina*. This legacy of the Soviet era is completely unacceptable for a hunting-gathering community in which several weeks of tough hunting during animal migration and plant growth provide a long period of life for the village. Of course, the “hungry” 1990s also changed the attitude of hunters to their duties, nevertheless Klava's contribution was impressive. At the meeting, I saw that the hunters are happy to be a part of the hunting *obshchina*. The position of a member of the hunting *obshchina* is desirable for many villagers because it provides traditional food, but also cash. Moreover, in the village there is even competition for a place in the hunting *obshchina*. This also applies to the position of the chairman of the hunting *obshchina*. I returned to Neshkan for my fieldwork two years later. It turned out that Klava was forced to resign, because those villagers who preferred a different person as the chairman wrote anonymous complaints about her. Victor, who replaced her, told me that she asked him to accept this position because she could no longer withstand the pressure. It is difficult to say unequivocally what was the reason for the pressure on her; perhaps because some villagers did not like the fact that the hunters were run by a woman. It may also be because the position of the chairman provides significant power: to hire villagers, manage subsidies, and distribute caught marine mammals.

I spent the first half of the short Arctic summer of 2016 in Neshkan, perhaps at the best time of the year for the villagers. After a long winter, fed by supplies of autumn hunting and canned store food, they can finally fish for Arctic char and salmon, hunt seals and walrus among the ice, hunt ducks, and gather fresh greens. I often went to the hunters in their facility or met them at sea while hunting. We talked a lot about their daily concerns, and some of the hunters agreed to give me an interview. For an outside observer, the members of the hunting *obshchina* are all hereditary hunters. However, there is now slightly more variety in the social sources of hunting crews than there was in the era of Bogoras exploration. The largest group of



hunters represents the descendants of those who have traditionally been a member of the hunting team, going through two generations of sovietization of Neshkan and Enurmino. The second largest group of team members is former reindeer herders who moved to the village due to the reduction of reindeer herding camps. Finally, the community's team of hunters also includes some representatives of other social groups in the village that formed in the 1970s and 1980s. These are former machine operators, veterinarians, or employees of municipal institutions.

There are some conflicts in the mixing and adaptation of the tundra and coastal inhabitants to each other. Some of my interlocutors, describing personal experiences, explained that it is rather difficult for a reindeer herder to become a sea hunter, and vice versa. But my observations revealed a long mutual stay of these groups in Neshkan and Enurmino. At least three of my interlocutors worked in a reindeer herding camp for about 10 years, although only one of them stayed there longer until he died. Currently, there are many former reindeer herders in the Neshkan sea hunting *obshchina*. A likely explanation for this phenomenon lies in the original mixed tundra-coastal status of the settlements that were the source of the Neshkan. The Enurmino hunting *obshchina* is more resilient, I would say. Andrian Omrukvun, hunter from Enurmino, mentioned that in Soviet times they clearly distinguished themselves as hunters from representatives of a non-hunting group. An explanation of this resilience also lies in the history of the enlargement of Enurmino, the source of which was only the coastal settlements around.

The influence of sea hunters, who make up no more than 15 percent of the village's population, is likely great because they produce at least 50 percent of the food consumed by the settlement. This group is also the main venue for regular survival rituals and the use of the Chukchi language. This fits into the conclusion that the functional component of culture ensures the reproduction of the spiritual component of culture. Still, a side effect of the regional subsidy policy is that sea hunting in Neshkan and Enurmino, after the collapse of the Soviet regime, did not return to the mainstream of the Arctic traditional way of life, but became the privilege of hired workers hunting in a subsidized *obshchina*.

#### *Formal and informal hierarchy in the hunting obshchina*

The formal structure of the Neshkan and Enurmino hunting *obshchinas* is quite simple: the chair, a secretary, and the hunters. There is no accountant or other office staff. This is due to the fact

that both *obshchina* are branches of the *Daurkin* hunting *obshchina*, which is present in five of the six villages of the Chukotsky district. The head office, located in Lavrentia, makes financial statements, tax payments, and contracts with the regional government to receive subsidies. I interviewed hunters of different ages about who makes the decision to go to sea to hunt and when. The simplest and most common answer was that the leader of the community makes decisions. None of them mentioned the captain of the boat as a responsible person. I found an explanation for this phenomenon in my conversations with senior hunters. Elders often lamented that boat crews are currently small. In the 1990s the typical crew was from seven to nine people, there are now only from two to four crew members in the boat and mostly they are only inexperienced or young hunters. The elders complained that in such crews there is no one to learn from the traditional knowledge of sea hunters. This also means that the leader of the *obshchina* cannot always rely on the captains of such boats. The *obshchina* leader therefore relies on assistants and advisers from among experienced hunters to help him make decisions when and where to go hunting. For example, Victor, the leader of the Neshkan *obshchina*, had his informal deputy, Maxim Enmytagin, a middle-aged hunter who was born in the village of Enurmino, which has a strong tradition of sea hunting. The Maxim family is one of the few in Neshkan that is heavily dependent on sea hunting, not only for food, but also for cultural needs. Zina (see Figure 4.5), Maxim's Enmytagin wife, complained that.

“The villagers are laughing at us [our family] because we live by the traditions of our ancestors. We preserve our heritage; we speak Chukchi, our children dress like our parents. Therefore, other children laugh at them, tease them” (Zina Enmytagina, Neshkan resident, 42 years old, July 2016).



Figure 4.5. Zina Enmytagina (far left) speaks at a memorial service for Fyodor Notagirgin, their father. Grave on the Neshkan Hill, July 2016. Photo provided by Uliana Notagirgina.

In turn, Maxim, her husband, pointed out that he highly appreciated the experience and wisdom of Sergei, one of the oldest hunters in their *obshchina*.

“Despite the fact that Sergei is from the family of reindeer herders, and he spent his childhood in the tundra, and then engaged in veterinary practice in reindeer herds, he is a very experienced person. Sergei knows quite a lot about sea hunting. I always consult with him, and we make decisions together” (Maxim Enmytagin, 44 years old, Neshkan hunter, July 2016).



Figure 4.6. Konstantin Veketchevun, Enurmino hunter. Lavrentia, 2010s.  
Photo provided by Eduard Ankaun.

In the Enurmino hunting *obshchina*, Alexander Tymkroltyrgin, the middle-aged leader, relied on two hunters over 50 years old, Andrian Omrukvun and Konstantin Veketchevun

(Figure 4.6). In addition, there was also a team of elders who used a decommissioned boat and motor. Perhaps because of problems with the old broken motor, they mostly stayed on the shore and processed the skins of marine mammals. Elders explained to me that they go hunting in the sea from time to time, when young hunters need help. They see their main duty in helping the leader of the *obshchina* to determine the time and places of hunting, as well as the processing of skins and belts of bearded seals and walrus.

I also asked hunters about who assigns roles between team members. Most of my interlocutors said that no one appoints positions. Each team member tries himself in each position until he finds the optimal place for himself and the team, either a mechanic, or a harpooner, or a helmsman, or a shooter. Over time, an informal hierarchy is naturally established, in which everyone is assigned their place in accordance with the skills, knowledge, and contribution to the success of the team.

The subsidized hunting *obshchina* in Neshkan and Enurmino meets the needs of villages for traditional food and helps to preserve the maritime Chukchi culture. In the meantime, the subsidized *obshchina* also unwittingly contributed to the differentiation of villagers. Today, the villagers are divided into those who work in the hunting *obshchina*, those who hunt on their own on their boats, and those who try to take part in individual hunting with traditional hunting tools or joining the first two groups. The first group of hunters works in hunting *obshchina* that are inherently equivalent to the former Soviet *sovkhos*. The *obshchina* provides transportation, gasoline, and wages. In the second small group, villagers who have high-paying jobs or their family members have such jobs; the income from this work provides them with hunting equipment and transport. The small size of this group predetermines their insignificant contribution to providing the village with traditional food. The third largest group is either unemployed or low-paid workers in municipal enterprises.

#### 4.1.2. The Hunting Cohort of Rodion

“With the whale, the meat, as has been mentioned, belongs to the whole village, generally to whoever wants to take part in the carving. ... Of walrus, the hunter takes the hide, the head, and the backbone, with all the fat of the back. All other meat and fat are divided among all those present. The choicest morsels are given to the older men. ... A successful hunter, oncoming

ashore, is met by widows and orphans, to whom he throws down some morsels of the meat he has brought. Then perhaps he will even send a piece or two to those of his near neighbors who for some reason were absent from the shore.” (Bogoras 1909, 632-634)

Rodion Rinetegin could be called a typical villager of Neshkan and even Chukotka. There are different views that build a collective image of the modern Chukchi villager. Rodion is the backbone of a small kinship hunting team that has hunted seals, walruses, and whales for over two decades. Many villagers would like to hunt with him, as he is a successful hunter, and his family is able to provide his hunting team with the necessary transport and equipment. For newcomers, Rodion (Figure 4.7) is definitely a typical Chukchi. Like many locals, he prefers subsistence activity to a full-time job, the Chukchi language is present in his everyday vocabulary, and the traditional cuisine of a maritime Chukchi described by Bogoras (1904, 193) is an essential part of his daily diet. From the point of view of the heirs of the coastal Chukchi, he is a stranger to the coast because of his reindeer herding roots. But for reindeer herders, Rodion is also an outsider, because despite his origins, he has lived almost his entire life in a coastal village. To urbanized villagers, he is a successful sea hunter, able to feed his family, relatives, and neighbors, but also a skilled worker, able to work in construction and mechanical workshops. Based on my observations in the villages of Chukotka and Alaska, I would even argue that in Rodion’s behavior and his way of thinking, there are features of a modern Indigenous villager of the Bering Strait region, whether the Chukchi, Siberian Yupik, or Inuit. I will discuss the socio-cultural features causing this phenomenon in a special chapter.

Rodion was born in Neshkan in 1972, into a mixed tundra and maritime Chukchi family. Yuri Rinetegin, his father, was from a reindeer herding camp that roamed between the *Kolyuchinskaya* Guba and the *Amguema* River. Lydia Rinetegin, his mother, was from the Enurmino family of marine hunters. In the early 1970s, mothers were already giving birth at the local hospital in Neshkan. Although only a decade before that, even those families who lived in the village were born in *yarangas* or in newly built dry cabins. Lydia, Rodion's mother, was taken from the reindeer herding camp to the village to ensure safe childbirth and motherhood. While Yuri, Rodion's father, lived in a reindeer herding camp and used every rare opportunity to come to the village to visit his family. This circumstance contributed to a typical phenomenon of



alienated Chukchi families in the 1960s and 1980s—parents lived in the reindeer herding camp and children lived in a boarding school (Abryutina 2007, 335; Zadorin 2008, 127).



Figure 4.7. Eduard Zdor and Rodion Rinetegin (right). Lavrentia, 2013.  
Photo by Eduard Zdor.

Rodion, his brother and sister grew up attending kindergarten, then boarding school, and their mother was able to take care of them only on weekends. Occasionally, during the summer holidays, the children spent time in a reindeer herding camp, immersing themselves in the Chukchi language environment and reindeer herding worldview. Rodion more often spent the summer in the village at the *Detskaia ploshchadka*, a school camp, based on the boarding school. Under these circumstances, parents were significantly constrained from passing on the ancestral

worldview to their children. After graduating from high school, Rodion went to community college and specialized as a builder and plasterer.

Rodion married Elena, a girl from the family of a marine hunter, in the early 1990s (Figure 4.8). The economic crisis forced Rodion, like his fellow villagers, to combine work and the traditional subsistence of the maritime Chukchi. Netepkir, the father-in-law, and his son Pyotr gradually made Rodion a member of their hunting and fishing expeditions. Finally, the day came when Rodion realized that the life of a sea hunter was his destiny. Here is his story.



Figure 4.8. Yuri Rinetegin (left), Elena Netepkir, and Rodion Rinetegin (right). Anadyr, 2007. Photo provided by Eduard Zdor.

“I was young, we had only been married for a couple of years, and I, like most of my peers, preferred to spend time with friends in the village. You know how it



goes, work, then hanging out with friends, partying, dancing. Therefore, at first, I was reluctant to take part in the hunt for walruses. Going fishing, hunting geese was like entertainment, but walrus hunting seemed completely uninteresting to me. But I could not refuse my father-in-law and went hunting with him every time he invited me.

One early morning we went hunting. It was sunny and calm, the sea surface looked like a mirror. At some point, we found a group of walruses on a small ice floe. We began to approach them at a short distance. Probably because the group of walruses was small, they were careful, and our approach scared the walruses. Four walruses simultaneously jumped from the ice in different directions into the sea. It was like a flower that blossomed in an instant. I fell into the hunt. From that day on, I myself always asked my father-in-law to take me hunting and willingly learned hunting skills from him. Netepkir was an experienced hunter and a good teacher. I went a long distance to obtain hunting knowledge. Together with him, I tried to determine the weather, the state of the sea and ice. He told me about what walruses are, when they come, and their behavior in different situations, how and where to look for them.

After the death of my father-in-law, my mother-in-law gave me a dog sled, a snowmobile, a boat with a motor and all my father-in-law's hunting equipment. She told me, "When I see you feeding the dogs or working in the garage, my heart is peaceful. It seems to me that my husband is still alive and just busy, preparing for a hunt or doing household chores. " I was ready to follow my father-in-law's maritime traditional way of life" (Rodion Rinetegin, Neshkan hunter, 44 years old, July 2016)

The tragic death of Netepkir on a winter fishing expedition unexpectedly ended Rodion's maritime training. According to Rodion, Netepkir, his father-in-law taught him the strategy and technique of the Chukchi marine hunting, while he learned traditional beliefs and rituals from his other hunting partner and brother-in-law, Konstantin Etyne. Konstantin (Figure 4.9) grew up in a family where they did not speak Russian and life was close to the traditional way of life,

slightly changed by the state farm system. Imelev, his father, was a sea hunter and trapper, and his mother ETTYNE-YLIO, who was born and raised in a reindeer herding camp, sewed fur clothes in a local sewing workshop.

Konstantin, like most of his peers, spent the summer school holidays at a reindeer herding camp, and after compulsory military service, he worked for a while in a reindeer herding camp. Afterwards he was forced to return to the village to help his old parents. His life became almost urban, except that he used a dog sled for winter fishing and seal hunting. ETTYNE-YLIO was an outstanding dog breeder and provided Konstantin with an excellent dog team. Dog sledding, while increasing the mobility of the Chukchi family and thus its subsistence productivity, also raises the need to get more meat. Imelev spoke about the needs for walrus meat for their household.

“Three to five walrus meat rolls, from 50 to 70 kilos each, are enough to delight the three of us with delicious fresh and fermented meat all winter long. We just need to add some seal and reindeer meat and fish to this staple of our diet. But for the dogs, we need to get a couple more walruses. This is a difficult task if you do not work in the state farm hunting team, because almost no one in the village has their own boat and weapons. Therefore, we travel a lot along the coast in the fall after each storm in the hope of finding walrus or whale carcasses washed ashore. If we don't find a walrus carcass, then we need to hunt seals and fish in winter a lot, and in any weather” (*Imelev*, Neshkan hunter, 65 years old, 1993).

According to Rodion, the family provided Konstantin with solid traditional knowledge and his worldview did not seem to have been undermined by the boarding school. Therefore, Rodion and Konstantin turned out to be not only hunting partners, but also mentors for each other. Rodion taught Konstantin the basics of modern Chukchi navigation, and Konstantin told Rodion the traditions and rituals of the Chukchi. Together they personified the modern Chukchi villagers, inheriting the traditional lifestyle of their parents and at the same time those who acquired the skills of sea hunting in adulthood. Rodion and Konstantin were able to acquire the knowledge and skills of the Chukchi maritime culture to survive. When remembering his hunting trips with Konstantin, Rodion described the following:



Figure 4.9. Konstantin Etyne (right). Neshkan, 1993.  
Photo provided by Eduard Zdor.

“I’ll just tell you such a combined, funny and difficult story. It was in August. In previous years, in August, we also had ice. We found an ice floe with five walruses not so far from Neshkan, beyond the *Idlidlia* Island. Probably the

distance was the reason for this story about which I now remember with a smile. But at that time, it was not funny to me at all.

I have a small boat, and we first decided to harvest only a couple of walruses, because they were young and small. I chose the walrus most suitable for shooting. It was necessary that the animal is not on the edge of the ice floe, so that it would not be pushed into the water by fleeing walruses. It is impossible for two to pull the walrus onto the ice or ashore. Then Konstantin suggested killing three or four walruses. His arguments were that the weather is beautiful, the ice floe with walruses was close to the village and not far from the shore, and most importantly that Konstantin needed to prepare traditional food for two families and their dog teams for the entire winter.

I thought and told him, “I think we have the strength to land two walruses for your families and one walrus for my family. If you want more walruses, you will do it yourself.” Konstantin agreed with my argument, and we shot all five walruses resting on the ice floe. I was angry with Konstantin. You know, no one should sit back on the sea, if your boat crew works. We butchered walruses all night. Then we made three trips, delivering the cut meat from the ice floe to the village. On the last trip we just left a boat with meat on the shore and went home, because we did not have the strength to do anything. My mother-in-law, Natalia Ivanovna, guarded the boat with meat, from the dogs, all the next day. Now I smile, but that day I was angry. We worked hard and that day we did what a team of 6 to 12 hunters usually does.

In any case, I have a lot of respect for Konstantin. Hunters at sea must not only be strong and hardworking, but also patient and persistent. We spent many days together looking for walruses and often returned with nothing. When we stood somewhere on the ice, on an island, or just in a boat at sea, Konstantin told me stories that he heard in childhood and adolescence from his father and older relatives. He told me stories from traditional way of life, as well as about the traditions and rituals of our people. It was Konstantin who told me about the rite

of initiation into hunters that I had with my son when he killed his first walrus. I had a good partner” (Rodion Rinetegin, 44 years old, Neshkan, July 2016).

Rodion and Konstantin hunted together for almost 10 years, until the heartbreaking death of Konstantin during the autumn walrus hunt. Sea hunting in autumn is the most preferred for Neshkan and Enurmino residents, because low temperatures contribute to the good preservation of meat and fat without refrigerators. Hunters, therefore, do not have to limit the number of walruses and whales hunted, as they have to do in summer. Apparently, autumn is accompanied not only by low temperatures, but also by unpredictable weather, storms, and ice sludge, which puts the life of hunters at great risk. After the death of Konstantin, Rodion helped *Ettyne-Ilio* (Konstantin's mother) for several years to maintain their dog team. This is a great burden and responsibility that Rodion dedicated to his deceased hunting partner. When *Ettyne-Ilio* died, Rodion inherited her dog team.

Another hunting partner of Rodion is Piotr Netepkir (Figure 4.10), the brother of his wife. The life story of Piotr, as well as that of Rodion, is typical for the modern coastal Chukchi. Piotr was educated as a teacher, but after several years of work at school he chose to be a hunter. For some time, he worked at a local *sovkhos*, and then began to hunt on his own, from time to time joining Rodion.

Piotr, like Rodion, prefers to hunt walruses and whales, but almost never hunts seals in winter. When they hunt together, each takes their own boat to facilitate safe and fast hunting, as well as more prey brought ashore. However, gasoline in Neshkan and Enurmino is supplied in limited quantities, while diesel fuel is delivered in large quantities to provide heat and electricity in the village. Because the engine on Piotr's boat is powered by gasoline, he could not always travel as long and as far as Rodion, whose engine is powered by diesel fuel. As the engine on Rodion's boat has gotten old and has broken down frequently in recent years the hunters were forced to ride one or the other boat. This circumstance makes Rodion and Piotr interdependent on each other, in addition to the fact that they are relatives. Piotr and Rodion spend a lot of time together, preparing transport and equipment for hunting and fishing, processing prey, and doing everything that the villagers do to ensure year-round subsistence (Figure 4.11). Elena, Piotr's sister and Rodion's wife, is essentially their bond, processing their booty, preparing their food,

and funding their hunting activities. Along with a couple of other Neshkan households, the family is part of a small group of private hunters outside the state-subsidized hunting *obshchina*. This occurrence makes them rather unique actors in the local community.

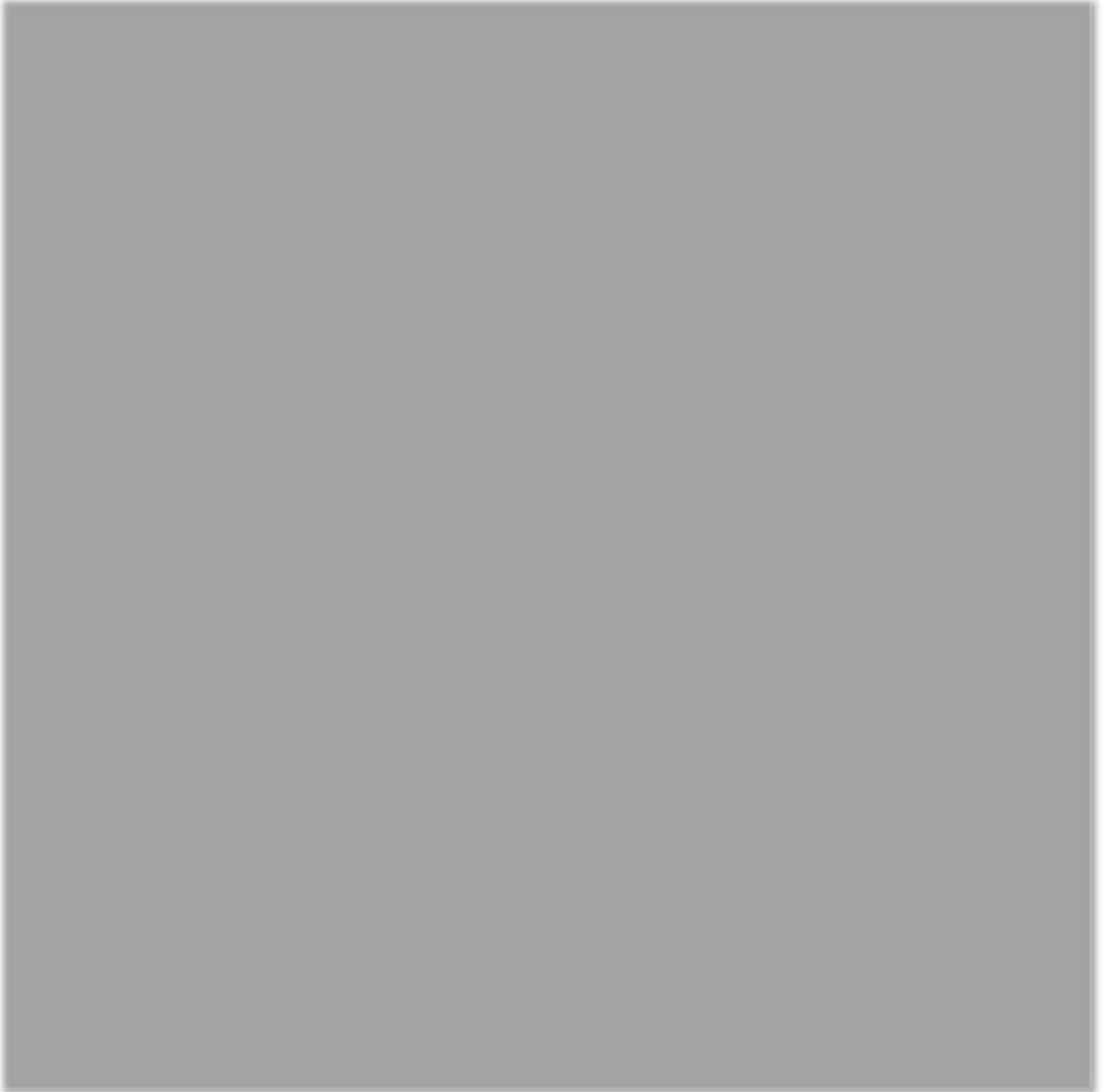


Figure 4.10. Piotr Netepkir, Neshkan hunter. July 2017.  
Photo by Rodion Rinetegin.

The year-round hunter is now less common in Neshkan than it used to be; some prefer summer hunting, while others favor winter hunting. These preferences are primarily due to the availability of boats and weapons, but also to taste preferences. In Neshkan and Enurmino, hunting with nets for seals is widespread in winter. Catches the seal underwater and cause it drawn made some of my interlocutors believed that the meat of such a seal has a much worse taste. There were also participants who, on the contrary, believed that the taste of the meat obtained in this way is getting better. In any case, those villagers who do not have their own boat and weapons, as well as the opportunity to work in the hunting *obshchina*, compensate for the lack of meat harvested in the fall by sea ice hunting for seals with nets.



Figure 4.11. Hunting crew of Rodion and Piotr. Neshkan, July 2016. Rodion and Yuri are returning from a successful hunt, and Piotr helps them to carry a piece of walrus meat to a shared ice pit. Photos provided by Eduard Zdor.

Unlike Rodion, Piotr does not have a snowmobile, a dog team, or even a weapon. However, his boat and motor make him a desirable hunting companion for any villager who has a weapon. Therefore, Piotr is highly valued amongst villagers as a captain of a small hunting team. Like most villagers, Piotr prefers to speak Russian, only occasionally using Chukchi expressions or words. Like the rest of the modern hunters in Neshkan and Enurmino, Piotr does not wear traditional fur clothes. Advances in technology have made factory-produced, highly insulated clothing and footwear competitive and suppressing local production of traditional fur clothing. Traditional cuisine in families of sea hunters is the basis of the diet and Piotr is no

exception. The availability of marine mammal meat is clearly a fundamental contributor to this phenomenon, although the high calorie content of seals and walrus meat and fat is also imperative. Subsistence activity in the sea and tundra demand a huge amount of energy to move and warm the body whether it's walking for many hours on the tundra, or sailing in the sea in an open boat, or regularly dragging the carcasses of seals or pieces of meat of comparable weight. Piotr and other interlocutors pointed out that only high-calorie food derived from sea animals covered this incredible energy expenditure.

“We eat traditional marine mammal food at breakfast, lunchtime, and dinner. This is our main meal. It is very high in calories. Calorie counts are critical when I am at sea or on the tundra. So, if I eat a grocery store soup, I’ll probably want to eat in an hour. But traditional food lasts a long time, especially *morjatina* [walrus meat]. If I have walrus meat for breakfast, I can already go without food all day” (Michael Nutetgivev, 52 years old, Neshkan resident, July 2017).

Most villagers have not retained such a commitment to traditional diet, although marine mammal meat saves a lot of family food costs. Residents of Neshkan and Enurmino prefer to mix shop grocery and traditional food. Even families, who regularly hunted found it difficult to eat only the meat of marine mammals. Piotr is one of those villagers whose lives have changed the most after the social changes of the Chukchi community at the turn of millennium. He was originally a member of the Chukchi intelligentsia. The economic crisis of the 1990s should have encouraged him to be committed to teaching. This group in the village has a full-time job and a regular substantial cash income. It is also important that teachers have access to food in the school cafeteria for a symbolic price. However, Piotr decided to be a marine hunter. The sociocultural changes in the village and in Piotr's personal life turned out to be so strong that the decision for him turned out to be extraordinary. He still ponders the question of whether his decision was correct.

Piotr is twice a widower. Many people fail under these circumstances. As is often the case, Piotr's alcohol addiction can be both a cause and a consequence of social order. However, his status as captain of a whaling ship gives Piotr the motivation to go on with his life. By providing his family, friends, and neighbors with traditional food, Piotr finds meaning in his life.



Piotr told me that he is a Christian. His faith is so strong, that he does not even recognize traditional beliefs and customs, “because it is paganism,” and traditional rituals “happen by the devil.” I have not met other Christian villagers with the same attitude towards the beliefs of their ancestors. The villages of Chukotka, Neshkan and Enurmino are no exception; religious communities primarily help villagers to unite efforts to survive among the weekly village drinking bouts (Yarzutkina 2016b). Villagers typically combine traditional and Christian beliefs (Oparin 2012), which, in my opinion, is due to Indigenous communities adapting to the changing socio-cultural milieu.

When I came to do field research in Neshkan in 2016, Rodion had already become a mature man and acquired the status of an experienced and respected hunter. Victor, chairman of the hunting *obshchina* publicly thanked Rodion and Piotr, while discussing the successful whale hunt on the Neshkan WhatsApp network. He stated that their dedication and experience in the sea hunt made them the core of a hunting brotherhood. In fact, Rodion, along with his relatives, has been maintaining a hunting team for twenty years. In Chukchi villages, there are commonly two to three such private teams, independent of regional subsidies. Looking at the example of Rodion's team, the basis for the strength of such a team is kinship. The combined efforts of family members funding the purchase and manufacture of hunting equipment, hunting activities, processing and storage of the harvested meat, fish, and plants is the foundation of the stability of the family team. Elena, Rodion's wife, works as a teacher at the elementary school and her salary is the main source of funding for the family's subsistence. Rodion and his wife said that her work in the winter ensures that in the summer they can enjoy a life of subsistence outside the village together, going home just to fill the meat pit and refrigerator with meat and fish and take the groceries and diesel fuel. Elena told me,

“I can't imagine our life outside Neshkan and don't understand how it is possible to live in a city and not see anything except city streets. Our life is concentrated outside the village. We invest all our income in transport and fuel in order to be able to live a subsistence activity. I love being a teacher, but the best time of the year for me is from spring to autumn, while we go by boat and snowmobile for hunting, fishing and picking berries and plants” (Elena Netepkir, Neshkan resident, 44 years old, June 2016).

Another foundation of family team resilience is that Rodion transfers knowledge and experience to his son, Yuri, who was named after his grandfathers, Netepkir from the Enurmino community of sea hunters and Rinetegin from a reindeer herding camp that nomadized between the Kolyuchin Guba and the Amguema River. Yuri was born in the 1990s, which were harsh for Russia and for the Chukchi communities in particular. Only the sea ensured the survival of Neshkan and Enurmino during these years. However, even the meat of marine mammals was difficult to obtain. Many of our interlocutors noted that migrations of marine mammals were irregular during these years, and even seals, which are permanent inhabitants of coastal waters, were often absent. Malnutrition significantly weakened the health of the villagers and their immune systems, so that even a mild respiratory illness could be life-threatening. In any case, the sea again, as in ancient times, became the only source of survival for coastal Chukchi. The collapse of the economy has forced even newcomers to switch to local diets as well.



Figure 4.12. Yuri (left) and Rodion Rinetegin's on a seal hunt. Neshkan, June 2016. Photo provided by Eduard Zdor.

Like other villagers, Rodion did not teach Yuri traditional subsistence. He simply took him to hunt at sea (Figure 4.12) and to go fishing in the tundra and visit reindeer camps. I noticed that Yuri is not typical of his peers. It seems that he not only loves the sea and sea hunting, but he also has leadership abilities and a desire to provide sea hunting in his native village. I drew attention to the fact that Yuri has influence in the Neshkan hunting *obshchina*. In 2014, I took part in the meeting of the Neshkan hunting *obshchina* and Yuri was one of the few who vividly and reasonably discussed the needs of sea hunters. In the 2016 field season, before I interviewed Yuri, we went sea hunting together many times. At first, as young crew members usually do, he stayed in the boat while Rodion and I, as elders, looked for walrus on the top of the hummock and discussed in which direction to look for animals. The lonely high hummocks in the sea provide the much-needed observation height. If a boat moors to such an observation ice floe, one team member is always in the boat. This ensures the safety of the crew and if the wind blows or a piece of ice breaks off, the hunter on duty will return the boat to the other crew members. I got it so that after several unsuccessful searches, I imperceptibly became the boat's watchman. Rodion casually told me that Yuri is the best observer in the village, and he finds walrus more often than others, so all hunting boats are always happy to take him into their team. Finally, walrus began their spring migration near Neshkan. Rodion invited me to go hunting. In one of the hunts, Rodion and Yuri crawled to a group of walrus. At some point I saw that Rodion decided that today Yuri would shoot at the walrus. He showed his son the walrus chosen and silently explained to him where to shoot and at what time. They spoke quietly and it was noisy, as usually the walrus rumbled and also became windy. The young walrus began to move towards a group of walrus and settled on the edge of the group, closer to the center of the ice between the walrus and hunters.

This was the main argument in favor of changing the target. Rodion showed Yuri this walrus. He used his shotgun to aim for a long time. Finally, he made a shot using a homemade bullet. The sound of the shot scared the herd. All the walrus woke up and began to look around and loudly roar. The hunters rose from the ice and began to wave their hands. Walrus in a panic jumped to the water, leaving behind them the current rivers of urine and liquid excrement. One walrus remained lying on the ice. He did not move, but it was clear that he was still alive. He moved in a convulsive motion, periodically pressing his head and flipper to its body. Rodion, fearing that the walrus would slip into the sea because of these movements, quickly moved to the

walrus. He slid on the wet ice, trying to choose a good position to make a final shot. He slid on the ice, and it seemed that he was trying to block the path of the walrus to the sea. It was risky as the ice was very slick and Rodion had to spend a lot of energy to stand. Rodion shot twice at short intervals, assessing the time of the death of the walrus. Finally, he was convinced that the walrus had died.

Despite such a risky hunt, Rodion was happy. This was Yuri's first independent successful hunt. Rodion put the rifle down on the ice and called his son to fight him for the booty. In a moment, he threw down the non-resisting Yuri on the ice floe. This typical Chukchi custom is mainly associated with the first seal hunt, but some villagers told us that the ritual is applicable to the hunted walrus as well. Rodion later said that he learned about this custom from his former hunting partner Konstantin. By this time, Yuri and his father had already hunted seals, walruses, and whales many times, but this walrus was the first, which Yuri harvested himself. Even though the walrus is huge and the distance for the shot is usually short, the walruses have almost no vulnerabilities. To kill a walrus, hunters shoot at the base of the skull or spear in the heart. If the hunter does not get to the right place the first time, the walrus will be able to crawl into the water and either escape or sink. Thus, the responsibility of the shooter is a heavy one. Success depends on the hunter's confidence, tranquility, and accuracy.

We moved the boat to a convenient place and began cutting the walrus. It was already early in the morning when we finished this process. We loaded pieces of meat into the boat. When we got to the village it was already about 11am. Like the last time no one met us, because most of the inhabitants of the village were on the other side, meeting a helicopter from Lavrentia (the arrival of a helicopter is always a big event for the villagers). On the beach sat only one elder, Kaipanau. After we pulled the boat out of the sea and unloaded the equipment, Rodion called Kaipanau and said: "We want to treat you to walrus meat on behalf of Yuri. Today he personally shot a walrus for the first time." The elder was very happy with the meat, and he fussed a lot and thanked Rodion.

## The Reach of Rodion

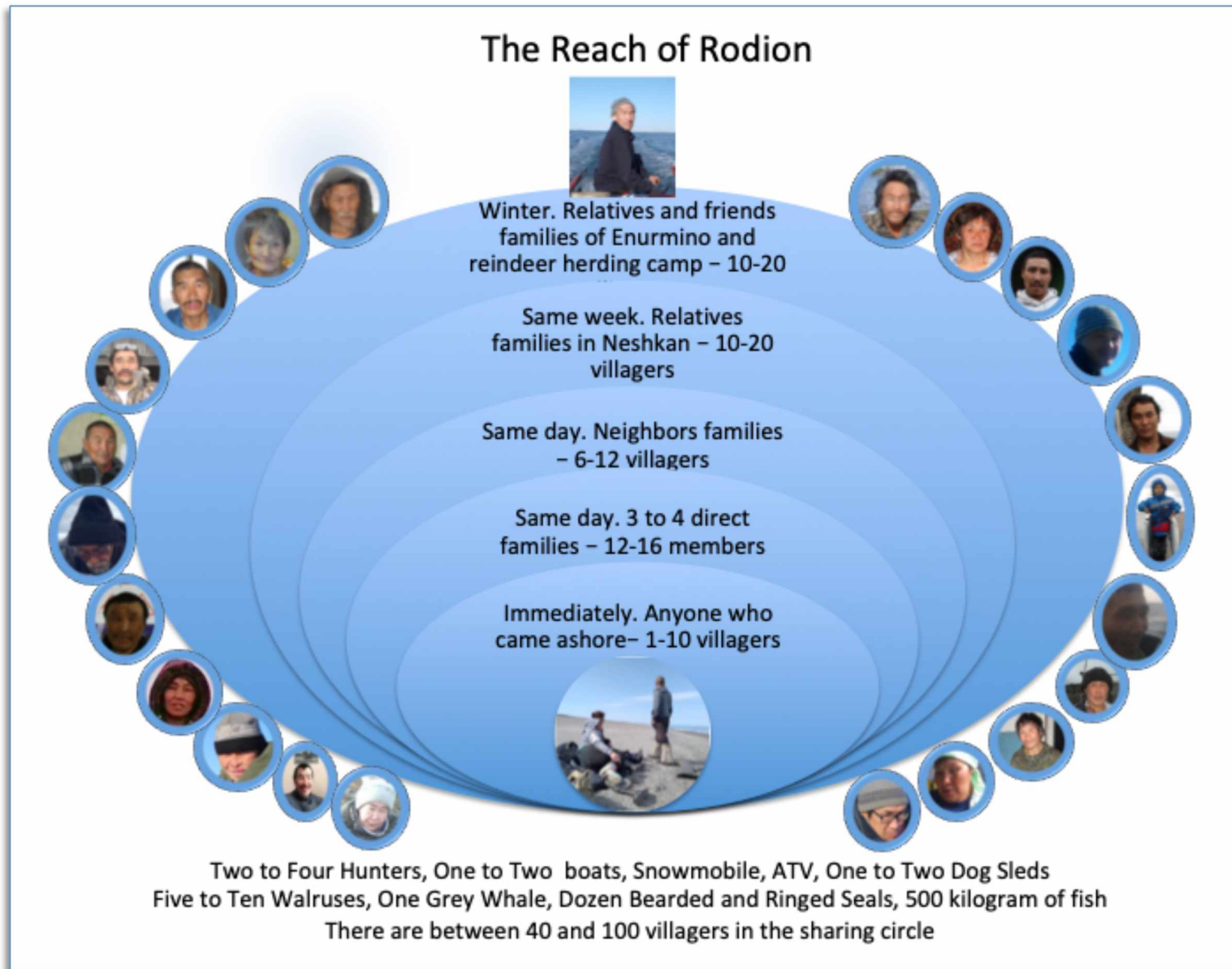


Figure 4.13. Sharing Circle of Rodion's Hunting Cohort.

Yuri is a hardworking hunter. He made up for his lack of skills in cutting walrus by vigorous participation during the hunt. Yuri's inspiration after the first successful hunt was so great that he easily dragged huge pieces of meat and threw them into the boat. Undoubtedly this hunt was not only an original initiation rite, but also a moment when Yuri felt his strength and confidence that he had become a real hunter.

Describing Rodion's hunting team, I must admit that even though all its members are ordinary residents of Neshkan, the team itself is a remarkable phenomenon of the modern Chukchi village. In fact, his team operates in a way that is closely aligned with the Chukchi hunting team as described by Bogoras. Rodion does not sell walrus and seal meat directly to either villagers or merchants. He limits in his commercial sales to the most valuable inedible hunting products, such as walrus tusk, baleen, and hides. He sells those products for cash or exchanges them for spare parts for his vehicles. Rodion, like the Chukchi in the time of Bogoras, follows the traditional distribution of the hunting product to survive. He shares his prey with his relatives, neighbors, and friends. He does not receive direct material benefits from such a division of hunting products. As I have already described, this circumstance may make him not very willing to share, but he cannot but share. In the end, sea hunting for him is not only a means to get food, but also the meaning of life. Only during trips to neighboring settlements where he takes with him such desirable fish, a roll of walrus meat or a seal, he can receive a mutual gift from the owner of the house that sheltered him. I did some simple calculations (Figure 4.13) to determine the impact of the Rodion cohort on local communities. For the Chukotka village, the household of Rodion's family is quite rich. Over the years, he and his partners have owned two boats and outboard motors, a snowmobile, an ATV, two dog teams, two ice pits, several seasonal hunting and fishing cabins. According to the Rodion team, the amount of catch, depending on the migration of wildlife, steadily revolved around one gray whale, five to ten walrus, dozens of different seals and several hundred kilograms of different types of fish annually. The traditional way of distribution of the harvested wildlife provided Rodion with intensive contacts with at least a hundred villagers. Anyone can come ashore for share of walrus meat if Rodion and his team had a successful hunt. Each of the four hunters of the Rodion team shares harvested meat with at least one neighboring family. This means that 6 to 12 other villagers benefit from this hunting team. Rodion and his cohort also share directly meat with some relatives in the village after they have left the shore. These are three or four more families, that is, approximately from 8

to 16 fellow villagers. The possibility of trail travel and visiting between villages and hunting camps further extends the Rodion's sharing network. Rodion and his partners exchange hunting products with relatives and friends in reindeer herding camps, Enurmino, and other settlements of the district. This is another 10 to 20 residents who have benefited from the hunting activities of the Rodion team. In total, hunting activities provide Rodion and his team with traditional Chukchi relationships with up to 100 people. I did not take into account in this calculation how many villagers come ashore to get a share of gray whale meat and *itgilgyn*, because whaling is a collective hunt of several boats. That is, the participation of two small boats of the Rodion team is obscured by the cooperative nature of this hunt.

It is not surprising that Rodion is, if not the most respected member of the Neshkan community, then at least a very influential person. He is a welcome person in many families of Neshkan, Enurmino and in reindeer camps. The villagers appreciated his opinion on hunting and fishing issues, which in Neshkan and Enurmino are a dominant topic of conversation during summer and autumn. Rodion learned from his partners not only the technical skills of hunting, but also the outlook of the maritime Chukchi. Rodion's commitment to the traditional way of life and the traditional knowledge of the ancestors is the guiding star and motive for the long-term survival of the Rodion hunting team.

Rodion has prominent features of the maritime Chukchi, which were shaped under the influence of his and his wife's cultural heritage, the Neshkan sociocultural patterns of the Soviet period and the unique 1990s. Together with his team, he was able to provide traditional food for his family, relatives, and neighbors for over 20 years. The traditional knowledge and skills he passed on to his son will continue to benefit the local community. In the years described, Rodion (Figure 4.14) was in his mid 40s, that is, barely five years younger than Netepkir, his father-in-law and the first teacher of sea hunting, when he died on winter fishing. His health is weakened by the constant and prolonged stay at sea in the cold and physical and psychological trauma, acquired in life-threatening subsistence practice. Like many of his peers by this age, he is almost unable to hunt and mostly waits on the shore for his son from the hunt.





Figure 4.14. Rodion during a fishing expedition, autumn 2020.  
Photo provided by Yuri Rinetegin.



## 4.2. Subsistence and Transportation: Meaning and Social Status

Interactions between Neshkan and Enurmino and other neighboring settlements are constant. People seem to be moving back and forth for no reason. To an outside observer, moving between settlements can even look ridiculous, given the effort involved. The distance between Neshkan and Enurmino is about 50 kilometers along the coast (Figure 4.15). Many times, I have watched young villagers go from one village to another for only a weekend dance party. Of course, the landscape is suitable for walking, the beach is straight and flat. Still, it is hard to believe that it is worth a 10 to 12 hours walk to have fun with friends and loved ones on the weekend and walk back home by Monday. Rather, it means that kinship ties are so strong, and hiking is still common for locals to visit relatives.

For example, Alexander Tyneskin (Figure 4.16), a reindeer herder from the Neshkan tundra, at the age of 30, in order to visit his family, he took walks at least once a year between his camp, located near the Kolyuchin Bay, and the village of Enmelen, located on the shore of the Anadyr Bay (Figure 4.17). This village is located on the other side of the mountainous Chukchi Peninsula on the shores of the Gulf of Anadyr, about 200 km south of the reindeer herding camp.

The explanation for these movements may be that subsistence-oriented villagers have different dimensions of spatial scale than those villagers who rarely go outside the village. They have an image of the Arctic tundra and the coast as a natural landscape that builds their life circumstances. Temporality also has other dimensions for them. Our interlocutors told us about many days of waiting for calm weather in huts if they were lucky, but more likely in tents, or even buried in the snow. Patient waiting for calm weather in the area of constant winds is a remarkable property of hunters and reindeer herders. If the villager has transport, the possibilities of maintaining family ties, through visits and the exchange of food and goods, increase significantly. Therefore, those who have transport are treated with respect.



Neshkan-Pilgyn Lagoon — Geographical Name

Kuimetegin—  
Rotten Corner — Local Name of the Place



— Hiking Route



Figure 4.15. Hiking route between Neshkan and Enurmino

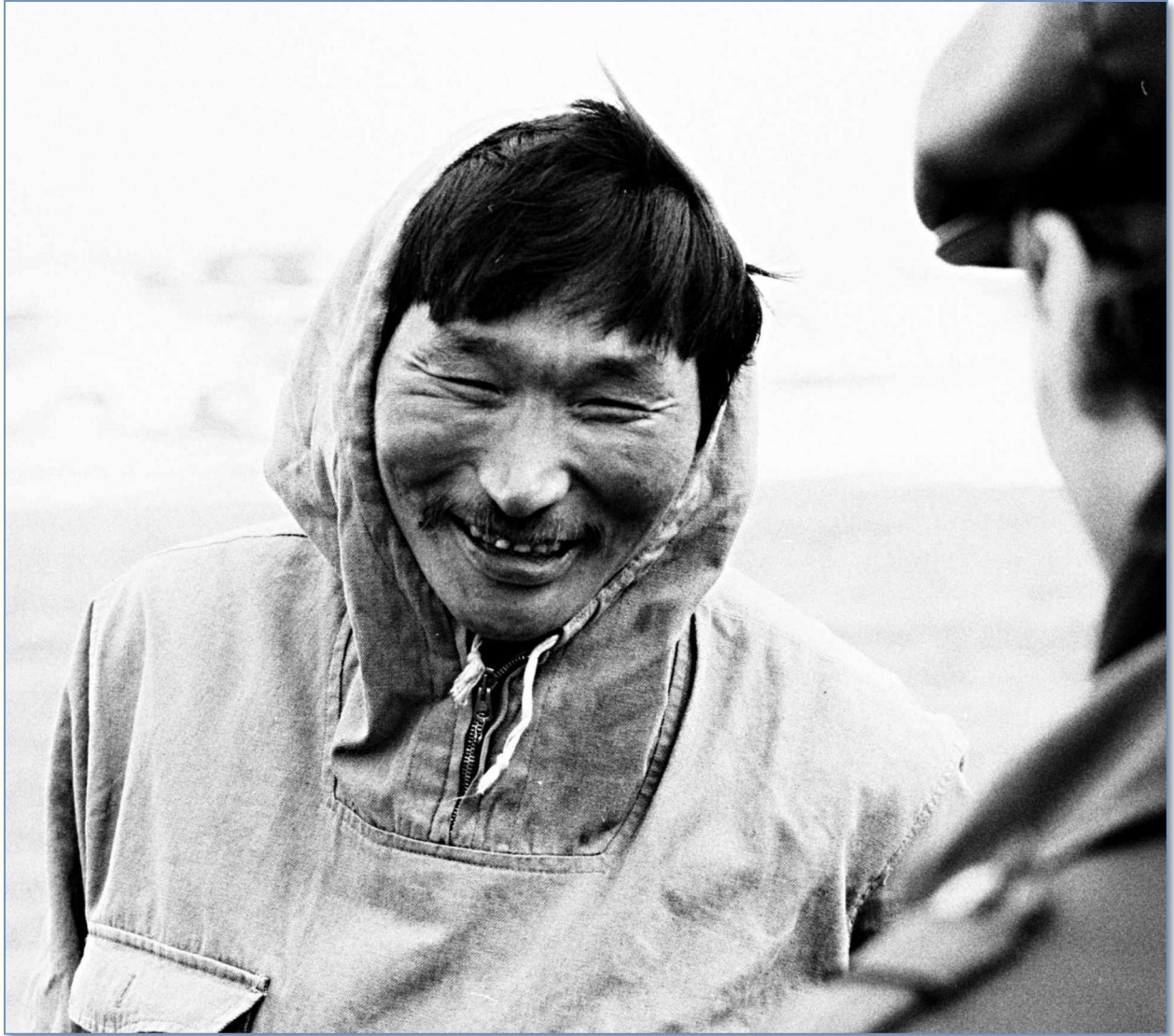


Figure 4.16. Alexander Tyneskin. Neshkan tundra, 1980s.  
Photo provided by Mark Zhuravsky.

Bogoras time social organization of the Chukchi community has been structured around a key type of economy, which in turn has been dependent on transportation. According to Bogoras (1909, 612, 628), the boat crew was a social unit of the Chukchi coastal settlement, while the reindeer herding camp was based on a family with a herd of reindeer. The success of the reindeer herd has depended on the availability of reindeer transport (Golovnev et al 2015). No matter how obvious the conclusion may seem, the Chukchi subsistence economy is directly based on

transportation. Traditional transport connects the coastal villages with each other and reindeer camps.

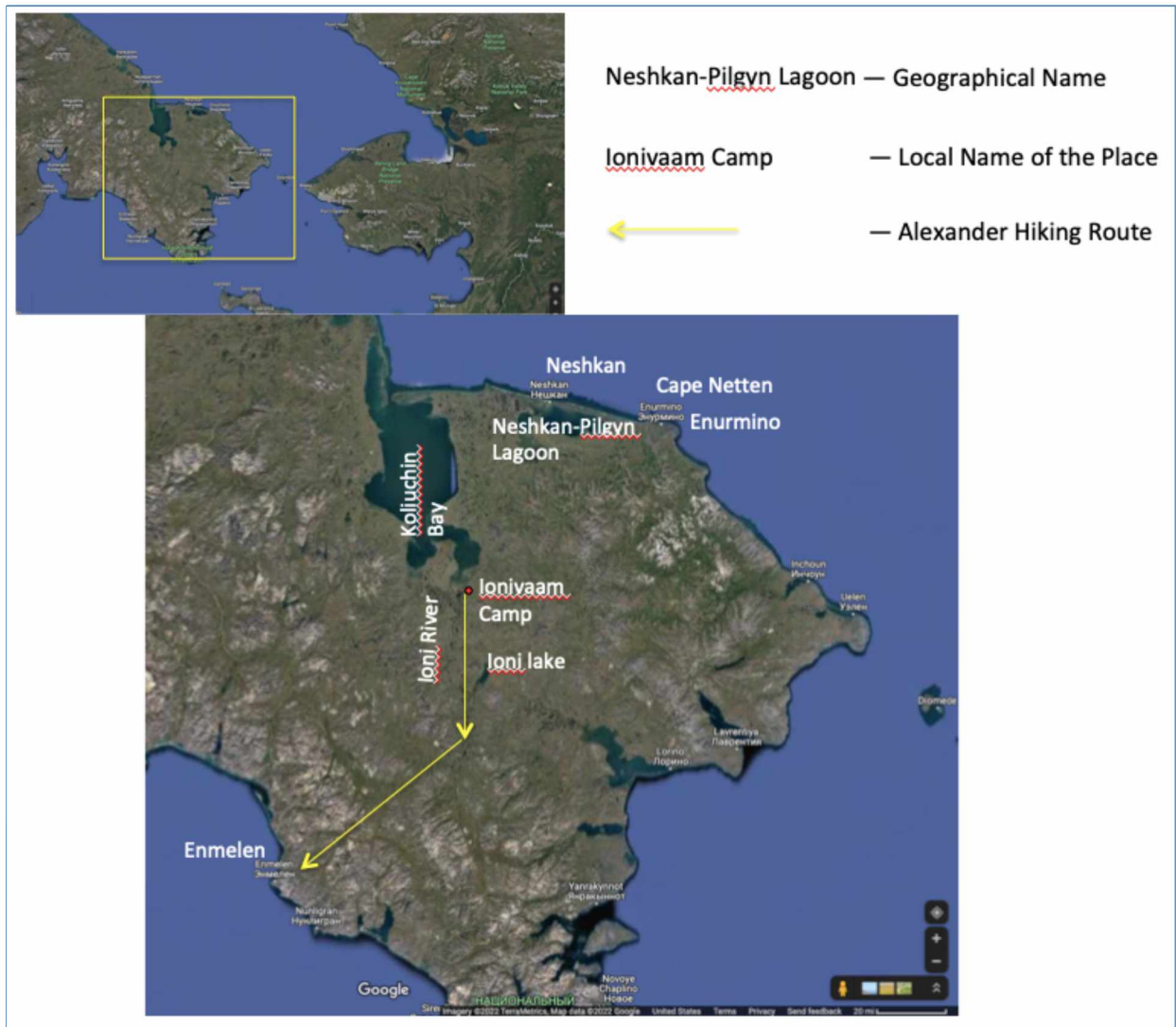


Figure 4.17. Alexander Tyneskin’s hiking route between their reindeer camp and village of Enmelen.

This provided for the customary distribution of food and marriage and kinship, as well as simple social interaction. According to Nordenskjöld (1881) and Kaltan (2008), between Enurmino and Neshkan in the 19th and early 20th centuries, a dozen small hamlets were located literally a few miles from each other. It was easy for coastal residents to visit each other even on



foot, on dog sleds, or on skin sailing boats. The resettlement of small villages into large but widely dispersed villages in the twentieth century complicated traditional ties.

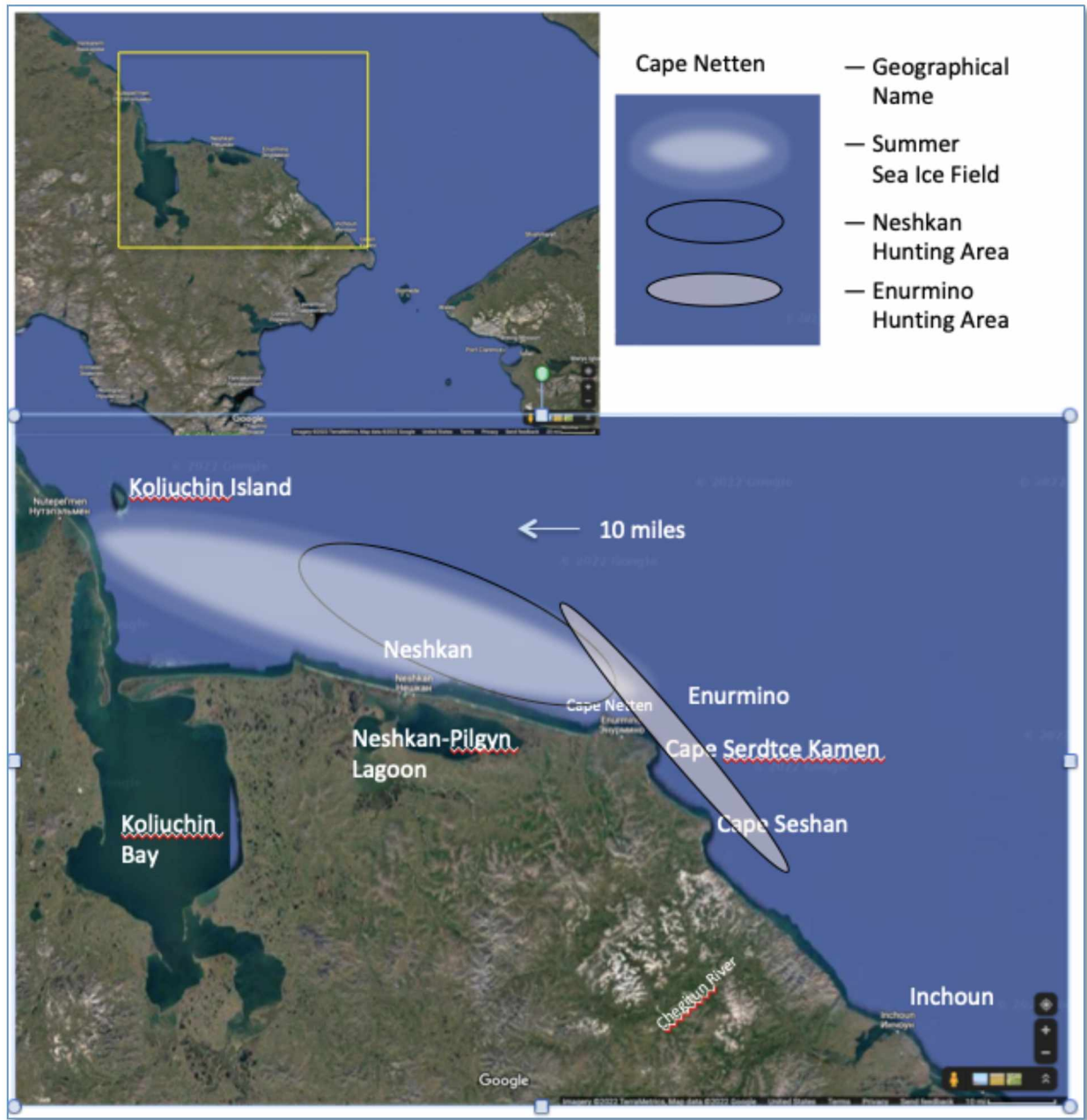


Figure 4.18. Neshkan and Enurmino communities hunting areas, 2010s.

Over time, high-speed and load-lifting aluminum boats replaced the slow skin boat (*baidara*) and the wooden whaleboat, and the dog sled was replaced by a snowmobile, which provides greater speed and greater carrying capacity. Boats and snowmobiles, in the absence of roads, make villagers mobile and facilitate a traditional way of life. Wenzel (2009, 92) properly

noted that modern high-speed transport compensated for the consequences of the relocation of scattered traditional camps into modern concentrated Indigenous settlements. I have mapped the summer sea hunting areas of the Neshkan and Enurmino communities, each of which covers an area of approximately 160 square kilometers (Figure 4.18). These hunting places, as well as the massive ice field, on the northern edge of which walrus rest, were roughly outlined by me on the basis of interviews with hunters and my hunting trips with them.

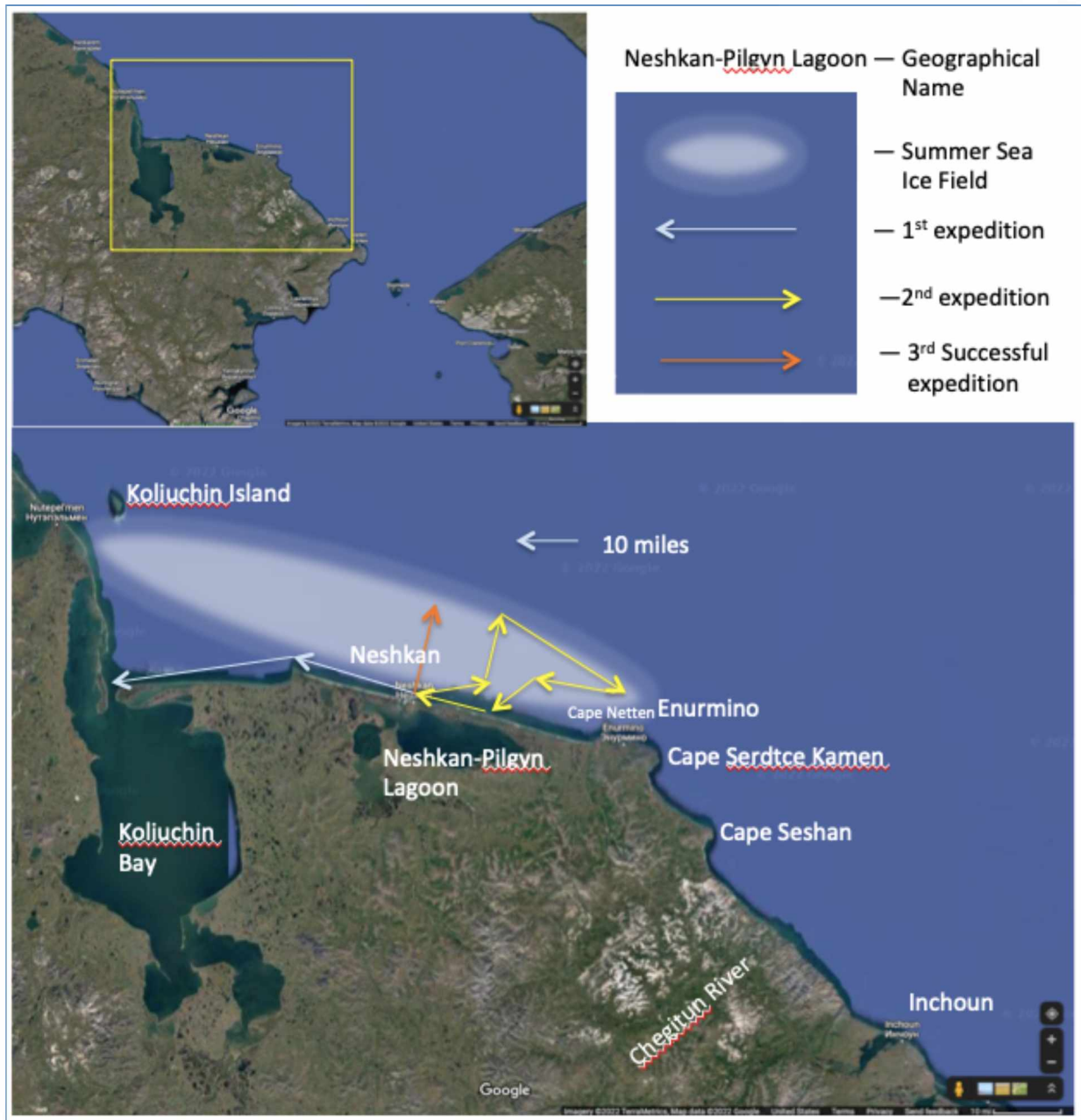


Figure 4.19. Map of Rodion's hunting expeditions during June and July 2016.

In my field season 2016, Rodion and his son searched for walrus among the ice floes at a distance covering a total of 120 km along the coast and up to 30 km from the coast just in just a couple of days (Figure 4.19). While we were looking for walrus, we visited Rodion's friends on Belyak Spit (80 km East of Neshkan) and Enurmino (50 km West of Neshkan). While there were no walrus, we landed on the shore even where no one lived, and Rodion and his family either fished or collected plants and did not seem to be tormented by the expectation of hunting, enjoying their lifestyle. This is a huge area for hunting in such a short time, which was inaccessible to the hunters of Neshkan and Enurmino 30 years ago for economic and technical reasons. Thanks to modern powerful and economical engines.

Overall, travel between settlements retained spatial models, but shortened the time scale. The social function of travel, however, has changed insignificantly. Villagers travel to redistribute the results of traditional subsistence, move to find a more comfortable space with food and housing, and to create and maintain family ties.

#### 4.2.1. Transportation and Social Status

Transport is a marker of the social hierarchy in Neshkan and Enurmino. Owning a boat, an ATV, and a snowmobile means that the villager belongs to the affluent group of villagers. This means that at least one of the adult family members has a job in one of the municipal institutions of the village. Typically, the wife works in a school, hospital, or grocery store, while the husband hunts and fishes. This is how it was in Rodion's family; his wife worked at the school. Sometimes a man also has a job in a heating or electric plant, but this position significantly limits his ability to engage in subsistence activity. Sasha Savelov, one of the most successful Neshkan private hunter, worked as a utility plumber during my field season, while his wife worked at a grocery store. Summer is a hot time for a plumber who needs to put plumbing in order in the houses of the whole village, so Sasha had a hard time being between hunting and work. Some enterprising families also sell clothes, shoes, groceries, and even alcohol to obtain cash to fund their subsistence. Being in this group of villagers also means that in this family alcohol is consumed either in moderation or rarely. Some villagers from this group sell products of subsistence activity. They sell walrus tusks and animal fur to ships and to the district center.



Figure 4.20. Valery Nypevgi, formerly of Neshkan and current Uelen resident. Anadyr, 2013.

Photo by Eduard Zdor.



A notable feature of Neshkan and Enurmino, as well as other Chukchi settlements, is that the villagers had a special respect for the drivers of transport, whether it is a boat, dog, or reindeer team. Each driver, depending on the type of transport, had his own name: dog team driver—*maglialeen*, reindeer team driver—*geken'yl'etyl'yn*, boat driver—*l'ytkul'yn*. Residents of coastal settlements or reindeer camps have always treated drivers with noticeable reverence. The reason for this attitude was clear because the drivers of the vehicles provided the connection between the settlements. In turn, the drivers of vehicles treated the transported goods and people with great responsibility. Even today this tradition has passed to modern modes of transport. Drivers of tracks and all-terrain vehicles, and even helicopter crews, if they take a package, always deliver it to the addressee. Valery Nypevgi (Figure 4.20), a resident of Neshkan, told me:

“When I take packages, I take full responsibility for each package, for each letter. Somehow, we were traveling on three all-terrain vehicles from Uelen to Neshkan. Two all-terrain vehicles broke down on the way. We were forced to spend two days to bring all the commercial cargo to the destination in several trips. First, we collected all the parcels from each all-terrain vehicle and delivered them to Neshkan. My father did it and I do it” (Valery Nypevgi, 37 years old, December 1992).

While the peculiarity of Neshkan and Enurmino is that traditional and modern modes of transport get along together, I considered it necessary to identify the main types of local transport and how they affect the social organization of the community.

#### Boat Crew (*Ytvyleet*)

“The dimensions of the [skin] boat secured for our collection are, length, 35 feet; ... It requires a crew of from six to eight men, and can carry freight up to two tons” (Bogoras 1904, 127).

In the summer of 1971, I was sitting in a hunting whaleboat, which was returning from Neshkan to Enurmino. It was a sunny but windy day. After we passed the *Idlidlia* islands, the ice fields typical of the sea near Neshkan became less dense and it seemed to me that huge green waves slowed down our course. I did not understand much then but noticed that only two people in the whaleboat were tense, the helmsman and the mechanic. The rest of the crew calmly went

about their business: a couple of people were resting, two more were drinking tea and talking, and the hunter on the bow of the whaleboat was carefully examining the sea around the whaleboat through binoculars. After the whaleboat once again ran into an inconspicuous small transparent ice floe, my father, a mechanic, shouted to the helmsman to be more attentive, because the whaleboat could lose propellers from such collisions. That day we safely reached Enurmino. Since then, my father and I have traveled many times in boats in bad weather, and I have always been confident in his knowledge and skills as a sea hunter. Looking at him, I realized how important the helmsman and mechanic in the crew of the boat is. In our children's games in Enurmino, we always fought for the right to be a *rulist* [helmsman] or *motorist* [mechanic].

Since the 1970s, there has been a fairly significant evolution of boat crews in the settlements due to the technological development of small shipbuilding and socio-economic trends in the settlements. The elders told us that the *baidara* (skin boat), common on small *kolkhoses*, was replaced by a wooden whaleboat at a reorganized enlarged *sovkhos* in the early 1960s. The crew of the *baidara* and whaleboats were not particularly different, and consisted of a helmsman, mechanic, and about five more crewmembers that performed the functions of shooters, harpooners, and ordinary sailors. A significant advance turned out to be that the engine power increased by about two times. Therefore, hunters now spent less time searching for marine mammals and towing prey. In the 1990s, the Neshkan' *sovkhos* bought a self-propelled barge, which was used to transport goods to reindeer camps and also for hunting. Andrey Mainyrintyn, the Neshkan hunter told me,

“In the 1990s, there were difficulties with the supply of gasoline to the village. Even diesel fuel was not always enough for a diesel power plant. There was nothing to go hunting for walruses. It's good that the *sovkhos* bought a barge. The barge carried whaleboats in tow to the ice edge, probably 20-30 kilometers from the coast. If we found an ice floe with walruses, then we started the engines on the whaleboats for a few minutes. A few liters of gasoline were enough to quietly approach the ice floe with walruses and shoot as many animals as we needed. Then we butchered walruses on an ice floe, loaded into whaleboats, and returned to the village in tow. Over time, we even stopped butchering on ice floes. We

dragged the whole walrus into the barge and butchered them on the shore”  
(Andrey Mainyrintyn, 44 years old, Neshkan hunter, February 1999).

In the early 2000s, the regional government began to supply subsidized hunting *obshchinas* with 7-meter aluminum boats and 150-horsepower outboard motors. These innovations significantly improved hunting efficiency while dramatically changing the age composition of the crew. Ivan Taenom (Figure 4.21), an elder from Enurmino, shared with us his opinion on the changes in hunting teams that have come about due to the new boats.



Figure 4.21. Ivan (left) and Sveta (right) Taenom. Enurmino, 2000s.  
Photo provided by Ivan Taenom.

“These new boats are very fast. Hunters can travel far and hunt many walrus.  
But I don't like that there are almost only young people in the boats now. Nobody

teaches them. Previously, in a whaleboat, there were hunters of different ages in the crew, including one or two cabin boys. I remember how the elders taught me. Someone was strict, someone just showed what to do, and there were those who told in detail and interestingly. I didn't have to invent anything, just memorize and repeat after the older hunters. And now almost everyone is the same age in the boat. It's good if at least one elder with young hunters is there, but they don't always listen to him. From whom will they learn traditional knowledge?" (Ivan Taenom, 52 years old, Enurmino hunter, July 2016).

### *Boat Crew Hierarchy*

"In olden times, when people used the skin boat exclusively, a boat's crew consisted of eight men, - one at the helm, another at the prow with harpoon and lance, and six paddlers. The man at the helm, who is the master of the boat, was sometimes considered as an extra member ..."

(Bogoras 1909, 628-629)

Over the past two decades, the size of the boat crew of the hunting *obshchina* has decreased from 7-9 people to 2-4 people. This has become a general trend for the villages of Chukotka (International Whaling Commission n.d.). The fact is that modern outboard motors are powerful and reliable and there is almost no need to row on sea hunting. This means that there is no need for a large crew, which existed in the Chukchi marine hunting for dozens of generations. Along with the benefits, innovations contributed to social change. Almost all of boat crewmembers are about the same age and the hierarchy is simple. The captain, who is also the mechanic and helmsman of the boat, is responsible for the safety of the crew and the success of the hunt. Other crewmembers share the responsibilities of harpooner and shooters among themselves. Each member of the crew alternately tries himself in different positions until the final composition is formed. All together they butcher the harvested marine animals. This is not easy, given that the same amount of work was previously done by a team twice the size of the current one. Difficulties are an integral part of sea hunting, and a much more significant side effect of small crews has been the disappearance of the knowledge and experience of the elders in the teams. Andrey Kaivukvun, an elder from Enurmino told us about his worries about this trend.

“I love the sea. I say to young hunters: Love the sea. Why did you just go shoot? Respect the sea. This is nature. Someday it will punish you severely. It is better to love the sea and wildlife. You don't have to do it just like you're at work—shoot and load dead walruses and seals. Also, dead animals should not be left on the ice. As soon as you have got as many walruses as the boat can hold, and that's it, stop shooting” (Andrei Kaivukvun, 59 years old, Enurmino hunter, July 2016).

Because the captain is not the owner of the boat, he does not select the crewmembers for himself, and most importantly, he is not the one who is responsible for distributing the harvested marine mammals. It would seem that the chairman of the hunting society has such power. Indeed, he hires hunters, lines up boat crews, gives the crews' wages, weapons, and gasoline, and the crews hand over the hunted animals to him for distribution. This should mean that the power of the chairman of the hunting society is significant, and also that he has great influence in the village. However, because the position of the chairman of the hunting *obshchina* depends on the office in the district center and chairman is actually an employee, this position does not reduce the uncertainty in the boat crew. In 2015 and 2017, first Klava Etyrintyna and then Viktor Tynecheivyn, respectively, were removed from the post of chairmen of the hunting *obshchina* in Neshkan, after which there were rearrangements in the boat crews. Although experienced and skilled hunters are very welcome on the crew of a boat because they are only hourly workers, no one can be sure of their future. This process once again turned the once restored hunting *obshchina* into a municipal unit, making it less traditional but more bureaucratic.

The evolution of boats in family crews was not so intense. There were almost no boats available for purchase for personal use in the 1960s. Therefore, the villagers got out as best they could. Yuri Savelov, an elder from Neshkan said,

“In our village it has always been hard to buy a motorboat. Even now it is difficult to do because of the remoteness of the village. Look, in the village today, only community hunters have new boats; because boats are brought under a special program of the regional government. So, I had to build a plywood boat then. It was plain, not seaworthy, but I could get walruses for my family. Only in the early 1970s I was able to buy a duralumin boat in ‘*Chukotsmeshtorg*’ (a local

store). Then ‘*Kazanka*’ (the name of the boat model) was the dream of any hunter. However, even now my son hunts using ‘*Kazanka*,’ a real 6-meter aluminum boat is very expensive. Nobody in our village can buy such a boat” (Yuri Savelov, 71 years old, Neshkan elder, July 2016).

Small duralumin boats and 30 horsepower outboard motors began to be sold at a local shop in the 1970s and 1980s. Although few boats were sold compared to the needs of the villagers, by the end of the 1980s there were a couple of dozen personal boats in Neshkan and Enurmino. The villagers had the opportunity to fish and hunt to meet food and cultural needs. A small miraculously preserved remnant of them in a rather dilapidated condition is still used by the villagers. The only difference from the old days is that they use modern outboard engines of 30 or 40 horsepower. Now they at least do not need to restore engines all day long. The new motors significantly increased the efficiency of family crews and their safety. Nobody buys new boats; the villagers cannot afford to order and ship a boat. The aluminum boat shop built in Anadyr is geared mainly towards subsidized hunting communities for the same reason. The villagers do not have enough income to buy boats in this workshop at a price of about 10,000 US dollars.

The small size of the boat determines the size of the crew and its composition. Two hunters, such as a father and son, or brothers, or just a couple of neighbors, hunt and fish together and make up the basic unit of subsistence farming. The distribution of prey in this unit is equal. Equality can be explained by the specifics of a small and close team of relatives. I have sometimes heard complaints from boat owners that they bear most of the hunting and gathering costs and that the distribution is mostly even. It is likely that the difficulty in finding a right subsistence partner forces the villagers to make compromises.

The lack of aluminum boats in the village forced the Neshkan and Enurmino residents to build their own boats. I have heard the story of at least one other Neshkan resident, Fyodor Notagirgin, who built a plywood boat. Apparently, because its qualities were not reliable, Notagirgin did not dare to go to the Chukchi Sea on it, limiting itself to skiing on the lagoon. Surprisingly, the traditional skin boat didn't get a second life in both local communities. In the mid-1990s, Keleugi, a retired reindeer herder from Neshkan, built the frame of a traditional boat,



but did not upholster it with walrus skin. *Aratgyrgyn*, a retired sea hunter from Enurmino, also built only the frame of a *baidara* in 2010. Both boat builders never launched their *baidaras* into the sea. I can only guess what the reason for could be the absence of skinboats in these places. Savelov was a carpenter and therefore could have preferred plywood instead of walrus skin as a building material. *Keleugi* was a reindeer herder and most likely did not have experience in processing walrus skin to pull the frame of a canoe. Why *Aratgyrgyn* could not complete his leather boat, and *Notagirgin* did not even try to build a canoe, it is difficult to find explanations. Enurmino is a traditional multi-generational village of sea hunters. In this village, as well as in Neshkan, in the early 1960s people went hunting in skin boats. In those years, *Aratgyrgyn* and *Notagirgin* were young, but already experienced hunters. In all cases, the most likely stumbling block is the walrus skin to cover the frame of the *baidara*'s.



Figure 4.22. Lygiytyk'ai (single-seat skinboat). Lavrentia, 2003. Photo provided by Eduard Zdor.



In some other villages on the Chukchi Peninsula, such as Nutepelmen, Uelen, Lavrentia, Lorino, and Sireniki, the Chukchi and Siberian Yupik again began to build skin boats. Single-seat skin boats (*lygiytyk'ai*), covered with bearded seal skins (Figure 4.22), were used for winter seal hunting on fast ice and in *polynyas*.

Large skin boats (*lygiytyt* in Chukchi, *umiak* in Siberian Yupik) covered with layered walrus skins, with an average crew of 7-9 people hunted among the ice fields in early summer (Figure 4.23). To find the reasons for the boom in *baidara* construction, I consulted Anatoly Kochnev, Russian biologist and ethnographer (Figure 4.24), Yevgeny Sivsisiv, sea hunter from Inchoun (Figure 4.25), and Mikhail Zelensky, an old-timer from Lavrentia (Figure 4.26) about the traditions of using skin boats in the Chukchi Peninsula.



Figure 4.23. Eduard Rypkhirgin builds the skinboat frame. Lorino, 2022.  
Photo provided by Gennady Zelensky.

The main aim for the construction of baidara is to provide a convenient and safe means of transport for harvesting marine mammals. The centers for the traditional use of skin boats were Nutepelmen, Uelen, and Sireniki. Uelen and Nutepelmen valued baidaras for their lightweight, while their carrying capacity was quite large. Zelensky told me that the lightweight of the baidara made it possible to drag them through the hummocks to the open sea and hunt walrus and whales there. The Sireniki hunters explained the need for umiak by the big surf on their village shore. In conditions of constant surf, only a traditional umiak provided a safe passage through the waves to the sea and return to the village.

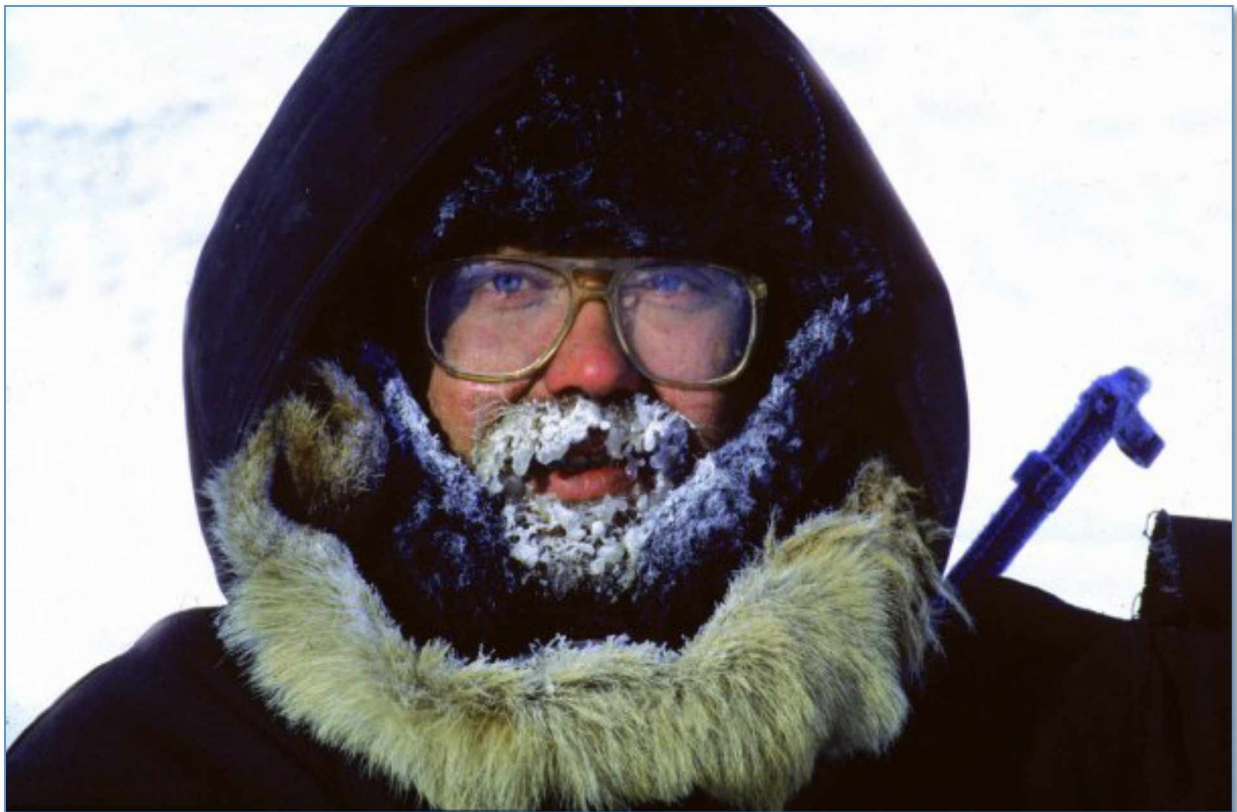


Figure 4.24. Anatoly Kochnev, Wrangel Island, 1999.  
Photo provided by Alexander Omelianenko.



Figure 4.25. Evgeny SivSiv, Inchoun, 1980s.  
Photo provided by Evgeny SivSiv.

The post-Soviet trend of regional support for traditional subsistence has led to resurgence in the construction of baidaras. The Chukotka government subsidized the construction of skin boats both directly by financing their construction and by holding boat regattas. However, the boom in the construction of skin boats was limited to only one, albeit the largest Chukchi village of Lorino. The construction of baidaras specifically for participation in regattas in other villages did not become popular. Evgeny SivSiv told, and Anatoly Kochnev confirmed his story that Inchoun hunters built one baidara for the regional government, but did not use it because of poor quality. The use of baidaras for hunting marine mammals in Sireniki, Uelen, and Nutepelmen gradually ceased.





Figure 4.26. Mikhail Zelensky, Neshkan tundra, 2010s.  
Photo provided by Mikhail Zelensky.

The scarcities of suitable wood, as well as the difficulty of processing the walrus skin, along with the supply of modern aluminum boats, have led to a lack of demand for the traditional skin boat. It takes a lot of time and effort, as well as good knowledge and skills, to prepare a walrus skin for covering a baidara frame. Hunters specifically select walrus females with visually

intact and high-quality skin for shooting. The defatted hide is fermented and then split in half to reduce its thickness. According to my interlocutors, this is a very painstaking and complex work, which was mainly done by women. Currently, in Lorino, men are engaged in it. In the history of Sivsiv and Kochnev, the low quality of the baidaras in Inchoun was due to the poor quality of the processing of the walrus skin. Vladimir Susyp (Figure 4.27), a hunter from Uelkal, told me that it took him a long time to master the art of processing and manufacturing leather products.

“Now we do not make belts from the skin of bearded seals. So far (temporarily) we are not doing it, but I think that we will still need to do this. I even tried it myself [cutting belts from the skin]. Then for a week my hands were sick. (Laughs). Previously, old men and women sat on the beach [of the sea] and cut bearded seal skins into belts. Then these belts hung where the upturned whaleboats lay on the racks in previous time. Hunters put baidaras there before, and then the time came when [wooden] whaleboats began to lay down on them. Here on these racks the old men hung belts. I watched how to cut them belts. Of course, experience is needed to cut belts. I had experience. I tried, but I got a bad belt. It didn't work at first, but then it got a little better. Everything seemed simple to me. I watched them cut, and they [elders] made the perfect belt. And when I tried it myself, for some reason, I didn't cut the belt very well. Well, of course, you need to sour [ferment] skins. Then degrease them. It was necessary to put them with some water so that they become sour, so that the skin [hair] begins to peel off. After that, you can already cut belts. Villagers my age hardly know how to handle skins and cut them. It needs to be shown [taught]. And one more key thing is needed. A person must have, not even a skill, but a sense of proportion. To such a person skill comes anyway.” (Vladimir Susyp, 48 years old, hunter from Uelkal, September 2018)

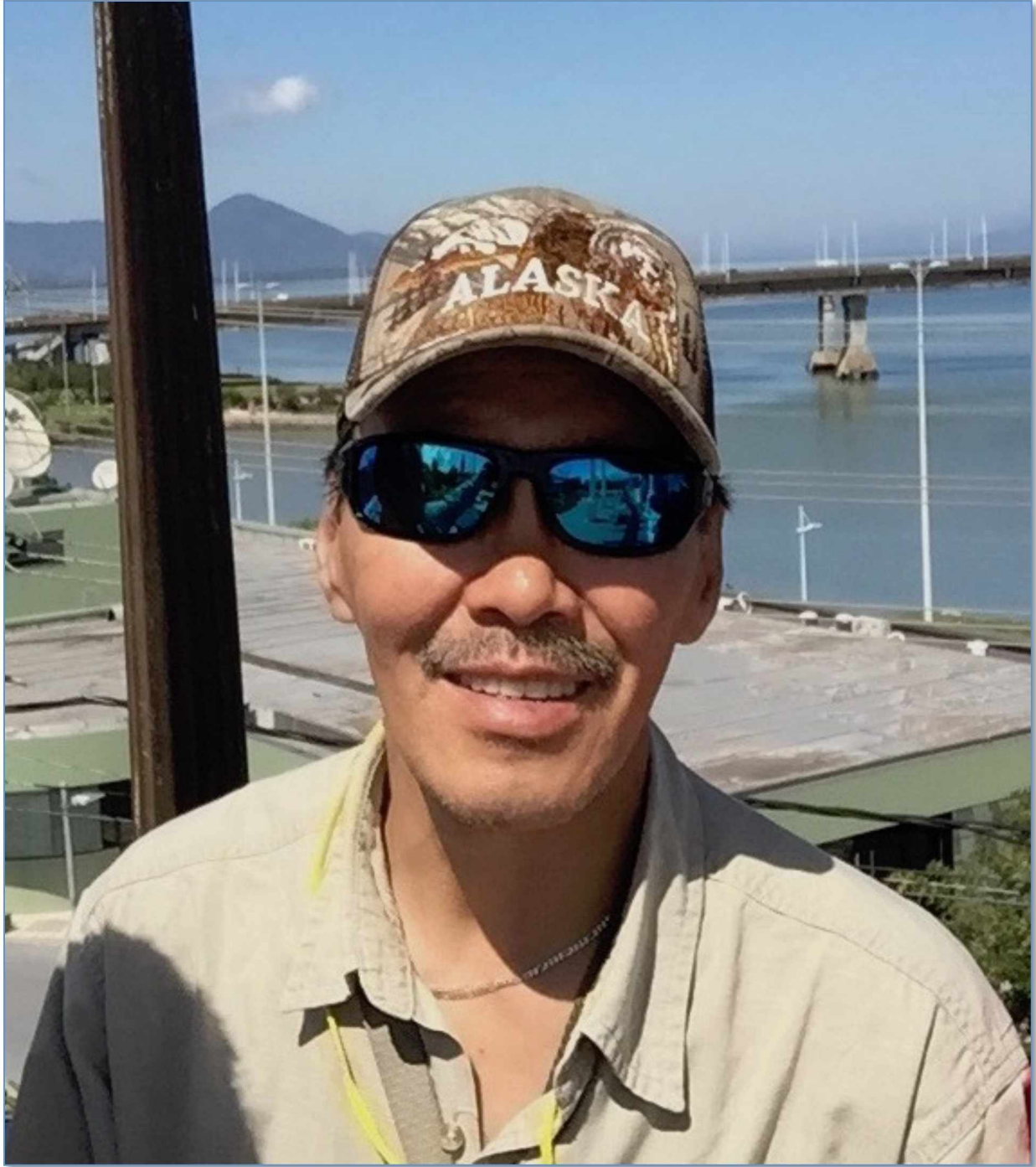


Figure 4.27. Vladimir Susyp. International Whaling Commission 67 meeting, Florianópolis, Brasil, September 2018.  
Photo by Eduard Zdor.

The laboriousness of manually processing a walrus skin and keeping it in good condition is a significant obstacle to the use of traditional skin boats today. Anatoly Kochnev described how the use of baidaras was dying out in Nutepelmen. In the 1990s, only one elder, *Galyavie*, knew how to process walrus skins. The old man complained to Kochnev that no one wanted to learn how to make baidara from him. In the end, *Galyavie* found himself a student, *Galyagirgin*, who for some time after the death of mentor kept a *baidara* for hunting and transportation. Anatoly remembered that in 2008 *Galyagirgin* took him to Kolyuchin Island on a skin boat. The dominance of aluminum boats, along with difficulties processing walrus skins, eventually forced *Galyagirgin* to stop keeping the *baidara* in 2010. Like the tailoring and repair of traditional fur garments, the labor-intensive processing and maintenance of the walrus skin was no match for industrial production. As fur clothes and shoes replaced factory items, leather belts replaced synthetic ropes, so skin boats were supplanted first by wooden whaleboats, and then by aluminum boats. The difference from the fate of traditional fur clothing is that traditional skin boat building has not completely disappeared but has been transformed from a subsistence-oriented to a tourist-oriented one.

#### Dog Sled Musher (*Maglialeen*)

“At the present time an ordinary dog-team has six or seven pairs of animals” (Bogoras 1904, 107)

Unlike a boat, dog and reindeer teams are an individual type of transportation. The hunter and reindeer herder are able to independently train animals, make sleds and harnesses, and transport themselves, people, and goods. Both types of transportation were the backbone of the economy of the reindeer camp, and the coastal hamlet of Bogoras’s time. As the main winter mode of transport, the sled teams significantly developed the temporal and spatial dimensions of the Chukchi settlement.

A notable feature of Neshkan and Enurmino is that these settlements still use this type of transportation, although much less so than they did in Bogoras’s time. This type of transport gained a second wind in the 1990s, saving coastal villages from starvation, and reindeer camps from extinction. This type of transport gained a second wind in the 1990s, saving coastal villages from starvation and reindeer camps from extinction. Dog teams, as in the time of Bogoras,



ensured winter hunting and fishing, and helps communities maintain economic, kinship, and friendship links between settlements. Reindeer teams ensured the nomadism of reindeer camps, which is a guarantee of successful Chukchi reindeer husbandry. The socio-cultural aspect of the sleds is that they provide adherence to traditional subsistence and, as a result, contribute to the preservation of the Chukchi identity. Local authorities support these identity motivators by hosting annual regional reindeer and dog sled races.

The great importance of dog and reindeer teams in the life of local communities is emphasized by the respectful attitude towards team drivers. The Chukchi have a special name for a person who rides a dog sled—*Maglialeen* (Figure 4.28). *Maglialeens* were not just drivers that ensured the movement of people and goods in a region where several thousand people were scattered over a vast territory comparable to several states, but rather provided a homogeneous informational, linguistic, and cultural space. It was obvious to the Chukchi that such a person deserved a special name and a special attitude towards him. I remember how the inhabitants of the reindeer camp were excitedly waiting near the *yarangas* for us coming from afar, first on dog sleds, and since the 1990s on snowmobiles. The campers looked forward to family news from the village, although in the 1980s, radio communications between the reindeer camps and the village were already regular. First, the meal, and then a long tea party, was accompanied by conversations about the weather, road conditions, and, of course, the news in the village. I would say that the guests themselves were more important for the few campers than what they said, because they were fresh conversationalists who brought new facets of communication, entertainment, and relaxation from everyday worries for a short time.

In the 1990s, the importance of dog sledding increased because there was almost no gasoline in Chukotka and snowmobiles had no spare parts. The villagers even went to the district centers and better-off villages to buy food. Konstantin Veketchevun (Figure 4.6), an Enurmino resident told me a story:



Figure 4.28. Konstantin Etyne and his dog team.  
Photo provided by Nikolai Etyne.

“In the 1990s, every year it got worse, until we finally had nothing in the store. Sometimes we received a gift a bag of flour or sugar from our friends from Neshkan. But it was rare, and a little bit, because they were in the same situation. At that time, grocery stores in our villages sold mainly salt, vinegar, baking soda, matches, and sometimes tea. As luck would have it, the sea at that time seemed to be against us. In the sea there were few walruses and seals, and birds disappeared somewhere. Fishing was bad too. We had to travel a lot, and patiently hunt to get and bring home some food. However, our children needed not only meat, they needed shop food, such as milk, bread, sugar, porridge, etc. Even we adults,

seemingly raised on the meat of marine mammals, were also accustomed to *Russian* [grocery] food in boarding schools. Our younger son could not eat only meat, so he suffered, especially, sometimes fainted from hunger. Then I prepared my dog sled and went to Nutepelmen, which is 180 km west of Enurmino to buy food at their store. This is another municipal district, they had a good local authority, a powerful trading company and sparsely populated villages on the Arctic coast. So they had enough food at the grocery store. I had money, fur and tusks for sale and exchange. When I returned home, I had a lot of food in the sled. I was happy. I made the life of my children a little better. Then Abramovich [governor of Chukotka] gave each inhabitant of the village humanitarian aid. Finally, the food was brought to our store. We survived” (Konstantin, 53 years old, Enurmino hunter, July 2016).

In this way, sled dogs provided the villagers with the mobility they needed to survive. The general trends of the Russian economy, which recovered after the collapse of the USSR, led to an increase in the well-being of the villagers. Some villagers regained the ability to buy snowmobiles and ATVs, which reduced the demand for dog teams in Neshkan and Enurmino. However, there are still at least a couple of dozen dog teams in those communities. The villagers hunt seals and fish in autumn, winter and spring, using dog sleds as a means of transportation for these activities.

Considering the phenomenon of dog sledding in the life of the inhabitants of Neshkan and Enurmino, I realize that dog sledding, in fact, is not only a means of transport, but also the reason for the villagers' adherence to the traditional way of life. The owner of a sled dog is forced to practice intensive subsistence in order to provide his dogs with food. During the year, each dog eats about half a kilogram of meat or fish daily. Bearing in mind that there are anywhere from eight to ten dogs in the average Neshkan and Enurmino dog team, the owner needs to additionally harvest about 2,000 kilograms of meat and fish annually. This means that a household needs to harvest at least a couple of walruses, several dozen seals, and hundreds of fish every year to feed their dogs. This circle of interdependence between humans and dogs forces the villagers to adhere to a traditional way of life.

## Reindeer Sled Musher (*Geken 'yl'etyl'yn*)

“If well pastured and not overworked, reindeer are swift; and in two days a single driver often makes two hundred miles, provided the snow is thin and hard, as it usually is on the tundra” (Bogoras 1904, 95).

Nomadism is the backbone of traditional Neshkan reindeer herding. The mobility of the camp provides the herd with forage-rich pastures and landscapes that reduce the impact of severe Arctic weather. For example, during the spring calving season, it is important that the broodstock graze in snowstorm-proof valleys to ensure the survival of newborn calves. In winter, reindeer herder's camps avoid icy pastures. Reindeer teams increase the mobility of reindeer herders and their camps. The elders and the leader of the camp scout the pastures regularly to always have several alternative routes in stock. The reindeer sleds, due to its prevalence and availability, provide such information.

In order to migrate one *yaranga* in Neshkan tundra at least about ten sleds are required. It means at least 10 trained reindeer are needed to transport one *yaranga*. In addition, each reindeer herder must have his own reindeer team for personal trips to address the needs of the camp. There are also additional reindeers that are in the training process. In today's Neshkan reindeer camps, on average, there are three *yarangas*. This implies that the camp must have 40-50 riding deer to maintain mobility. Reindeer herders spend a lot of time with the herd to select and tame the right animals for reindeer sledding. This is a huge training job that requires skill, strength, and patience from the reindeer breeder.

Reindeer herders work with reindeer not only to train them, but also to get the herd used to people. I witnessed a conversation between a mature and young reindeer herders:

“You must not just be near the herd to guard it. The herd needs to get used to you. So, when you have time, do something in the herd. Catch a deer, check its joints, or mark our camp on its ears, or find your riding deer, spend time with him. Work with the herd, the deer must feel that you are with them, they get used to you so much” (Conversation in Neshkan tundra, 1995).

During the Soviet period of Neshkan reindeer herding, each reindeer herding camp had a tractor or an all-terrain vehicle for nomadism. In the summer it was mandatory. For exploration of pastures, the *sovkhos* supplied snowmobiles to the camps. However, due to the shortage of snowmobiles, there were still few of them. When the Soviet model of reindeer herding in Chukotka collapsed, those Neshkan reindeer herding camps, where reindeer teams were used despite the presence of a tractor, survived. They ensured the autonomous existence of the herd and camp. The reindeer teams also indicated that the members of the reindeer camp have a commitment to their way of life, and value their reindeer herd. I have seen how the difference in attitude towards the reindeer team has kept three reindeer herds in Neshkan, while five other camps were eventually forced to join successful camps to keep at least a remnant of the reindeer.

#### 4.2.2. Trends in Types of Transportation

Transport provides not only subsistence and related social functions, but also serves to generate cash income. In turn, cash accumulation is an indicator of the emergence of wealthy entrepreneurs among the subsistence participants. The villagers take to Lavrentia, a district town, fish, walrus tusks, and fur that they have caught or bought for sale. There they buy spare parts and ammunition for themselves, as well as food or goods to sell to fellow villagers in Neshkan and Enurmino. They also transport fellow villagers and goods between settlements for money. For some villagers, the transportation of research teams is becoming a significant business. This is a new additional facet of the mixed cash-subsistence economy, indicating a further shift of the established equilibrium towards cash. It is probably too early to assert the appearance of an elite stratum of villagers in the subsistence group, although elements of it do exist to a certain extent. In any case, the organization of the hunting team is quite costly and testifies to the entrepreneurial qualities of the individual and the accumulation of cash.

In the summer of 2016, after a long break, I visited Neshkan and Enurmino and was surprised to find that the once quite large fleet of individual boats was reduced to a few pieces. At the same time, the hunting community has acquired high-speed large aluminum boats instead of slow-moving wooden whaleboats. Despite the grumbling of the elders about breaking the traditions of the Chukchi hunting, these boats provided high efficiency and small teams of hunters today are able to provide the main need of the settlements for the meat of marine mammals, as large teams used to do before. From an economic point of view, this trend in the

settlement boat fleet has meant that the villagers individually are still on the edge of poverty, and the regional authorities are focused on supporting them through subsidizing a small group of hunters.

Motorcycles, which were widespread in Soviet times, were replaced by a few ATVs. The rather long competition between dog sleds and snowmobiles continues. And has been the gradual dominance of technology. The advantage of dog sledding is the lack of fuel costs. In addition to the fact that fuel is expensive, it is supplied to villages in small quantities. On the other hand, dogs eat more than half of the dog owner's annual prey. The fact that snowmobiles provide the speed and load capacity that dog teams cannot compete with is a decisive factor in choosing the types of transportation. After a surge of interest in dog sledding in the 1990s due to the impoverishment of the population, snowmobiles are now becoming more widespread among the villagers. Only the high price limits their widespread use, and dog teams still compete with snowmobiles, but mostly at close range. The villagers found a way out by buying cheap used snowmobiles from residents of the regional town of Lavrentia. Overall, the villagers are in a rather difficult position to maintain their transportation capacity.

Neshkan reindeer camps, due to the use of many traditional reindeer herding processes, determine the traditional character of transport services. The villagers are happy to fulfill the requests of the reindeer camps for the delivery of food and goods from the village shop by boat, snowmobile, and dog sled. Several of our interlocutors indicated that they regularly exchange walrus meat for reindeer meat with the reindeer camp. Most often, this exchange looks like a friendly relationship. Rodion Rinetegin told me his story of such relationships:

“I visit a reindeer camp every winter. I usually bring with me as a gift one or two rolls of walrus meat or a bag of seal oil. While I am in *yaranga*, we tell each other all sorts of life stories. The topic can be any sudden interest. I talk about village news, basically like all sorts of life stories of my neighbors and acquaintances. The hostess usually treats me well with tundra delicacies. I think that not necessarily because of my gift, but because they are happy with a new person. If the weather is good, then in a day or two I'm going back home. The owner of the *yaranga* always slaughters a deer for my journey. It probably looks like an

exchange, but a good relationship goes a long way. I will not go with my rolls to any yaranga and, moreover, to another reindeer herding camp” (Rodion Rinetegin, 44 years old, Neshkan hunter, July 2016).

Sometimes the reindeer camp orders sea hunters what items and how much they need to bring, primarily due to the need for marine mammal skins and belts. Vasily Roskhinaut, an elder of Neshkan, said that sometimes he was ordered the skin of a young walrus cut with a stocking to make leather belts.

“This is a specific order. In this case, I purposely went to Enurmino in the fall to go to the slaughter of walruses at the *Kenishkun* rookery along with local hunters. There it is easier to choose the right walrus and take it. Enurmino hunters are tolerant that we, the Neshkan inhabitants, hunt with them. The main thing is that we do not hunt ourselves, but only when they do it. I slaughtered the right walrus and skinned it with a stocking and took it home. Then I either cut the belt to the required length myself or took the entire skin to the reindeer camp. Of course, while I was there in *Kenishkun* I also slaughtered a walrus along the way for myself. The made walrus rolls were left until winter in the ice pit of other hunters. During the winter, I came there again on a dog sled and took the rolls to Neshkan” (Vasily Roskhinaut, 62 years old, Neshkan resident, June 2016).

Reindeer herders invite hunters to hunt wolves. Hunting for wolves brings a double benefit to the villagers. They acquire expensive wolf skins to sell, and also receive a reindeer carcass or two, which the herders present to them as a token of gratitude. The villagers on snowmobiles assist in the nomadic camp. The payment for these services is reindeer meat, a favorite food of the residents of coastal villages. Overall, any visit to the reindeer camp implies a gift from the hostess of the yaranga, who usually puts pieces of reindeer meat in a bag as a gift to the guest, along with parcels to relatives or friends living in the village. Davydova (2018, 56; 2019b, 155) believes that an additional motivation for visiting deer camps for some villagers is a return to the taste of food and living conditions from childhood memories.



#### 4.3. Food (*K'ametvan*) and Way of Life (*Lygi Vagyrgyn*)

“The staple food of the Reindeer Chukchee is reindeer meat, and that of the Maritime people, "sea-meat," - the meat of sea-mammals. ... I myself witnessed that Reindeer Chukchee who had not had any blubber for a long time develop a craving for it, and are ready to pay extravagant prices for it. ... On the other hand, the Maritime Chukchee and the Eskimo value reindeer-meat very highly, and call it the "sweet food of reindeer-breeders" (Bogoras 1904, 193)

In the summer of 2016 and 2017, when, together with my local collaborators, I conducted fieldwork in Neshkan and Enurmino, there were test questions in almost every section of our questionnaire. The purpose of these tests was to determine how much the answers and stories of our interlocutors correspond to reality. For example, when our interviewee stated that he/she eats traditional food every day, the test question was when he/she recently ate such food. Basically, the answers to the screening questions confirmed the conformity of the statements. However, there were cases where the villagers tried to determine which answer they thought we would like. Only further conversation revealed the true nutrition of the interlocutor. Probably the inconsistencies were also because the concepts of traditional food have shifted somewhat compared to what it was two generations ago. For example, traditional food in Neshkan and Enurmino has long included store-bought products. Fried flatbread is a prime example, but even tea, sugar, and buttered bread have become an integral part of the Indigenous diet. Therefore, when our interlocutor said that he/she only eats traditional food, this included tea, bread, and canned food.

The combination of local and global with different variability is a typical feature of modern Neshkan and Enurmino communities. For example, my lunch or dinner on this expedition consisted of what my relatives or I fished at sea. It could be a soup of finely chopped walrus meat and fat with leaves (*svitkiret*), boiled seal meat and fat (*memyletol*) and broth (*arapan'y*), dried fish (*tev'el*) and meat (*kykvat'ol*), whale skin (*itk'ilgyn*), and boiled (*ymypat*) or fried (*ymyner*) fish. On another day, it might have been canned meat soup with rice and pasta. Or just pasta and rice with fried chicken or beef, or even canned stew. Breakfast, if I didn't have to go by boat to the sea, was a typical breakfast for a modern resident of the Russian countryside. It contained what is sold in the local store: coffee, tea, sugar, a sandwich with butter or cheese

and canned meat or jam. So, my diet consisted of marine mammal products and what was available to buy with my daily allowance and my mother's pension. It is likely that most pantries in Neshkan differ depending on the success of hunters, fishermen, and cash income of the villagers. A significant number of villagers do not have a paid job, just as not everyone has the means of subsistence, weapons and time to get fish and marine mammals. In the words of Gerlach et al (2020, 90), the food choice in Neshkan and Enurmino “is shaped by cultural preference and availability.” The purpose of this section is to reveal the cultural preferences and available food sources of Neshkan and Enurmino residents.

#### 4.3.1. Food Patterns

The food habits of today’s Neshkan and Enurmino communities, as well as other socio-cultural features of the modern Chukotkan village, are the result of the collision and merging of local global cultures. It should be borne in mind that all groups of villagers, regardless of their food preferences, have long considered tea, sugar, and bread and butter to be an integral part of their traditional diet. To be specific, when a villager claims that he mainly eats meat from marine mammals, it is understood that tea, sugar, and bread are also included in his daily diet. The mixing of subsistence food and store-bought products contributes to the conflicting opinions of villagers regarding their diet. Most villagers estimate their diet is split 50/50 between store-bought and subsistence foods. There are villagers who claim that they cannot get enough to eat if their food consists only of groceries. These people consider the meat of marine mammals to be their foremost food, and store-bought food as a way to diversify their diet. There is also a group of villagers whose diet primarily consists of grocery store food, and traditional food is a sort of delicacy.

School and daycare are direct and indirect sources of food for a large number of locals. The children of the village eat in the school canteen. Adult villagers working in schools and daycare also could eat there for a token amount. Several of my interviewees pointed out that eating in a school cafeteria save a significant portion of their cash income for other household purposes. The villagers consider school meals as an additional source of income because it saves them money. The social function of school meals also greatly enhances the impact on local food culture. Children are introduced to a new type of food in school; when combined with traditional

food at home, they develop food and cultural habits. Even though today's older generations claim that traditional food is delicious, in reality they cannot eat only such food. Their eating habits were also formed during childhood, in preschool and boarding schools. My interlocutors said the “hungry 1990s” were also terrible because it was difficult to eat only sea mammal meat (see the Konstantin Veketchevun story pp. 174-75).

Personal preferences in the composition of the diet of villagers are influenced not only by the identity of motives, but also by other factors such as seasonal migrations of marine mammals, climatic influences, and cash income. Rare winter hunting, even if there are stored walrus meat and whale skin after a successful autumn hunt, forces the villagers to shift the diet towards store food. The occasionally harvested ringed seal is not enough to provide the villagers with daily food. A similar situation occurs in summer between spring and autumn migrations of marine mammals. At this time of the year, the villagers have little choice between store-bought food and a small amount of caught fish and gray whales. Off-season consumption also depends on storage availability. Melting permafrost is damaging ice cellars. Only a few villagers manage to keep the ice cellars running. It is difficult to store large quantities of walrus, whale and seal meat in the refrigerator and wooden shed. Therefore, villagers store small amounts of meat and fish in home freezers or use preservation methods such as pickling. There are new means and methods for processing meat, fish, and plants, such as salt and sugar (Davydova 2019a, Yamin-Pasternak et al 2014). Mushrooms and berries have been an important part of the harvest for several decades, leading locals to believe they are traditional products (Yamin-Pasternak 2008). Traditional food is also a marker in the hierarchy of the village and an indicator of the well-being and dreams of the villagers. Although almost all Indigenous villagers consume traditional food, not everyone can afford to eat it all year round. Some do not have the income to buy hunting equipment; some are too busy at work to go hunting. Only a few have enough income and time to provide themselves with traditional food all year round. This is a significant challenge for today's members of the community. I will consider several Neshkan families as an example, although the gradation is not so noticeable. Rodion Rinetegin (Figure 4.29) and his family had substantial cash income to eat store-bought food all the time and finance their own hunting, fishing, and exchange expeditions all year round to provide themselves with traditional food.



Figure 4.29. Rodion Rinetegin (right) and his companions have a snack during an exchange expedition to the reindeer herders' camp. Neshkan tundra, 2016. Photo provided by Rodion Rinetegin.

Andrei Notagirgin (Figure 4.30) had almost no cash income and his diet depended on the seasons. Food from marine mammals dominated his diet in summer and autumn, when the hunting and fishing seasons were successful. Store-bought foods became the staple food in winter because there was almost no successful hunting and fishing during these seasons. In order to provide himself with cash, he temporarily worked where he could and asked his sister Uliana for help.

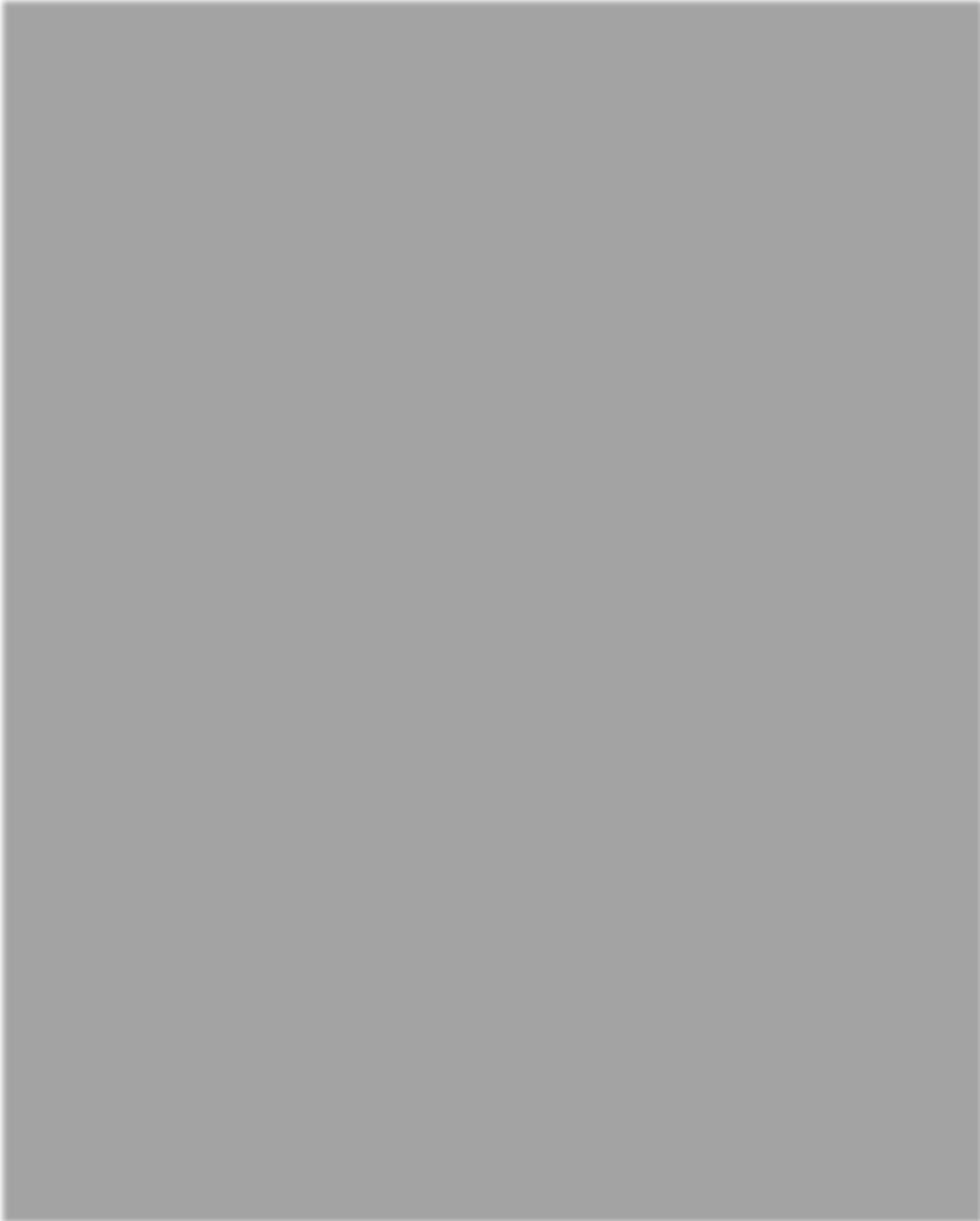


Figure 4.30. Andrei Notagirgin. Neshkan, July 2017.  
Photo provided by Andrei Notagirgin.

Uliana Notagirgina (Figure 4.31) had a stable cash income, but had to support her unemployed husband and brother, who were unable to provide their households with traditional food. She told me that it was good luck for their family when relatives shared walrus roll with them. Overall, the villagers dreamed of having both traditional and store-bought foods in abundance in their diet. There was also another group of villagers who desired of providing their families with fresh vegetables and fruits, in addition to frozen and canned store products. This category of villagers has moved to district and regional cities, although it is not significant in number.



Figure 4.31. Uliana Notagirgina (right) and her son Nikolai feast on vil'egyt (fermented seal flipper) and velponty (fermented walrus kidney). Neshkan, June 2016. Photo by Eduard Zdor.

The key reasons for promoting the adherence to traditional food are that local grocery stores are expensive and traditional food is familiar and tasty. The villagers' incomes are not enough to provide themselves with adequate store-bought food. This situation is typical for remote Indigenous villages across the Arctic (Wenzel 2000; 2005; Wheeler and Thornton 2005). Therefore, local residents have an additional motivation to include products of subsistence hunting and fishing in their diet.

Official sources report that the registered unemployment rate in the Chukotka district is 13.67% (Labor market 2017). Our interviewees, who have experience working in municipal agencies, claimed that the real unemployment rate is about 2-3 times higher. This means that 25-40 percent of the adult population of Indigenous villages does not have a steady income and their life depends on traditional subsistence. Sociological surveys confirm this assumption. In 2011, 737 kilograms of meat, fish, birds, and berries were eaten per family (Kochnev and Zdor 2016, 80). Considering the average family size of three in Chukotkan villages (GKS.ru N.d.) and the customary law of mandatory sharing of traditional food with neighbors and relatives, this means that in 2011, about 200 kilograms of traditional food was consumed per capita. This estimate is not so far from the modern estimate of Dudarev et al (2019, 11-12) 192.5 kg per one Indigenous inhabitant. In other words, every villager consumes a half kilo of locally harvested foods a day. A comparable numbers occur in other Indigenous communities of the Arctic (Wolfe and Walker 1987, 65; Wenzel et al 2016, 152), which pointed to the very similar sociocultural patterns.

#### 4.3.2. Nutritional Shifts Among Villagers

“The Chukchee like to try every kind of "alien-food," and even become accustomed to condiments, like mustard and pepper. They even offer sacrifices of sugar, bread, etc., to the spirits, supposing that they are also fond of new kinds of food” (Bogoras 1904, 201).

Members of the hunting *obshchinas* in Enurmino and Neshkan often told me that they see their mission as “feeding fellow villagers.” It is difficult to construe unequivocally because they complement each other whether the hunters see their responsibility as part of a tradition to provide the village with meat from marine mammals, or whether the hunters feel the responsibility to feed the village relates to the regional subsidy that hunting *obshchinas* receive to cover the basic costs of hunting, including wages. The small group of *chastniki* (independent



hunters hunting outside the subsidized hunting *obshchina*) does not clarify this issue. Some of them willingly share their prey with all the villagers who come ashore. This is what Sasha did when he made announcements on the local social network. “We got a walrus. In about an hour we will arrive at the village. Come ashore to take your share of the meat.” Others, like Rodion, prefer to fill their *uveran* (ice pits) first and only share meat with neighbors, relatives, and friends. However, any villager who was on the shore at the moment when they arrived in the village with prey had the opportunity to get a piece of meat. Both options, Sasha’s and Rodion’s, correspond to the Chukchi traditional distribution (Bogoras 1909, 631). Most likely, the goal of local hunters to “feed their fellow villagers” is traditional for ordinary egalitarian hunting-gathering communities, where the redistribution of hunted products is the core survival strategy of the community. Gurven and Hill’s (2009, 55) quantitative analysis revealed that in hunting-gathering communities, families with children often receive large shares of hunting prey. It turns out that the government's strategy for preserving the identity of local communities coincided with customary law so closely that they now successfully complement each other in helping local communities incorporate the cash economy into the traditional way of life.

A fairly clear trend in Neshkan and Enurmino has become a shift in the subsistence economy towards the processing and consumption of traditional Arctic food in a Western style. This drift is revealed in reduction of the share of marine mammal meat in favor of fish and land animals (Dudarev et al 2019, 12), processing of traditional food sources using salt, sugar, and spices (Davydova 2019a), including making the meat of marine mammals taste like "beef" (Yamin-Pasternak et al 2014, 632).

Once in Kotzebue, Alaska, my hostess Vika Owen (Figure 4.32), former Uelen, Chukotka resident, cooked fresh walrus meat, which we took with us to visit her Inuit friends. It was a supper of subsistence food complemented by tea, local blueberry jam, and apple pie. Despite the fact that the hosts and guests praised the walrus food, almost the entire walrus dish was returned to us at the end of the dinner. The dinner attendees tended to eat store-bought and iconic traditional foods, such as dried (jerky) and frozen fish, caribou, and whale skin (*maktak* in Siberian Yupik, *itgilgyn* in Chukchi). I observed a similar pattern at local festivities in Utqiagvik and Nome and also at Chukotkan regional and district events. Although contributors bring almost all types of traditional sea food to community dinners, most of the participants in the meal prefer

to enjoy dishes made from store-bought food along with the iconic Indigenous dish like *maktak*. This trend is more typical for regional cities, while in small and remote Indigenous villages, there is a greater commitment to the local cuisine of the Bogoras times.



Figure 4.32. Vika Owen, former Uelen and current Kotzebue resident, and her traditional walrus dish Kotzebue March 2019. Photo by Eduard Zdor.

As for the Neshkan and Enurmino communities, traditional subsistence food is still of great importance. Variations in the food pattern correspond with household cash income. Those with substantial and permanent earnings prefer to mix iconic subsistence diets with food from grocery stores. Yamin-Pasternak et al (2014, 630) argues that this is due not only to food preferences, but also because of social etiquette. Those with low cash incomes claim that they

are not satiated with store food and prefer to eat the full range of traditional food every day. I observed such differentiation between the villagers even among the members of the same family. Elena and Piotr Netepkir, sister and brother, 44 and 43 years old, respectively, had different eating habits. Because Elena worked as a teacher at the school, her family belonged to a small number of high-income families. Elena's income from her schoolwork provided her family with a boat, a snowmobile, and an ATV. Her husband Rodion Rinetegin and son Yuri mainly hunted walruses and whales in the summer and worked part-time in municipal enterprises in the winter. When I asked how often they eat walrus meat, Elena replied that it is rather hard to digest that food. Therefore, although they, like most villagers, are happy to prepare two unique types of walrus food, soup (*svitkaret*) and frozen fermented roll (*velk'opalgyn*), walrus meat does not take up much space in their diet. Meanwhile Pyotr's diet mostly consisted of subsistence food of the entire traditional spectrum. He hunted and fished all year round and hardly worked for cash, only seldom selling fish and profitable parts of marine mammals.

#### 4.3.3. Subsistence Consumer Groups

Cash income generation in Neshkan and Enurmino is not high enough to eat only store-bought food. Therefore, all villagers, including newcomers, have subsistence food in their diet. The amount and type of subsistence food consumed are the main criteria for stratifying consumer groups. The names of the units are translations from Russian into Chukchi because the social organization of Neshkan and Enurmino has changed significantly compared to what was found by Bogoras's research. Because subsistence activity still has a significant impact on the socio-cultural model of the Chukchi settlement, many subsistence terms correspond.

*Ivinil'yt ynk'am K'oragynretyl'yt* (sea hunters and reindeer herders) are active subsistence actors working in subsidized enterprises. This group of villagers has a leading position both in the consumption and handling of subsistence food. They and their family members consume large amounts of subsistence foods, both because of its availability and because they are habituated to this diet from birth. Because the members of this group have cash income from their subsistence work, store food is also available to them. During the hunting season, store-bought food supplements the diet and also provides variety. In the off-season, when subsistence food is scarce, they make do with store-bought products. A distinctive feature of this group is

expressed in the opinion of Mikhail N. (52 years old, Neshkan hunter, August 2017), who claimed that store-bought food does not satisfy him and is too low-calorie for a long stay at sea.

*Y'tvermechyt* (boat owners) are also active subsistence actors. Funding for subsistence activity comes from cash income from their or their family members' employment in municipal institutions. Monetary income supports their subsistence activity, which they practice for the traditional way of life and acquiring habitual subsistence food. Cash income also provides them with access to store-bought food. Despite the great role of subsistence cuisine, the diet of this group is balanced between store-bought and subsistence food. Vehicles and equipment purchased at their own expense give them freedom of choice in the types and amounts of subsistence food they consume. Elena (44 years old, wife of an independent sea hunter, July 2016) argued that marine mammal food is too "heavy" to eat every day, so it should be alternated with store-bought food.

*Nymytval'yt* (village residents) are villagers who have cash income from their municipal work. In Soviet times, they were called *poselkovye* (village dwellers), because they primarily did not engage in subsistence activity and spent all their time within the village. Work reduces their ability to practice subsistence activity. In addition, work for some of them is not only a way to get cash, but also a natural way of life. These factors dictate that store-bought foods are the basis of their diet. Subsistence foods diversify the diet of members of this group, but it seems to be increasingly becoming a delicacy and a time machine to the old traditions (Davydova 2019b). The proportion of subsistence food in their diet depends on fishing and gathering during their free time. They also have access to a share of subsistence food from a subsidized hunting community. Work in municipal institutions obliges them to observe "odor" etiquette (Yamin-Pasternak et al 2014), which also limits their consumption of fermented food.

*Ynpyl'yt* (old people) and *rochevenaral'yt* (infirm villagers) are part of a group that includes pensioners and social welfare recipients such as single mothers, the disabled, and the registered unemployed. The amount of cash the members of this group have is not significant and their opportunities for practiced subsistence activity are also small. The members of this group are almost entirely dependent on the share of subsistence food that the hunting *obshchina* gives to the villagers. They, and especially the elders, are willing to supplement their diet with

available subsistence food that comes from available subsistence activity, mainly fishing and gathering.

*Emigchiretyl'yt* (unemployed) are unemployed villagers who cannot or do not want to register with the social service. Members of this group have almost no monetary income due to the limited job market as well as their commitment to a subsistence life. Sea hunting and reindeer herding are not available for them, and other types of subsistence activities are also difficult due to the lack of cash to purchase weapons and gear. Some members of this group practice subsistence using almost exclusively traditional equipment and modes of transport. These people, due to circumstances, eat mainly subsistence food, which they either get themselves or their relatives and the hunting *obshchina* share with them. As no one lives today without store-bought food, most of the members of this group are highly dependent on other groups. Store-bought food is available to them when relatives share with them. They also exchange subsistence products for money or food.

*Tann'yt* (newcomers) is a small group of villagers from different regions of Russia. They work in municipal institutions and have a stable cash income. They eat mostly store-bought food. School staffs also eat in the school cafeteria. Subsistence food in their diet consists mainly of terrestrial animals, fish, berries, and mushrooms. However, among the newcomers there are those who live and eat like the Chukchi. In 2014, when I was once again in Neshkan, I met a Russian individual named Dmitry S. He was about 40 years old, born and raised in Neshkan, and was married to a Chukchi woman. A couple of years later, he moved to Lavrentia, a district town where many Neshkan families moved. This is probably a common phenomenon, because in almost every Chukchi village there are newcomers who, for various reasons, adopt the local way of life. Nikolay, about the same age as Dmitry, born and raised in Neshkan, is even a sea hunter in the Lavrentia hunting *obshchina*. Johangir, 36, loves sea hunting and local cuisine in Enurmino. What they all have in common is that they are married to Chukchi women. While they differ from each other in almost everything: Dmitry was born and raised in a newcomer's family, Nikolay grew up in a mixed family consisting of a newcomer's mother and a Chukchi stepfather, and Johangir came to Enurmino as an adult. Overall, this only confirms that such newcomers are the exception rather than the rule.

The boundaries between these groups are blurred. Villagers move from one group to another for various reasons, sometimes gets a job, someone starts receiving an old-age pension, or cannot cope with alcohol problems. However, the size of the groups is relatively stable. This is due to the limited job market, generational transitions, and the cultural characteristics of the village. One thing is clear: all groups of villagers depend on subsistence food. It is a unifying component that determines the way of life, worldview, and commitment to their community.

#### 4.3.4. Distribution of Subsistence Food

“With the whale, the meat, as has been mentioned, belongs to the whole village, generally to whoever wants to take part in the carving” (Bogoras 1909, 632)

The distribution of subsistence harvests in today's Neshkan and Enurmino communities is carried out in mixed local and global ways. In this social action, the norms of customary law, described by Bogoras, still prevail. This is due to the remoteness of Indigenous communities and the government's strategy to support traditional natural resource use.

In June 2016, I went hunting with Rodion and his son many times. On one day, we were searching for a passage between the ice floes for a long time, but the ice fields were tightly closed. This meant that once again we would not be able to get to the place where the walrus migrate. So that the hunting expedition would not go to waste, we had to hunt seals. After two unsuccessful attempts to shoot a bearded seal on a "rotten" ice floe, we moved to a different type of ice field, where, according to Rodion's observations, ringed seals prefer to rest. He turned out to be right. After a careful observation of the ice field, we found several resting seals and Rodion quite quickly shot a young ringed seal. His son Yuri, eager to prove himself a hunter, rushed to hunt another seal, but came with nothing. Early in the morning we returned to the village and Rodion generously offered me to take the harvested seal. Rodion told me: “We call such young ringed seals *kastrul'ka* (a small pot) because the butchered seal fits almost all in a large pot.” My mother was delighted with the captured seal, because on previous trips we had returned with nothing. After butchering, she distributed most of the seals to our neighbors. For lunch we had boiled seal ribs with fat and braided intestines, my father's favorite dish.

The way my mother distributed the harvested seal is common in Neshkan and Enurmino. The distribution of harvested walrus and whales is approximately the same. Hunting *obshchinas* tow the harvested whales or walrus to the shore of the village and the residents get their share of the animals, while the hunting *obshchinas* is entitled to a subsidy. However, there are signs indicating that money, a universal commodity as a means of economic exchange, is gradually penetrating traditional exchange transactions. In the social networks of Neshkan and Enurmino, there are announcements like "Fish for sale" or "Fermented walrus meat (seal oil) is bought." Sales volumes are small but stable. Although the traditional distribution of subsistence products is still common in Neshkan and Enurmino, the cash economy is slowly being integrated into the social life of the villages. The dominant sellers are those who are engaged in subsistence and do not have cash income and therefore need cash to obtain food and equipment for their activities. The buyers are families that have cash income—social benefits or a salary—but they either do not have adult family members, or they do not have time because of work. At the end of winter, typically the time when supplies of walrus meat and whale skins run out, trade deals are made because the villagers want traditional food.

In other Indigenous villages located closer to the district towns, the sale of subsistence food is already acquiring the features of commercial operations, that is, significant volumes, regularity, and export outside the village. For example, I noticed on the regional social network WhatsApp an ad for the sale of 2300 kg of smoked whale skin, which was sold along with other attractive subsistent products like caviar or fish. One of my interlocutors commented on this fact by saying that the native villagers are starting to commoditize the traditional use of natural resources, because for some part of the villagers this is the only source of cash. Klokov (2019, 2020), discussing this phenomenon using the example of several Indigenous settlements in Arctic Russia, classifies the phenomenon as an "informal (expolar) economy." The essence of this type of economy is that it is "aimed not at the accumulation of capital, but at survival" (Klokov 2020, 158). On the same basis, it is quite possible that similar phenomena should occur in other regions of the Arctic. However, Harder and Wenzel (2012, 315) point out that "sales of seal and other traditional foods among Inuit are virtually non-existent and subject to social stigmatization." Most likely, their authorities provide a sufficient level of social benefits so that it would not be profitable for the native villagers to commoditize subsistence food.



Limited sources of income also affect the food patterns of the villagers. Without substantial income, the villagers cannot purchase transport and hunting equipment for hunting at sea. Therefore, in Neshkan and Enurmino, sea hunters provide the villagers with the meat of sea mammals, which most of the villagers cannot get on their own. Hunters and reindeer herders make up about 15 percent of the population of Neshkan and Enurmino, while providing about half of their diet (Figure 4.33). A similar phenomenon occurs in the coastal villages of Alaska. According to Magdanz and Utermohle (1998), in Wales “20% of the households accounted for 70% of the community's harvest,” while the low-income part of the population provides for barely a quarter of the subsistence of the village's food. Whatever model of subsistence food redistribution works in an Indigenous settlement, it is clear that most villagers are not satisfied with the amount and type of meat shared with them. To fill the need for subsistence food and diversify their diet, Neshkan and Enurmino villagers are forced to shift towards affordable fishing and gathering. Berry and mushroom picking have also become a significant type of subsistence activity. The fact that the subsistence species of most of the villagers shifted from specialized sea hunting and reindeer herding to fishing and gathering was perhaps the biggest shift compared to the Chukchi settlement of Bogoras times.

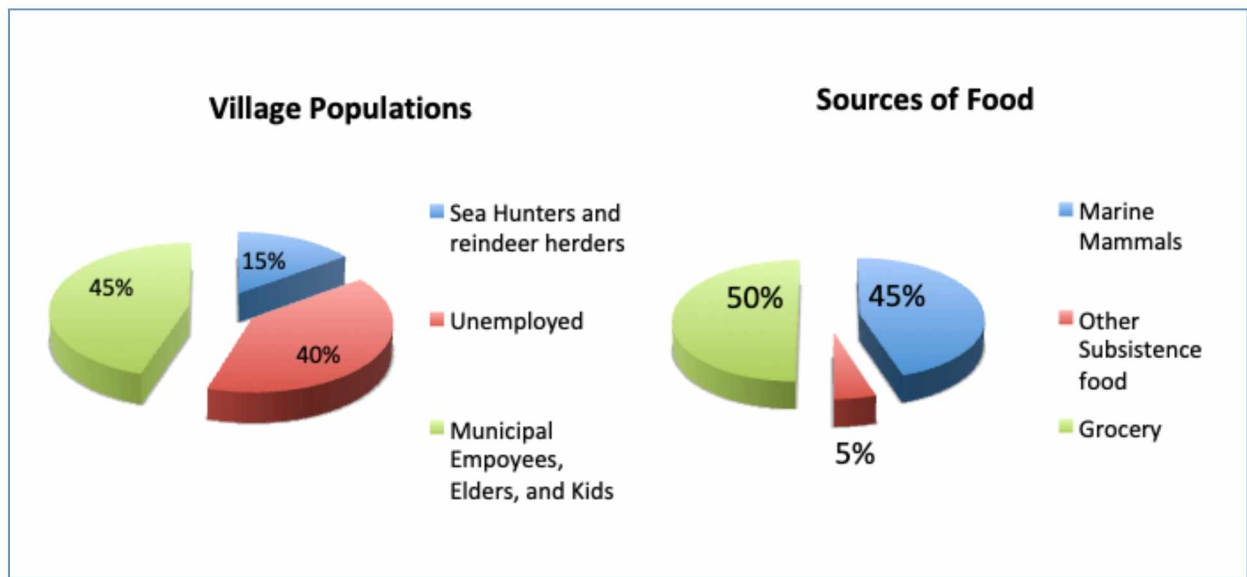


Figure 4.33. Village Populations and Food Sources

The crisis in reindeer husbandry, innovations in marine hunting, and the impoverishment of the villagers led to two main trends. First, there was a decrease in the number of subsistence practitioners in the two main subsistence economies of the Chukchi, reindeer herding and sea hunting. For the same reason, the villagers had to find an alternative to subsistence practices to survive. Together, subsistence activity trends have contributed to the stratification of traditional food consumers.

In the winter of 1996-1997, I spent two months in reindeer herding camps. There we selected deer into a "commercial" herd for slaughter with the aim of selling. Since the owners of the *yarangas* knew that the supply of fuel, equipment, clothing, and store food and marine mammal meat and fat to the reindeer camps depended on our work, they were very hospitable and fed us everything they had. Deer meat was the basis of the meals, although fish, fermented walrus meat, and seal oil were also quite common. The main drink was black tea and the hosts often served traditional bread fried in seal oil. On New Year's Eve, the hostess of our *yaranga* even cooked schnitzel with buckwheat. Overall, the diet was varied, although it consisted mainly of subsistence food. Two decades later, instead of eight reindeer camps, only three remained in the Neshkan Tundra. Nearly 100 members of the reindeer camps were forced to move to Neshkan and Enurmino. In the settlements, their diet has changed significantly, reindeer meat has been replaced with meat from marine mammals, and store food has increased significantly in their diet.

In the summer of 2016, I did research at Enurmino. I rented a small dry house from the family of a sea hunter. Because it was their opportunity to earn cash, they temporarily went to live with their parents. The kitchen in this house was stocked with food from a local store, mixed with frozen local fish caught at this time of year. In the shed attached to the house lay the skin and the blubber of a butchered seal. Looking at the stored food, it could be assumed that the family had a mixed diet without much dominance of subsistence food, like the reindeer herding camp, which I wrote about above. However, it was the middle of summer, when the meat of marine mammals is quite rare in Neshkan and Enurmino.

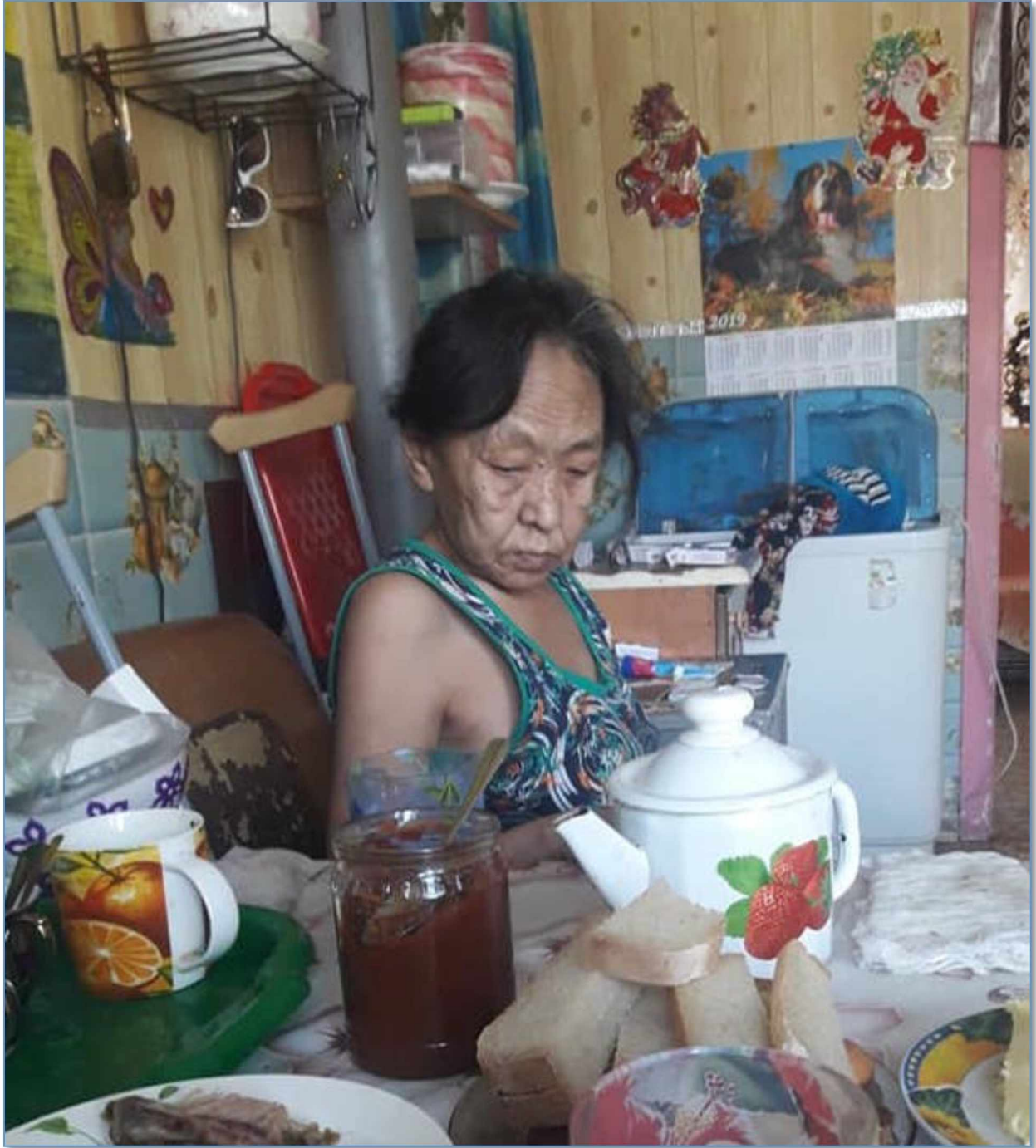


Figure 4.34. Lidia Taenom. Enurmino, 2019.  
Photo provided by Eduard Ankaun.

Because I was a guest in the village, my older cousins insistently invited me to eat at their homes. Lidia Taenom (Figure 4.34), the eldest of the sisters, was 62 years old that summer. Her notable feature was that she worked all her life as a cook at a local school. Probably for this

reason, her family had a markedly Europeanized cuisine, or rather I would say Europe-ish. I observed that Lydia was updating the recipes of the traditional cuisine of the Maritime Chukchi due to her professional experience. Nevertheless, the traditional Chukchi food she cooked was truly traditional. Her sausages made from walrus intestines and internal organs with fat were as tasty as in other houses of Neshkan and Enurmino. At another lunch she made a wonderful fish dish with mashed potatoes. Although we have known each other for many years and I often ate at her house, I was surprised by the new flavors of Chukchi subsistence food. When I mentioned this to Lidia, she replied to me: “Due to the peculiarities of my cooking, many newcomers who come to our village on a business trip prefer to eat at my house. Probably because they get the usual taste of European cuisine, even with traditional ingredients.”

I believe Lidia's skill in cooking was also the reason her family became notorious among the villagers. In the famine-stricken 1990s, when the villagers ate mostly subsistence food, her little son Peter fainted from hunger because he could not eat only the meat of marine mammals. Fainting spells of hunger, which became a symbol of the 1990s, were known in neighboring Neshkan also. Aleksey Tyneskitegin (Figure 4.35), a sea hunter from Neshkan, in those years worked in a reindeer herding camp near Enurmino, told us:

“I worked in the tundra during the 1990s, so I endured to lack of food in the store more easily. But in Enurmino, a child fainted from hunger. Therefore, Anna Petrovna Moiseeva, the head of the village administration, requested an all-terrain vehicle to bring any food. The all-terrain vehicle came to us to the reindeer camp so that we could send reindeer meat. We brought reindeer meat on an all-terrain vehicle and just on the same day Enurmino hunters got the whale” (Aleksey Tyneskitegin, 52 years old, Neshkan hunter, August 2017).





Figure 4.35. Alexey Tyneskitegin. Neshkan, August 2017.  
Photo provided by Rodion Rinetegin.

This case indicates that local communities are equally dependent on subsistence and store-bought food. The cuisine model was built back in the Soviet period of the region and the social upheaval caused by its collapse and has been explored from different perspectives by recent studies. In particular, in the subsistence segment of the mixed Indigenous diet, food from marine mammals prevails (Dudarev et al 2019, 12). In more westernized Indigenous villages, subsistence smelling meal, being stigmatized, has been transformed into festively "tastily rotten" food (Yamin-Pasternak et al 2014, 640) instead of the everyday tasty-fermented food. In the

reindeer camps, “doshirak (fast food) has become a traditional food” (Davydova 2019b, 1413), while the subsistence cooking itself in the villages becomes a “time machine,” bringing back memories of the Chukchi from the time of Bogoras. Overall, the mentioned conclusions are applicable to a certain extent to the communities of Neshkan and Enurmino. Consumption patterns depend on various factors and are as follows.

#### 4.3.5. Processing of Subsistence Products

“Although it would be easy to construct storerooms in the frozen ground, in which meat could be preserved in good condition, the Chukchee are satisfied with their ill-protected cellars, in which the provisions soon begin to become putrid. Therefore both the Reindeer and the Maritime Chukchee live on putrid meat throughout the summer and part of the winter” (Bogoras 1904, 195).

Along with successful hunting the process and storage of food have great importance for the consumption of traditional food. Nowadays, villagers use several types of storage methods for storing subsistence products.

A traditional ice cellar or a temporary deep hole in the permafrost on the seashore is used for fermentation and long-term storage of meat and fat. What Bogoras peremptorily perceived as a " ill-protected cellars " for food storage was in fact a Chukchi traditional way to diversify food. In a culture that does not use salt for cooking, fermentation is a significant contributor to flavor diversity. A shed or an extension to the house is used for short-term storage. Depending on the temperature of the outside air, these buildings keep the subsistence products from several days to two weeks. Such structures are also used for long-term storage of dry meat and fish, melted seal oil, and salted fish. Traditional processing methods such as fermentation and drying are still relevant, albeit difficult. Melting permafrost complicates the preservation of ice cellars and degrades the quality of traditional fermentation of meat. Drying meat and fish are complicated by the low temperature and high humidity in the coastal villages.

Villagers use freezers for long-term storage. However, the capacity of one freezer is not enough to store the required amount of meat. Therefore, in some cases, villagers combine a freezer with an ice cellar; first they freeze meat, fish, and edible plants in the freezer and then

move the frozen food into an ice cellar. However, difficulties also compound one another; not all villagers have a freezer, and not all have an ice cellar.

These circumstances, as well as the socio-cultural shifts of the villagers, led to the emergence of new methods of traditional processing of subsistence products, among which salting, sugar dressing, and pickling (Davydova 2019a) are the most common. A plastic bucket and synthetic rope, which are much more convenient and cheaper than traditional leather belts and gear, have replaced the traditional tools, and in turn, have changed the methods of processing and storage. For example, the fall fish catch was traditionally kept in a sealskin bag, where it was fermented. The bag kept the frozen flesh hydrated. Now the villagers put the fish they caught in plastic buckets and salt it.

Traditionally, walrus meat is fermented using the rolling method. To sew the roll tightly, the villagers used (and in some cases still use) a rope cut from the piece of meat itself. At the same time, some villagers, avoiding additional efforts to cut the skin, use synthetic rope. But this method is not organic since there is an impact on the meat due to contact. Instead of gradually fermenting, rolled meat begins to rot at the crosslinking site.

The difficulties of traditional processing and storage of subsistence foods, the combination of local and global cuisines, shifts in the dietary habits of villagers, as well as the changed migration schedules of marine mammals all contribute to an increase in the importance of grocery stores. Even subsidies for hunting communities, which aim to provide the population of villages with traditional food, cannot withstand the impact described above.

In spring and autumn, when hunting for migratory marine mammals provides villagers with a large amount of prey, and average low temperatures ensure long-term storage of meat, consumption of subsistence products increases. In winter, the consumption of traditional food is reduced due to the harsh hunting conditions. The bodies of marine mammals are also changing under the influence of climate change. Some villagers stated that the ice seals now sink after being shot even in late fall, although they traditionally had a lot of fat at this time of year and did not sink when killed. Hunters speculate that this new phenomenon can be explained by the fact that marine mammals have adapted to shifting seasons and changing sea temperatures. In summer, the number of marine mammals near the villages is limited. Only gray whales feed in



the sea near the village, but the ability to catch these animals is limited due to small quotas. In addition, the ability to store whale meat is limited, so hunters hunt whales as the population consumes them.

Climate changes as well as sociocultural shifts are affecting the processing and preservation of traditional foods. The absence of perennial ice gives marine mammals the opportunity to remain in the Bering Strait almost all year round. Hunting for migrating whales and walrus begins almost two months earlier than in recent decades (Zdor 2021a, 79) and ends a couple of months later than in previous decades. Together, these circumstances are changing the ability of villagers to process and consume subsistence food. Now they are forced to switch to the current consumption of fresh sea game, as fermentation and refrigeration for long-term storage is difficult. Fishing and gathering is gaining a large share in subsistence products.

#### 4.3.6. Global and Local Perspective on Subsistence Food Governance

The Chukchi's hunting and distribution of the marine mammal are governed by international, federal, and regional legislation. Because sea hunting is designed to meet the cultural and nutritional needs of the Indigenous people, customary law is also considered. In accordance with international and federal laws, marine mammal hunting is the exclusive right of the Chukotka Indigenous people. The regional government provides subsidies for hunting to a limited list of registered hunting *obshchinas* (Lobanov). State subsidies regulate hunting *obshchinas* in providing villagers with the meat and fat of marine mammals. Because the legal and financial system for providing traditional hunting is intended to be a means of preserving the Indigenous identity, Neshkan and Enurmino hunting *obshchinas* use elements of customary law to distribute the results of hunting. Because local and global features are mixed, the existing model of the distribution of hunting results is complicated by some circumstances and remains a work in progress.

It would seem that hunting teams are the owners of subsistence products. This is consistent with customary law, but since most hunters are hired workers, it appears that the regional authorities are the owners of the hunting products distributed. The regional authorities cannot claim this because the quota is allocated to the Indigenous people. The lack of regulation of property rights causes uncertainty in the social order and is the reason that each settlement

itself decides to whom the products belong. In a sense, this is reminiscent of the rules of customary law, in which everything rests on the traditions of a common view of justice. In each village, the role of the owner is determined by the personal characteristics of the hunting community's leader.

The distribution of subsistence food in Neshkan and Enurmino is provided in a mixed way, delivered through the customary law of the local communities. Rituals, festivities, and trade relationships assure the distribution of subsistence products. Stable kinship and neighborhood relations are both a means of ensuring distribution and beneficiaries. Hunting *obshchinas* are the main source of subsistence food in the village, but hunters need boats, motors, weapons, gasoline, and ammunition. Their families need groceries and the goods of modern society. The modern provision of food and cultural needs of the villagers involuntarily contributes to a clash in their worldviews, because the cash economy is also an integral part of a remote Indigenous settlement.

International law and the Russian federal government, by approving the distribution of marine hunting products through customary law, revived these rules after several decades of Soviet suppression. A crucial part of customary law in the distribution of hunting products was built on modern interpretations of the traditional worldview of the Indigenous peoples of Chukotka. Bogoras (1907, 407), Tein (1984), and Khakhovskaya (2018), argued that according to Chukotkan traditional beliefs, the soul of the killed animal is a guest in the village, voluntarily sharing its flesh. Willerslev (2009) and Willerslev et al (2014) believe that these animistic practices were still in demand among the Indigenous people of Chukotka. In their discussions, they highlighted the phenomenon of reciprocity, which is a key element in the relationship between humans and animals. Fienup-Riordan (1990, 168-169) argues that reciprocity in the human-animal relationship consists of respectful treatment of the animal, in which case it shares its flesh with humans. Tein (1984) described that in honor of the guest (the whale that was caught), the villagers arrange a big holiday, they serve him with valuable fresh water, return part of his flesh to his habitat, and entertain him so that he can pass on to his fellow tribesmen how well they are welcomed in this village. Khakhovskaya (2018, 78) even concludes that the relatives of the harvested animal observe this holiday from their worlds.

Reciprocity implies a mutually beneficial sharing of material and / or spiritual things for exchange. This is most likely why the Chukchi of the settlements that I am researching conduct special rituals before the beginning of the hunting season, and before a big hunt, if a large number of walrus are to be slaughtered. In other words, this rite contains an invitation to exchange, tangible reciprocity. However, when it comes to sharing the flesh, the exchange does not seem to be equivalent. The master of the herd or the soul of animals shares their flesh with the human being, while the human being does not share, but only feeds with delicacies before the hunt and organizes an honorary reception and thanks for the generosity at the end of the hunt. I believe these interpretations are lacking something. Can we really conclude that the guest voluntarily came and shared his flesh, his soul was pleased, part of his flesh was returned so that the soul would raise the animal again? There may be joy, respect, and reciprocity in this relationship, but it looks like a one-sided relationship or even a gimmick. If there is no respect for the hunted animal, luck leaves the hunter. If there is a respectful attitude, the animal voluntarily gives itself to the hunter.

It seems that some of the Chukotkan rituals and traditions practiced in the Bogoras era may indicate that between the human "people" and the animal "peoples" there was still a way to share flesh. Bogoras (1907, 522), describing the funeral of the coastal peoples of Chukotka, noted that the deceased were left "on the ground in the wilderness." The term wilderness does not necessarily correspond accurately the tundra for reindeer herders and the coast for the seaside inhabitants were not a desert, but a very familiar system of localities with distinguished places, and often these prominences were named after the dead. The soul of the deceased, according to traditional beliefs, moved to other worlds, while polar foxes, crows, seagulls and other animals ate his flesh. Another example of sharing flesh can be interpreted in the tradition that the elders told me about. There was a tradition that if a member of the boat crew falls into the sea, this means that the sea takes the person and the fallen one was forbidden to be rescued. In such interpretations of the cycle of flesh, which facilitate the passage of souls through the worlds, there is reciprocity. On the other hand, this statement contradicts the terminology of the Chukchi of the animal world. According to Chukchi grammar, a person and an animal are clearly distinguished according to the question, who is it (*man'in*)? - This is a man, and what is it (*r'emut*)? - This is not a person, but a living being or object.

Because these transitions are tangible and transcendental at the same time, there is a possibility that reciprocity in human-animal relationships is present not only in the minds of people but also in their actions. Elders' hunters described the human-animal relationship in the late 2000s and early 2010s as a journey of soul and flesh. Before the hunt, hunters turn to the spirits of the sea (*An'k'avagyrgyn*) with requests. They reinforce their appeals (*Enantaaronatgyrgyn*) by offering food (*Ninegnintytuk'emat* or *Nenaneparavk'emat*) to the spirits. The spirits of the sea, for example, the master of a walrus herd (*Ryrkakaly*) can accept gifts and then good luck comes to the hunters. In this case, hunters return parts of the flesh of the captured animals (pieces of the heart and other internal organs) to the sea (*An'k'y*). Khakhovskaya (2018, 77), explains this tradition by the belief that the soul of the animal receives flesh back a part of its flesh in order to restore the entire body.

However, the journey of the flesh doesn't end there. My interlocutors could not explain why, but they were sure that they were obliged to share-*Et'eivetyk*, the obtained marine mammals, with neighbors-*Enaalyt* and relatives-*Chymchylyt*. It is a fairly common fact when the bearers of traditional culture, avoiding explaining rituals and traditions to researchers, strictly and steadily observe their performance. Hunters share their prey with those who came during butchering on the shore, bringing their share home and distributing them to neighbors. Hunters deliberately prepare surplus of marine mammal food for sharing in accordance with tradition. To do this, they organize family holidays and exchange gifts with relatives and friends from other settlements and reindeer herders' camps. This can be interpreted as a belief, since they themselves acquire a gift-*Jylgyrgyn* from the spirits of the sea, and therefore are obliged to share this gift with other people. Hunters, in this framework are not the owners of harvested animals but only one of the intermediaries in the transitions of souls and flesh. The transfer of food (flesh) has caused the emergence of both rituals associated with it, and traditions of distribution.

The modern hunters have retained their former position as intermediaries. The difference is that today the federal government acts like the owner of the marine mammal populations. Authorities issue hunting permits: they also subsidize hunting activity directly or indirectly. This means that the Indigenous communities must somehow harmonize the traditional regulation of hunting and the distribution of its results with the rules from the authorities.

## 4.4. Subsistence Trends

### 4.4.1. Between the Sea and the Tundra

A distinctive feature of the Neshkan and Enurmino communities is their significant economic and cultural dependence on sea hunting and reindeer herding. This connection is especially noteworthy given the fact that most of the villagers today are not engaged in these types of traditional economic activities. Interlocutors pointed to a connection with, or rather their dependence on, subsistence food. When we linked the subsistence food topic with the perspectives of the family, the settlement, and the Chukchi people, the majority was unanimous in assessing the importance of traditional subsistence for their future. The villagers were sure that traditional subsistence was the core of the cultural identity of the Chukchi. In their opinion, sea hunting and reindeer herding are the key to the future resilience of Neshkan and Enurmino as Indigenous settlements. We have not had enough time to delve deeply into the reasons for this confidence, but it is likely that it is based on real local precedents and historical facts.

Chukchi culture for many generations had two complementary economic activities sea hunting and reindeer herding (Vdovin 1965, 9). Tundra and coastal Chukchi exchanged products of reindeer breeding and sea hunting on a regular basis. Reindeer skins provided material for clothing and dwellings, while marine mammal blubber provided heat and light (Bogoras 1904, 53). A diversified economy also ensured the resilience of the Chukchi people in confronting the harsh natural conditions of the Chukotka region. Climatic and hydro meteorological fluctuations affected reindeer pastures, which led to a mass death of reindeer and melting sea ice, which changed the migration routes of marine mammals and their seasonality. Meidel (1894) and Khakhovskaya (2016) described those reindeer herders who lost their herd preferred to become herders for a more successful reindeer herder. In some extreme cases during the crisis years, they were forced to move to coastal villages and became sea hunters. Our interlocutors in Neshkan and Enurmino also pointed to such facts. Natasha (53 years old, resident of Enurmino, former member of a reindeer herding camp, July 2017) said that the parents of her husband's great-great-grandparents were forced to migrate to Enurmino from an impoverished reindeer herding camp on *Kolyuchinskaya* Bay "because of hunger". If we take 20 years per generation as a basis, then we are talking about events that occurred around the beginning of the 20th century.

In the middle of the 20th century, political reasons were added to the economic circumstances that caused migrations between reindeer camps and coastal villages. Nikolay (65 years old, Neshkan elder, born in *Anayan* in *Kolyuchinskaya* Bay, May 2016) said that the resettlement of impoverished reindeer herding camps in *Kolyuchinskaya* Bay took place in the middle of the 20th century, first to the village of *Anayan*, then to the coastal village of *Toigunen*, and finally to Neshkan. These settlements were gathered into Neshkan as part of a government resettlement program in the late 1950s. In this way, families of reindeer herders and sea hunters intermingled in this settlement.

The main results of the sovietization of the Chukchi were the transition of nomads to a settled way of life and subsequent resettlement. For the culture of the reindeer herders, who were nomads, and the coastal peoples, widely dispersed along the coast, these changes were shocking. It also seriously changed the traditional economic activity. Twice, in the 1950s and in the 1990s, that is, in a relatively short time, the owners of reindeer and hunting boats were alienated from their property and turned into employees. The economic crisis of the 1990s, caused by the collapse of the Soviets, affected a significant percentage of the reindeer herders and their families. In total, about 130 people were forced to move from eight reindeer herding camps to Neshkan and Enurmino. For a population of approximately 1000 inhabitants of Neshkan and Enurmino, this is undoubtedly a significant number that affected the economic, social, and cultural patterns. What happened in the Neshkan and Enurmino communities will be discussed in this section.

The post-Soviet migration of reindeer herders was not instantaneous and took place over two decades. The cessation of federal support for reindeer herding camps led to the fact that those camps that failed to adapt and return to the pre-Soviet model of reindeer herding lost reindeer. For example, in the mid-1990s, reindeer herding *brigade* number one (the Soviet name for the reindeer herding camp), after several years of unsuccessful attempts to survive on its own, lost almost its entire reindeer population and then joined the neighboring reindeer-herding brigade. In this reindeer herding camp, reindeer herders did not live in traditional *yarangas*, but in cabins. Living in cabins requires a tractor for their transportation, while *yarangas* can be migrated on reindeer. The cabin requires a huge amount of diesel fuel for heating in the winter.

In Soviet times, the federal government covered such costs. Reindeer herders could not afford to finance these expenses on their own.

The loss of reindeer forced the reindeer herders and their families to move to the village. Former reindeer herders, as well as their children, who lost their future in reindeer camps, learned to be coastal villagers. This means that they competed in the limited local labor market, joined the group of the unemployed, or moved to the district and regional cities. Some of the former reindeer herders mastered the skills of sea hunting and gradually became full-fledged members of hunting teams in local hunting communities. Mikhail Nutetgivev, who was a reindeer herder until the early 1990s, has come a long way toward becoming a respected member of the community's hunting team:

“Until the early 1990s, I worked in the tundra with a reindeer herding team. Then in 1991, no, in 1992, I moved to the village because of family issues and got a job as a sea hunter at the *sovkhos*. Kelepki and Mainyrintyn taught me. When I came from the tundra, they taught me how to put nets on seals. So they taught me where to put the nets.

I got up early in the morning and came to Kelepki. I said to him: "I will go with you to hunt." At that time, he set nets for the seal behind the island. Well, we went there, and he showed me how to set up nets. We first looked for a hole [in the ice]. Then, we opened [cleared] the seal hole and lowered the rope through it into the water and then we made another small hole for the second rope. This is how we put the net using the *wall* method.

In the spring we put nets in another way. At this time of the year, the hole is already open, and (in such holes) we set (the net) using the *troyak* (triple) method. We make the net hang right under the hole parallel to the ice. This is how we catch seals” (Mikhail Nutetgivev, 52 years old, former reindeer herder, Neshkan hunter, August 2017).

Embedding reindeer herders in the coastal Chukchi settlements was accompanied by both traditional protocols and ongoing adjustments due to new social conditions. Multigenerational



kinship and friendship, intertwined with economic relations, contributed to the former reindeer herders acquiring the skills of subsistence practices that are typical for a seaside settlement. At the same time, the new socio-economic model of the village, characterized by a limited labor market and social benefits, caused competition among hunters and former reindeer herders, and conflicts associated with it.

According to my observations, the reindeer herders who moved to Neshkan and Enurmino sparked animistic beliefs among the villagers. Of course, in some families of sea hunters, customs continued to be observed (Kochnev 2014, 45). In particular, almost all of my Enurmino interlocutors pointed out that until recently the *Kayom* family had the greatest adherence to Chukchi rituals. Maxim *Enmytagin* (a former Enurmino resident, now an *obshchina's* hunter in Neshkan) and his wife Zina (a resident of Neshkan) shared with me some only family rituals that they continue to observe to this day, because the public animistic rituals were banned by the Soviet authorities. Meanwhile, the remoteness of the reindeer herding camps limited the influence of the Soviet authorities located in the coastal villages. Thus, the geographical features of the region contributed to the preservation of many social rituals and traditions that regulate the key economic cycles of reindeer herding: mating, birthing of calves, and changing seasonal pastures. This equally applied to Neshkan and Enurmino. Nowadays, the villagers have acquired additional motivation to carry out public rituals dedicated to sea hunting. This was on the one hand facilitated by the tourism-oriented strategy of the regional authorities. On the other hand, the cohort of animistic-oriented former reindeer herders who moved to the villages and their involvement in hunting activities contributed to the increased importance of the animistic rituals of the hunting community. This is not about weaving reindeer herding rituals into hunting rituals, but rather an increase in the importance of ritualism, because the number of supporters of animism has increased. Former reindeer herders, who grew up surrounded by animistic rituals that permeate the entire reindeer herding production cycle, transferred to their life in the village the norms of behavior typical of the Chukchi traditional subsistence.



Figure 4.36. Sergei Vukvunakay (second from right) and his team members. Neshkan, August 2020.

Photo provided by Eduard Zdor.

For example, Sergei Vukvunakai (Figure 4.36), a former reindeer herder, told us that in the village he continued to adhere to the usual procedure he had acquired in the reindeer herding camp:

“If we saw dead parents in a dream, then we go somewhere to the tundra with unpacked food. We are going to do the *Ignentytku* (rite of appeasement of the master, or the souls of the ancestors). Throw in, well, edible bits of food (share food with the spirits). We do the rite in the Chukchi [language] to ourselves” (Sergey Vukvunakai, 54, a former reindeer herder, a member of the hunting *obshchina*, August 2017).

Natalia Penerultyna, the former mistress of the *yaranga* in the reindeer herding camp, said that she adapted to the tradition of the maritime Chukchi, trying as much as possible to observe the familial rituals she acquired in her reindeer herding past:

Well, of course, we are everything that parents once taught us, we observe all the holidays as best we can; an ancestral rite, of course. When I moved here to Enurmino, my husband told me that in the spring it was necessary to carry out the ritual. We keep the heads of the seals we have eaten during winter and then when the [sea] ice is gone we make a feast on the shore. We return the heads of seals to the sea. So that next year we still have a successful hunt. In the tundra there is also a [holiday] Kilvey, the day of a young deer. When reindeer herders perform shamanism, drums play, smoky. *Ignenintytku* [rite of thanksgiving] is done (Natalia Penerultyna, 53 years old, former mistress of a *yaranga* in a reindeer herding camp, resident of Enurmino, July 2017).

Two adjoining reindeer herding and maritime Chukchi ways of life, for many generations, built a traditional worldview that complemented each other. Overall, the crisis that caused the mass relocation of reindeer herders to the coastal village, although painful for participants, took place within the proven practice of Chukchi survival. Moreover, to some extent it even contributed to the revival of the traditional worldview of the Chukchi community of Neshkan and Enurmino.

### *Reindeer Herders and Local Hierarchy*

In Soviet times, the reindeer herders of Chukotka had a special place of honor and were an influential and numerous group of villagers in the local community. Their representatives were always present in the municipal and regional authorities, and the director of the reindeer-breeding *sovkhos* was perhaps the most influential figure in the village. The collapse of the Soviet system undercut the position of reindeer herders in the village hierarchy (Schweitzer 2000). And although reindeer meat is still the most desired food in the local diet, its limited supply, along with its high price, no longer contributes to the former high status of reindeer herders.

The relocation of reindeer herders to Neshkan and Enurmino changed the social configuration of the village. Stresses arose due to the limited job market, housing, and competition for influence on the local community. During my 2016 field season, I talked a lot with different residents of Neshkan and Enurmino. I heard the discussion of strategies and personal qualities of the leaders of municipal institutions quite often. Some were unhappy with Rimma Taiot, then head of the village administration. Others chatted the struggle between groups of villagers to put their man in charge of the hunting community. Dissatisfaction with the alienation of the newcomers and their non-natural leader, Nina Potapova, the manager of the leading grocery store, was also a frequent topic of conversation among the villagers.

During my 2016 field season, Rimma Taiot, a representative of the merchants, was the head of Neshkan administration. About a year later, Nikolai Vorobiov, the manager of a branch of the municipal reindeer herding enterprise, was elected to the head of the village administration. His victory did not bring much benefit to the reindeer herders, and somewhat reduced the influence of merchants in the life of the village. A similar battle took place in the community of hunters. Viktor Tynecheivun (Figure 4.37), the chair of the Neshkan hunting *obshchina*, spoke about the exhausting struggle going on in the village. According to him, he was forced to lead the hunting *obshchina* at the request of the previous leader to ensure the continuity of the development strategy and a smooth transition period.

“Now the hunting *obshchina* has a regular source of income from the regional budget. We could pay wages to hunters, provide them with weapons, ammunition, and boats. The relative prosperity of the *obshchina* contributed to the emergence of a struggle for the management of these resources. The position of the chairman of the *obshchina* became the subject of intrigue. My predecessor as chairman was Claudia. She was a good chairman, but someone wrote a dirty letter about her to the district administration, and she chose to leave the *obshchina* voluntarily. The hunters have asked me to be chairman. Now someone is again writing slanderous letters to the authorities. I can guess who it is, but I don't want to talk about this person. People asked me to lead them. Hunters trust me and I must help them” (Viktor, 45 years old, from a family of reindeer herders Enurmino and Neshkan, head of the Neshkan hunting *obshchina*, July 2016).



Figure 4.37. Viktor Tynecheivun. Enurmino, 1977 (left photo); Neshkan, September 2022 (right photo).  
Photo provided by Viktor Tynecheivyn.

Competition for a place in the hunting *obshchina* also contributed to the ability of Neshkan community to provide for itself with the meat of marine mammals. One of the notable comments of my interlocutors, which I remember in the summer of 2014, was: Our hunters have now stopped the habit of resting on weekends. They go hunting whenever possible, if there is weather and there are walrus and whales in the sea. They do everything they can to provide us with meat (Neshkan resident, July 2014).

Victor Tynecheivun has extensive hunting experience, yet his roots are in reindeer herding. He lived in the Neshkan for many years doing management activities. It seems these circumstances were the reason that he chose Maxim Enmytagin, a hunter from the hereditary Enurmino family of hunters, as his assistant. Maxim was perhaps the most experienced hunter in

the obshchina at that time and, in fact, was a genuine informal leader. Surprisingly, he doesn't want to be a formal head of the hunting obshchina. It is noteworthy that, in turn, Maxim highly valued Sergei Vukvunakai, the oldest member of their hunting obshchina and a former reindeer herder. Maxim discussed with Sergei in all routine hunting matters. Victor agreed with this opinion of Maxim and said:

“Even though Sergei comes from a family of reindeer herders, and that he spent his childhood in the tundra, and then engaged in veterinary practice in reindeer herds, he is a very experienced person and knows quite a lot about sea hunting. I always consult with him, and we together make decisions” (Viktor Tynecheivun, 45 years old, from a family of reindeer herders Enurmino and Neshkan, chairman of the Neshkan hunting obshchina, July 2016).

A year later, after a long internal struggle between the villagers, Viktor was also forced to leave the post of head of the hunting obshchina. Now a representative of a family of hereditary hunters heads it. However, hereditary hunters and former reindeer herders are almost equally represented in the Neshkan hunting community. There were almost no such obvious clashes in Enurmino. Although Neshkan residents and former reindeer herders are present in this hunting settlement, the dominance of ancestral sea hunters is beyond doubt.

Neshkan has a remarkable resilience. The Soviet authorities planned to close the village in the 1970s. During this period, Akkani, Pinakul, and Nunyamo were closed in the Chukotka district. *Neperspektivnye* (Unpromising) villages, as they were then called, were relocated to Lorino and Lavrentia. In the meantime, the residents of Neshkan managed to defend their village and resettlement did not take place. In post-Soviet times, there were no direct plans to close the village, but the construction boom of the 2000s in Chukotka bypassed the Neshkan. Today, the majority of Neshkan villagers live in dilapidated shacks built in the early 1960s as part of a program to enlarge Indigenous villages (Chukotsky District 2017). In recent years, the district and regional authorities because of the current housing crisis have launched a program to resettle Neshkan villagers to Egvekinot, a district city in the neighboring Iultinsky district. Some villagers took advantage of this program with pleasure because it is hard to live in shacks, with coal stove heating, and without running water. Yet, most residents still love their village and



dream of its bright future. In our interviews, we did not specifically ask about housing issues, but we had a section related to the dreams and desires of the villagers. To have a warm and big house in the native village of Neshkan was often in the dreams of our interlocutors. In the meantime, they are forced to survive in shacks.

“Now the children do not live with me, because a very cold apartment. The other half of the house burned down. Everything blows. Therefore, they live at the mother-in-law” (Aleksey, 52 years old, Neshkan resident, August 2017).



Figure 4.38. Konstantin Netet, in front of his house. Enurmino, July 2017.  
Photo by Rodion Rintegin.



In Enurmino, construction of new housing was carried out in the 2000s, although about half of the village still lives in shacks. Konstantin Netet (Figure 4.38), a resident of Enurmino, said to us bitterly:

“There is no construction in our village. In general, there is no construction of new houses. Here, I now live in my house, I have it in disrepair. Last year the authorities said that my house would be demolished this year, but no. I did not even begin to repair the house because of their announcement. I didn’t even buy coal for heating the house this year” (Konstantin Netet, 39 years old, sea hunter and employee of a power plant, Enurmino, July 2017).

In my 2016 field season, I lived in such houses in Neshkan and Enurmino. In Enurmino, I lived in a rented house right across from the house where my parents and I lived in the early 1970s. The name "Chukotsky domik" has taken root since the mass construction in the villages of Chukotka in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The building is approximately 60 square meter, divided into two halves. Each half, in turn, is divided approximately in the middle by a brick oven. On the side of the stove there is a kitchen and a dining room. On the other side, there is a sort of sleeping room with several beds, depending on the number of family members. Often in the "Chukotsky domik," three generations live together at a time. There were three beds: a matrimonial bed; a chair-bed for a girl of 5 years and a cot for a 2-year-old son in this house. There was also an annex on the entrance side; this is a kind of Arctic entry or vestibule, protecting the front door from direct winds. In addition, the annex was also a utility room where the owner not only repairs equipment, but also stores hunting utensils, clothes, and food. The village is located on the dunes, where only grass keeps small hills from weathering. Heavy utility vehicles often drive through the streets of the village. This resulted in the sand being blown out between the houses. Therefore, houses rose on mounds of soil, which they held with their foundations. Because of this, they are in disrepair, with crevices appearing in the buildings. At least the building that I rented was clearly rotten and shaky. The housing crisis poses a serious challenge to the resilience of local communities. Not only young people, but also even older people are forced to think about moving. They have a hard time weighing personal and communal well-being.

## *Sea Hunting and Relocated Reindeer Herders*

Sea hunting is certainly essential to the life of Neshkan and Enurmino today, but in the 1990s it was the basic viable source of food for the villagers. Therefore, the reindeer herders who moved to the village were forced to master the traditional knowledge and subsistence of the coastal communities. We asked them and other villagers what they had to deal with and how they adapted to the new activity for them.

### Individual hunting

Modern seal hunting almost does not differ in the way of hunting from what it was in the pre-Soviet period of the history of Chukotka, during the time of Bogoras research. This means that seal hunting does not require significant costs for the purchase of modern subsistence gear and transport. To catch a seal, a hunter needs to have a homemade ice pick, an ice-scoop, and two types of nets (Bogoras 1904, 125; 149). The availability of homemade equipment and the regular and widespread distribution of seals near Neshkan and Enurmino were the main reasons for the prevalence of seal hunting. Seal hunting was the first step in the transition from reindeer herder to seaside villager.

Despite the minimalism of the equipment and the apparent simplicity of the methods for installing and processing nets, winter and spring hunting at sea is both complex and dangerous, requiring knowledge and skills. The hunter must be able to find prey sites, know the features of sea ice and sea currents, navigate in conditions of limited visibility of the polar night, and know the biology and behavior of not only seals but also polar bears, which are competitors in hunting. Sergei Vukvunakai, a former reindeer herder, said that he got his first experience in sea hunting on a spring seal hunt with nets. His mentor at that time was Vasily Roskhinaut, a hereditary sea hunter.

“Vasily taught me how to set nets when I came to the village from the tundra in the spring. He gave me his net for the first time. Typically, the net is installed using the *wall* method, and he gave me a *tee* net. Well, net tied by the *tee* method. Villagers hunt with such a net during the spring. I even thought about cutting it off. Vasily was not far from me) somewhere about 100 meters, probably. I went

to him, I said: “There's some stupid net there. Should I cut it off?” He laughed and then said: “No need.” He taught me how to set up a *tee* net” (Sergey Vukvunakai, 54, former reindeer herder, hunter of the hunting *obshchina*, August 2017).

Sergei was even luckier during his transition period. In the same first year of his move to the village, Boris Kaipanau, his friend, invited Sergei to the whaleboat hunting team.

“Borya, the kingdom of heaven to him, said (to me): “Let's become a hunter.” I had a shotgun at the time, but I [later] drowned it. Not me, but the dogs. It turns out that he, [Borya], then made me become a hunter.

I remember how we went to the first hunt, ah, no, to Vank'arem (neighboring village) for cartridges. We went there to exchange cartridges. We have *tigrovye* (brand carbine "Tiger") cartridges, and they have *sksovskie* (brand carbine SKS) cartridges. Vank'arem far away .. in the Iultinsky district. On the way back.. we got into (a storm). A strong *yughak* (Southern wind) was blowing. And there, on the Kolyuchinskaya Bay, you know, it's like in a pipe, a blown place. Strong *yughak*. The first time I went. And I say to Borya .. We are sitting on the bow of the whaleboat; there was one whaleboat, eight people [in the boat]. I look at the waves and say: "Damn, probably the first and last time I'm hunting." Borya looked at me and said: "Ah, this is still *hernya* (a trifle)." And so, I thought, well, I didn't panic, but there was some kind of fear. Right after life in the tundra I became a sea hunter. The first trip and they immediately took me, although there was other much-experienced hunters” (Sergey Vukvunakai, 54, a former reindeer herder, then a hunter of the hunting *obshchina*, August 2017).

Sergei was lucky to have mentors who taught him how to hunt and survive in the sea. Over time, Sergei became a respected member of the hunting community. He is an excellent example of the adaptability of the Chukchi in their ability to transform from reindeer herders and sea hunters.

While the villagers hunt for seals on the winter sea ice, they must face polar bears—their competitors. Hunters say that polar bears try to avoid conflict with people, but when it comes to

a hunted seal, they become aggressive. Nearly every one of our interviewees shared personal stories of dangerous encounters with polar bears. The risk of conflict in some years is quite high, and seal hunting is not a team activity, so the hunter can rely mainly on his skills and hunting equipment for safety. Viktor Y. (56, Neshkan hunter, January 2010) said that when he was about 50 years old, a family of polar bears attacked him while he was with a dog sled near an ice hole where he was checking the net. As Viktor's dog team was fighting with two two-year-old cubs, the she-bear attacked him. Thanks to the ice pick, which is part of the traditional hunting equipment, and dog teams, he managed to drive the bears onto the icy hummock. A collision with a polar bear is a lot of stress even for experienced hunters. Unlike other villagers and the same former reindeer herders, experienced hunters have traditional knowledge, equipment, and experience gained throughout their lives. Of course, reindeer herders have experience primarily of survival in the tundra and mountains, but the sea is a completely different habitat. It takes time to gain knowledge and experience and therefore new hunters should learn from experienced hunters. Diligent students survive and provide their families with food. Sergei, a former reindeer herder, told us about such an encounter, which he called the most frightening incident in his hunting history.

“Frightening (hunting) was here once (for me). This incident happened to me. Misha Kaipanau was with a single-barreled shotgun, and he separated, you know, from hunters. And the polar bear jumped on him. Misha, he started screaming, he misfired. Shot in the air and the cartridge stuck in the chamber. Long story short, he started screaming. Raised panic. And Misha Nutetgivev [another man] ran [to them] and shot this white bear. Well, he was already walking straight ahead, specifically. Well, that's all [I thought]. If he had caught up. If Misha were alone, he [the bear] would have eaten him. And then this bear was butchered. There was nothing in the stomach. We even saw cigarette butts in the stomach. And the teeth [of the polar bear] were worn out. He was already old. And so we started laughing: "*Mishka* [a polar bear in Russian can be called Misha] went to Mishka [hunter]. And Misha killed Mishka." That was both funny and scary” (Sergei Vukvunakai, 54, a former reindeer herder, then a hunter of the hunting *obshchina*, August 2017)

In Sergey's story, many years of survival experience and traditional knowledge of the Chukchi were of great importance in a successful outcome from the current situation. Hunters Neshkan and Enurmino often encounter a dangerous beast because they hunt the same prey. I have heard many stories from villagers in which they even go without weapons in encounters with a bear, using only hunting equipment such as a rope, an ice pick, as well as the traditional rules of conduct when encountering a polar bear.

### Team hunting

Boat hunting requires a team effort. It takes at least two people to hunt marine mammals regardless of their size. One steers the boat, the other harpoons and shoots the animals. However, due to the large size and weight of marine mammals, the efforts of several people are needed to do the processing, butchering, and transportation of the harvested animal. Team hunting requires an optimal structure of members, in which both the knowledge and skills of mature hunters are important, as well as the strength and endurance of young hunters.

For the Neshkan and Enurmino communities, the walrus is a symbol of identity and a guarantee of well-being. The villagers look forward to walrus hunting in the spring to finally enjoy their favorite fresh dishes, *svitkiret* [walrus stew] and sausages made from walrus intestines stuffed with meat, fat, and internal organs. According to the criterion of providing the necessary amount of meat and fat, the autumn hunting for walruses is much preferable for the communities of Neshkan and Enurmino than hunting for seals and whales. One or two successful autumn walrus hunts provide the family with food for the whole winter. At this time of the year, villagers place rolled walrus meat and blubber with skins into ice pits to make *velk'opalgyn* (fermented roll), perhaps the most popular dish of the villagers. Therefore, almost all the male part of the village, including the reindeer herders who moved to the village, want to take part in this type of hunting. Because the number of participants in walrus hunting is limited by the capacity of the boats, there is a lot of competition among the inhabitants of Neshkan to get on the autumn hunting expedition to Cape Netten, located near Enurmino. Many factors are important to get on a hunting expedition. If a villager has a rifle, or ammunition, or gasoline, he has a higher chance of getting on a hunting expedition. The personal skill of a potential expedition member is also very important in joining hunting teams. Excellent shooters and harpooners,

sharp-sighted and skillful observers, and strong people are more likely to be invited to hunt. Villagers with the gift of luck are also attractive to hunting teams. Rodion Rinetegin said with pride for his son:

“Yura still lacks patience, but he is very sharp-sighted and lucky. When he makes a search with binoculars, he finds walruses, whales, or bearded seals more often and faster than others. Community hunters are always happy to have him join them on the hunt because he is usually the first to spot marine mammals. And this is perhaps the most important thing in the hunter. Harvesting and butchering a walrus or a whale is also not easy, but it's just a job that a lucky and sharp-sighted observer provides” (Rodion Rinetegin, 44, Neshkan hunter, July 2016).

Rodion, being from a family of reindeer herders, under the pressure of circumstances, became a successful sea hunter. Of course, his personal abilities deserve high praise. Rodion's personal case is in fact the embodiment of the Chukchi's successful strategies tested by many generations - the complementarity and interchangeability of reindeer herding and sea hunting. However, the apparent ease of switching from reindeer herding to sea hunting actually requires a lot of effort, time, and most importantly perseverance, backed up by motivation. The collapse of the Russian economy and the lack of social support and food in stores in the 1990s certainly became significant motivators for the villagers, including reindeer herders. Sergei Vukvunakai, a former reindeer herder, shared with us a story about his first walrus hunt.

“The very first hunt? Well, I went on a whaleboat as a harpooner. Tolya Eretu and I were on the bow [of the whaleboat]. It was in the spring, the first hunt. Suddenly the walrus surfaced. We must first harpoon him and then kill [shoot]. I harpooned a walrus. At the same time, Tolya Eretu immediately shot him to death, well, we thought that he shot a walrus to death. ... There, the old hunters began to resent: "What are you like?" Well, they started to resent me.. Like, I'm weak and couldn't harpoon walrus. And Fedya N., the old hunter, he was silent. He was the helmsman. He paused and then says: "Let's stand still." Well [he ment] drifting where the walrus was drowned. After 10-15 minutes, the walrus surfaced again. Well, this time I definitely harpooned him. *Vemek* (harpoon tip) stuck in the spine.

Only after we butchered the walrus this *vemek* was pulled out. Tolya Eretu said there: “the walrus was already for sure harpooned.” (Sergey Vukvunakai, 54, a former reindeer herder, then a sea hunter Neshkan, August 2017).

Sergei that day successfully passed the test for the members of the hunting team. If he hadn't harpooned a walrus on his first time, he might have had another chance to harpoon animals on his next hunt. But most likely, due to diminishing confidence and under the stress of the mocking looks from the members of the hunting team, Sergey could be demoted to the position of gunner, sailor, or leave the team altogether. Informal rotation ensures the selection of members of the hunting team and their ranking. Aleksey Tyneskitegin, another former reindeer herder, said that he learned to hunt walruses from Enurmino hunters.

“I started hunting when I went on vacation, when I was in the tundra, I worked there. As a vacationer, I began to learn [to hunt] from Enurmino hunters. When I came on vacation from the tundra, I mainly hunted walrus and seal. This is usually in the summer on whaleboats, on boats. Well, there with hunters “*Zapoliarie*” at that time, it seems that the sobkhoz “50 years” still existed at that time. Sometimes with *chastnikami* (individual hunters) on aluminum boats or rather duralumin. The Enurmino hunters, Pasha R. and Ivan T., taught me how to hunt. Before that, I already knew how to shoot. Ah, harpooning, yes, they taught me. For a long time at first, I could not harpoon. There, you know, they laughed at me; Ivan Taenom said when I was harpooning, my face was like distorted. Then the decline came in the tundra, and I moved to Neshkan to work and started working as a hunter, probably in the late 90s” (Aleksey Tyneskitegin, 52, hunter Neshkan, former reindeer herder, August 2017)

Aleksei had the advantage of being a reindeer herder on holiday at the time. That is, he had a rather respectable status as a friend from a nearby reindeer camp, with whom the hunters exchanged the meat of marine mammals and deer. Therefore, the hunters treated him with perhaps banter, but tolerated his presence in the hunting team. Are the requirements for a temporary team member always more lenient than for a permanent team member? Hunters from time to time take the villagers with them to hunt and share with them what they have got. Why



do hunters take on such a burden? After all, an extra member of the team reduces the weight of prey to take into the boat and reduces the proportion of meat distributed. Probably in such cases there is an expectation of a reciprocal benevolence later because Aleksey was from a reindeer herding camp. I have also heard that hunters are willing to take villagers, owners of weapons and ammunition, into the boat, because they often lack these recourses. I also do not rule out that this tradition may be a voluntary contribution of hunters to the redistribution of hunting prey among the members of the settlement.

Whaling in today's Neshkan and Enurmino has gained great importance largely due to changes in the state of the sea ice. Climate change has significantly shifted the timing of ice conditions near Neshkan and Enurmino in the recent two decades. Now the ice leaves the coast in late May and early June, which is about a little more than a month earlier than it has left traditionally. The positive aspect of this change is that walrus hunting starts earlier. On the other hand, by the end of June or the beginning of July, the ice fields either go north or melt. The hunt for walrus stops as they follow the ice further north. Until the autumn migration, for almost three months, the only source of marine mammal meat for the villagers is the gray whale. Maksim Enmytagin (44, Neshkan hunter) said that another reason why storing food is important in his family, despite their adherence to a traditional diet, is that in the summer there is nothing to catch in the sea except for whales. Although natural conditions have increased the importance of whale hunting, the villagers have nowhere to store their shares of whale meat. Ice pits are flooded in the summer, and freezers do not have a significant volume. Our interlocutors informed us that every villager has the right to come ashore to cut off his share of meat. The symbolic privilege of hunters in the distribution of the landed whale is its tail flux. In the ethnography of the Chukchi culture, whaling is considered to be the pinnacle of the hunting-gathering economy, since this type of hunting requires extraordinary collective efforts, traditional knowledge, and sophisticated hunting equipment. Like other hunting settlements in Chukotka, Neshkan and Enurmino settlements have been banned from hunting whales for over 20 years. In the 1990s, they had to restore the whaling industry. Former reindeer herders and hunters did it together. Sergei Vukvunakai spoke about the first bowhead whale hunt in Neshkan.

“The most difficult hunt was when the bowhead whale was being hunted. You know, on a barge still [we hunted at that time]. All night we shot and shot him. As

a result, we got it, and then the storm began. And on a barge. He is heavy there, the most [first whale in the 1990s]. And finally washed up [the corpse of a whale ashore]. We had to leave him because the storm came. But all winter there dogs. Well, there five kilometers from the village. We fed the dogs. And this was the most difficult [hunting]" (Sergei Vukvunakai, 54, former reindeer herder)

Over time, the hunting *obshchinas* of Neshkan and Enurmino have regained their whaling skills. This reclamation once again confirms the capacity of adaptability in local communities. In the case under consideration, there was a change in the type of hunting, typical for the area. Whaling, along with fishing, is increasingly coming to the fore in the subsistence activity of the studied communities. Whaling, along with fishing, is increasingly coming to the fore in the economic activities of the studied communities. These two species have made significant semantic changes in the Chukchi settlements. Fishing, being essentially an individual activity, is both an available everyday food and a commodity that is quite easily converted into cash. Whaling has become the function of a small group of professional hunters in a subsidized community, and whale meat is not a commodity but a means of Indigenous identity.

#### 4.4.2. Subsistence and Cash: How it works in Neshkan and Enurmino

Rodion Rinetegin has been hunting at sea for many years. Those villagers who hunt with their boats outside the subsidized hunting *obshchinas* are called *chastniki* (private hunters) in the village. Rodion hunts seals in the spring, walruses and whales in the summer and autumn, fishes year-round, and sometimes gets a job in a utility company during the winter. His wife, a local schoolteacher, has been the main sponsor of his hunting expeditions. With her cash income, they bought a boat, an outboard motor, an ATV, a snowmobile, as well as fuel and ammunition. Rodion has shared the harvested marine mammals with relatives and neighbors, and exchanges them for reindeer meat in reindeer herding camps. Rodion sold or exchanged the fangs and teeth of the harvested walruses for electronics and clothing with the crews of ships delivering food, coal, and fuel to the village. He sold the surplus fish he caught to the villagers.

The described phenomenon indicates that Rodion's distribution of the marine mammals he harvested occurs both in non-cash and in cash spaces. These interactions do not differ much from the Chukchi economy described by Bogoras (1904) and are also evidence of claims about

the adaptation of a hunter-gatherer society to the cash economy. At first glance, the cash sale of marine mammal meat does not yet appear to be governed by customary law. This is due to the rather strong local traditions of the hunting products distribution, which formed the basis of the recommendations of regional authorities subsidizing sea hunting. In the meantime, some signs of change gradually become noticeable and line up in a trend. For example, I noticed if Rodion returned from a successful hunt, he was not very happy with the villagers coming to his boat to get a share of walrus meat. Even though Rodion did not refuse to share, it was clear that he preferred to deliver as much meat as possible to his meat ice pit, so that he could later dispose of it as described above. Although Rodion distributed meat and fat without cash, he was very frugal with the results of the hunt. Considering how much money and effort it takes for a successful hunt, his behavior is understandable. After one of the unsuccessful hunting expeditions, Rodion told me:

“You see, today we drove about 90 miles along the coast in search of walruses, not counting attempts to drive north through the ice, and spent 60 liters of fuel. Such waste costs are not acceptable for Neshkan owners of gasoline engines. I'm so glad we bought the kerosene engine. Diesel fuel is plentiful in the village, and it is cheap. I converted the engine to diesel fuel, and it has served me reliably for almost 8 years” (Rodion Rinetegin, 44, Neshkan hunter, July 2016).

That summer, only two of Rodion's five hunting expeditions were successful. Then a huge ice field, more than 100 km, rotating between Kolyuchin Bay and Cape Netten and providing Neshkan and Enurmino with walrus meat, went north. And in the middle of summer, on a fishing trip, Rodion's engine broke down and he could no longer restore it. He traded four walrus tusks that season with the ship's crew for a 32-inch TV. To summarize, Rodion's subsistence activity reflects the social processes taking place in the Chukchi settlement today. Cash is the backbone of hunting and fishing because a boat, gasoline, equipment, and weapons have to be bought. Consequently, modern hunting tools have significantly increased the effectiveness of hunting and contributed to the demand for the boat team, the traditional social unit of the Maritime Chukchi settlements (Bogoras 1904). Considering that, for many of the villagers, there has been a shift in subsistence activities from sea hunting and reindeer herding towards fishing and gathering, which were not subject to sharing traditions, or at least were not

strictly regulated. It seems likely that the trend of further embedding cash into the traditional regulation of subsistence activity will continue.

In recent years, Neshkan and Enurmino WhatsApp groups occasionally appear in ads asking fellow villagers to sell seal meat and fat or fermented walrus rolls. This was not typical for local settlements. The sale of meat from marine mammals in the past was done by the *sovkhos* and now by the hunting *obshchina*, its successor. At the same time, the exchange of marine mammal meat among individuals was based on customary law, that is, free distribution of surplus to relatives and neighbors, exchange with residents of other settlements, and gifts. Embedding money in the traditional distribution of sea hunting products points to several phenomena that have taken place in the villages. The division of labor in the villages, innovations in sea hunting, and the strategy of regional support led to a decrease in the number of members of the subsistence group. The increase in the number of members of other groups, employees of municipal enterprises, the unemployed, and pensioners on the one hand retained the demand for traditional food, but also caused the loss of skills and knowledge in the processing and storage of marine mammal meat. Finally, climate change has deprived the villagers of the traditional ice pit, an efficient and affordable means of processing and storing the meat and fat of animals. The villagers are adapting and looking for new affordable ways to process and store traditional food. Nowadays, instead of fermenting, drying, and oiling, they are forced to freeze, salt, and pickle products of subsistence activity.

The urbanization drift in Neshkan and Enurmino is partly due to the regional strategy to support traditional subsistence. Regional subsidies to reindeer herding camps and hunting *obshchinas* ensured the steadiness of Indigenous subsistence enterprises in Neshkan and Enurmino, and the need for traditional foodstuffs for almost the entire village. At the same time, this strategy unintentionally contributed to the reduction in the number of villagers involved in reindeer herding and sea hunting, the key subsistence activities of Neshkan and Enurmino during the Bogoras era. Today, only 15% of adult villagers can expect to work in subsidized reindeer herding and hunting communities. A few more families whose members have municipal jobs can afford to buy a boat, motor, and guns to hunt at sea.

After it was found that hunting-gathering societies had adapted to a cash economy to fund subsistence activities (Hovelsrud et al, 2008), optimism regarding the resilience of Indigenous communities rose. Indeed, in the villages I surveyed, hunting *obshchinas* and private family hunting teams represent a small group of villagers and are able to feed the entire village population, which appears to be a general trend in the Bering Strait region (BurnSilver et al 2016, 2). This was made possible by the adaptation of Indigenous communities to the cash economy and technical innovations. By using a powerful boat, engine, snowmobile, and electronic devices, hunters can provide the entire community with familiar and accessible food faster and more importantly, safely. On the other hand, the modernization of traditional subsistence has changed its essence. Moreover, government subsidies, aiming to support the traditional subsistence by financing, become not only a source of income, but also an incentive for the further development of the village's economy. Therefore, most of the villagers had to switch to available types of subsistence activity, such as fishing and gathering, and only a few to catch seals with nets. The consequence of this subsistence shift is that the villagers are acquiring an urban lifestyle. They mostly stay in the village, and only occasionally come ashore during the summer, and intermittently during the winter, to get a share of meat from the hunting *obshchina* or go fishing.

Together, these circumstances give the sociocultural pattern of the Chukchi settlement a dual meaning. On the one hand, the commodification of traditional subsistence (selling of marine mammal products and by-products) is limited by international and Russian legislation. The purpose of the restriction is to meet the nutritional and cultural needs of Indigenous peoples and to exclude profits from these activities. In fact, it turns out that the market encourages individual hunters and those hunting *obshchinas* to produce more products from the skins and tusks of marine mammals. This duality, hidden behind the traditional production of souvenirs, on the one hand, opens up additional opportunities for villagers to earn income in order to spend it on the so-beloved subsistence activity. On the other hand, it also opens up loopholes for the commercial use of traditional hunting. Commercial profits, in turn, diminish the role of traditional regulations on the harvesting and processing of marine mammals, the main purpose of which is to ensure the constant use of these animals. For example, the customary law of Neshkan hunters requires the complete butchering of a harvested walrus, even if the hunter team is unable to take all the meat with them due to the limited capacity of the hunting boats. The cut parts of the walrus, which the

hunters cannot take with them, must be returned to the sea, and part of the guts of the cut walrus must be left on the ice for seabirds. Over time, disregard for the rules that prohibit the abandonment of an unfinished walrus carcass weakens traditional regulations that serve the rational and stable use of the wildlife.

Along with the lack of oversight on the part of government environmental agencies, this trend leads to the fact that hunters hunt walrus more than they need for food, taking only the tastiest cuts of meat and the tusks. It turns out that the business has adapted to the legislation regulating the traditional use of natural resources. Communities are also exploiting existing loopholes of their exclusivity. They provide tourists with sport hunting and sell some of the caught marine mammals, such as sealskins, walrus tusks, and whale skin and bones. In this way, there is a rapid change in Indigenous self-regulation to adapt to external regulation.

Concluding the discussion of the current state of subsistence activity in Neshkan and Enurmino, I would like to encapsulate the current trends. Commodity-money relations permeate the Chukchi traditional subsistence, retaining some features of the customary law. In the foreground are the following quantitative changes that have occurred in the subsistence activity. There was a decrease in the number of participants in key types of subsistence, while at the same time, production volumes remained unchanged. The number of boat crews in the village increased, but the number of members of the hunting boat crew, the traditional social unit of the settlement, from the time of Bogoras, decreased. Quantitative changes led to qualitative transformations in the boat crew. Other qualitative changes that have taken place in subsistence activities include the continued importance of traditional subsistence in terms of providing calories, the traditional taste of food, and cultural significance. A decrease in the number of subsistence participants indicates an increase in the importance of the subsistence cohort for nutritional and cultural needs. The transformation of traditional knowledge has been driven by shifts in language, worldview, and technology.

## Chapter 5. Chukchi of Neshkan and Enurmino: What Do Community Members Think of Themselves and Their Community?

### 5.1. Personal and Social Interpretations

According to the Chukchi fairytale recorded by Waldemar Bogoras from Ag'ttinqueu, a Maritime Chukchee man, at Mariinsky Post, October 1900, a raven named *Kurkyl* and his wife created the world (Bogoras 1910, 151). It would seem that a simple plot actually describes the attitude of the Chukchi to the creators of the world. Most likely, this is because the raven, with its manners, social habits, and ability to have more fun than other animals, reminded the Chukchi of a human being. The raven is not a heroic bird, such as an eagle or a falcon; however, it is quick-witted and able to survive in the difficult conditions of the Arctic all year round. Chukchi attributed to the raven all the advantages and disadvantages of an ordinary person. The Chukchi's worldview contributed to define them and distinguish them from the other people. This process of identity was helped by the knowledge accumulated in the course of adaptation to the environment, for a kind of dynamic equilibrium.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, because of globalization of the Chukchi community, much traditional knowledge of local people either disappeared or mixed into that of the dominant cultures. This chapter discusses my observation of the modern Chukchi, who still maintain their own worldview, although they are increasingly affected by outside influences. They learn the peculiarities of local ecology, the wildlife, and the phenomena of nature through constant interaction with the environment. The outcomes of these observations and interrelations are remembered and transmitted from generation to generation through oral traditions and joint practice. I emphasize that knowledge is acquired, tested, and preserved only in the case of their daily use. An essential fact is that because of the environment is in a state of constant change, practice is a way of both producing knowledge and constantly updating it. Therefore, each subsequent generation actually produces updated knowledge. A strong emphasis on the production and preservation of knowledge created a balanced relationship between the generations of the Indigenous community. At present, these factors have diminished their significance in the life of Indigenous communities, which led to a change in the paradigm of the knowledge studied. The facts indicate that knowledge of Indigenous settlements is currently in a



state of transformation under the influence of climatic, technological, and social factors affecting the local ecology and culture, which contributes to the homogenization of communities. Nevertheless, the production of knowledge in local communities continues through the preservation of the traditional way of life, and their adaptation to the use of traditional natural resources in the face of climate change and industrial development of the Arctic.

For the purposes of this chapter, I have used recorded and transcribed voice interviews from residents of Neshkan and Enurmino. In 2016, I spent several months observing, communicating, and interviewing current and former residents of Neshkan and Enurmino. In my field notes, I reflected my thoughts on semi-structured interviews conducted with 15 residents of Neshkan and 11 residents of Enurmino. The following year, Rodion Rinetegin, my long-term partner in subsistence activity and co-researcher, conducted 20 structured interviews in Neshkan and Enurmino based on my questionnaire. Among the various topics we discussed with the villagers was a special section on what the villagers in Neshkan and Enurmino think about themselves, their community, and the outside world. These topics were discussed in the context of beliefs, traditional and formal social organization, and the challenges that interlocutors face on a personal and communal level. We also asked people to share their thoughts about their village and neighboring settlements of Chukotka in terms of well-being and preservation of their family, community, and the Chukchi people. It seemed initially that they did not consider it responsible to talk about the state and future, if not of their community, then of the people. Then, after the first difficult step, they spoke carefully and even with harsh truthfulness. In some cases, we inadvertently provoked the interlocutors into statements that, it seems to me, are not very true. For example, the language environment has shifted quite clearly towards Russian in Neshkan and Enurmino. The Chukchi language does not dominate in everyday communication, and for a significant portion of the villagers it is the second language. However, some of our interlocutors argued that the Chukchi language has a vital future. Since these were more often young villagers, they probably perceive the mixed Chukchi-Russian language as their native language, which means that they do not prevaricate when they see the prospects for their native language. Overall, responses to a structured questionnaire are documented to provide significant support for social web interpretations and are indicators of the relevance of anthropological research judgments.

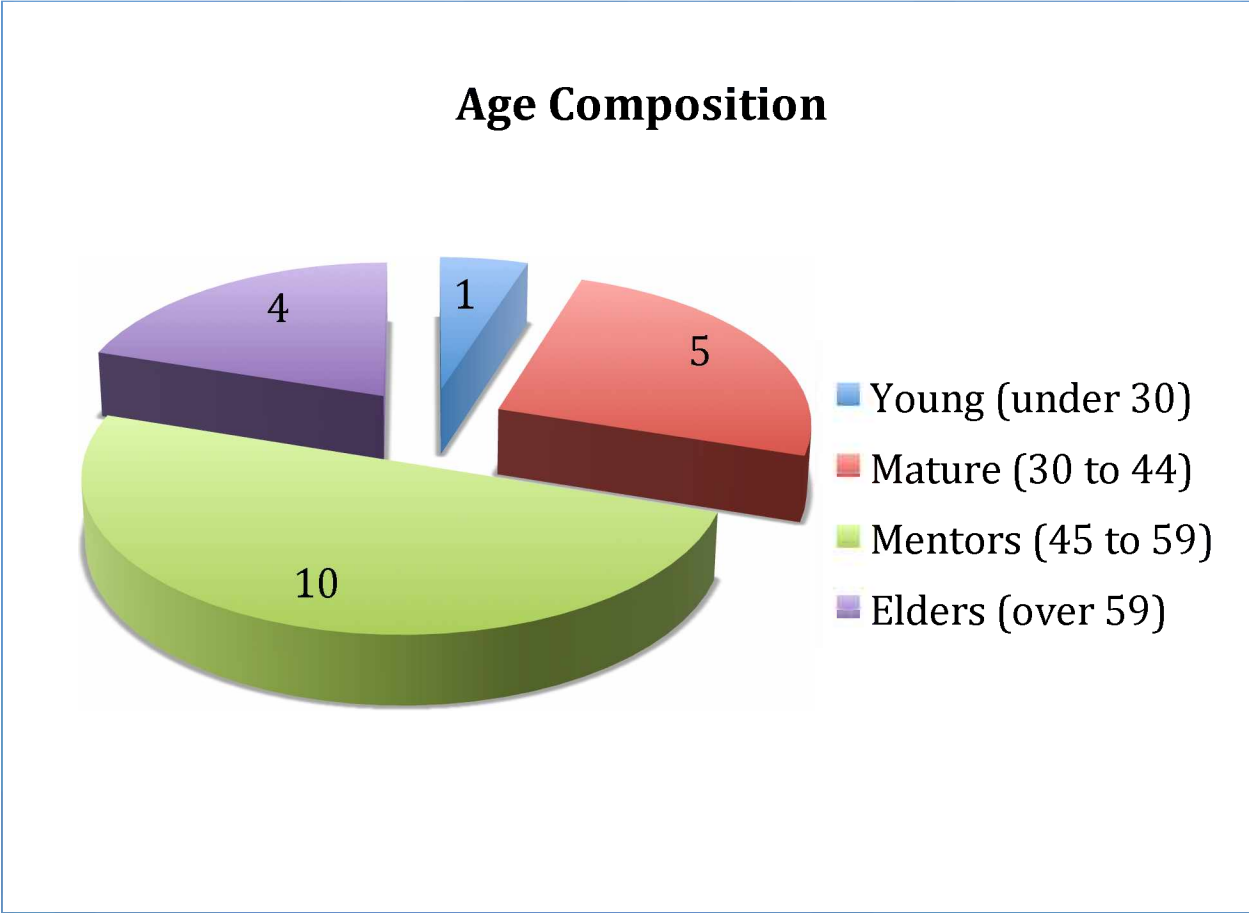


Figure 5.1. Age Composition of the interviewees.

Because Rodion conducted a structured interview, in some topics the questions led to monosyllabic answers. Such statements were easy to put in a comparative table to distinguish between answers in several stable groups. Even if the interviewees reflected on the questions being asked, this contributed to the clarification of the points of view outlined. Analyzing the answers, I found that the points of view of the respondents correlate with their age to a certain extent. For this reason, I have identified age groups according to the degree of their involvement in traditional subsistence and the average life expectancy of the villagers. Four age groups were obtained in this survey in accordance with the selected criteria (Figure 5.1). Of the younger generation under 30, only one person was interviewed. The middle-aged group of villagers aged 30 to 44 had five interview participants. In the mentors group of villagers aged 45 to 59, 10 people were interviewed. There were four people in the group of elders over 60 years of age.

Rodion conducted interviews among 20 Chukchi, 10 people in Neshkan and 10 in Enurmino, 14 of them men and six women. Only four participants were unmarried (single or divorced). There were also a few widows and widowers, mainly due to the advanced age of those interviewed. Because widowers were the heads of large families with grandchildren and even great-grandchildren, I did not classify them as unmarried. Among those interviewed, nine people were sea hunters, four villagers had municipal jobs, two people were unemployed, and five people were pensioners.

### 5.1.1. Individual

In this part of the interview, I wanted the villagers to share their perception of life and the challenges they face at the personal, family, and community levels. 75% of the interviewed villagers said that they are satisfied with their lives; another 15% of the participants said that they are mostly happy, but there are some problems, and finally, 10% of the interviewees either sighed heavily or simply did not answer. When we asked this question a little differently—namely, do they want to change their lives—only 40% of respondents remained satisfied with their lives, while 45% expressed some uncertainty and even anxiety about their life, which in a sense turned out to be the opposite of the previous answer (Figure 5.2). Addressing the topic of life satisfaction, we also asked the villagers about their dreams. 15% of the interviewees, who were from the oldest group, answered that “there is no more dream” or “it seems that I already have enough of everything and there is nothing to dream about.” Most dreamed of a new house, boats, snowmobiles and weapons, which is typical of a subsistence-oriented community.

For most of the villagers, the values listed above are almost inaccessible due to low incomes, the absence of credit institutions, and the market. Even if one of the villagers dares to think of spending an amount that exceeds the income of an average family in Neshkan or Enurmino, he will need to put in a lot of effort. First, the dreamer needs to get to the nearest bank in Lavrentia, a district town. Then, to buy a snowmobile, a boat, an engine, or a weapon, the villager must fly to Anadyr, a regional city, and buy goods there for much more than official dealers. After that, the villager must order the delivery of the purchase by plane to the district center Lavrentia. Finally, he needs to find a way to deliver the purchase from Lavrentia to Neshkan. This may be by water or terrestrial transport, as air transportation is rare and almost always filled to capacity. This is a huge amount of money and time—since flights between

Neshkan and Lavrentia run once every two weeks and between Lavrentia and Anadyr once a week—and only a few villagers can afford to do it. Therefore, for the majority, buying new gear is an unattainable dream.

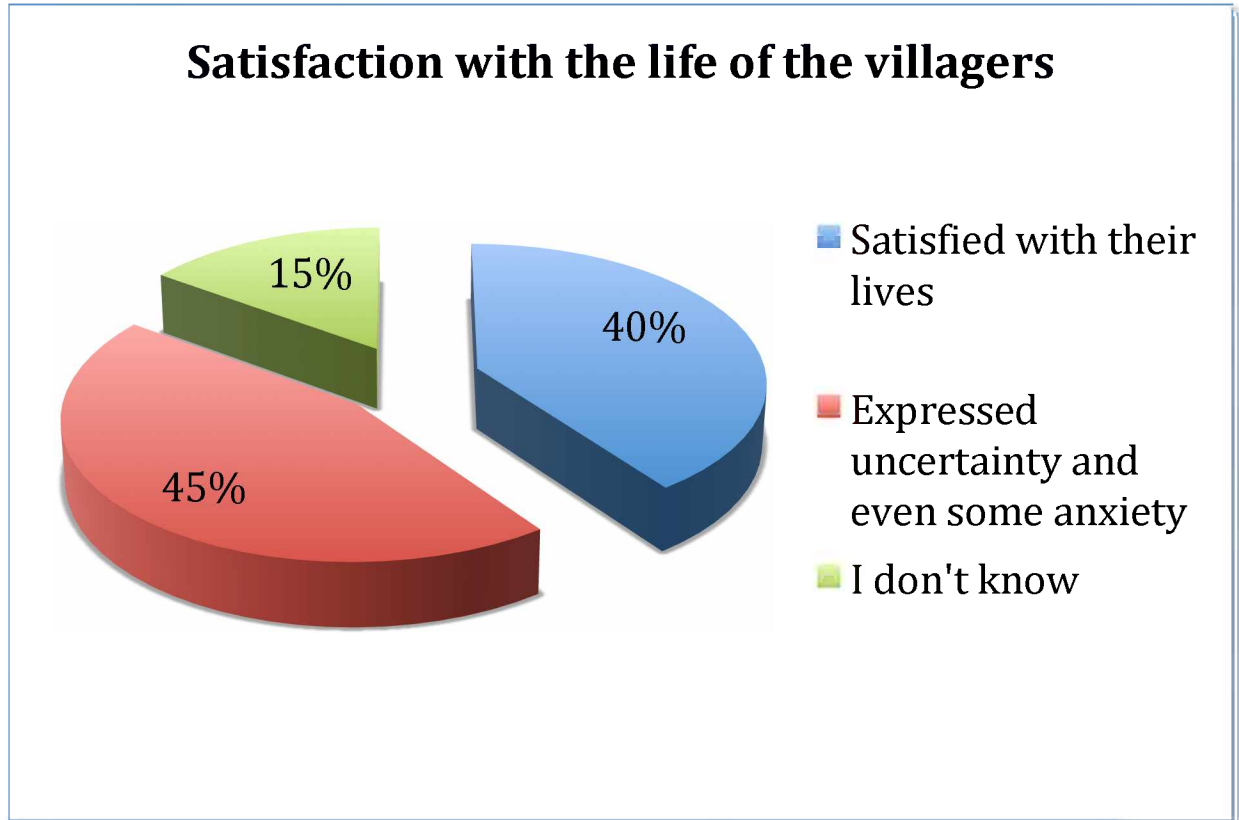


Figure 5.2. Satisfaction with the life of the villagers.

The last question about personal perception of life was: “What do you want from life?” Surprisingly, half of the interviewees perceived this question in the context of the community in which they live. They wanted their community to have comfortable living environments, and the younger generation to have a good education to provide their community with quality services. These answers can be interpreted such that the villagers cannot imagine their success without their community. Another 20% of the participants experienced the same feelings but were not sure about the ability of the authorities to provide such a future for their villages. Finally, the remaining 30% of the villagers either did not answer this question or responded with neutral phrases.

### 5.1.2. Family

The interview questionnaire had a section devoted to the family, clan, and neighbor clan of the interviewee. Most of the interviewees were able to describe their clan only up to and including the grandparent level, although there were also detailed and longer-term lineages. For example, Natalya Penerultyna from Enurmino was able to reproduce the history of their family almost a hundred years ago. She related the following about her husband's family:

“His father, Penerultyn, my husband and Radik Panechevun's father. These are two brothers. Another brother is Eineneku. This one is also theirs, well, cousin. And there was a sister, aunt Tamara Tyken. Theirs too are sistes. There were many of them, so there were four brothers. They once migrated from--. They came on foot Penerultyn (her husband) speaks with Kolyuchin, from Kolyuchin (Bay). Once upon a time, theirs, well [ancestors]. Their grandfathers, well, parents. So, they migrated here once. When, probably, hungry [time] was, they migrated here. And they dragged [carried] behind them the very oldest sister. She was already well, old. So, her brothers brought her. Well, they brought her here. And here she is now she has a family here Eieneneku. Here Yutgu” (Natalia P., 53 years old, Enurmino resident, July 2017).

Almost every interviewee was confident that his/her lineage would be preserved. 75% said that their clan (extended family), or at least family, will survive for a long time. 25% of the participants did not answer this question because it was asked in a series of other questions, and they may not have paid attention to it. This group of interviewees had children, grandchildren, or nephews. Overall, the interview participants clearly distinguished their clans, adhered to them, and were proud of belonging to them.

The modern Chukchi family (*Rojyr 'yn*) does not differ in social characteristics from that described by Nordenskjöld (1881), Bogoras (1904), Gondatti (Kolomiets et al 2020), and Sverdrup (1978). Traditional gender divisions are still prevalent in the Neshkan and Enurmino families. The male usually hunts and processes larger prey such as whales, walruses, and bearded seals, while the women and children fish. The men take care of transportation, equipment repairs, and keeping buildings in order. The women collect edible plants, process the harvested prey, and

provide household services such as cooking, laundry, and so on. Rights in the family are, as before, more or less equal; in some families the male power as the head of the family is predominant, while in some families the wife balances this power. Men, of course, are the main earners of traditional food, but women more often than men have a job or social benefits due to large families or an earlier pension. Family sources of income can be an additional argument for family dominance. Alcohol has the greatest impact on family relationships. Family members who are dependent on alcohol are often the cause of domestic violence, make scandals, fights, and even kill with a knife. They *propivaiut* (drink away, Russian) household items such as clothes, shoes, electronic devices, and even steal family money. The complexity of these relationships contributes to the phenomenon of single mothers. Sometimes it is easier for a woman to have a family without an alcoholic man who does not provide income or traditional food. I will discuss in more detail the impact of alcohol on the Neshkan and Enurmino communities later in this chapter.

Extended families (*Main'yrojyr 'yn*) are present in the surveyed villages, but they are not a significant unit of social organization. The key markers determining the strength of extended families were compact living and the joint traditional subsistence practice to provide food. Sea hunting and reindeer herding, as mentioned earlier, have become the lot of a small proportion of villagers. A modern hunting boat crew consists of 2 to 4 people. Relatives may hunt together or be scattered across different boats. The few villagers who are in a position to purchase vehicles and weapons belong to ordinary nuclear families. The only in the reindeer herding camp is the related principle of social organization preserved. The decline in the proportion of women in reindeer camps, as well as the closure of fur-sewing workshops in villages, has led to the situation that only reindeer herders who have a wife, mother, or sister in the camp have fur clothes, without which reindeer grazing in winter is not safe. Those reindeer herders who do not have such female relatives are sooner or later forced to leave the reindeer herding camp.

The modern Chukotkan village is not conducive to the neighborhood of closely related families. Neshkan and Enurmino have a longstanding housing crisis. Almost all housing in the settlements is municipal. Due to the lack of housing, old small one-bedroom houses and apartments are often forced to fit up to 3 generations (Raymond-Yakoubian and Zdor 2020, 89). This means difficult living conditions, which, along with the low level of income of the

population, contribute to the preservation of the phenomenon of family subsistence unit. As in the days of the Bogoras studies, the family team consists of a father-son-grandchild/mother-daughter-granddaughter chain living in the same dwelling.

For example, the Vukvunakai family consisted of a father, mother, their two adult children, and two grandchildren, who lived in a one-bedroom apartment in an old house. The father (Sergey) and his son (Arkhip) worked in the Neshkan hunting *obshchina* in the summer and hunted together in the winter, while their female counterpart of the family was maintaining the household, plant gathering, and provided men with traditional men's clothing. In the Rinetegin family, the father (Rodion) and his son (Yuri) had their own boat and made up a small hunting team, thanks to the financial viability of the spouses of Rodion (Elena). More than twenty years of subsistence history of the Rinetegin family is described in the third chapter. While the children are small, heads of families often cooperate with relatives, friends, or neighbors to hunt walruses. Hunting for seals and fishing is more of a family affair and does not need cooperation with other villagers. Although our participants were very familiar with the lineages, their life histories showed that their subsistence activity was not very correlated with the extended family. Most likely, the current municipal housing, along with the dominance of the municipal hunting community in subsistence sea hunting, reduces the family subsistence activity to two people.

Although there is almost no reason to discuss family lineage due to the dominance of federal family law and the decline in the role of the extended family, in some families, lineage is still traced. Villagers, mainly those born in the middle of the 20th century, use this information in conversation with the younger generations. In such conversations, a young individual from another village, introducing himself, usually explains which family he/she belongs to and names the name of the head of the family. Ethnographic methods are also used to draw kinship. At school, teachers ask students to share family stories, and parents or grandparents provide information on distant ancestors for homework.

Customary law has little bearing on modern marriage, so no one restricts or guides the young in their choice of spouse. My interviewees recalled that some time ago special rules for arranging marriage were an obligatory part of social life. Given the small number of villages,

some of the rules of traditional marriage, such as choosing a couple in order to avoid incest, were significant for the health of subsequent generations. In Soviet times, the customary regulation of marriage was discontinued. However, the concentration of students from different villages of Chukotka in a boarding school and college, as well as inter-ethnic marriages helped avoid incest. Even pregnancy from so-called casual ties with seasonal builders or ship crewmembers, which from the outside looks like a frivolous act, is also a solution to the problem of incest.

The prerequisites for marriage are romantic or simply sexual relationships, or the practical need to have a family. For example, the existence of a reindeer herding camp is difficult without the mistress of the house. The main motivation for villagers to approve federal marriage regulation is to benefit from official acts to obtain a state support program, such as a state financial support program for children, municipal housing, mortgages, and so on.

In general, modern naming has the interethnic complexities (Schweitzer and Golovko 1997, 168) and reflects the linguistic preferences of local communities. Parents use mostly common names from different cultures for the first name of their children. Because of the Russian language dominates the villages, names characteristic of the Russian naming prevails, and only occasionally are in their native language. The surnames have a Chukchi base with Russian variations of the endings (Schweitzer and Golovko 1997, 168). Surnames are often passed down on the paternal side but can also be passed down on the maternal side.

According to the Chukchi anthroponomy, the villagers had a single name. The resettlement of small coastal hamlets in Neshkan and Enurmino in the mid-1950s made it possible to introduce modern social institutions such as municipal authorities and educational, medical, and social services. This process contributed to the transition to three-component anthroponomy. For example, Kostya, Rodion's partner who was born in the mid-1960s, had the surname Ettyn. This is the male version of the Chukchi name ETTYNE (female dog), the only name of his mother, who gave birth to him in a district hospital. Since she did not speak Russian, the hospital staff helped her choose the Russian name Kostya for him. Kostya chose his patronymic for himself. When he turned 16, the authorities issued him a passport. He took the same patronymic as his older brother Nikolai.



Nowadays, some parents and more often grandparents give the newborn an unofficial Chukchi name (nynny) along with the official name. This traditional naming (nynnytyk) is not very different from those described by researchers at the beginning of the last century (Sverdrup 1978, 135; Bogoras 1907, 514). For instance, the custom has been preserved to call a newborn with the Chukchi name of a deceased relative. The villagers of the older generation still believe in the reincarnation of the person who has departed to other worlds, described by Bogoras. However, Chukchi unofficial names rarely go beyond the family circle. In some families, it is the custom to change even the official name of the child if they believe he / she is in danger. Such children have an officially registered name on the birth certificate and an unofficial name that becomes dominant in everyday life. In the villages, nicknames are common, which may be in their native language, but in recent years they are more often Russian. Nicknames appear and become codified for people because of some unusual event in life, for example, while hunting, fishing, or at school. Personal character traits can also be the reason for the appearance of a nickname. Summarizing the above, today's naming traditions reflect the current contradictory socio-cultural state of the Chukchi communities, in which the global is mixed with the local, and the dominance of the Russian language over the surviving Chukchi language is shown.

According to Bogoras (1909, 556), the death of the parents transferred the responsibility for raising children to relatives. In Soviet times, a system for orphanages was installed. At present, in the studied villages it looks like there is a symbiosis of federal and common law. In the Russian system of custody of orphans, there is a foster family program. For Indigenous families in remote villages, this is one of the few ways to have cash income. Some time ago I met one of my fellow villagers the day she was picking up her niece from the orphanage. She explained her decision to me that tradition obliges her to raise her niece. Later I learned that the monthly payment for caring for an orphan gives the family enough money not only to support the orphan, but also significantly helps the family. The state provides these parents with a kind of salary and even housing. Overall, orphanhood, I would say, is not uncommon, but is mostly hidden in a mixture of traditional and torn social organization. Foster families, a rural boarding school, and the Chukchi tradition of redistributing children between large and small families are phenomena for raising orphans in their native habitat.

Both childhood and old age in Chukchi villages are somewhat different than elsewhere in Russia. Children from about 7 years old are involved in the everyday life of the villagers in a playful way: boys participate in hunting, reindeer husbandry, and a home workshop, while girls are involved in gathering, fishing, and household chores. By about 10 to 12 years old, children already independently contribute to providing the family with meat from wild animals and birds as well as fish and plants. The boarding school adjusts for these stages of growing up, but still many minor villagers fit into this schedule.

Just as the transition from childhood to adolescence occurs early, so the status of an elder in Chukotka villages generally occurs earlier than in other regions. The official average life expectancy in Chukotka was about 60 years in 2008 (Federal State Statistics Service 2009). The authorities, relying on statistics, believe that this is due to the harsh living conditions in the Arctic, especially in places of traditional subsistence, which contributes to a high level of chronic diseases and mortality. For this reason, the retirement age for the Indigenous inhabitants of the Russian Arctic is five years earlier than for the rest of the citizens of Russia, and, for those engaged in traditional marine hunting and reindeer herding 10 years earlier (Social Fund of Russia n.d.). While agreeing to some extent with the opinion of the authorities, one cannot ignore the fact that the life expectancy of the Indigenous peoples of Alaska in 2001 was 70.3 years (Brubaker et al 2011, 2) under roughly the same Arctic environments. A likely explanation for this difference in life expectancy is the difference in health care, drug supply, and living conditions. Lung, heart, and infectious diseases are caused by living conditions, lack of running water, and poor quality of drinking water, but premature death from these diseases is caused by infrastructure problems. Flights (there are no alternative connections) between Neshkan and Enurmino settlements and Lavrentia (district city) are carried out twice a month. For a villager who does not need urgent treatment, a visit to a district or district hospital is a multi-week event that requires not only time, but also money. For this reason, many villagers do not get the examinations and treatment they need. Hospitals provide annual medical exams, sending medical professionals to villages. However, doctors can only conduct visual observation, detecting only a part of potential diseases, as rural hospitals lack the equipment necessary for examinations.

The appearance of grandchildren in the family is another significant life marker for a villager. He/she attains a new status as a local community elder with the arrival of grandchildren.

Grandparents have more free time than parents or at the very least; they find it necessary to devote more time to their grandchildren than do the parents. Spending a lot of time with them at home and outside the village, the older generation considers it their duty to share their knowledge and worldview with children. The elders I spoke with had a relevant, and at the same time multifaceted, assessment of the social life of the village. They believe that ongoing social shifts have a profound impact on the culture and language of their people. On the one hand, they really wanted these changes not to damage the Chukchi identity, and to see that the village flourishes. At the same time, at least some of them clearly want a different life for their grandchildren. They would like their grandchildren to acquire a quality education, get a good qualification, a well-paid job, and live somewhere in the city. Although the elders grumbled that children and grandchildren should know their native language, for them there was no doubt, no matter how contradictory it might seem, that only knowledge of the Russian language can preserve Indigenous villages, traditional subsistence, and Indigenous culture. In other words, they want both personal success for their grandchildren and that they receive a quality education and be able to work for their villages and for the people.

Young villagers thought less about contemporary Indigenous culture and were reluctant to share about their personal lives, but their opinions also create a complex mosaic. Even though they differ from the generation of their parents—their first language is Russian, they are passionate about computers and the internet, and these activities are their primary interests—hunting, fishing, and gathering are still a significant and meaningful part of their life, just as they are for older generations. Just like previous generations, they confidently and effectively provide themselves and the villagers with traditional food. For most of the villagers, this is an everyday food, the alternative to which is almost nonexistent due to the high cost of store types of meat, including reindeer meat. On the other hand, young villagers want to have new experiences, new options in life. College and military service are the most affordable means of achieving their dreams. Some settle in district or regional hub cities, and even leave for other regions of Russia.

Recently, a new window of opportunity for moving has opened up for the residents of Neshkan. Local authorities are offering them a subsidy to move to Egvekinot, a district hub. The villagers who move there try to stick together. Together they celebrate holidays, collect greens, berries, and fish. However, the job market in the new location cannot offer them much work.

Desperate, some return home. In addition, the urbanized way of life is not acceptable for everyone. They miss their homes, their native way of life. They say that this is the land of their ancestors, and they want to live on it. Several of my young participants also said that they were forced to stay in the village because their parents are unable to provide themselves with traditional food and young people need to take care of them.

Death has remained perhaps the most respected act in the traditional life of the community. In both villages, the tradition of a three-day departure of the deceased to “another world” has been preserved. The villagers come to the house of the deceased to say goodbye, drink tea, and have a snack, bringing their contribution to the common meal. Guests talk, tell stories, and help prepare food and tea for other guests. Visits continue to arrive at any time of the day or night. Tired visitors can take a nap. The tone of the conversations is rather optimistic. It is understood that the deceased has gone to a better world and therefore it is not accepted to grieve. The dead are no longer dressed in traditional fur clothes and shoes; everything is purchased in the store. The custom of questioning the deceased has been preserved. The main questions are related to the distribution of inheritance, as well as what things and equipment the deceased would like to take with him/her to the “other world.” Some of the older relatives’ “question” the deceased using the same method as before (Bogoras 1907, 522). In one of the cases, the deceased was asked about where he wanted to be buried. The deceased “chose” a place on the slope of the hill, and not within the rural cemetery. On this occasion, there was a conflict between the head of the administration and the relatives of the deceased. The conflict was resolved in favor of the will of the deceased, since he was a respected person in the village, and the head of the administration was a Chukchi. There is still a combination of modern and traditional funerals here. Even though today a grave, a coffin and a tombstone are used, ending the farewell and leaving the grave takes place in accordance with traditions. The villagers leave the grave in a clockwise direction and make a bandage on their wrist from the blades of grass plucked near the grave.

### 5.1.3. Community

Interviewees' opinions indicate that they love their villages and want them to have a prosperous future. Among the participants in the study were those who hoped that the village would prosper and rebuild. This outlook for the future is confusing given the conditions in which

the study participants have been living. The housing and water supply crisis that has existed for several decades points directly to a negative trend.

In fact, the statistics of responses to the questionnaire confirm the complexity of the challenge faced by the villagers throughout the post-Soviet history of Neshkan and Enurmino (Figure 5.3). Only 30% of interview participants were sure that their villages would exist for a long time, that is, more than two or three generations. The other 40% of the interviewees hoped for the survival of the villages if sea hunting and reindeer herding are in demand by the villagers. I found a clear correlation between the involvements of interviewees with subsistence at sea and in the tundra and their confidence that the Neshkan and Enurmino, and the Chukchi as a people, would be able to survive. In other words, those villagers who are subsistence participants believe that they will maintain this activity, and this in turn will be a decisive factor in the preservation of the villages.

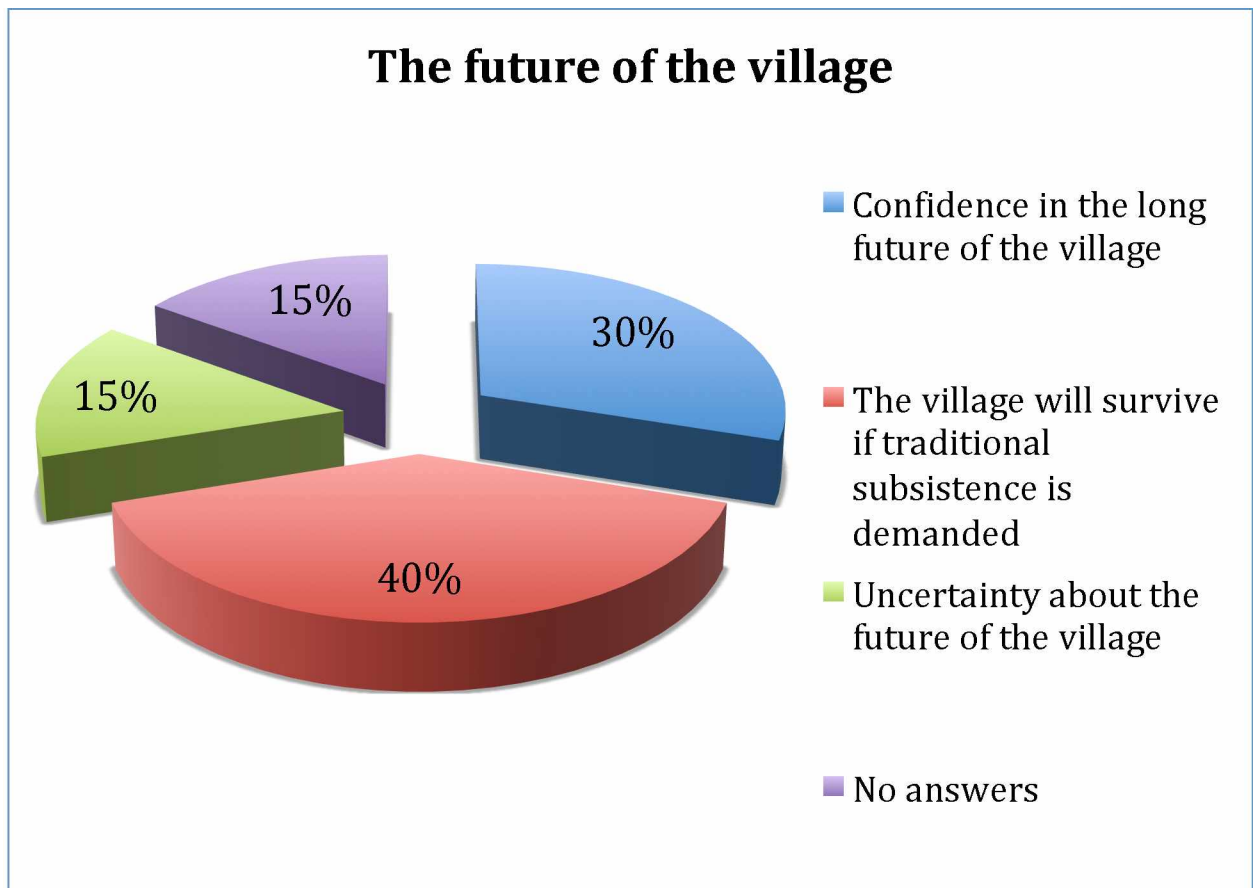


Figure 5.3. The future of the Village.

Among the interviewees there were also those who had some doubts about a bright future for the settlements. These opinions were driven by factors such as high levels of alcoholism in the villages, significant and rapid climate change destroying the coastline, and disbelief that local authorities are determined to promote the existence of Enurmino and especially Neshkan. This point of view was shared by 15% of the interviewees. Likely for the same reasons another 15% chose not to answer this question.

Overall, the respondents wanted the settlements to exist, but as for the future of their children, their opinions here were not so unambiguous. They wanted their children to have a good education and a well-paid profession, but the place of life and work was left to their discretion. In particular, there were those who wanted their children to return after acquiring a profession and work for the benefit of the village, but there were also those who wanted their children to live in more socially and economically secure settlements.

My observations of the Chukotkan Indigenous settlements over several decades have shown that subsistence activities in remote communities are an integral part of the life of the villagers. Subsistence provides villagers with food, outdoor activity, and a sense of belonging to their people. Although the importance of subsistence food in the Neshkan and Enurmino communities has decreased somewhat in the last decade and there has been a shift from sea hunting to fishing for a majority of the population, as our interviews revealed, they have retained their commitment to sea hunting. Most of the interviewees (80%) were sure that subsistence has a future. Only the elderly (another 15%) was not sure about the viability of the future traditional subsistence. They pointedly expressed hope for the return of practices to traditionalism because they considered it a key condition for the secure well-being of the villages and the preservation of the Chukchi identity and culture. The difference in opinions between the older and younger generations was due to their vision of forms of subsistence activity. The elders wanted the hunting to be the same as in their childhood, in wooden and leather boats with large crews, while the younger generations simply practice subsistence in accordance with the current social and economic realities.

Common to all generations is the continued demand for subsistence food. For them, this food is not only a rare delicacy and a means of providing their cultural identity, but primarily a

source of food that provides basic caloric needs. The Neshkan and Enurmino communities literally depend on the number of seals, walruses, and whales that are caught. Marine mammal food is also an affordable source of nutrients because the store's assortment consists of canned and frozen foods and is unable to provide a year-round supply of fresh vegetables and fruits. This dependence on traditional use of natural resources is a strong incentive for villagers to preserve their settlements.

I must point out that the picture I have outlined of the relationship of the Neshkan and Enurmino inhabitants to the traditional beliefs of the Chukchi reflects only part of the real picture. This is because our interviewees were highly dependent on traditional subsistence, both in terms of activity and consumption. Men are engaged in sea hunting and fishing, women are engaged in gathering berries, plants, and processing hunting prey. All interviewees consumed subsistence food every day, either self-produced or obtained from the hunting *obshchinas* and neighbors.

An analysis of the interview revealed that 70% of the interviewees claimed to adhere to traditional beliefs (Figure 5.4). No correlation was found between age and adherence to traditional beliefs. Of the three people (15% of those interviewed) who claimed not to adhere to traditional beliefs, one was an elder. On the other hand, two middle-aged interviewees from this group reported that they observed some traditional rituals, even though one of them was an Orthodox Christian. The rituals described by the interviewees varied according to age and occupation. The older the study participant was, the more detailed the rituals described were. Former residents of reindeer camps were also more detailed in their accounts of traditional holidays. On the other hand, the descriptions of the subsistence participants, the hunters, and their observance of the rituals indicate that they observe them in the present tense, while the former inhabitants of the reindeer camps mostly referred to the rituals in the past tense.

To summarize the assertions of the Neshkan and Enurmino villagers, rituals directly correlate with subsistence activity. The more difficult and dangerous the subsistence activity was, the more carefully the traditional rituals were observed. Life in the villages without hunting, fishing, and gathering is difficult due to the low incomes of the villagers and the relatively high

prices for store products. Therefore, most villagers are motivated to adhere to traditional beliefs to varying degrees.

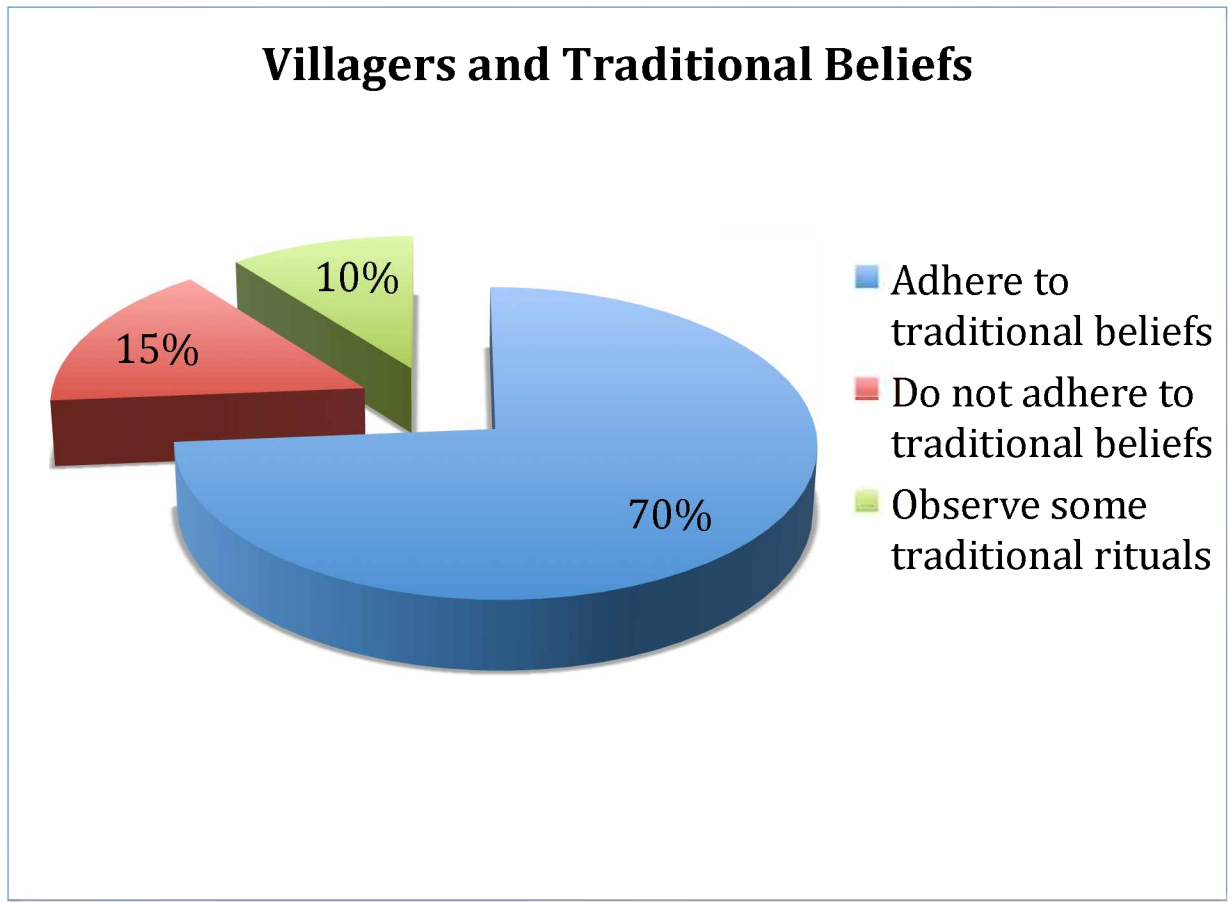


Figure 5.4. Villagers and Traditional Beliefs.

Due to decades of Soviet propaganda regarding atheism, most people in Neshkan and Enurmino are not particularly religious. Religious freedom, restored thanks to the collapse of the Soviet system, has opened up windows of opportunity for both those who follow traditional beliefs and various Christian denominations. The economic collapse stimulated traditional subsistence, which in turn called for traditional knowledge, part of which is the animistic worldview. These views were preserved by the older generation. However, since public events were strictly prohibited, the rituals were based on individual and family experiences. Some of the rituals came from reindeer husbandry, which was because traditional beliefs and the Chukchi



language were better preserved in reindeer camps due to their remoteness from settlements. As a result, today's traditional beliefs have been greatly modified both in terms of external attributes and internal content. In fact, not many villagers are involved in traditional sea hunting. The majority of the villagers are not interested in either traditional knowledge or traditional worldviews.

Christianity is also present in the villages to a small extent. These small religious communities are based on the desire of the villagers to have mutual help in the struggle against life's challenges and setbacks, such as alcoholism and poverty. Some villagers with a traditional lifestyle combine animistic and Christian views (Oparin 2012, 203). This trend is characteristic of the subsistence-oriented Indigenous peoples in Alaska (Gadamus and Raymond-Yakoubian 2015, 94) as a cause and consequence of decolonization. In Chukotka, it was reinforced by the Soviet stage of atheism. The traditional knowledge and rituals are organically intertwined and difficult to separate from one another, while the leaders of Christian communities are the same villagers whose knowledge of Christian teachings is not much greater than that of other villagers. This interweaving of beliefs and atheism contributes to various and sometimes unexpected consequences, such as the emergence of ethical complications.

These challenges are illustrated by the case of Gennady Inankeuas, a sea hunter from Lorino, my colleague and consultant. Thanks to his good traditional knowledge, traditional subsistence experience, and leadership qualities, Gennady was a respected person, known far beyond his village. For many years he led a small hunting *obshchina*, where traditional rituals and customs associated with traditional sea hunting and traditional distribution were carefully observed. His hunting *obshchina* provided dozens of villagers with traditional food. As one of the Indigenous leaders, Gennady represented his people at regional, federal, and international meetings, fighting for the right of the Chukchi people to preserve their identity. Collaborating with him, I drew attention to Gennady's negative attitude towards the Christian religion. I believe that Gennady saw a certain threat to the Chukchi identity, which was based on traditional subsistence and accompanying beliefs. Once Gennady told me: "I think that when I die, God will send me to hell, because on my hands is the blood of hundreds of killed animals." It is a little surprising that Gennady, apparently a convinced animist, believed that the Christian god would punish his hunting activities.

To understand Gennady's way of thinking, it makes sense to refer to the distinctive socio-cultural marks in his life history. He was born in the late 1950s, almost 20 years after the Soviet authorities destroyed shamanism in the settlements of the Chukchi Peninsula (Khakhovskaya 2013). This means that his parents, although still adherents of traditional beliefs, were well aware of the authorities' persecution of animistic rites. Therefore, the observance of their beliefs was possible only in secret in the family circle inside the house or outside the settlements. In addition, the Soviet school in which Gennady studied positioned atheism as part of the educational process. Sea hunting in those years was part of industrial agriculture. Sea hunters had to provide the local fox farm with meat from marine mammals for an hourly rate. Then, in the 1990s, along with the collapse of the Soviet economy, famine came to his village. Marine hunters prey as in pre-Soviet times became the main source of food for the villagers. In both time periods, Gennady and his colleagues harvested an impressive array of marine mammals.

Killing a large number of living beings raises ethical difficulties sooner or later. Animism, to a certain extent, gives the Chukchi a solution to this challenge. Claiming that he is the heir to the animistic beliefs of his ancestors, Gennady could assume that he does not kill animals. After all, according to the traditional ideas of the Chukchi, marine mammals are neighboring peoples (Bogoras 1907, 280; 283), and voluntarily and reciprocate share their flesh with the villagers (Stepanoff 2015; 2017). The post-Soviet appearance of a Christian community in Chukotkan villages further contributed to the upheaval of Gennady's beliefs. This is probably why Gennady tried to impose his own interpretation of the Christian concept of sin on his hunting activities. For some reason, he considered that, according to Christian beliefs, the thousands of sea animals that he had taken in his lifetime was a sin. In Gennady's mind, the traditional Chukchi belief in reciprocity and mutual respect in relations with animals collided first with the brutal Soviet version of atheism, and then with no less adamant Christian rejection of paganism. This set of influences created a conflict for Gennady, which has not yet been resolved. Members of the Neshkan and Enurmino communities are dealing with this challenge with varying degrees of success.

## 5.2. What Influences Locals?

Relocation occurs at a smaller scale within the villages due to the lack of local schools. Between the ages of ten and twelve, children graduate from the elementary school in Enurmino and are forced to move to the Neshkan boarding school for the school year. This helps connect the two communities, but it comes at a cultural cost for Enurmino residents because this is the typical age for an Indigenous child to start hunting, fishing, and undertaking reindeer husbandry under the supervision of their parents. The boarding school takes away the time the youth would be acquiring basic traditional subsistence skills and obviously influences the socio-cultural traditions of the Indigenous villages. At the age of sixteen, the students of Neshkan and Enurmino are forced to move to Lavrentia High School (another boarding school), which again postpones their time of acquiring traditional knowledge and skills, forcing young men to be alienated from their families and Indigenous occupations. After school, young men undergo a one-year stint of compulsory military service, and only after they reach twenty to twenty-two years of age can they either return to their native village or move to regional hub cities. These boarding schools have contributed to spatial and sociocultural movement. Children, separated from their parents for years, lose a strong connection with their home and the hereditary occupation of their parents, making it much easier to move between settlements and types of economic activities. Residents from different villages marry each other after either graduating from boarding school, completing compulsory military service, or going to college.

The primary language in Neshkan and Enurmino is Russian. The Indigenous Chukchi language is spoken mainly by residents over fifty years old and mostly not among themselves, but with elders who speak Chukchi only. Young villagers learn Russian first with their families and Chukchi later, on the street and in kindergarten. However, in each settlement there are several young villagers, including adolescents, who are fluent in Chukchi since they were raised by their grandparents, often in a socially isolated reindeer herding camp. The rest of the villagers speak primarily in Russian peppered with a few Chukchi words or short conversational phrases. This form of speech is typical among the Indigenous villages of the Bering Strait of the region (Schwalbe 2015; 2017; Morgounova-Schwalbe 2020).

The decline in the use of the Chukchi language is an obvious marker of the ongoing sociocultural shifts. Our interlocutors, who are younger than 40 years old admitted that the Russian language dominates their lives, and the Chukchi language is rarely used. Despite this statement, they still considered the Chukchi language as their mother tongue. Morgunova-Schwalbe (2020) explains this phenomenon as a consequence of the growing Indigenous identity in the neighboring Yupik villages of Chukotka. The villagers, worried about losing their identity, use every opportunity to separate themselves from other peoples.

When asked whether the Chukchi language will exist for a long time, 60% of the interviewed villagers answered positively (Figure 5.5). It is noteworthy that more than half of those who were optimistic were representatives of the younger generation. A reasonable explanation is that the young people's confidence is based on their perception of the Chukchi language. In the conversations of the villagers of Neshkan and Enurmino, they used a mixed Russian-Chukchi language that was predominantly Russian speech. Opinions among the elderly were divided equally. 20% of the older generation respondents were sure that the Chukchi language had no future and another 10% of the interviewed elders doubted the bright future of their native language. There was another group, which made up 10% of the interviewees, who did not express their opinion about the viability of the Chukchi language. The main reason was that they were upset about the current situation with their mother tongue.

Overall, the elders believed that the changes in the Chukchi language environment were clear and strong. The younger generation also recognized that Russian had supplanted their mother tongue. However, it is also likely that younger villagers also believed that the mixed Russian-Chukchi language along with the Chukchi accent made their everyday language slightly different from what they considered Russian.

Traditional subsistence is the architect and the core of traditional knowledge, which ensures the continuation of the socio-cultural characteristics of the Indigenous peoples of Chukotka. Today's villagers seem to have less traditional knowledge than their parents and grandparents. School, television, and the internet are replacing traditional oral information sources.

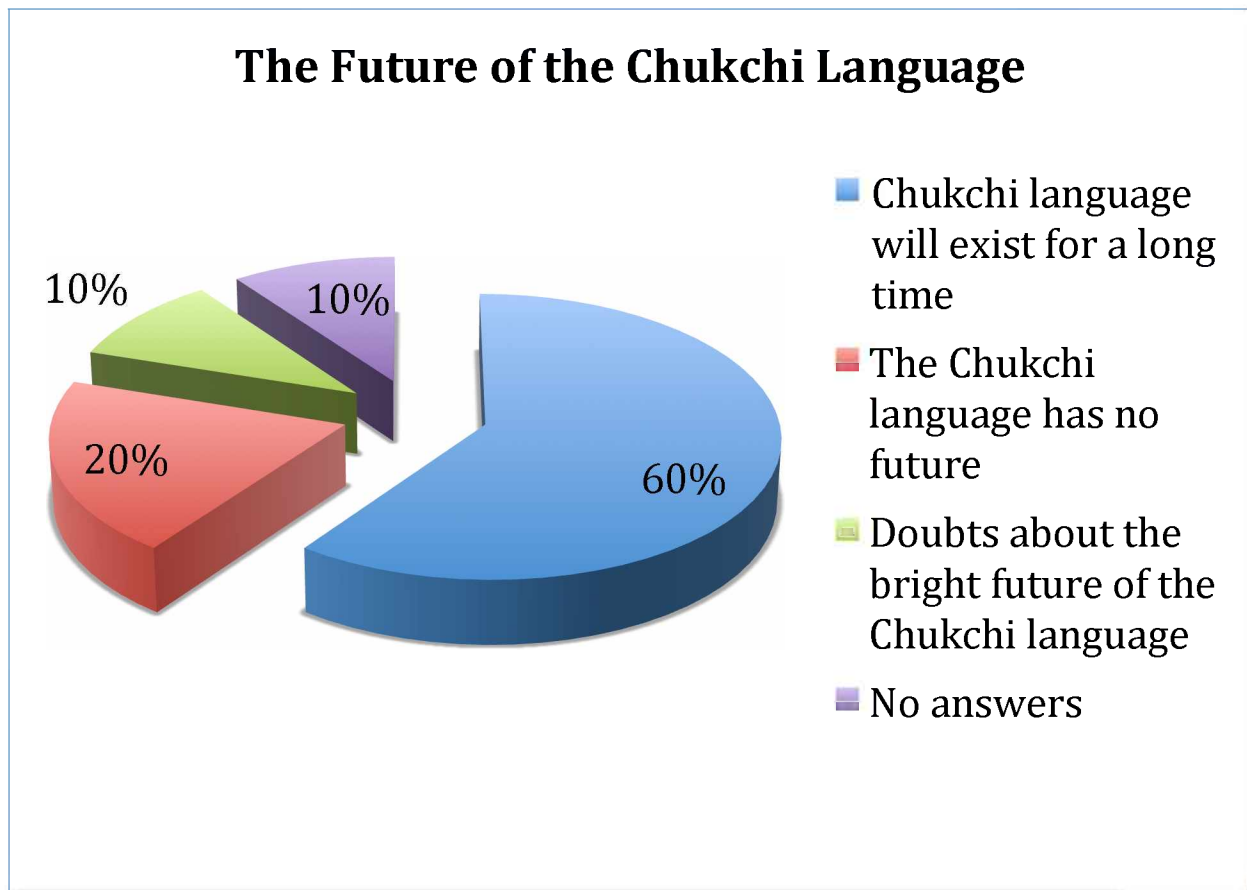


Figure 5.5. The Future of the Chukchi Language.

School occupies most of the a child's days. In the morning there are regular classes in the classroom and additional education groups in the afternoon. Some children, whose parents are in reindeer herding camps, live in a boarding school all winter, joining their parents only during the summer holidays. Even during the three months of summer holidays rural children usually spend time in a summer camp at school. This institution is dominant in shaping the worldviews of the villagers. For this reason, traditional knowledge has become available only to a limited group of children. Those parents who involve their children in hunting, fishing, and related household work, sometimes even to the detriment of school, raise villagers for whom traditional subsistence activities and knowledge are fundamental. Their worldview combines both a global and a traditional perspective.

Until the 1980s, it was typical for a family to gather and share stories in the evenings. Part of this communication was devoted to telling tales that taught children the basics of the local worldview and how to interact with society and nature. In the 1990s, television firmly entered the life of the villagers, where it reigned supreme for almost twenty years. In the 2010s, the internet invaded villages, even reindeer and hunting camps. Now, several generations live together in a small house and their only entertainment is watching TV programs or films as well as communicating in internet groups. Watching cartoons or reading books has replaced the tradition of gathering and telling stories for children. The only opportunity that still remains for passing on traditional knowledge to children is the reindeer herding camp during the summer holidays. This camp is also a place for hunting, fishing, and gathering edible plants.

Some of the middle-aged participants in the case study pointed out that they retained traditional beliefs largely because, together with their parents, they hunted, fished, and observed the performance of rituals all year round. Indeed, their knowledge of the names of hunting equipment, animals, and rituals in their native language was extensive, while most of them considered themselves to be limited speakers of their native language.

Other hunters never had the chance to learn traditional knowledge as children, since their parents belonged to the urbanized group of villagers. By joining the hunting *obshchina*, they obtain this knowledge from their peers, or by observing older hunters. However, their worldview was already formed during childhood and adolescence. Although they participate in hunting rituals, it is very likely that their perception of the world has already shifted the general mentality of the hunting *obshchinas*. Performing rituals helps villagers avoid anxiety, insecurity, and uncertainty. However, the typical villager follows this path less and less. Animistic beliefs are currently undergoing change under the influence of a huge amount of information that is supplanting traditional knowledge and beliefs.

However, the young villagers continued the activities of their ancestors. They hunt marine mammals and distribute ample marine food throughout the village, using methods and protocols somewhat like those of the older generation. This also means that the subsistence-oriented knowledge and skills of modern hunters are sufficient for stable subsistence. This knowledge has changed in the process of adaptation of the villagers to new social and climatic

conditions. After all, the changes in subsistence activities such as hunting, butchering, and meat processing stem from changing needs and opportunities, not a lack of skills or loss of traditional knowledge. Things that are in demand in the village, such as housing, boats, equipment, clothing, and footwear, no longer require the skins and blubber of marine mammals for their production and repair because their factory-made counterparts can be cheaper and more practical to use. Further, global progress is providing villagers with the information technology and equipment they need to safely hunt in the sea.

### 5.2.1. Alcoholism and Community

Alcohol addiction is a crucial challenge that affects all aspects of community life. Municipal stores legally sell alcohol on days and hours established by regional law (ANO IA “Chukotka” 2018). In Chukotka, the sale of alcohol is illegal in one village. However, such prohibition is not widespread, because illegal sellers, if banned, occupy the entire niche. The competition for municipal shops is made up of low-quality alcohol, which is sold by both visitors who sell beer and low-alcohol carbonated drinks and Indigenous villagers who trade mainly home-brewed beer. For these reasons, most Indigenous villages prefer to set limits on the days and times for the sale of alcohol, rather than a complete ban. Yarzutkina (2016a, 103) argues that from 23 to 47% of the adult population in the Chukotka settlement is addicted to alcohol. In fact, villagers drink at every opportunity. Federal holidays such as New Years, Army Day, Women's Day, and the May holidays are accompanied by massive alcohol consumption, sometimes for several days. Payday, social security benefits, and pensions are also the cause of massive drinking. Somewhat similar patterns are observed among Greenlanders (Bjerregaard et al 2020, 3). Many villagers get their first experience of drinking alcohol during such binge drinking episodes as children or in youth. Drunken parents, spending time drinking, quarreling, or ending up unconscious, forget about their responsibility to their family and the well-being of their children. In the days of rampant drinking, children are left to themselves. They must look for food and shelter while trying to avoid violence. During these events, some of them try alcohol for the first time. For some, this is limited to minor troubles, while someone is addicted to alcohol for life. In summer, children take shelter for the night in the attics of houses or in tents outside the village. In winter they do not have many choices and often the only salvation is the

boarding school, where they can also eat. Some murders occur due to drunken mothers in an unconscious state squeezing their babies to death.

Even though many villagers drink, there are groups of villagers who do not drink alcohol nor consume a substantial amount. The stereotype of the whole village drinking alcohol prevails because the sober villagers prefer to hide in their houses these days or get out of the village to fish, hunt, and spend time in outdoor recreation. Some villagers only drink for one day, such as a holiday, or because they were given a salary, pension, or social benefits. These villagers spend only a small part of their budgeted money on alcohol. Some villagers drink for several days, but they are limited by the amount of cash that they have. Finally, there is a group of villagers who drink as long as they can. To get alcohol, such villagers sell everything that is of value in their home. They start with hunting products such as ivory, meat, and furs. Then, store-bought harvesting gear, such as nets and rubber boats, or spare parts for snowmobiles, outboard motors, and ATVs go on sale. If they have outdoor clothing, shoes, or consumer electronics, they are either exchanged for alcohol or sold for next to nothing so they can buy alcohol. At the same time, they are constantly looking for those who can offer them alcohol or any opportunities to purchase alcohol, and even steal alcohol or a valuable thing to exchange for alcohol. Such villagers drink until their bodies are exhausted. It rarely comes to a medically dangerous state, but only because the villagers do not have much money or valuable things.

During such festivities, local authorities are faced with the problem of providing the village with heat, electricity, and water. Drunken employees do not go to work and therefore sometimes even the managers themselves are forced to watch the power plant and drive communal vehicles. Municipal authorities are trying to control the sale of alcohol and regulate its sale in liquor stores. They also support the initiatives of some rural communities to completely ban the sale of alcohol. However, almost nothing is done about illegal alcohol sellers. Villagers usually hate bootleggers, realizing that many problems in their lives are related to alcohol. Although local laws prohibit bootlegging, neither the authorities nor the villagers are taking significant action against the illegal sale of alcohol. Moreover, some of the villagers said that bootleggers, using the money from the sale of alcohol, acquired start-up capital to develop their trading business and provide residents with clothes, shoes, and food at affordable prices. Some Indigenous villagers are also involved in the illegal alcohol business. The only difference with



newcomers-bootleggers is that locals sell alcohol to generate income in order to buy themselves alcohol to drink, although some of them use this money to pay for living expenses.

Meidel (1894), Bogoras (1909, 644) described the Chukchi phenomenon of a “violent man” terrorizing their families and neighbors. Such characters lasted until someone killed them. In a modern village, there are also such people. These are often very strong villagers, but they can also be ordinary people. Their distinguishing feature is vicious behavior stimulated by alcohol. Having drunk, such a person terrorizes the villagers. Fights, violence, and bullying initiated by an abusive person can last for a long time, sometimes years, until something bad happens to him. For some reason, such people often die while hunting, fishing, or traveling outside the village. Could this be explained by the fact that the community punishes such villagers for inappropriate behavior? Nobody claims participation in such events, they just happen and the community returns to homeostasis.

The villagers I interviewed acknowledge that alcohol is perhaps the most critical issue for the physical and mental health of villagers as well as the well being of the local community. They discuss the problem, hoping to find a solution on how to reduce alcohol consumption among their fellow villagers. However, so far, no successful solutions have been found. The villagers turn to the authorities for help, while the authorities argue that only villagers can and should solve the problem of alcohol addiction. In any case, both sides are making efforts to solve the problem. Local residents organized a special program in which Indigenous anti-alcohol activists conducted a class to decrease alcohol addiction. Family members paid for this work. The Chukotka Red Cross, a non-profit organization working in partnership with the Chukotkan government, has organized a special program to improve the health of the population (Nikitin 2019). However, the efficiency of these programs also turned out to be low. Christian communities in the villages are working hard trying to help the villagers get rid of alcohol addiction (Oparin 2012). However, like other allies in the fight against addiction, they cannot help alcohol-addicted villagers much.

Alcohol addiction is one of the key challenges for Chukchi identity (Avksentyuk et al 1995; Segal and Saylor 2007). The high level of illness and death from alcohol, as well as the

social consequences of alcoholism, such as job loss, family breakdown, and criminal offenses cause irreparable damage to the social life of the settlements.

### 5.2.2. Global and Local Influences on Worldview of the Villagers

The profound social shifts in the Chukotkan community seem to be ongoing and often contradictory. The coastal and tundra Chukchi were first drawn into the cash economy through trade with Russian traders and American whalers. The Soviet authorities incorporated them into a gigantic industrial economy. With the collapse of the Soviet system, the economy of the Chukchi villages was thrown back almost to pre-Soviet times, and the inhabitants survived only thanks to traditional subsistence activities. Finally, over the past two decades, they have been integrated into the symbiosis of the socialist and capitalist systems, somewhat reminiscent of the so-called “mixed economy” (Wolfe and Walker 1987).

It is not easy to determine which worldview is dominant among the villagers because it is shaped under multidirectional natural and social influences. Being an integral part of the Arctic environment, observing natural phenomena and interacting with wildlife at almost the same level as their ancestors, villagers are exposed to the same information flow as the older generations. This interaction with the nature persistently keeps the villagers’ minds in an animistic worldview. Global society, which influences Indigenous settlements through the cash economy, modern law, social mobility, and multicultural information pathways (linguistic, educational, entertainment, religious, and consumer), has filled villagers’ minds with tolerance for both atheism and religiosity, and has supported the combination of traditional and modern knowledge.

Despite these changes, villagers demonstrate an impressive capacity to adapt and, while transforming under diverse influences, still retain many traditional cultural characteristics. The Chukchi still recognize themselves as separate peoples, despite the uniformity of their lifestyle, nutrition, and the dominance of the Russian language. Reindeer herders and marine hunters continue their traditional activities, even though some of the traditional approaches are not in demand (Davydova 2019a), some are gradually changing (Klokov), and some are simplified (Zdor et al 2010). Still, there are some clear signs that new generations of villagers continue to adhere to the traditional worldview, including the case study’s participants who did not wish to discuss their views. These villagers continue the rituals dedicated to hunting and butchering

methods at almost the same rate as those of previous generations of villagers: they follow the traditional distribution of the results of their hunt.

A similar situation regarding worldviews took place in the 19th century (Maydel 1896). When questioned, locals did not provide researchers with the rational explanation of the rituals that researchers sought. Chukotkans, like those in many cultures, may simply be continuing the traditions they learned from their parents and grandparents, and supplementing them with new traditions and what they have learned from popular culture. It is likely that villagers have sufficient traditions, skills, and knowledge to become part of a global society and avoid cultural extinction. The question now is what will happen—are Chukchi communities adapting to preserve their Indigenous identity so the culture will survive, or are individuals transforming so that they can survive personally in a modern globalized world?

Identifying what is global and what is local in the villages is complicated, since the modern Indigenous communities of the Arctic, despite their remoteness, isolation, and dependence on wildlife, are part of the global information system. The structuring of the villagers' opinion about what is considered local (Indigenous), or traditional and intrinsic, and what is global (Russian), or alien to the Indigenous mentality and culture, opens a window for the interpretation of the dichotomy of the Indigenous villagers “us vs. them.”

The case study's participants clearly and loudly declared that they belong to the Chukchi, articulating their separate identity from other peoples, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. This applies to the relationship between the Chukchi and the neighboring Siberian Yupik people, although they have the same lifestyle, the same education, and speak the same Russian language (reference Russian-speaking Indigenous peoples). Both the Chukchi and the Yupik believe that they still speak different languages, because they mix words and expressions from their native languages into their everyday Russian (Schwalbe 2015; 2017; Morgunova-Schwalbe 2020). The feeling of having a separate identity also applies to newcomers from other regions. The attitude of the Chukchi is tolerant, but it is clear that newcomers are them, not us, despite the fact that the newcomers speak the same Russian and have grown up with a similar educational paradigm.

From an outsider's perspective, the difference between newcomers and locals may not be readily apparent. Newcomers may have decided to move to such a remote and difficult place to

live because they already have rural and northern mentalities. Newcomers also practice subsistence activities for the purpose of storing food and enjoying the outdoors. But their methods of hunting, fishing, and gathering edible plants differ from those of the native villagers. The difference is most noticeable in the fact that the Indigenous villagers remain committed to the methods and approaches developed by their ancestors, meaning the optimal combination of minimalism and perfect execution, while at the same time enthusiastically using technical innovations. As Sahlins stated,

All across the northern tier of the planet, scattered through the vast Arctic and Subarctic stretches of Europe, Siberia, and North America, hunting, fishing and gathering peoples have survived by harnessing industrial technologies to paleolithic purposes (Sahlins 1999, vi).

Newcomers also have a different attitude toward the natural resources of the Arctic, both in recreational and commercial contexts. I watched as the newcomers caught more fish than Indigenous villagers, using every opportunity to increase their catch, while the Indigenous villagers were content with the amount that was necessary to feed their families or provide the minimum necessary cash income. The same pattern repeated with the catch of polar foxes. As in other eras, newcomers would likely be willing to kill more whales and walruses if they were allowed and there would be a benefit. Bockstoce and Botkin (1982), Bockstoce and Burns (1993), and Krupnik and Chlenov (2007) describe the overharvesting of walruses and whales in the 19th century, which devastated wildlife in the Bering Strait region for several decades.

Then there is the question of mixed marriages: how do the children of Indigenous and non-Indigenous parents identify? Children in inter-ethnic families have a sense of Indigenous belonging that depends mainly on where they live. It is not only ethnic identity that matters, but also the subsistence-oriented preferences of Indigenous peoples that are tied to their traditional places of residence. The further the inter-ethnic family lives from the Indigenous village, the more indifferent the children are toward their Indigenous identity. This is probably a way of adapting children to the ethnic community in which they live. Some descendants of mixed families who live in an Indigenous village feel an increased sense of Indigenous identity over time.

At a much smaller scale, villagers draw distinctions about identities within a settlement. For example, *We* are coastal dwellers and *They* are tundra dwellers. *We* are those whose ancestors are from the Kolyuchino Bay, and *They* are those whose ancestors are from the Ildidlya Island. Over time, these differences become blurred, but as long as the elders live, the origin stories of families in the villages remain significant in the conversations of the villagers.

Neshkan and Enurmino are only thirty miles apart, and although their inhabitants have family ties and similar lifestyles, they still divide each other into *us* and *them*. Groups of villagers are divided according to natural landscape features: for example, those who live behind the river and those who live on the seaside. Most likely, the size of the village population is the determining factor in this division. Some residents of Enurmino claim that Neshkan, for them, is a kind of city of sin. They are confident that the residents of Neshkan consume alcohol twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, although alcohol consumption patterns and quantities seem to be no different than many Indigenous communities of the Arctic (Avksentyuk et al 1995). It is difficult to understand why the Enurmino residents think they are so different from the Neshkan residents. Most students from Enurmino attend the Neshkan middle school, and then, together with Neshkan students, spend two years as boarding school students at Lavrentia High School.

Chukchi villagers in Enurmino and Neshkan have as great an adaptive capacity as they have always had. In the face of dramatic social, political, economic, and environmental change, this adaptive capacity has enabled a transformation of identity. A relatively large group of young villagers is ready to move to cities, and the migration process is limited only by financial opportunities. Many have already moved elsewhere in Chukotka, to other regions of Russia, or even outside of Russia. Since this transformation has occurred over several decades, it involves not only young residents. Retirees often move away to their spouses' villages and become newcomers in these other native places. They miss their own homelands, but not enough to return there. Together, all these signs indicate that at least part of the Chukotkan community is ready to assimilate with the dominant society.

That said, not all have the capacity or desire to transform. Just as the collapse of the Soviet Union pushed many Chukotkans back to traditional hunting for the sake of survival, current financial and political constraints can limit mobility. Yet lack of financial means is not

the key factor sustaining the traditional subsistence lifeway of the Chukchi. There is also a meaningful desire to hold onto this identity, even while taking advantage of modern amenities. In this way, the Chukchi are united with other Indigenous groups across the world, who strive to continue and improve their Indigenous lifeways.

## Chapter 6. Anthropology of Contradictions

Throughout my writing process I would ask my peers, mentors, and tutors at the University of Alaska Fairbanks Writing Center to read the various drafts and sections of the manuscript. Among the commonly offered remarks were those pointing to the instances where I appear to be contradicting myself. For example, when discussing the villagers' sentiments on the use of Chukchi language (see Chapter 4), I would report that residents of Neshkan and Enurmino wish that Chukchi was the first language of everyday use to ensure the cultural vitality and prosperous future of our people; I would also report that the villagers want their children to be well-educated in Russian to ensure prosperous future and access to opportunities that exist in the modern world. Or, as I discuss later on, the wishes for the social and living conditions stated by the villagers often included access to medical services, education and job opportunities, transportation, and utilities infrastructure at the levels found in cities, yet, overwhelmingly, the residents of Neshkan and Enurmino wanted to remain in their village and did not support the various proposals for consolidation or relocation of their settlements. Quite often, my readers suggested that I eliminate such ambiguities, believing that I was contradicting myself. In fact, I was only describing the realities as I observed them, accompanying them, I think, with reasonable interpretations. After weighing the pros and cons, I considered these phenomena worthy of special attention and decided to develop this topic into an acceptable contribution to the anthropology of contradictions.

I proceed from the observation that the main contradiction shaping the modern Chukotkan community is the clash between group identity and personal well-being. The villagers want to preserve the Chukchi language and culture, while personal and family welfare are based on the Russian language and global culture. Discussing the anthropology of contradictions, I will reflect on the challenging and crucial choices of contemporary Chukotkan communities.

### 6.1. Contradictions and a Social Unit: Overview of Some Outlooks

Social sciences that discuss contradictions tend to do so either in connection to the macroeconomic theory of dialectic, or to logical laws. Anthropological attention to contradiction has been rather limited, with the vast majority of academic studies related to the term "contradiction" being in the fields of philosophy, psychology, or linguistics. "Anthropology and

the study of contradictions," edited by Berliner (Berliner et al 2016) brings together a range of anthropological perspectives. I look to the ideas featured in this volume, in combination with other to consider the findings from my field research and lived experience in the modern Chukotkan community.

#### 6.1.1. The concept of "Contradiction" for the Purpose of Examining the Chukotkan Community

The Cambridge dictionary (n.d.) defines contradiction as “the fact of something being the complete opposite of something else or very different from something else, so that one of them must be wrong: You say that you're good friends and yet you don't trust him. Isn't that a contradiction?” Although the conclusion in this case operates in terms of formal logic, I consider this is a very apt instance of the contradictions that appear in anthropological studies of communities. These inconsistencies differ depending on the time, place, or composition of the participants in the conversation. In fact, my interlocutors seemed sincere when they made seemingly contradictory statements. I explain this friendly coexistence of contradictions by the fact that the hierarchy of desires and needs of the individual is more complex than the simplified logical constructions cut out to search for patterns of phenomena. The logical structure tries to generalize ideas and throws aside the details, which include the innumerable shades of human relationships and behavior that form a real socio-cultural pattern. While the interrelated desires and circumstances influencing themselves have continuously changing weak and strong influences that highlight or obscure the degree of inconsistency. Therefore, contradictions that look as such for others are not really contradictions for the participants in the interaction.

Contradictions at the communal level seem to be more of a psychological issue than political or logical ones because they have an individual basis. The duality or multiplicity of the options that generate them is revealed in the interaction of individuals and circumstances, and therefore predetermines their role to be the cores of the social process. This change in the thoughts and desires of the individual is due to many influences in human activity, ranging from the idea, its articulation, perception, implementation, and consequences. As much of this process lies in the linguistic phase, if we apply the findings of Austin (1962) to the anthropology of contradiction, then contradiction, as an act of social interaction, arises within locution, their illocution and perlocution. The anthropological perspective includes human activity besides



speech. As Lambek (2016, 6) relevantly stated:

“From a certain perspective these might be considered inconsistencies rather than contradictions. They could produce conflict (again different from contradiction) and the sense of being pulled in opposite directions—situations that get resolved through practical judgment and sometimes rupture. They could also lead to various tactics or strategies, including (unconscious) repression, (subconscious) rationalization, ambivalence, self-deception, (conscious) lying, or attempts at compromise.”

Duality or plurality provides a choice for achieving the goal, but also makes obstacles to social relations and is its integral feature or even the basis of existence.

### *Contradictions and the Social Pattern*

The daily life of the settlements I study is filled with clashes of the desires of the villagers and the (im)possibilities to fulfill them. That, in my view, is the fundamental circumstance that generates the contradictions I have encountered during my research. Reporting that many of his “interlocutors were expecting both good and bad, they saw themselves as good and bad, and they were feeling “in between” (Jovanović (2016, 2) Jovanović argues that contradiction “is a part of the greater task of understanding people’s different (and many times mutually exclusive) dispositions toward their futures and their everyday lives” (2016, 3). The villagers want well-paying jobs, quality education, medical and social services. While these services are often better and more easily accessible in cities, community members prefer to stay in their village. For two generations, the authorities resettled local residents first from reindeer herding and hunting camps to small villages, and then to Neshkan and Enurmino. For the last three decades there has been a push by (so and so, whoever the authorities are) to relocate the residents of Neshkan to the district cities of Lavrentia and Egvekinot. Yet, villagers stubbornly resist these plans, because they want “to live in traditional places where their ancestors are buried.” In addition, many of them cannot imagine life without traditional subsistence. That is, the actions of the authorities (for the case under consideration, their real reasons do not matter) to make the life of the villagers comfortable conflict with the core set of values of the villagers, which motivate them to resist and stay in their homelands.

Here is another, perhaps the most significant, contradiction in the communities of Neshkan and Enurmino. One of the distinctive cultural features of these villages is the high attractiveness of sea hunting and reindeer herding for the villagers. But sea hunting is almost impossible without transport, weapons, and fuel, which in turn is not affordable for the villagers with their low incomes. Few villagers were fortunate enough to become members of a hunting *obshchina* and a reindeer herding camp, subsidized by the authorities. Municipal subsistence-oriented enterprises provide paid work for only about 15% of the adult population of the village. Together, these circumstances lead to the fact that from 30 to 50 percent of adult residents of the village have neither paid work nor the opportunity to do their favorite sea hunting and reindeer herding. How do the villagers resolve this contradiction? A very small number (2-3 percent of the adult population of the village) have the cash income of their family members working in municipal services to invest in vehicles. Only occasionally and only a few villagers participate in municipal sea hunting and reindeer herding when they are allowed. Basically, the inhabitants stay in the village, fish and collect plants in the surrounding area, and wait for a free share of the meat and blubber of marine mammals, which are provided by the subsidized hunting *obshchina*. In other words, the majority of the villagers had to shift from sea hunting and reindeer herding to fishing and plant gathering. This is most likely not the best solution to the conflict and most likely contributes to a much more serious challenge to the Chukchi identity that was built around sea hunting and reindeer herding. However, the villagers do not have many options.

Contradictions also arise between and within social groups such as families and municipal units. The extended Chukchi family split into nuclear families due to modern-day trends and economic motives (again, negotiating between the personal and communal well-being), and the size of municipal housing, which is limited to literally tens of square meters. According to Creed et al (2010, 1337), “The concept of contradiction is of key importance to theoretical understanding of endogenous change in institutions.” Identifying contradictions, clarifying their causes, and tracking social trends make it possible to identify the motives and causes of the parties behind arguments and to interpret the current sociocultural pattern. Or, as Nugent (1982, 509) mentioned, “Leach claimed that social reality is caught in contradictions, and that an understanding of these contradictions allows us an understanding of the processes of social change.” The duality and doubt generated by disparities between words and deeds is the natural state of a person and a social unit and is due to the natural physiological and spiritual

needs of a person and his own abilities to achieve them. By identifying and analyzing contradictions, I describe the needs of the villagers and their opportunities to outline the cultural trends of local communities. The contradictions and ways to resolve them reveal the socio-cultural model of the settlements I study.

### *Why a Contradiction Arises*

Communication is the basis of the social process and interaction between individuals and/or social units. From the point of view of achieving the goal, contact has two criteria, consensus or conflict. Neutrality is an intermediate option to avoid disagreement if consensus is impossible, and there is not enough power for the conflict. According to Messmer (2007, 8), “While communication is fundamental for all social life, the same logic does apply to the processes of the initiation, stabilization and termination of a social conflict.” I believe that contradiction is an integral part of communication (interaction) due to the duality (plurality) of the identities of the individual and the social unit. In turn, this multiplicity predetermines the diversity of goals and means of achieving them. Moreover, goal setting and means of achieving individuals can change under the pressure of circumstances in the process of interaction. Almost every interaction of social actors is permeated with contradictions of varying degrees of strength. There are three main social actors: the individual, the social unit to which the individual belongs (family, group of colleagues, group of friends, etc.), and external communities, those outside the social unit to which the individual belongs. The multiplicity of individual identities generates his need to determine his place in the system of social coordinates. An individual is simultaneously a member of a family, a member of a social group, a citizen of a country, and so on. The simultaneous coexistence of several identities is the cause of contradictions. I distinguish two main levels of conflict interaction both in the mind of the individuals and in the interaction between them: inconsistency and contradiction. The difference between them is determined mainly by the degree of tension and significance.

Inconsistencies are reflected in the discrepancy between words and deeds, or in a quick change of goals under the influence of various circumstances. Inconsistency is not critical for the individual, and therefore it is quite easy for the actor to either ignore the inconsistency or find a compromise. People commonly and frequently act differently from what they claim as their

ideas, values, and actions and do not feel conflict in this. Many years ago, I attended a regional meeting of hunters, which discussed, among other things, the difficulties of obtaining permits to hunt whales. One hunter told me at a break, "I absolutely must come forward because it's not good for our community. Migrating whales don't wait for us to get permission from the authorities. The whales follow their own laws, and as a result our village is left without traditional food." When the turn came for my interlocutor to speak, he talked for a long time about important things that bother his fellow villagers. He performed very well and was pleased with himself. But it turned out that he did not say anything reflective of what he earlier claimed as his main purpose at the meeting: that there is a gap in the bureaucratic system that makes critical challenges for the food security of their village. I did not notice that this fact bothered him, at least outwardly.

Contradiction, in contrast to inconsistency, is a more intense level, where the clash of oppositions is clearly expressed by conflict and ends with the dominance of one of the parties. For example, a couple of decades ago, the Neshkan hunting *obshchina* had permission to hunt gray whales. In that season, gray whales almost did not migrate near the village and the hunters were forced to get the bowhead whale. This in itself is a serious violation of the rules of hunting. However, the real conflict in this case was the conflict between legislation and customary law. From the point of view of international and federal laws, a violation was committed. From the point of view of the Chukchi customary law, they did what many generations of Chukchi did in order to ensure the food security of the village. In this controversial situation, hiding the fact of hunting the bowhead whale eliminated the conflict. Conflict is an interaction in which there is a winner and a loser. From the outside, the hunting community found a way out of the contradiction. On the other hand, the concealment of the fact of "illegal hunting" actually gives rise to a much more significant contradiction, due to the fact that customary law is not legally recognized in the contemporary society.

### *Sources of Social Contradictions*

Contradictions are the natural state of an individual primarily because of his/her sociality. An individual is always a member of a group. He/she is a family member, has friends, classmates, coworkers, neighbors, etc. The plurality of social positions of an individual

predetermines his/her goals and desires, as well as the circumstances affecting them. Multiple relationships, in turn, are either equal or hierarchical. The multilevel nature of human relations also contributes to the multiplicity of contradictions. The combination of these components is the cause of both group and individual contradictions. In particular, contradictions determine either solidity or volatility of a social unit. A group of individuals with a stable system for regulating contradictions strengthens and develops a social unit. New external conditions determine the achievement of a critical threshold of contradictions and the transformation of the social unit. That is, contradictions determine either stability or vulnerability of social ties. For some groups, contradictions are an insoluble situation leading to disorder and destruction, for others it is a choice of a solution from several possible options and strengthening the stability of a social unit.

Most of the contradictions that I have observed and heard in my research are not conflicts between the points of view of community members, but rather discrepancies between words and deeds or between the dream and reality of an individual or a group of fellow villagers. For example, my interlocutors said that they wanted their native language to be the language of everyday communication, and traditional subsistence to be a significant activity in the settlement. At the same time, while describing the desired future for their children and grandchildren, the participants concluded that it is much more important to know Russian and have a quality education that ensures well-being. Uturgasheva et al (2014, 743) have identified similar dilemmas across the Arctic. These cases look like contradictions. However, as the threshold has not been reached in them, one can also assume that these are not contradictions at all, but the adaptation of Indigenous communities to the changing socio-cultural milieu. In the constantly emerging situations that lead to the contradictions of modern Indigenous communities, the limit is not reached because it is smoothed out by rationality and compromise.

Compromises are because direct confrontation means victory or defeat for its participants. The risk is too high so, in most cases, the participants prefer the hybrid option. Specifically, in the face of dual or multiple choices, the individual will prefer the option that requires less effort, with the most comfortable state of mind, body, and social status. This approach assumes flexibility of judgment or even the presence of multiple points of view on the issue under discussion. Variability mainly depends on the composition of the participants. To paraphrase Grenoble (2018, 346), the inhabitants of the village, speaking in Russian, call

themselves Chukchi, speaking in the Chukchi language they call themselves *Ligoravetlyat*, in conversations between different groups in the village they call themselves Ank'alet or *Ank'asormyk Nymytvalet* (coastal residents) and *K'oran 'ynretylet* (reindeer herders). Identity must be multiple since the individual has to constantly determine his place in different circumstances and groups. Multiple identities are a survival set of natural responses of the individual to the circumstances in which he finds himself. The contradiction between the multiple states of an individual is resolved by compartmentalizing the multiples to adapt to the circumstances and environment in which the individual is in a particular period of time. This multiplicity thus indicates the adaptive capacity of the individual.

#### 6.1.2. Aristotelian Law of Non-contradiction

A concise understanding of the Aristotelian law of Non-Contradiction is that opposite assertions cannot be true at the same time. Identifying configurations in community relationships is key to understanding community nature. This procedure is complicated by the variety of individual and community contradictions. The structuring of social interactions is complicated by the fact that logical constructions in social contradictions contain multilevel components. Exploring these contradictions through the prism of Aristotle's law of non-contradiction (Gottlieb 2020), I find unexpected explanations for these paradoxes.

Returning to the case of the contradiction, in which the residents of Neshkan and Enurmino want to preserve their Chukchi language but prefer Russian for their children as a means of gaining education and a career. The resulting contradiction in the desires of the villagers seems to fit into Aristotle's law. The rational desire to preserve the communal identity gives way to the rational desire for personal well-being, and the contradiction seems to be removed. In both options, the individual's prioritization is based on a personal survival instinct. A person wants survival/well-being due to the community to which he/she belongs, but if one must choose by weighing the survival/well-being of the community versus the individual, the solution is obvious in most cases. The law of non-contradiction also applies to Indigenous communities themselves. Inuit communities in Canada and Greenland (Krauss 1977; 2005) have retained their mother tongue as the primary language of communication, and this does not appear to harm either personal well-being or community identity due to the harmonization of strategies

between federal and local governance. In the meantime, I witnessed a discussion among Alaskan elders who argued that English was essential for their community to protect their group identity. Therefore, the loss of a native language is a difficult but necessary minor loss compared to if they fail to protect their community in English-oriented legislation. These two contrasting examples are illustration of how today's Indigenous communities deal with conflicting situations, both by suffering from them and gaining new achievements. This constant struggle of alternatives reveals the strength and resilience of local communities. Clearly, for their decisions to lead to the survival of local communities, they must comply with the Aristotelian law of non-contradiction.

Lambek (2016, 6-7) is generally inclined to believe that some contradictions are rather inconsistencies that cannot be compared by a single criterion or by any neutral external measure, and therefore “[O]utright binary oppositions are incommensurables.” It is the complexity of social contradictions that causes, as Irvin argues, “the role of apparent contradictions in social life does not have the character of dissonance, but instead inconsistencies might tend towards peaceful coexistence, or may even be mutually constitutive” (Irvin 2016, 14). In these contradictions, each participant has his own logic based on worldview, habits, and opportunities. Moreover, the individual is sometimes trapped in a contradiction because the individual lives between two worldview systems (Berliner 2016, 4). This situation is typical for the Chukotkan villages where villagers live according to federal law, while traditional customary law regulates their subsistence activity. Finally, Aristotle's law of Noncontradiction, like any consistent pattern, is built on generalizations that exclude the features affecting the statement. For example, Schweder concluded, "The law of non-contradiction has universal normative force because it is an ultimate criterion for distinguishing between rational, irrational, and non-rational states of mind, and is an indispensable tool for constructing any and every picture of reality" (Shweder 2016, 12). At the same time, Schweder gives an example of the inapplicability of the law of consistency, finding contradictions between autonomy, justice, equal opportunities, and benevolent protection, which “The four values are not logically contradictory (one can ascribe “goodness” to all four) yet from a practical point of view they are agonistic” (Shweder 2016, 12). The individual and/or the community act in accordance with the logic of the situation, sometimes acting seemingly irrationally when dealing with many circumstances affecting their desires, decisions, and actual actions.

### 6.1.3. Cultural Relativism

Moving from formal logic to the domain of anthropology, we may find that cultural relativism is also a suitable lens for analyzing contradictions and their causes, especially when one is trying to learn and understand an unfamiliar culture. Brown (2008, 371) alerts us that “classical cultural relativism, an all-encompassing doctrine that embraces methodological, cognitive, and ethical components, has been debated by scholars for more than a half - century.” Today’s consensus is that, as originally conceived, cultural relativism has significant flaws. Sahlins (2002, 27) explained that for an outside observer, to see in a seemingly contradictory situation that there is actually no contradiction, it is necessary to include the view of the participants' culture.

In my study of the sociocultural scenes of Neshkan and Enurmino, cultural relativism provided reasonable interpretations. I have observed in the daily life of the villages an ample number of cases confirming the relevance of this approach in the study. Despite the seeming homogeneity of the modern Chukchi village, the real picture is more complex. There are several social groups in the village, notably differing from each other in terms of lifestyle and worldview as well as the source and amount of income each social group commands. The presence of different social groups in a remote and relatively socially isolated settlement is a substantial factor contributing to the emergence of contradictions. In particular, one of the fundamental bifurcations of the modern Chukchi settlement is being built in day care and school. Children are the largest group in the village. It seems that parents and their traditional way of life are role models for them. In fact, because children spend most of their time in school, they acquire global eating habits, social behavior, and worldviews there. The competition between the two cultures continues to intensify the contradictions between the Chukchi village groups. There is the ongoing gap between parents and their children. Children are more or less prepared for urban life and know little about the subsistence economy and customary law of their parents. At least three of my middle-aged interlocutors said that they became TEC guardians and experienced sea hunters or reindeer herders only because their parents decided to take them out of school so that they could acquire subsistence knowledge at the most relevant age - in childhood. While most young villagers have to learn how to hunt marine mammals or herd deer only after graduating from high school. This is the biggest challenge for the modern Chukchi community. What choice



do parents have? In order for a child to survive not even in the external global world, but in the village, which is a structural part of the global world, a young individual must acquire the skills to survive in it. School is the only means for this. At the same time, at least half of the villagers are unemployed, and traditional means of subsistence are almost the only available source of income for them. Without the skills to survive in the sea and the tundra, which, like school knowledge, are best acquired in childhood, the villagers put their lives at great risk. It turns out that by acquiring global culture skills, the villagers lose their Indigenous knowledge, and vice versa, so parents face a dilemma that is almost insoluble in the current circumstances.

Some newcomers are sure that many Indigenous villagers in the post-Soviet period have become so unaccustomed to permanent work that they began to have a parasitic lifestyle. Non-local teachers told me that they did not understand why the villagers, despite their low cash incomes, did not want to work as janitors and auxiliary workers in municipal institutions. For representatives of a culture where money is the measure of well-being, the local phenomenon of voluntary unemployment can only be logically explained by social diseases. This view is driven by comparisons on a short-term scale of one to two decades. Newcomers do not consider that the Chukchi of Neshkan and Enurmino, as well as other northern Indigenous communities, have gone through the trauma caused by the change in socio-economic and cultural systems. Culture shock elicited various reactions. Some of the Indigenous villagers adapted and were able to integrate into the global community, whilst most community members are still trying to adjust traditional and global social institutions to preserve their identity. Considering the described phenomenon through cultural relativism, it should be borne in mind that the period of one hundred percent compulsory work on a *sovkhos* in Chukchi villages, characteristic of the socialist system, was hardly 20 years, from the late 1960s to the early 1990s (Khakhovskaya 2011, 119). Prior to this, in small villages scattered along the coast and the tundra, there were collective farms, whose socio-cultural environment, which included mainly hunting, reindeer herding and barter among members, was not much different from the daily life of the villagers in the pre-Soviet period. In fact, collective farms existed only in official records (Khakhovskaya 2016, 84). The collapse of the socialist system in the 1990s actually returned the Indigenous inhabitants of Neshkan and Enurmino to the pre-Soviet economic system. Of course, the villagers were no longer the same, but they managed to survive only because they resumed hunting and gathering activity and the customary law associated with it. It is very likely that this

is why many villagers still believe in subsistence and are oriented towards a mixed economy based (Wenzel 2013; 2016; Wolfe and Walker 1987) on cash invested in traditional subsistence. In a cultivated hunting-gathering culture, the lack of hired work does create difficulties, but it is not parasitism. Their lives are aimed at a stable and understandable way of life, providing traditional food and worldview. To newcomers, subsistence-oriented Chukchi seem to be a low-skilled labor force that is unable to earn the cash to ensure a prosperous life. To most Chukchi, visitors seem to be people who never see the clear, spacious, and beautiful ocean, tundra, and sky, because they have locked themselves in the small huts of the village and live in anticipation of the next vacation to visit their homeland. In this way, two different cultures often see each other. Despite the logical bias, the villagers may be slowly but steadily crossing the cultural frontier, blurring differences, and creating a new cultural domain for today's Arctic Indigenous community.

#### 6.1.4. Contradictions' Process

To reveal the essence of what is here regarded as contradiction, I analyzed the chain of key events and circumstances leading to a contradictory occurrence. At the starting point, at least one statement or wish of a person is required. Circumstances that affect a person's statement or desire either facilitate or hinder the achievement of desires. The goal and circumstances colliding and intertwining with each other give rise to contradictions. The individual compares the magnitude of the desire and the circumstances influencing its realization. Reyna (2017, 111), discussing the phenomenon of contradiction in the context of conflicts at a macro level, concluded that the notion of a limit is a novelty in explaining contradiction, because it points to the boundaries of functional compatibility. In my interpretation, this means that the opposing sides coexist until one of them, or both, reaches the limit of compatibility. Let's overlay Reyna's discovery by examining the Cambridge Dictionary example of contradiction: two individuals claim to be friends, but there is no trust between them. If the magnitude of distrust (friendship) prevails over the magnitude of friendship (distrust), then functional compatibility is possible; one side dominates the other. There is no contradiction in this scenario of the strength of forces. If the magnitudes of friendship and mistrust are equal, then functional compatibility is possible, but only if the upper limit is not reached. A low level of desire to be friends

(distrust) means that neither side is able to suppress the other, both options are functionally compatible, which means there is no contradiction. An equal increase in the magnitudes of "friendship vs. distrust" eventually leads to reaching the limit. In such a scenario, interoperability reaches the limit of coexistence and causes a contradiction, which, in turn, brings about transformation. In our example, this means the termination of either friendship or distrust. Thus, the magnitude of forces is the cornerstone of the contradiction.

Combining theoretical discussions and my field cases, I reconstructed the arc of contradiction and identified its key components: how it arises, develops, resolves and, finally, what consequences follow. Most of the contradictions that I have observed in my research are not direct physical or verbal conflicts between community members but rather, discrepancies between words and deeds, or between the dream and reality of an individual or a group of fellow villagers. These are continuous leaps in the mindset of an individual or a group of people in his/her routine actions or social interactions between their opinions and actions. I modified Oberschall's (1978, 292) model of conflict in accordance with the typical contradiction arising from the inconsistency in words and deeds that I observed in the Chukchi community, and into the following sequence. For a contradiction to arise, at least one thought (goal or desire) of the individual is required. The impetus for the emergence of a contradiction is circumstances that affect the thought (goal or desire) of a person. These circumstances either facilitate or hinder the achievement of the goal or desires. The individual, reflecting on the circumstances leading or hindering the achievement of goals and desires, finds pros and cons. Each argument has strength of a certain magnitude. If either pros or cons are greater than the opposite, there is no contradiction. If both pros and cons are equal, then tension arises.

Certainly, social relationships are much more diverse than the structure that explains them, and there are a lot of deviations between friendship and mistrust. The variety of relationships determines the range of contradictions and their solutions, and, accordingly, the complexity of sociocultural patterns. Let's see if the proposed configuration matches the cases from my fieldwork, where the scales Pros and Cons are balanced. Quite a common cause of contradictions in the villages I studied was the struggle for leadership in hunting teams. Competition between hunters in general is the driving force behind the sustainability and

productivity of hunting *obshchinas*. Hunters compete who will see the animals first, who will throw the harpoon farther, who will shoot the seal more accurately, who will control the boat better, and so on. In the end, everyone wins, as the best ensure successful hunting and the survival of hunters at sea. As an illustration, I will cite real conflict cases in hunting *obshchinas*, and therefore, instead of names, I use letters. Many years of hidden antagonism within the hunting *obshchinas* of the southern Chukotka village between the key actors *B* and *K* ultimately did not reach a critical threshold and therefore did not lead to a conflict that transformed local groups. *B* was one of the villagers who managed to combine high hunting skills and remarkable independent Indigenous leadership. *L*, his peer and another well-known hunter in Chukotka, although he recognized the leadership of *B* was dissatisfied with his position in his shadow. Only after the unexpected death of *B* did the community recognize the leading role of *L*. Apparently, although there was distrust in their relationship and tension was present, it did not reach the threshold that gives rise to conflict and the subsequent transformation of the social hierarchy. A directly opposite example occurred in another hunting community. There, the distrust between the leading individuals, initially hidden, quickly reached a critical threshold. In addition to members of the hunting community, this conflict involved municipal authorities and was resolved only by eliminating the opposing side. As I stated at the beginning of the paragraph, in both villages, in the end, both the hunters and the villagers won, providing themselves with traditional food and livelihoods. A comparable illustration of a non-tension-based controversy is that my interlocutors, when discussing identity preservation, argued that they wanted their mother tongue to be the language of everyday communication and traditional subsistence to be an essential activity in the settlement. Later, when they described the desired future for their children and grandchildren, the participants stated that knowledge of the Russian language is key to getting quality education and high-paying job. Nobody mentioned the native language and traditional knowledge in this context. The desires and circumstances in this case are not equal, personal/family survival/well-being dominates communal identity, and this is most likely the reason that a contradiction does not arise. In this way, villagers separate conflicting desires further from each other to avoid conflict of desires and not contradict themselves. Imposing the proposed structure of contradiction on this conversation, it turns out that desires and circumstances that prevent them are not equal, as the personal prevails over the public. Inequality of the opposing sides of the contradiction is the most apt reason that inconsistency

does not arise in the minds of the villagers.

Typical contradictions in thought and action, like other vivid social contrasts, are markers that contribute to delineating sociocultural patterns. In the contradictions that are significant for the outlining of social life in Neshkan and Enurmino, I have also identified obscure cases. This is probably why, describing social phenomena and events of the village, I drew conclusions that sometimes contradicted the assumptions I had made earlier on the same topic, but under different circumstances. For example, while examining social groups in a village, I found that social groups in the village operate at conflicting levels. According to my interlocutors, the average ratio between store and subsistence foods in the diet of villagers is approximately 50 to 50 percent. After collecting the actual numbers, I concluded that this is a very realistic estimate. According to the chairs of the hunting *obshchinas*, the marine hunters of the Neshkan and Enurmino annually deliver about 160 tons of meat and blubber of marine mammals to the villages, which is about 160 kg of food per capita. Kochnev and Zdor (2016, 80) indicate that fish, reindeer meat, game, plants, mushrooms, and berries provide approximately 78 kg of subsistence food per capita. It turns out that the villagers consume an average of 238 kg of subsistence food per capita per year. This figure, to some extent, corresponds to 191.5 kg of subsistence food per year per capita, as estimated by Dudarev et al (2019, 11). Meanwhile, the trading company annually delivers 178 tons of store products to Neshkan and 108 tons to Enurmino (ANO IA “Chukotka” 2020), which is approximately 286 kg per capita per year. Summarizing these values, I found that the average consumption of grocery and subsistence food in Neshkan and Enurmino is about 524 kilograms per capita, while, according to Kupina (2009, 73-74) the average consumption of food in Russia is about 628 kilograms per capita. Thus, the diet in Neshkan and Enurmino consists of about 55% of store food and 45% of subsistence food (Table 6.1).

Table 6.1. Food Consumption in Neshkan and Enurmino

Name of Food (Source of Information)	Consumption Per Capita (kilogram)	%
Subsistence Food Consumption in Neshkan and Enurmino	238.0	45.42
Marine Mammal Meat and Blubber Consumption in Neshkan and Enurmino (Neshkan and Enurmino Hunting <i>Obshchinas</i> )	160.0	30.53
Average Other Subsistence Food Consumption in Chukotkan Coastal Villages: fish, reindeer meat, game, plants, mushrooms, and berries (Kochnev and Zdor 2016, 80)	78.0	14.88
Store Food Delivery to Neshkan and Enurmino (ANO IA “Chukotka” 2020)	286.0	54.58
Subsistence and Store Food Consumption in Neshkan and Enurmino. Total	524.0	100.00
Average Food Consumption in Russia (Kupina 2009, 73-74). Total	628.0	

The calculations made indicate that marine hunting continues to have a significant impact on the life of Neshkan and Enurmino. In addition to the changed pattern of food, thanks to the diverse world cuisine incorporated into the village, the increase in the share of store-bought food in the diet of the villagers is also due to the difficulties of subsistence activity. Some of my interlocutors noted that their consumption of traditional marine food was due to both reduced participation in hunting and storage difficulties. A subsidized hunting *obshchina* manages to provide the village with sea mammal meat during the summer, while the villagers can take a small fraction of the meat they can consume during the week. Most villagers do not have

freezers, and traditional ice pits are no longer available today due to the effects of climate change. In autumn, lower temperatures increase villagers' ability to store marine mammal meat. Because the hunting *obshchina* consists of only 15-20 people, it is not able to provide the amount of meat and fat demanded by several hundred people.

As mentioned above, there are only about 20 hunters in Neshkan and the same number in Enurmino, which is about 10 percent of the adult population of the villages. According to these figures, the influence of hunters on the socio-cultural structure of the settlement seems insignificant. Indeed, the routine of hunting life and the traditions of hunters are almost invisible to most of the villagers due to the small number of teams, and because hunters spend a lot of time outside the village. For these reasons, traditional worldview events associated with the hunting seasons are important mainly for hunters and their families. Meanwhile, the communities simply replaced traditional religious events with analogs of commonly used federal holidays. Neshkan and Enurmino hold Hunter's Day once a year, inviting neighboring villages to the festival. This holiday reflects a new reality, as it is not much different from many modern professional holidays, such as the day of the medical worker, the day of the teacher, and so on.

Paradoxically, in both cases the conclusion is accurate, although contradicting each other. The hunters should and are supposed to be an influential group in the village, as they provide a significant amount of food for the settlement. At the same time, their somewhat elitist, secluded, and distant way of life makes them not such an influential group in the village. In this way, a case of antinomy arises in a modern Chukchi village. A similar illustration of the paradoxical coexistence of contradictions comes to light on the example of newcomers. Due to their small size, that is, no more than 5% of the total population, and relative social self-isolation, they should not have had a significant direct impact on the local culture of the village, and they do not at first glance. The basis of this group is schoolteachers and preschool educators. As they deal with children, they end up shaping the mindset of the village and its social life. Children eventually become adults and live on the habits and thoughts they acquired in school. Therefore, the influence of immigrants on the socio-cultural model of the village is long-term and fundamental.

## 6.2. Contradictions and Chukotkan community

### 6.2.1. Villagers and Contradictions

As contradictions are caused by the sociality of human nature, it is clear that the communities of Neshkan and Enurmino, in order to maintain their stability, must have ways of resolving contradictions. Confrontation, compromise, and indifference are the basic responses (or strategies) for finding a solution when wish and reality conflict. Confrontation is an extreme strategy due to the high risk of potential significant negative consequences for the community. This way of resolving the conflict either strengthens or weakens the homeostasis of the social unit, depending on the magnitude and duration of the contradiction and the response to it. To illustrate this point, I will discuss a case of a seemingly minor controversy in a dispute over the name of a local *sovkhos*. It turned out to be almost fatal for the Neshkan group of reindeer herders, because it was, in fact, about who would be the owner of the reindeer and pastures. After the collapse of the Soviet system, the Indigenous villages of Chukotka had to decide the fate of their reindeer herding camps. *Sovkhozes* in some villages were corporatized, in others they were transformed into cooperatives and partnerships. The name of the reindeer-breeding enterprises has also been the subject of debate. Members of the Neshkan *sovkhos* gathered in the summer of 1993 to determine how reindeer herding would develop in the future. The meeting was largely divided into two opposing factions. Some believed that nothing needed to be changed, that is, the reindeer herding camps should remain in the *sovkhos*. While the speakers in this group were most often a few newcomers from the *sovkhos* administration, most of the listeners were reindeer herders. Their silence was because in Soviet times the reindeer herders, although they belonged to a formally privileged group, were still the heirs of the owners of small herds, suppressed by the Soviet concept of the economy. Still, there were those reindeer herders who believed that the time had come to restore the pre-Soviet reindeer herding and return the former property to the heirs. They were joined by a group of those who dreamed that reindeer, along with pastures, would belong to reindeer herders and their auxiliary services. Finally, the majority of the meeting was made up of those who were either indifferent or took a wait-and-see attitude, holding in their minds the brutality of the persecution of private property during the Soviet time.



Valery Ivanovich *Tynecheivun*, a reindeer herder and former Soviet activist, gave the brightest and most memorable performance that day. He talked about the difficult and complex work of reindeer herders. His speech was dominated by the idea that only the self-sacrifice of reindeer herders, their faith in the reindeer and in themselves, brought success in reindeer herding. *Tynecheivun* argued that only successful and experienced reindeer herders, excellent organizers, experts on deer and pastures became the owners of reindeer herds. In conclusion, the speaker told the story of the dispossessed reindeer breeder *Pappylö* and suggested establishing a private reindeer herding enterprise, returning *Pappylö* reindeer there and naming the enterprise after him. Office workers opposed this proposal. Preservation of the status of ownership (sovkhoz) was, as it seemed to them, a guarantee of their income, and the preservation of the 50th anniversary of the Great October Revolution in the name of the state farm was a kind of symbol of stability.

Although the dispute seemed to be about the name, the meeting actually decided on the business model for reindeer herding. Will it be a former *sovkhoz* with hourly wages, hired reindeer herders and other workers, or a traditional Chukchi family farm? The villagers that day decided to keep both the *sovkhoz* and the name. Most likely, the comfort zone had too much influence, as well as the sincere desire of some and the fear of others that the Soviet order of things would return. The controversy did not reach a climax and, it would seem, did not lead to an insoluble conflict. Which does not mean that the conflict has been resolved. More than two decades have passed since that meeting. The reindeer camps that adhered to the family organization of reindeer herding managed to save the reindeer. While the camps dominated by the Soviet labor organization lost deer. Of the eight reindeer herding camps in the early 1990s in the Neshkan Tundra, only three have survived to this day. Despite this fact, the regional government continues to remain committed to the Soviet organization of reindeer herding. Which means that the conflict continues and there is still no certainty whether the reindeer camp will be preserved as a social unit or will cease to exist.

The unpredictable consequences and difficult choices that accompany aggressive resolutions of controversies dictate fewer radical strategies. Compromise, in contrast to direct conflict, helps smooth out contradictions in the social process. The reduction of tension and the length of time for resolving the conflict provide the members of the community with options for

adaptation, and therefore, to some extent, contribute to the resolution of contradictions. An example of this adaptation was the controversy that arose in the Neshkan and Enurmino communities about the daily use of languages. By the time of the establishment of modern Neshkan and Enurmino in the 1950s and until the 1980s, Chukchi was the dominant language in both communities. The exclusion of the Chukchi language from the educational process at school in the 1960s and later, predetermined bilingualism in the villages. In turn, bilingual parents, along with the dominance of the Russian language in municipal services, led to the fact that the Russian language became the first language of the newly born Chukchi. Even before the 1990s, the Chukchi language milieu was in demand in reindeer herding camps and sea hunter crews, in the last stronghold of the Chukchi language. Over time, the older reindeer herders and hunters were replaced by new generations of Chukchi, for whom Russian was the main language. Although they, like their ancestors, skillfully hunted marine mammals and herded deer, the Chukchi language was transformed into professional slang.

The almost complete disappearance of the Chukchi language from everyday communication in the villages was an unexpected fact in a long and gradual series of compromises. My interlocutors explained the change in the language environment to two paramount reasons. Some believed that their parents were inspired by the prospects of integrating the Chukchi into Soviet society and therefore passionately wanted their children to speak Russian. There were also villagers who mentioned that the brutality of the *Sovietization* of Chukchi society and the nationalization of property were fresh in their memory, so caution and avoidance of conflict was necessary for survival. Either way, both explanations justified the strategy of avoiding confrontation. While many signs indicate that Chukchi identity still has a strong foundation, the Russian language currently dominates the Neshkan and Enurmino communities. This has led to significant changes in the worldview of community members over the past 30 years. Now again there is no gap between generations, that is, everyone speaks the same language, lives the same lifestyle, in which upgraded subsistence activity is mixed with television and the Internet. This case can also be interpreted as a conflict mitigation option. Ignoring the danger of the disappearance of the Chukchi language in favor of the Russian language, local communities eventually came to a point where parents spoke their native language, and their children barely understood them. Consequently, the Russian language is dominant in local communities now. Although native identification still has a strong foundation,

the communities of Neshkan and Enurmino have significantly transformed over the past 30 years because of a language shift.

There are many other options for dealing with contradictions, but they are all a variation of the aforementioned options. Sometimes community members pause as if to ignore the controversy while focusing on other aspects of the dilemma. They might leave it for a time that will either increase tension or reduce the demand for one of the parties to the contradiction. Quinn (1996, 400) described a similar strategy as follows:

“A different possibility, explored by Claudia Strauss (1990), is that individuals avoid contradiction by compartmentalizing potentially contradictory ideas. Strauss describes working-class men she interviewed who see no contradiction in their ideas about the way the system oppresses little people and their ideas about getting ahead in it, because these two sets of beliefs have been maintained in separate cognitive context.”

An individual or a community, transferring a contradiction to an indefinite future, either postpones the solution of the problem, or moves into a new state in which the current contradiction is no longer relevant. By overlaying Strauss' discovery with the Neshkan and Enurmino challenges, I discovered how the villagers dealt with the impacts on their eating patterns. This took several opposite paradoxical stages. At first, villagers were disgusted with the so-called Russian food. Then, when they grew accustomed to it and eventually adapted to the cuisine, which was dominated by imported products, the native food became a delicacy. Later, in the 1990s, the villagers were forced to return to their native food and many of them could hardly adhere to this diet. In the early 2000s, a new generation of villagers again experienced difficulties in transitioning from a native diet to a store food. At the same time, they adapted their traditional cuisine itself, changing the way of processing and storing subsistence food under the influence of climatic and technological shifts. The twisting of food adaptations revealed that local communities are in a continuous state of change, and adaptation is the dominant way of responding to contradictions.

It turns out that the solidity of local sociocultural patterns is determined by the degree of the community's adaptability to resolving contradictions. Individuals or groups under the

pressure of conflicting circumstances or avoiding direct confrontation, are forced to seek compromise solutions, which seem to be a common method in the social process. This strategy reduces stress and helps to bring out the benefits of a new situation. As Schneider (1997, 518) wrote: "Contradictions will always continue, but pressures can be changed." In other words, community members have a choice, either to intensify the confrontation and maybe achieve the goal, or to change the pressure and find a compromise solution. However, avoiding solutions still confronts communities with an equally difficult question: where is the line between a compromise of adaptation that does not destroy the Indigenous identity, and a compromise that imperceptibly leads to a complete cultural transformation of the community?

I have been watching how it happens nowadays in Neshkan and Enurmino. Young people perceive the current reality as an unshakable one. Mature villagers in the daily routine do not notice this challenge, because they need to ensure the well-being of their families. Only the elders, observing the changed reality, complain that everything is not the same as it was in their youth. There was a council of elders in Neshkan, and its activity might not bring any visible benefit to the settlement, but it clearly pointed to the ongoing changes and gave the community food for thought.

### *Contradiction and Community Resilience*

According to my observations, contradictions are an integral part and condition of social life in the Chukchi communities. It would seem that this find is in opposition to the concept of the strength of the social unit. However, if one side of the contradiction gains the upper hand and the other weakens, then this means that there is no more dualities. The presence of social regulation, eliminating duality, indicates the stability or homeostasis of the social unit. If the traditional social regulators of the community fail to resolve the emerging contradictions, the stability of the social unit is threatened. This is what Hughes et al (1965, 51) described how, as a result of contradictions within the social body, "the older pattern of equilibrium is upset, and forces are set in motion for the formation of a new configuration." If there is no dominant in the contradiction, then this means that the balance of the social unit already prevails. Balance in a social context means that there is a consensus between two or more social actors and the social circumstances in which they interact and reproduce. If there is no consensus, then the current

sociocultural model will continue to change until homeostasis occurs.

One of the most difficult challenges for the Chukchi communities is due to the contradiction generated by traditional subsistence. This type of activity is the most significant marker that identifies ethnic differences between the Chukchi and other peoples. Hunting and gathering reproduce specific worldviews, customary law, knowledge, and traditions, as well as food, equipment, and transportation. To survive, Chukchi communities have continually adapted innovations to meet their subsistence needs. Modern firearms, vehicles, and electronic devices facilitate safe and successful hunting. Technical innovations contributed to a change in the social organization in the Chukchi village. Eventually, technical adaptation and commitment to a mixed economy served to reinforce the traditional subsistence of Neshkan and Enurmino up to a certain point. Today, only 10 to 15 percent of the adult population of the Neshkan and Enurmino is engaged in sea hunting and reindeer herding all year round, while at the time of the Bogoras study, this was the main occupation of the Chukchi. Together, such signs as a decrease in the number of participants in marine hunting and reindeer husbandry, and a shift in the types of subsistence activities towards fishing and gathering indicate a potential change in the generation of ethnic markers. The decline in the role of traditional subsistence, the change in the linguistic environment in favor of the Russian language, as well as the unclear boundaries between the arts of the Chukchi, Yupik, and other Indigenous peoples also indicate that adaptation of the modern Chukchi community eventually curved into transformation. In other words, the Chukchi community, faced with a contradiction between survival and identity, was able to avoid a high level of confrontation, which, having reached the threshold, although it confirmed the resilience of the Chukchi, still produced significant sociocultural changes.

#### 6.2.2. Customary and Federal Laws

Beyond conflicts within the village, there is a tension caused by clashes between communities and the outside world. Customary law was once replaced by Soviet law, but during the turbulence of the 1990s, it has been reinstated, along with traditional subsistence. In the post-Soviet times, the Russian authorities joined the international community in ensuring the rights of Indigenous peoples. However, collisions between federal law and customary law are still common. A typical example of discrepancies between federal and traditional regulations is the

1956 legislative ban on hunting polar bears. The federal authorities aimed to preserve polar bears as a species, but the decision was made without considering the real state of the Alaska-Chukotka polar bear population. Chukchi customary law has managed wildlife for many generations. Daily observations provided high-quality monitoring of the state and distribution of animal populations, and customs and traditions regulated the frequency and amount of use of wildlife. Based on traditional knowledge, villagers reasonably believed that the local polar bear population was stable and continued to hunt polar bears. The validity of the community assessment was confirmed by the fact that, in neighboring Alaska, authorities and research institutions, based on their polar bear research, did not consider it necessary to forbid the customary use of polar bear by Chukchi.

Nevertheless, the Chukchi, acting in accordance with customary law, were technically violating federal laws. Recognizing the correctness of the villagers, Russian law enforcement agents largely refrained from prosecuting villagers for ‘secret’ non-commercial use of the polar bear. Meanwhile, the clandestine hunting of the polar bear had forced the villagers to carry out the rites connected with the hunt and the overall human-bear relationship in secret. That, in turn led to a range modification, resulting in communities breaking continuity with ancestral rituals. Chukotkan peoples have repeatedly asked Russian authorities to legalize the hereditary use of polar bears, but to no avail. A federal ban on the polar bear harvest by Chukchi is still in effect, despite the recommendations of the US-Russian Commission on the management of the Alaska-Chukotka polar bear population regarding the possibility of traditional hunting. In short, the conflict between federal and customary law has damaged both the legal foundations of Russian society and fundamental rights of Indigenous peoples to their identity and way of life and Arctic maritime hunters.

The conflicts and adaptations described above, connected with the histories of tundra and coastal Chukchi, the emerging intra-community hierarchies resulting from the tensions between Indigenous and state structures, and the discrepancies between the customary and federal and international laws, take place alongside technological innovation, participation in formal education, and rapidly changing climate that demands a range of adjustments in all subsistence-oriented activities. In the face of all that, Neshkan and Enurmino, my two main study sites, as well as other Chukotkan settlements with which I am familiar, have strong family and neighborly

ties, significantly depend on traditional subsistence, and generally see themselves as highly resilient. More so, the application of modern technologies for traditional subsistence, the commodification of subsistence-related activities, and use of formal education are seen by my fellow Chukchi as part of an effort to preserve their identity. It seems that the villagers are able to “customize” modern goods and practices to maintain an established connection with the sea and the tundra. A broadly applicable anthropological question that arises is: is there a limit to which this kind of flexibility can be exercised without losing cultural identity?

### 6.2.3. Contradictions and Traditions

As discussed earlier, inconsistencies in personal and interpersonal space in the Neshkan and Enurmino communities, as in any social unit, are social in nature. The villager’s dream of the well-being of the village and people, and want well-being for themselves and their loved ones. In reality, circumstances force them to fight not for their big dreams, but for simple routine survival. The small populations, crowded living arrangements, lack of quality living conditions, and to some extent the isolation of Neshkan and Enurmino significantly limit the ability of the villagers to meet their needs. Dilapidated housing, school buildings, poor water supply, and no plumbing characterize Neshkan and Enurmino. Municipal and regional authorities see the solution to these problems in the relocation of the population to regional towns. Despite these negative circumstances, the population of Neshkan and Enurmino is decreasing slightly. The villagers prefer to live on the land of their ancestors and provide themselves with subsistence food. Their patient acceptance of reality is expressed in the traditional Chukchi phrase “*k’eluk’ym minkyri*” (nothing can be done). This phrase is not an admission of defeat, but rather signifies the ability to live within one's means.

To deal with the challenges and controversies they pose, Chukchi communities are adapting and developing customary law. I observed in some Neshkan traditions, an example of which I will discuss later, attempts to resolve some modern everyday contradictions. The disadvantage of tradition as a means of resolving modern conflict is that there is not enough time to cultivate a tradition for each new challenge. Time is an insurmountable obstacle in today's rapidly changing social processes. For this reason, many means of conflict resolution are outside the community. These circumstances caused the migration of some villagers of Neshkan and

Enurmino to the regional cities. For those who remain in the communities, and they are in the majority, the contradictions to be resolved are in the space of customary social interactions. Because traditional subsistence provides at least half of the food needs of the Neshkan and Enurmino communities, conflict resolution there is critical to the food security of the communities.

Sharing has been the fundamental tenet for the distribution of hunting results in Neshkan and Enurmino. The origin of the rule of sharing began with the relationship between people and wildlife. I have already discussed the circulation of the flesh as a gift in the worldview of the Chukchi. Our conversations with the Neshkan and Enurmino villagers confirm that this belief is still used among them. According to the idea, the harvested animal is a respected guest, for whom all the rules of human communication apply. Families of young hunters still symbolically give water to the seal brought to their home. Nikolai Rovtyn, an elder from Enurmino, explained that the seals are thirsty because of the long journey through the sea ice where there is no fresh water. In summer, this custom is not required, because seals can find fresh water on their own. Once a hunting family has received a gift from a guest, they must continue the gifting route. Therefore, it is common and comfortable for the villagers to approach the boat of a successful hunter who has returned from hunting to get a share of meat and fat. The hunter's family is also obliged to share some of the meat with their neighbors on the same or the next day, and then in the winter they share the meat with their relatives. Sharing hunting products was a social benefit. This tradition was the backbone of an egalitarian Chukchi society in both the fragile and harsh Arctic environments. The cash economy and the global worldview are steadily undermining the old ways of resolving contradictions. I have observed several cases in which hunters were reluctant to share prey for various reasons, but in the end, they always had to follow the tradition of distribution.

The social function of the traditional Chukchi distribution of hunting products had the task of ensuring the food security of the family and the settlement. The tradition also contributed to the resolution of a typical dilemma in the mind of a conflicted individual: to bring home more meat at once by taking all of the successful hunt without sharing it with other households, or to share meat with other households of the settlement, counting on receiving a share of the meat from their successful hunt. Nowadays, the issue of the physical survival of the villagers is not a



direct challenge. Federal and regional social and economic programs provide social benefits, and a subsidized hunting *obshchinas* and a grocery store provide food. The incorporation of cash transactions into the traditional food cycle adds complexity to the economic activity of subsistence practitioners. Fish has traditionally been an object of sale and purchase in Neshkan, due to the almost industrial local fishing. Together, these circumstances give rise to a clash between the tradition of subsistence food cycling and cash relations in the village. I have seen several cases where Neshkan hunters, for the reasons mentioned, did not want to share their hunted marine mammals.

In the Chukchi villages, the 1990s are called “hungry” because in that decade, the collapse of the USSR resulted in a fall of the village economy. There were no paid jobs in the villages. There were almost no groceries in the stores. Hunting, fishing, and gathering plants and berries have become the only sustainable source of food. In these circumstances, the traditional distribution of hunting products became relevant again and was restored in Neshkan and Enurmino after the seemingly complete Soviet suppression.

I heard one of these stories about the revitalization of traditional subsistence distribution from Tlecheivune, a resident of Neshkan. One day, Notagyrgyn, her father, was lucky in the early morning to be the first to find the corpse of a walrus washed ashore. By this year, dog sledding had again become an important mode of transportation for subsistence activities due to the lack of gasoline and snowmobiles for sale. The dog sled, as previously described, provides more space for subsistence activity at a relatively low maintenance cost. The main cost item is feed, which is provided by successful hunting and fishing. That year, the migration of walruses was fleeting, and the villagers were unable to provide enough meat for themselves or their dogs. The lack of food for dogs has already become the reason that the owners began to release animals even in the spring so that they feed themselves on their own. The threat of a hungry winter was becoming real. All these reasons pushed Notagirgin to secretly attempt take home the meat of the walrus he had found.

*Notagirgin* was returning home for assistants and tools, and suddenly he met *Nomyetau*, his peer. They exchanged news, but Notagirgin did not say a word about his find. Later, *Notagirgin* told *Tlecheivuna* about his arguments during a conversation with *Nomyetau*.

“We are running out of meat in our house, and I have to feed the dogs because without a dog team it will be difficult in winter. If *Nomyetau* finds out about the walrus corpse I found, then I will have to share with him. *Nomyetau's* dog team is large, which means that he will take a large share of meat. Of course, for the Chukchi not to share the booty is a big sin. However, the corpse of a walrus thrown onto the seashore is not prey because it is not suitable for human food. So, the found walrus corpse rightfully belongs only to me. After all, I got up early, walked to the shore and found a walrus. For what? To feed other people's dogs when my own dog team is hungry” (Notagirgin, Neshkan elder, 1990s).

To *Notagirgin*, his arguments seemed convincing, and he decided not to report the find. He really wanted to get all the meat home and feed his dogs for several months. During the butchering of the walrus, *Nomyetau* approached them and Notagirgin had to share the meat of the found walrus. “The Law of the Sea,” *Notagirgin's* favorite saying, turned out to be stronger than *Notagirgin's* desire to provide his dogs with food.

Such cases have happened in the villages of Neshkan and Enurmino. The motive for violating the customary law may not be as the excuses Notagirgin had. Because communities are small, hiding prey can greatly damage the social position of the intruder. The fear of becoming a social outcast has so far turned out to be stronger than the desire to solely own the subsistence product, and therefore the villagers share the booty. However, social rules change when the cash economy intervenes in the circulation of subsistence products.

In my field season in 2016, Yuri, the son of Rodion Rinetegin, shot a walrus for the first time in his life. We returned to Neshkan with walrus meat early in the morning. At this hour, a helicopter flew into the village and almost the entire population went to the airport instead of meeting the lucky hunter. Only a single woman came up to our boat with an empty bag and was waiting for her share of meat. It seemed to me at some point that Rodion would like to take all the booty to his ice cellar. Rodion and his son were busy with the boat and equipment and did not pay attention to the woman, as if she were not there. Some time later, the woman silently turned around and left for the village. I asked Rodion why he did not give her a piece of meat. He replied to me with some annoyance that she simply did not wait for the distribution time. “I

know her well, she's always in a hurry,” he told me, “Other villagers had to come up to determine what size of the piece should be for distribution to each person who came.” When we finally finished unloading the boat, only *Kaipanau*, a pensioner, was next to us. Rodion turned to him and said, “Today my son harvested his first walrus. I would like to distribute the meat completely, according to custom. Because you came alone, then take as much as you can carry.” *Kaipanau* was very happy, because instead of a small piece of meat, he could take food for a week or more. On that day, he turned out to be the sole beneficiary of Yuri's first booty. Many years have passed, and I still cannot be sure whether there was some kind of internal conflict in Rodion's mind or whether I simply did not know all the details of the tradition and the relationship of the inhabitants of Neshkan. Both cases indicate that, in the long run, the observance of traditions in the face of emerging contradictions is still an imperative for the subsistence-oriented villagers of Neshkan.

So, collisions in the traditional distribution of harvested prey happen from time to time, especially against the backdrop of successive cultural shifts. Therefore, the villagers, mostly hunters, were forced to develop new sharing rules adapted to the new cultural, social, and economic realities. Each village determined its own rules, which were most often determined by the personal characteristics of the chairman of the hunting *obshchina*. The most common rule was the collective butchering of the whale by all the villagers who came ashore and the free distribution of the first large marine mammal caught. In some villages, it was a rule to provide a share of the meat for the elders and single mothers who were not able to go ashore for their share of meat and blubber. Evgeniy SivSiv, a sea hunter from Inchoun, my research collaborator and adviser of many years, described how difficult it was for him to establish this while he was the head of the village council and the head of the hunting cooperative in Inchoun during the 1990s. Key traditions related to the regulation of butchering, distribution, and the celebration of a successful hunt for walruses and whales, they had to reconstruct according to the recommendations of elders and culturologists, and even develop them on their own. The regional authorities of Chukotka also contributed to the development of rules for the distribution of the results of sea hunting in accordance with traditions. Yuri Tottotto, head of the Union of Sea Hunters, developed the informal "Rules for the distribution of harvested whales" commissioned

by the regional regional *Goscomecologii*<sup>4</sup> in the late 1990s, no matter how ironic and paradoxical it may look. This effort to establish a uniform while still informal regulation for all coastal villages ended in nothing due to the apparent incompatibility of the components. The final argument in favor of the new tradition of free distribution, that is, without the contribution of all the villagers to a successful hunt, was a subsidy from the regional government. Each villager who came ashore and took part either in butchering a marine mammal, or standing in line, received his share according to the rule "first come, first served." This rule, vaguely reminiscent of existing traditions, is the current way of resolving conflicts. However, it works only for subsidized hunting communities, whose hunting results, although they dominate in the villages, are not the only ones.

For several generations, the hunting and gathering traditions of the Neshkan and Enurmino communities have been influenced by the cash economy and a worldview oriented toward a globalized world. Villagers were forced to adjust old or develop new traditions to ensure a balance between well-being and community identity. In these adaptation efforts, it is difficult to determine which phenomena are the primary influences that generate contradictions, and which are the consequences of resolving contradictions. For example, the de-emphasis of the belief that marine mammals are also a people like the Chukchi facilitated a shift towards a market-based approach to sea hunting. For those hunters who were not afraid to be punished by local spirits or by the master of the animal herd for violating traditions, it was obviously easier to switch to monetizing hunting products to the detriment of the tradition of redistribution. This approach is reinforced by the fact that the life and well-being of a villager today depends not only on subsistence activity. Moreover, while Chukchi communities find a balance between cash and tradition, the cash economy is still shifting the traditional distribution of hunting prey. The common case, the purchase of gasoline, weapons and ammunition for hunting directs the hunter's thoughts to the fact that he needs to find this money somewhere. The first and obvious solution is to monetize hunting products.

Current legislation allows the subsidized hunting *obshchinas* of Neshkan and Enurmino to sell surplus hunting results. The government refers by this term to the inedible parts of marine

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<sup>4</sup> Gokomecologia - The Federal Agency for the Regulation and Control of Environmental Protection in the 1990s.

mammals such as walrus ivory, baleens, and skins. Money is always in short supply, so hunting *obshchinas* look for legal loopholes to generate income. Even the seemingly illegal sale of marine mammal meat is commodified through simple managerial tricks, such as reimbursing the indirect costs of processing and storing meat and blubber. In other villages of the Chukotka peninsula, monetization of sea hunting is also carried out through the sale of the fur of Arctic foxes raised on farms, which are fed with the marine mammals' meat. Together, this commodification process led to the fact that some hunters of Neshkan and Enurmino began to disrupt the traditional detailed process of butchering walruses and distributing meat. Hunters take only walrus tusks and maybe a piece of meat, while walrus carcasses are left on an ice floe or on the beach. A generation ago, the entire local community condemned such a violation of customary law. As Rodion Rinetegin explained to me, according to tradition, the corpse of a shot walrus should not be left without a complete butchering process. Hunters, to show respect for the walrus herd, should butcher the walruses they have killed in such a way that it looks like they are taking all the meat back to the village. Those pieces of meat that do not fit in the boat must be *returned* to the sea. Today, the attitude towards violators of the old traditions ranges from simple disapproval to envy about the profits received. Together, this destroys the traditional Chukchi worldview, already damaged by Soviet atheism. Breaking subsistence traditions may not please the elders, but it happens anyway. The question is, what traditions will the modern communities of Neshkan and Enurmino create to cope with such a challenge? Control by government inspectors almost does not work; they have no way to keep track of hunters at sea. If it were possible, such a situation would give rise to a new contradiction: hunters and their families cease to be an integral part of the nature and turn into a kind of sport hunters, which completely destroys the idea of traditional subsistence.

What's happening now?

Neshkan and Enurmino residents believe that such commodification of subsistence products ultimately contributes to both the well-being of community members and the preservation of their native way of life. This view correlates with the findings how Indigenous peoples in the Arctic have been able to adapt a cash economy to their food and cultural needs. I observed some signs of adaptation of local traditions to the new social and economic realities. A distinctive feature of the regulation of traditional subsistence of modern time is that both the

authorities and the Chukotkan communities are configuring the Chukchi subsistence pattern, combining the cash economy and local customary law. This is a difficult task, the purpose of which is the food security of Indigenous settlements and the preservation of their cultural identity. Subsidized hunting *obshchinas* are recommended, as in pre-soviet economy times, to distribute free of charge walrus and whale meat on the shore. This is a rather controversial interpretation of the Chukchi tradition, given that the distribution was based on the participation of all households in the settlement in traditional subsistence. While today no more than 15 percent of adult villagers involve in subsidized subsistence activities that are significant for redistribution.

The local communities themselves also tried to cope with adaptation to the new reality. Villagers use personal cash income for individual subsistence. This is notable because the regional subsidy strategy seemed to discourage self-hunting. It would seem easier and cheaper for the villagers to wait on the shore until the subsidized hunting *obshchina* delivers the hunted walruses and whales. Some villagers have a regular salary, either themselves or their families, and use it to finance hunting and fishing. So did Rodion *Rinetegin* and Alexander Savelov, two prominent non-*obshchina*'s hunters from Neshkan. Other villagers use official mode of transportation for hunting. This is exactly what National Park rangers, Vasily *Tatatay* in Neshkan and Stas *Taenom* in Enurmino did. To find finance to buy boats, motors, snowmobiles and weapons, some residents of Neshkan engage in unlicensed trade, including alcohol and cigarettes. They use the acquired hunting equipment to provide their families and fellow villagers with the meat of marine mammals.

Neshkan and Enurmino are remote villages and therefore the villagers have limited knowledge to find funding. In large villages there are financial institutions and, accordingly, their residents have more opportunities to study the financing of subsistence activities. Gennady Inankeuyas, chairman of a small hunting *obshchina* in Lorino, was among those looking for a compromise between a cash and subsistence economy. He invited the residents of Lorino to contribute some money to his hunting *obshchina*. Gennady bought gasoline and ammunition with this money, and his community brought walrus and whale meat to each contributor from the hunt. He found it difficult to fight alone with the existing system of government support for sea hunting. In the end, competitors from the subsidized hunting community strangled his initiative.

This subsidized *obshchina* provided marine mammal food to the villagers. In return, the community received regional subsidies. The portion of the meat not claimed by the villagers the *obshchina* provided for its fox farm to generate additional cash income. Ultimately, in this way, the government of Chukotka influences the perception of the Chukchi communities to resolve the contradiction between cash and subsistence economies.

The current delicate balance between the global and the local, mixing Russian and Chukchi cultures, has preserved the basic framework of the traditional way of life described by Bogoras more than a hundred years ago. A toggle-head harpoon, already in use during the Punuk and Thule cultures (Rousselot et al. 1988, 163), and the hunting methods based on it are still in demand in Neshkan and Enurmino. The local reindeer husbandry has the same model of a nomadic reindeer herding camp that was described by Bogoras (1904). Both staple types of the traditional Chukchi economy still dominate the Neshkan and Enurmino communities, albeit with significant upgrades due to modern transportation, weapons, and communications. These two generators of Chukchi identity withstand the ongoing pressure of becoming more integrated within a globalized world, thereby bringing the contradictions of the local community to a new level and generating new paradoxes. What remains unchanged is that these confrontations and the community traditions that resolve them form the core of the sociocultural model that still supports the stability of the Neshkan and Enurmino communities.

## Chapter 7. So What is the Chukchi Community a Hundred Years After Bogoras?

“The Maritime village is founded, not on family connection, but on territorial contiguity. ... In these [villages], all the inhabitants are on a quite equal footing, and the houses are scattered around without any plan” (Bogoras 1909, 628).

There is no simple and short answer to this question. I have done my best, drawing on my years of observation and current training, to highlight general patterns and back them up with noteworthy details. Still, I cannot be sure that my "thick description" painted a comprehensive socio-cultural portrait of contemporary Chukchi society. Therefore, in this chapter, I will list the most typical facts that point to the commonality and differences of the Chukchi maritime community, which has gone through a century of tremendous changes in the local culture. In Chukotka, private property went through the thorns of nationalization. First, private hunting boats and deer were transferred to collective ownership, and then nationalized (Khakhovskaya 2011, 115; 119; 2012). The short period of private property ownership within subsistence activity in the 1990s was replaced by municipal property at the end of 1990s ownership (Gray 2001). Municipal ownership today directly and covertly dominates reindeer husbandry and sea hunting. Reindeer herders and sea hunters, due to these changes in ownership, were forced to change their status as co-owners to that of municipally-hired workers. A direct consequence of hired labor in subsistence activity is that reindeer husbandry in Chukotka has been in a depression for several decades, and only about 10 percent of the adult population of villages is engaged in sea hunting. The collapse of the socialist system destroyed the existing industrialized socio-economic structure of the enlarged Indigenous village. The villagers were left on their own and survived mainly thanks to hunting and fishing activity. The subsistence economy has not been homogeneous in its ability to provide people with the means of survival. The two traditionally interdependent and complementary Chukotkan economies find themselves in different situations. Marine hunting literally ensured the survival of local communities, while many reindeer camps have shrunk or even ceased to exist. The lack of resurrection in the subsistence of reindeer husbandry has several probable reasons. Reindeer husbandry is a more vulnerable traditional economy than hunting-gathering activity. Another argument is that subsistence reindeer husbandry cannot survive as long as it is carried out as a non-subsistence activity. Chukotkan reindeer husbandry, as well as marine hunting, is based on family activities.



Reindeer camps experienced a crisis largely due to the disappearance of the family division of labor. Meanwhile, the family roles in sea hunting and the sharing of the harvest still continue in coastal villages. This conclusion also leads to the fact that the Chukotkan reindeer husbandry, having been incorporated into the state economy in Soviet times, lost many of the properties of subsistence activities and suffered a crisis along with the state system that created it. It's hard to explain why it didn't work for sea hunting, which was also part of the state farm system, and hunters, like reindeer herders, were and continue to be hired/paid workers.

Nowadays, Chukotkan reindeer herding is formally, and in practice, municipally owned. Hunting *obshchinas*<sup>5</sup>, which formally belong to a collective of hunters, are in fact completely dependent on the municipal authorities. The crisis in state reindeer husbandry, the first signs of which arose in the 1970s, was described by Khakhovskaya (2011). The collapse of the *sovkhos*' reindeer husbandry system was supposed to provide a new breath of life for traditional reindeer husbandry. There were still living heirs of the owner of the reindeer herds among the modern reindeer herders. A striking example of a responsible attitude in traditional reindeer husbandry is the independent preservation of reindeer in the Khatyrka tundra (Klokov 2018, 119). Despite the example of stable private reindeer husbandry in the first half of the 20th century in Chukotka (Khakhovskaya 2011, 113) and Alaska (Naylor et al 1980, 253), as well as modern private reindeer husbandry in Yamal (Klokov 2011, 32, 38; Klokov 2012, 27-28), the Chukotka authorities preferred the option of mixed state-subsistence reindeer husbandry. However, short-term success soon gave way to a stable negative trend (Klokov 2011, 32; Bryzgalov et al 2020, 1).

The facts indicate that mixed state-subsistence reindeer husbandry has exhausted its possibilities. Although reindeer herding currently plays a minor role in the social life of the Neshkan and Enurmino communities, reindeer herding trends are important for my research in the context of identifying the prospects for traditional subsistence in general and sea hunting in particular. It is not clear why mixed municipal-subsistence marine hunting has survived and even gained significant momentum, while the subsidized traditional reindeer herding almost ceased to exist and drags out a miserable survival at the present time. If subsistence reindeer husbandry is

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<sup>5</sup> Government-registered non-governmental kin-related or neighboring communities for traditional subsistence

in such grave peril, how long can sea hunting be safe with government support? The revived ubiquitous hunting and gathering activity of the Chukchi communities underlined the significant reserve of their adaptive capabilities. Several decades of embedding the Chukotkan people in the Soviet social structure—where there was 100% employment, an urban lifestyle (or that of the village-based *poselkovye* (see p. 5)) predominated, and the majority of the Indigenous population was alienated from subsistence activity and food—did not destroy the foundations of traditional Chukchi society. The knowledge, used only in a narrow circle of the subsistence-oriented workers of state-owned agricultural enterprises, was quickly returned to the entire spectrum of community members. Moreover, the subsistence activity has contributed to the revival of traditional worldviews, knowledge, and customary law.

The 1990s were generally a turning point of hope for the Chukchi, as is for any Arctic Indigenous community. Traditional knowledge and its implications for the interconnected globalized world has become the subject of debate among researchers (Albert 2001; Berkes 1993; Bohensky and Maru 2011; Descola 1996; De Castro 1998; Morris 2010; Nadasdy 1999; Purcell 1998; Sillitoe 1998). According to Sahlins (2002, 60), the researchers concluded that they hastily predicted the extinction of the culture of the hunter-gatherer community. In the context of this study, the 1990s, by ensuring the return of the Chukchi communities to a cash-subsistence economy this strategy also contributed to their return to the common foundation of the Bering Strait region cultures. In subsequent decades similar sociocultural patterns (Raymond-Yakoubian and Zdor 2020), linguistic trends (Krupnik and Vakhtin 1997; Jolles and Oozeva 2011; Golovko 2019; Morgunova-Schwalbe 2020) and even numbers for the consumption of subsistence products (Wolfe and Walker 1987; Yamin-Pasternak et al 2014; Kochnev and Zdor 2016) were revealed in the Alaskan and Chukotkan Indigenous villages.

Wenzel (2000; 2013), Wolfe and Walker (1987), Dombrowski (2007) and other researchers argue that the Arctic Indigenous peoples were able to use money to maintain their traditional way of life, giving rise to the phenomenon of a mixed economy. In general terms, a mixed economy means that Indigenous villagers earn money to invest in subsistence activities and traditional distribution to maintain their culture. The vitality of this phenomenon has been repeatedly questioned (Hughes 1963; Libby 1960; Langdon 1991). Over time, it has emerged that the adaptive capacities of Indigenous communities are able to cope with the negative

impacts of invading cultures. While the effect of the cash economy has produced profound shifts in beliefs, worldview, and social organization, local communities have retained the basic features of a hunting-gathering society. Paraphrasing Sahlins (2000, 52), "Money can very well be the servant of custom not its master," the Alaska Natives were able to refute even the assertion of Marx, who stated, "money destroys the archaic community because money becomes the community."

While it seems clear that the subsistence lifestyle will continue in spite of an increasingly globalized and commoditized society, it is also clear that the subsistence practice has change as it adapts to external and internal pressures. The Indigenous culture of the coming years will be significantly different not only from what it was 30 years ago, but even from what it is today. Following the decreased participation of Indigenous villagers in the marine hunting activity (Zdor 2020, 79), there are now also signs of a decrease in consumption of traditional food (Yamin-Pasternak et al 2014), if not in small Indigenous villages, then, at least, in the regional hubs and larger Indigenous communities. Langdon (1991, 28), while optimistic about the resilience of Indigenous cultures, nevertheless expressed concern that "gender imbalance, formal education, school diets, and television" are factors that strongly influence the resilience of the Yup'ik cultural system. Thirty years have passed since his study; indeed the Yup'ik cultural system persists, albeit in a significantly modified form. Cash economy, television, the Internet, urban lifestyle, and world cuisine now have been part of life for several generations, but the culture of the Arctic Indigenous peoples is still distinctive.

The adaptive capacities of the region's Indigenous community are subject to continuous pressures. The successful conversion of the cash economy into an investment institution of subsistence activity resulted in the phenomenon of a mixed economy. The nationalization of subsistence activity in Chukotka and the establishment of Native corporations in Alaska were also perceived by local communities as a source of funding for traditional subsistence. However, the amalgamation of large-scale economic structures with inherently small-scale subsistence activities has had a much more complex impact on local identity. The undermined traditional subsistence (Dombrowski 2007, 220; Khakhovskaya 2011, 123), along with increasing inequality between and within communities, has established new sociocultural patterns. In this regard, it is difficult to distinguish between the ongoing adaptation and the incipient

transformation of culture. For example, there is now evidence that Indigenous residents, at least in large local cities, increasingly prefer paid work as a source of wealth, while subsistence activity and its products are not a livelihood need, but markers of identity. In other words, members of the community deliberately preserve local characteristics, but feel comfortable in the global cultural environment. This adaptation mechanism confirms that the Indigenous communities of the region are an organic part of the global society. As long as federal and local governments support traditional subsistence directly (through subsidies to hunting *obshchinas*) or indirectly (through welfare payments to Indigenous villagers), this core of local culture remains central to most Indigenous communities. Government strategies to support traditional subsistence reasonably assume that this activity is a key factor contributing to the preservation of identity. Indeed, subsistence activity shapes the way of life, thoughts, and a sense of unity for its participants. So, while the nature of the problems faced by Indigenous communities in Alaska and Chukotka has changed over time, the problems are similar for both places. This sets a trend in which communities and governments find similar solutions or make decisions that have similar consequences. Discussing cultural changes in the Chukchi society, I want to emphasize that the Chukchi community at the time of Bogoras was also quite different from the previous one described by researchers in the middle of the 19th century (Meidel 1894, Nordenskjöld 1881). Significant and gradual cultural impacts have influenced the Chukchi community; in the meantime the distinctiveness of cultural characteristics remains a notable feature of the contemporary Chukchi community.

So, what is the Chukchi community a hundred years after Bogoras? The Chukchi settlements of Neshkan and Enurmino are pronounced Indigenous settlements, the sociocultural model of which is built by its multidirectional social and economic needs. Today's rural settlements in Chukotka, where the Chukchi and other local Indigenous peoples make up the majority, are legally referred to as *Indigenous villages*. There is a strong reason for this title. The studied villages of Neshkan and Enurmino are homogenous, Chukchi dominated, communities. Traditional subsistence is a key economic activity for most villagers. Even those villagers who have a paid job are involved in some subsistence activities. Almost every single villager is a consumer of subsistence products, by whichever traditional or modern modified methods the foods from these products are prepared. Marine mammal meat and blubber, reindeer meat, and fish are valuable and in high demand. These three pillars of the Chukchi community

predetermine the sociocultural frame of a Chukchi settlement, which might be wearing modern clothes, but the mindset it has inherited is traditional indeed.

The Chukchi clearly separate themselves from other peoples. They still use their native language, albeit partially. Sea hunting and reindeer herding is the backbone of native distinctiveness and is in demand in the villages, at least in terms of providing traditional food. Because participation in reindeer herding and sea hunting is limited by subsidies, most villagers have shifted their traditional subsistence towards fishing and gathering. Traditional subsistence predetermines the meaning of TEK, language, and customary law and because of it offsets the negative cultural impact of unemployment, which would otherwise be quite high, around 30-40 percent. Technological innovations have driven the efficiency of the residents. Although the volume of production they generate provides for the entire the community in the past, due to the fact that the subsistence practitioners have decreased, the cultural space that they reproduce has been reduced.

The Chukchi coastal village in the time of Bogoras (1909, 537), was more of a neighborhood cluster than a unit of relatives or a rigidly structured hunter network. The social organization Bogoras described was a community whose members were free individuals – a convergence that was stable and fragile at the same time. Today, while being managed by a municipal government, Chukchi villages also have Council of Elders and representatives of Association of Indigenous Peoples of Chukotka working alongside the municipal authorities, who in great part are also the local Chukchi. These factors contribute to the reproduction of social relations that are characteristic of the Chukchi coastal settlements described by Bogoras (1909, 628). Of course, they are not the same, because they revolve around the institutions and processes of modern times - school, hospital, municipal legislation, but the spirit of a free egalitarian Chukchi community and its principles of social interaction described by Bogoras are still present. Chukchi language, traditional knowledge, and customary law, although not as much as before, are still important in governance and subsistence.

All of my interactions during fieldwork and lived experience indicate that Chukchi worldview, while not entirely the same as at the time of Bogoras research, is the backbone of the cultural characteristics of today's Chukchi settlements. Traditional subsistence has not lost its

significance both in economic activity and in the shaping of a worldview. Technological innovations and globally diversified diets have influenced traditional subsistence as well as the food preferences of community members. In the present, most of the villagers do not need to be involved in reindeer herding and sea hunting in order to provide their families with traditional food: fifteen percent of the adult population provides the same amount of marine mammal meat as the entire population of the Bogoras-era settlements. A desire for the diversification of diet has increased the importance of fishing and brought about many changes in how food is processed and stored, but that too is a feature of the Chukchi cultural disposition Bogoras noted, when he described Chukchi keenness for “alien food” (1904, 201) and observed Chukchi openness to trying food attributed to other peoples’ traditional diets. Along with the distinctive features of the modern Chukchi community, I found common features that are characteristic of the Indigenous settlements of Chukotka, Russian North rural areas, and even in other countries of the Arctic Circle. The Chukchi settlements of Neshkan and Enurmino are outwardly difficult to distinguish from the Siberian Yupik settlements, for example, Novoye Chaplino, or, even more so, from the Chukchi-Yupik settlements of Sireniki and Uelen, which emerged as culturally mixed communities as a result of the relocations implemented by the Soviet authorities. Sea hunting is also the predominant source of traditional food for these villages and the education, medical, utilities services that exist there are characteristic not only for Russia, but also for any modern state. The dominance of the Russian language in school, the library, and on television produces similar cultural patterns, similar not only along the coast of Chukotka, but also perhaps throughout the Indigenous communities in rural Russia. The geographic features of the Arctic, such as the remoteness and isolation of Indigenous communities, in addition to direct dependence on traditional state-subsidized subsistence, are factors that contribute to the sociocultural similarity of the Indigenous settlements of the Bering Strait region of Alaska and Chukotka. The similarity in economics and socialization characteristic of the hunting-gathering community was likely what prompted Bogoras to include his ethnography of Siberian Yupik culture in the multi-volume *The Chukchee*.

As I discuss in the previous chapter, certain values and dispositions expressed by contemporary Chukchi villagers may to some appear contradictory. Villagers want their community to be prosperous, have modern conveniences, and live in a traditional way of life. Poor living conditions, low level of social services, and lack of work force part of the villagers to

leave for the cities, while low incomes tie them to the villages. The elders want the younger generations to be committed to the Chukchi language and identity. But they also want the younger generations of the villagers to get a good education and a well-paid job, which means that the children should be fluent in Russian and study outside the village. Food habits are built on current traditions and conditions. The low-income level of the villagers clearly contributes to the demand for food provided by traditional subsistence. The meat of marine mammals and fish are the mainstay of the diet in many families. Current eating habits are shaped not only by traditionally available animals and fish, but also by store-bought food provided free of charge at school. Modern-day villagers use store-bought food because they are used to it, and also because in the off-season it is the only source of food. Holidays in the villages are now a mixture of global culture with elements of traditional local festivities. Hunter's Day became a kind of symbiosis, built on Soviet professional holidays like the day of a medical worker, teacher, builder, and so on, and traditional holidays described by Bogoras (1904). Taken together, the Chukchi community is built around the divergent needs of the villagers, but still converges on identity that is distinctively Chukchi.

Some communities sharing a distinctive culture may change so much in the process of adapting to the demands of a globalized world that their distinctiveness fades as they take on more features of the dominant society. The Chukchi communities so far demonstrate resilience in balancing between the global and local vectors. Today's Chukchi community is certainly different from the one that was described by Bogoras more than a hundred years ago. But this difference is expressed in external signs, while Neshkan and Enurmino are Chukchi communities with pronounced cultural distinctions.

## Afterword

While I was working on the final chapters of my dissertation, summing up the ideas about what today's Chukchi community is, Russian troops invaded Ukraine. Death and destruction came to Ukrainian and Russian families because of the war unleashed by the Putin regime. The grief and horror of the war also came to the Chukchi communities. We were first getting the news about the killed and wounded among the Chukchi who served in the Russian army on a contract basis. Then came news about the mobilized Chukchi who died in the occupied country. How the war affected the Chukchi communities is not the subject of my research and it is not a topic that is possible to discuss in much detail in real time. There are too many military secrets, personal, family, and collective grief, and hidden feelings of people used to living in an oppressed and unfree society to draw conclusions about what people learn about the war, how they react to it, and what personal and public consequences are expected. Nevertheless, I must at least briefly discuss in this afterword the first echoes of the war and the reaction of the Chukchi communities in the context of my research.

A year has passed since the start of the war. My observation on several Chukotkan WhatsApp and Telegram social media has helped me get a general idea of Chukotkans' feelings toward Russia's war in Ukraine. In the spring and summer, during the first months of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Chukotkans in most social media groups seemed to ignore the war, discussing everyday stuff as if nothing had happened. I believe that people followed the news of the ongoing war with dismay, as the occasional patriotic comment about the war either caused a backlash or a pause in conversations. Only one WhatsApp group from the very beginning of the war consistently reposted propaganda clichés about "Ukrofascism." The frequency of reposts of Russian propaganda in this group decreased when the all-Russian "partial" mobilization began. Moreover, when one of the Russian senators recently raised the alarm about the mobilization devastating the already thinned settlements of the Russian Far East, the group immediately posted this news. The repost in this group of the initiative to stop the mobilization for the Russian Far East is an indicator that the members of the group are not eager personally to take part in the war in Ukraine.

Eventually, Chukotkan participants in the social media groups, like other Russians, were



becoming more involved in the discussions in Russia's war in Ukraine. News of killed and wounded fellow countrymen, both drafted and contracted soldiers, began to come to the villages. Then the Russian authorities pulled out young villagers from the communities, as part of the "partial" mobilization. As announced by RIA Novosti (2022) – a Russian state-controlled media outlet, mobilization

“is a set of measures to transfer the country's armed forces, its economy and government to work in wartime conditions. Mobilization can be general and partial, in the first case it concerns a wide range of the population and is determined by federal law, in the second case it can be limited regionally or by other parameters that are established by a government decree.”

Once the Chukotkan social networks began to convey that the majority of those called up for war in the villages were sea hunters and reindeer herders, the Russia's war in Ukraine ceased to feel distant and alien. The number of native villagers mobilized for the war in Ukraine turned out to be so great that even Roman Kopin, former governor of Chukotka, who supported the war, was forced to promise that not a single sea hunter and reindeer herder would be mobilized again. The reasons for this governor's decision to not mobilize hunters and herders again are quite obvious. This cohort is the generator of the Chukchi identity, as traditional subsistence is the foremost source of reproduction of the Chukchi traditional culture. Apart from cultural justifications, this age group of the villagers is the foundation for the physical survival of the villages. Being generally important for the creation of new families, representatives of this group form the backbone of the hunting and reindeer herding units, which provide at least half of the food needs of the village. Despite the promise made by Governor Kopin (who was forced to resign in the week I was finalizing this dissertation) anxieties of the villagers are caused by their fears about the fate of their relatives and friends, taken by the Russian authorities to the war.

The autumn mobilization gave rise to various feelings among the Chukchi communities. There was still some discussion of the war with reposts of local newspaper articles calling on the residents to provide all possible assistance. For example, there was a series of articles that encouraged women to knit socks for the soldiers. These publications did not prompt much discussion. The lack of reaction could be a sign of a negative attitude towards the war. The

poverty of the villagers, whose incomes are barely enough to survive on their own, is also a good reason for withholding support. Some group members warn that discussing the war, and specifically anything connected with the soldiers on the frontlines, is prohibited because “the enemy” could be monitoring the social media sites. That does not, however, prevent the Telegram group “Chukotka to the Front,” which anyone can join from raising funds for the purchase of clothing, medical kits, and survival equipment for the mobilized soldiers from Chukotka. It is noteworthy that against the background of increased donations, the use of propaganda clichés ample at the start of the war, such as those calling for conquering “Ukrofascists,” has become less dominant on social networks.

In any case, trying to carry on ignoring the war, as seemed to be the case through summer 2022 when only the contracted soldiers were being sent to Ukraine is no longer an option. Now that their relatives and friends are at war, the villagers are forced, if not to support the war, then certainly to worry about the life and health of the soldiers. If a Chukchi son or husband is wounded or killed in the war, his death must be viewed as heroic, not as that of an invader or occupant. Therefore, the Chukotkan social media groups had no choice but to justify the participation of the Chukchi in Russia’s war in Ukraine. Social networks focus on such topics as defending the Motherland from the enemy and often refer to the overwhelming support for the Soviet army during World War II. Patriotic conversations and glorification of the soldiers who died in Ukraine prevail over the rare mournful questions of the relatives of those killed, such as why the war is needed and why fellow countrymen needed to die. Almost inaudible are those Chukchi and residents of Chukotka who are against Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Their public silence is due to Russia’s near total suppression of civil liberties. The protests that erupted shortly after the invasion were brutally crushed by law enforcement agencies; some protesters were put in prison and others had to flee Russia.

Russian laws regarding human rights are becoming more and more suffocating. At first, a mere mention of the word "war" in everyday conversations became grounds for a criminal case. Then, any negative connotation associated with Russian soldiers, such as a mention of their poor training and equipment, became a crime.

Meanwhile, cases of the voluntary participation of the Chukchi in the war in Ukraine

began to appear in the news and social media more and more often. Dozens of villagers went to war on contract or as volunteers. This phenomenon, covered by state propaganda as the defense of the Motherland from the Ukrainian “Nazis” or “neo-Nazis” supported by the West has another significant motive: cash. The media continuously informs that a soldier in the Russian army has a salary of about 200,000 rubles (\$3,300) a month; there is also emphasis on the compensation for the family of 5,000,000 rubles (\$80,000) if he is killed. To what extent these promised figures correspond to reality is a big question. Especially against the background of rumors that the families of mobilized soldiers have to buy uniforms and protective equipment for their husbands and sons and even raise money for the funeral when their loved ones are killed.

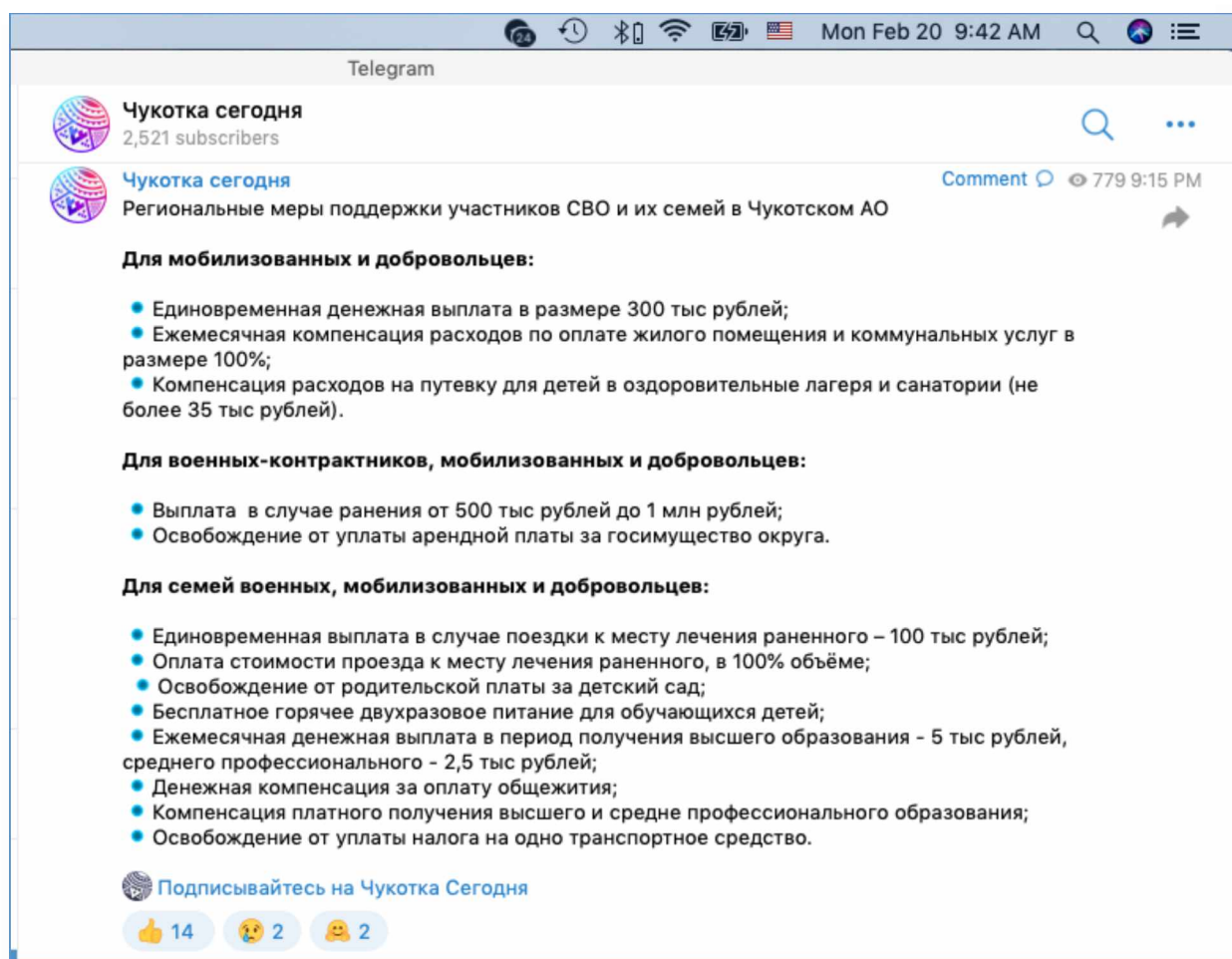


Figure Afterword 1. List of regional compensation payments to the participants of the “Special Military Operation.”

An information page in the Telegram channel Chukotka Today that lists the Chukotka regional government’s incentives for joining the “special military operation,” also listing the support to be provided to the soldiers’ families.

Nevertheless, we must realize that advertised salary and compensation figures represent enormous amount of money for an ordinary family in Russia, including the Chukchi families. Therefore, against the backdrop of a television picture boasting the successes of the Russian army in Ukraine, the promised amounts of money look attractive to many with humble incomes. The authorities of Chukotka also regularly publish information (Figure Afterword 1) about what compensation that the regional government provides to the soldiers and their families in addition to federal funding. The most notable figures in these ads are 300,000 rubles (\$5,000) as a one-time bonus for a soldier at the time of signing the contract and 500,000 to 1,000,000 rubles (\$80,000 to \$160,000) if the soldier is wounded. Acquiring the much-desired snowmobile, boat, and ATV in a few months of participation in the "liberation of Ukraine from Nazism" becomes such a seductive reality that it may be the reason we are currently seeing a rise in the number of Chukchi men volunteering to go fight in Ukraine. Does this mean that the Chukchi have at last been absorbed by the dominant society? Or are they just again using all available means to maintain the meaning of their life: the traditional subsistence?

Because of the persecutions during their Soviet past, caution and secrecy have become a characteristic feature of the everyday conduct of the modern-day Chukchi. The ban on one's own opinion, reinforced by the persecution of dissent, developed a survival technique that prescribes hiding one's true feelings and desires. Therefore, although today's Chukchi are probably unhappy that they or their relatives are being sent to war, they do not protest. Because even they are put in prison for protesting, they are not immune from being forcibly sent from there to the war. They are used to hiding their thoughts and feelings, because the regime punishes whoever does not support the authorities. There are likely those who do believe the Russian government's narrative that Ukraine is occupied by Nazis and must be liberated. And then there are those who believe that regardless of the reason for the war, Russia's soldiers should be supported. Therefore, many Chukchi are now willingly transferring money, sending clothes, shoes, and medical kits to the military front line. This justification creates confidence, security, and unity. Intersecting with the overwhelming poverty of the villagers, the propaganda that is poisoning the civil society in Russia, has made the war a tangible source of solving one's financial problems. "Everyone in Russia seems to be happy with this war: men earn money, family members buy mortgaged

housing and cars, children get free university education,” says one social media post. This is exactly what the Putin regime, now in existence for over twenty years, wants from its people: a total absence of questioning the authorities. Why do we need the war? Why does anyone need to be killed? Why do we need the occupation of a sovereign country? Instead of asking these questions, which are prohibited by Russian law, people may think either that they are “liberating” Ukraine or about the financial incentives, or both. How is it possible for either propaganda or the promise of the financial incentives for people to ignore the price being paid – relatives and friends being killed or wounded, economic costs of the war, and the destruction of neighboring country – is a very difficult question that is yet to be explored, perhaps once again pointing to contradiction as an inherent part of the human condition.

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