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Thank you for the
inspiration!

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A LINE IN THE SAYANS:
HISTORY AND DIVERGENT PERCEPTIONS OF PROPERTY AMONG THE
TOZHU AND TOFA OF SOUTH SIBERIA

Brian Robert Donahoe

Submitted to the faculty of the University Graduate School
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy
in the Department of Anthropology,
Indiana University
December 2003

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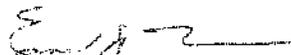
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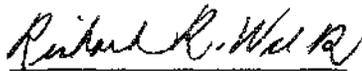


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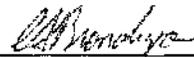


Eutilio F. Moran, Ph.D.

Doctoral
Committee



Richard R. Wilk, Ph.D.



Eduardo S. Brondizio, Ph.D.

8 December 2003

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To my mother, Rho Donahoe

Lord knows you 've waited long enough!

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I was first introduced to the Republic of Tyva (more commonly known as Tuva) by Prof. Roman Zlotin of Indiana University's Department of Geography, who had done his dissertation research in Tyva in the early 1960s. I was particularly intrigued by its position at the ecological crossroads of the Siberian boreal forests and the Inner Asian steppes; cultural and linguistic crossroads of the Turkic and Mongolia peoples; and historical, political and administrative crossroads between Russia, Mongolia, and China. My interest was further kindled through communication with the organization *Friends of Tuva*, and its founder, Ralph Leighton. I began to read all I could find on Tyva in English. Of course, prior to the *glasnost'* and *perestroika* movements in the Soviet Union under Gorbachev, virtually no Western researchers could get into Tyva (or anywhere else in the former USSR), so there was very little English-language literature up to that time. Following that, the great majority of English-language material, both academic and journalistic, focused on one of three things: Tyva's national art, throat-singing (*khoomei*); the revival of shamanism in Tyva; or the nationalist-secessionist movement in Tyva in the early 1990s. Tyva is also known to stamp collectors for its curiously shaped postage stamps issued during Tyva's short-lived national independence (1921-1944). As I am not musically inclined nor a philatelist, a study of Tyvan throat-singing or of postage stamps was out of the question. That left shamanism and the nationalist-secessionist movement. Hence my initial research interest was to investigate the critical juncture where, I imagined, the discourses of nationalism, shamanism, and environmentalism converge to contribute to a

unique Tyvan national identity and to justify Tyva's claims to sovereignty over its natural resources. At the time, based on available materials (e.g., Alatalu 1992; Eismont 1996; McMullen 1993), I was speculating that in the wake of Chechnya's efforts to secede, Tyva appeared to be subtly positioning itself to become the next secessionist test-case to challenge Moscow in the volatile politics of the fragmenting Russian Federation.

However, when I made my first trip to Tyva in 1997, I found that neither of these issues was foremost in people's minds, and to my understanding, both had been blown out of proportion by the handful of Western academics and journalists who had made their way to Tyva in the early 1990s. No one in Tyva talks about seceding anymore, and "shamanism" has, in my opinion, been woefully misrepresented. Western attention has focused on a highly publicized, newly institutionalized form of shamanism, represented by shamanic training institutes, certification boards, and clinics. In my experience most Tyvans emphatically reject this version of shamanism as inauthentic, and view these shamans as charlatans. The belief system that has legitimacy in the eyes of most Tyvans is for the most part tacit, an internalized worldview that incorporates a spirit world manifest in nature. This worldview permeates the consciousnesses of most Tyvans and is reflected in many subtle ways, but is in no way dependent on a shaman, hence is more accurately described as a type of *animism* (with appropriate caveats - see *inter alia* Bird-David 1999) or *spiritism*.

Given the lack of salience of these two issues to the everyday lives of the Tyva people, I found myself without a topic. But several people said to me, "You know, we used to have a lot of reindeer up in the Tozhu region, but now we don't. Why don't you look into that?" And thus a dissertation topic was born.

But the first task was to become proficient in the Tyvan language. Tyva has always been unique among the republics of the former USSR in that it is one of the few places where the titular nationality has always been in the majority, and where virtually all Tyva people still speak Tyvan as their first language. In fact, many of the older reindeer herding peoples (as well as some yak herders in the west), being the most removed from urban areas and still leading nomadic or semi-nomadic lifestyles, speak Russian only as a distant second language, and are uncomfortable expressing themselves in Russian. At the time of my initial trip to Tyva, I knew no Russian. This proved to be an advantage for me - I probably would not have been able to learn Tyvan if I had known Russian, because everyone in the capital would have reverted to speaking Russian with me. But with a strong background in Turkic languages and my total lack of Russian, the easiest thing for me and others to do was to try to speak in Tyvan. Of course, I couldn't become fluent in a single summer, but I returned in 1998, and then lived in Tyva for two full years from September 1999 through September 2001. I conducted all fieldwork in the Tyvan language, including extensive interviews and surveys. I became proficient in reading Russian, as this was necessary for archival work and to read earlier ethnographic accounts, most of which are written in Russian.

Toward the end of my first year in Tyva, I was contacted by a colleague who was in the process of applying for a grant from the Volkswagen Stiftung to document endangered Tyva-related languages in and around Tyva. He got the grant and set up the Altai-Sayan Language and Ethnography Project (ASLEP). This allowed me to stay in Tyva for another year (Sept. 2000 - Sept. 2001). While my main task within the ASLEP project was to document the Tozhu dialect of the Tyva language via video and audio

recording, as well as to assess people's attitudes toward their language and its decline, I was also able to go up to an area informally known as Tofalaria in southwestern Irkutsk Oblast', just on the other side of the border between Tyva and Irkutsk Oblast'. In this remote region live the Tofa (more commonly known as Tofalar), an ethnic group very closely related ethnically, historically, linguistically, and in their traditional lifestyles to the Tozhu reindeer herders I had been working with. The short time I spent with the Tofa (two trips totaling five weeks) was very informative and particularly productive for the comparative framework it allowed me to construct. This comparative framework is the structural backbone of the entire dissertation.

Acknowledgments

Needless to say, any project of this size can only be accomplished with the support and assistance of an army of people. Stateside, I would like to thank my dissertation committee, first and foremost my principal advisor and committee chair, Dr. M. Nazif Shahrani. Dr. Shahrani brought me into anthropology and made my doctoral studies possible by nominating me for a Social Science Research Council (SSRC) Fellowship, despite the fact that I had had no prior anthropological training. He was the perfect advisor for an older student such as myself - he gave me the latitude and freedom to make my own decisions (and mistakes), but stepped in where necessary with unconditional support and sage advice. In the dissertation writing process, I thank him for giving me enough rope to hang myself and then not letting me do it, and for making me make it better. I thank Dr. Emilio Moran for prompt and insightful comments on earlier drafts; Dr. Rick Wilk for forcing me to look beyond the ethnography; and Dr. Eduardo

Brondizio for agreeing to step in at the *last* minute and sit on my committee. I would also like to thank Dr. Laird Clark for offering a course on the structure of Tyva Turkic when there was only one student to take it. The administrative staff at Indiana University's Department of Anthropology, especially Connie Adams and Debra Wilkerson, have given me unconditional administrative, logistical, and moral support.

Funding for this project has come from a variety of sources. The Anthropology Department funded me throughout my graduate student career with teaching assistantships, partial funding for two pre-dissertation summers in Tyva, and travel grants to attend conferences. Indiana University's Office of International Programs also helped fund two pre-dissertation fieldtrips to Tyva. The SSRC funded my first year of graduate study and one summer of language study. Foreign Languages and Area Studies (FLAS) fellowships funded two more summers of language study and my final year of course work. Dissertation fieldwork was funded by a Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Fellowship and the Altai-Sayan Language and Ethnography Project, funded by the Volkswagen-Stiftung's Initiative for the Documentation of Endangered Languages (DoBeS).

Thanks also to my entire wonderful and sprawling family, especially my brother Mike, who took care of all my business stateside during my extended periods overseas and who has always made me feel that *su casa es mi casa* (and storage unit); my sister Lyn, for moral support, cheap air tickets and free travel advice; and of course my mother, Rho, to whom this dissertation is dedicated. I have also been blessed with the most generous and supportive friends a person could hope for. I am especially indebted to my life-long best buddy, Joe Clarke, for years of unstinting generosity, fully aware that I

would never be in a position to repay him. Jeff and Missy Zaraya and Missy's mother, Margaret Baldwin, gave me free use of Mrs. Baldwin's house in Bloomington for two years and treated me to many wonderful dinners. I'd like to thank my support network of fellow graduate students at Indiana University who slogged through the trenches with me, especially Sebastian Braun, Christina Burke, Jennifer Cash, Margaret Dorsey, Kimberly Hart, Candice Lowe, Tracy Luedke, Kathy Mctzo, Lena Mortenson, Kathy Pelrie, and Ann Reed.

In Moscow, special thanks go to the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, Russian Academy of Sciences; especially to Prof. Dr. Sevyan Vainshtein, the grandfather of Tyvan and especially Tozhu ethnography. Everything I have done here rests firmly on the ethnographic and historical foundations he has built over his long and distinguished career. Drs. Anatolii Yamskov and Natasha Novikova were always especially attentive during my visits to Moscow, introducing me to people, suggesting important Russian-language literature, and pointing me in directions I would not have otherwise gone. My close friends in Moscow, Grigorii Neverov and Taraa Kuular, always made sure I had a place to stay in Moscow and helped me navigate and negotiate that sprawling and hectic metropolis.

The number of people in Tyva who have helped me is simply too long to recount, but the following deserve special recognition: Lyubov Shuluyevna Shoiduk, my *ugbam* (big sister), with whom I lived my first two summers in Tyva and who has always been there to help; Rollanda Nikoiaevna Kongar, my other *ugbam*, who arranged my living situation and language lessons when I first went to Tyva; and Afanasii Myldyk, Kyzyl-Maadyr Simchit, and Kheimer-ool Kuular for patient research assistance, accompanying

me on difficult fieldtrips, and being general factotums and all-round good friends. Special thanks to the Tyva Institute for the Humanities (TGI - formerly TNIIYaLI) and its former director and assistant director, Churguy-ool Mikhailovich Dorzhu and Svetlana Mongushevna Biche-ool; and current director and assistant director, Vyacheslav Dongakovich Mart-ool and Valentina Suzuksi, for taking care of difficult visa issues and for granting me affiliation with the -institute and unlimited use of the library. In Toora-Khem, the family of Vaierii and Galina Shyyrap opened their home to me and accepted me as a member of their family. Arena Dongakovna Kashkak, the director of the school museum in Toora-Khem, shared with me her insights garnered over years of collecting material culture and life histories of the Tozhu people. And of course, this research would not have been possible without the cooperation of all the Tozhu reindeer herders and former herders who gave so willingly of their time, information, knowledge and wisdom, which is so inadequately reflected here, and who patiently taught me all I could learn and tried to teach me much more. Special mention goes to Viktor (Piko) and Valentina SambuLi and their son Sholban Bimba, with whom I lived out in the deep taiga for six months and who didn't let me freeze to death or get eaten by a bear.

And to the hundreds of other people in Tyva who provided help and support at various stages of this research, whether with tips as to how to navigate the archives, or language help, or a hot *banya*, or an iraportant contact, or a helpful phone call to someone important, or simply a friendly word of support and encouragement - if I listed them all it would more than double the size of this dissertation, so let me just thank in general the warm, helpful and hospitable people of Tyva.

I am now comfortably ensconced at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology (MPISA) in Halle, Germany, and so, appropriately, the final acknowledgements go to people affiliated with that institution. Patty Gray helped me get my foot in the door at the MPISA by putting forward my name for an appointment as a visiting scholar in 2001. The Institute's directors, Prof. Drs. Chris Hann and Gunther Sehlee, have followed up with several invitations and generous support, and have shown remarkable patience with me as this process has dragged on far longer than any of us expected. This dissertation has benefited greatly from the unparalleled facilities and exceptionally stimulating intellectual atmosphere at the MPISA. Conversations with current and former researchers here have shaped my thinking. Special thanks to Keebet Benda-Beckmann, Joachim Otto Habeck, Alexander King, Frances Pine, Mihaly Sarkany, Lale Yalcin-Heckmann and John Ziker for reading and commenting upon drafts of various chapters along the way. Thanks also to John Eidson, Deema Kaneff, Gordon Milligan, and the members of the Siberian Studies Centre - Katharina Geraet, Joachim Otto Habeck, Agnieszka Haleniba, Istvan Santha, and Virginie Vate - for moral support and patience with my mood swings. Also in Halle I would like to acknowledge my friend and colleague Sven Grawunder and his wife, Ulli, for helping me get settled in Halle.

My final thanks go to my fiancée Chaizu Kyrgys, for everything else.

ABSTRACT

Brian Robert Donahoe

A LINE IN THE SAYANS: HISTORY AND DIVERGENT PERCEPTIONS OF PROPERTY AMONG
THE TOZHU AND TOFA OF SOUTH SIBERIA

This dissertation is a study of comparative change and continuity among two of the smallest and most neglected of Russia's indigenous minorities in the post-Soviet period, the Tozhu of the Republic of Tyva (Tuva) and the Tofa of southwestern Irkutsk Oblast'. The Tozhu and the Tofa are closely related reindeer-herding and hunting peoples inhabiting the Eastern Sayan mountain region of southern Siberia. Geopolitics and accidents of history have set these otherwise closely related peoples on different historical trajectories. As a result, the Tozhu have maintained their reindeer-herding traditions and native language, while the Tofa no longer practice reindeer herding nor speak their native language. I employ concepts from institutional analysis to explain the differences between these two peoples, particularly their different senses of property in land and animals, and to explain why post-Soviet development initiatives have failed among the Tozhu and Tofa.

Moving out from the local level to the constitutional level, I analyze the history of the legal framework affecting the indigenous peoples of Russia, paying particular attention to the official category of "Indigenous Small-numbered Peoples of the North," which includes both the Tozhu and the Tofa. I examine three new framework laws specifically designed to provide a legal structure through which the indigenous peoples of Russia can assert their rights, and the potential problems with these legal protections. One

of these problems is the recently legalized privatization of land, which threatens Russia's indigenous peoples' access to land and resources. By way of conclusion, I suggest reasons why local-level governance structures have not emerged among the Tozhu and Tofa, and speculate on the future of reindeer herding in south Siberia.

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Part I

Research Setting:

Theoretical and Historical Background

Chapter 1

Introduction

Ivizhi dep eres attyg!

("To be called a reindeer herder is to have a brave and daring reputation." From the folk song *Tozhu Try* ("Song of Tozhu"), words by Leonid Chadamba).

Ivi chok bolsa, Tozhu kizhi baza chok boor.

("If there were no reindeer, there would be no Tozhu people." - an often repeated refrain by Tozhu people during interviews.)

Kandyg-daa bske azhyl bar bolza, bis ivi azhylyn kagbas bis. Ol bisting khanyvysta, bisting chiireeviste, bisting sagysh-setkiliviste.

("Even if there were other work available, we wouldn't quit reindeer herding. It's in our blood, our hearts, our souls." Tozhu reindeer herder Baak-ool Andylayovich Ak, July 1998)

Ish chok. Ish bar bolza men mynda ishtenir men. Ibi bile ishtenmez iyik men.

("There's no work. If there was any other work, I'd work here in the village. I wouldn't work with the reindeer!" Sergei Amostaev, the last remaining full-time Tofa reindeer herder, May 2001.)

July 1998. Sitting knee-to-knee with Tozhu reindeer herder and hunter Aleksandr Akovich Shyngylai on a rough platform of pine trunks in his canvas tent. We are at his summer camp on the upper reaches of the Bedii River amidst the highest peaks of the Eastern Sayan mountains, on the border between the Republic of Tyva and the Irkutsk Oblast', in southeastern Siberia. The sun had gone down long ago, and the right side of his narrow lined face and forward-thrusting jaw are illuminated only by the red glow seeping out of cracks in the iron wood-burning stove. My assistant had excused himself for the night, but Aleksandr Akovich, who goes by the nickname "Cha-Cha," wants me to stay. I protest that I am afraid I won't be able to follow the conversation, but he grips my

knee and says to me in Tyvan, "You'll understand. I'll make yon understand." Then he throws back another shot of vodka, leans in so that his face almost touches mine, and intones gravely, "Truly, in a year, maybe two, three at the most, there will be no more reindeer in Tyva."

Figure 1.1. "Cha Cha" Shyngylai cranks the generator as his wife, Roza, makes contact with the village of Kham-Syra.



April 2000. On a sunny spring day on the high banks above the Chaiynda River in the Tozhu District, in the northeastern quadrant of the Siberian Republic of Tyva,

Viktor Shamboiovich Sambuu sits outside his tattered canvas tent, hunched over a piece of birch wood that he is hacking and whittling away at with his homemade Bowie knife. Viktor, nicknamed "Piko," is shaping the wood into one of the two side supports that will eventually be the frame of an *ezer*, a saddle for his reindeer. He could just as easily be making a *mongiu* (a muzzle to prevent reindeer calves from nursing), or an axe handle, or a chess piece, for that matter.

Inside the tent his wife, Valya (Valentina), tends to a loaf of *kakbak*, a dense, soda-leavened bread, baking on the top of the *izig demir*, a wood-burning stove welded together from sheets of beaten iron. She's city-educated and not an ethnic Tozhu nor from a reindeer-herding background, but since her marriage to Piko she has left her home in the town of Saryg-Sep to live in the taiga. Their 6-year-old daughter, Cherlik-Kys ("Wild Girl"), 9-year-old son Adygzhy ("Shooter") and 12-year-old nephew Ay-Kherel ("Moon Beam") who goes by the nickname Opei-ool ("Baby Boy") are outside playing reindeer herder, hobbling one of their good-natured, long-suffering hunting dogs by tying

a rope around its neck and then tying the other end of the rope to its forepaw, much as they've seen Piko do with the reindeer, Cherlik-Kys has lived nomadically in the taiga with her parents since she was two months old. Now it's time for her to start gradeschool in the village, but Piko and Valya aren't ready to let her go yet, and she herself doesn't want to leave the taiga. They hold her out for another year. Every April Adygzhy is

Figure U. Cherlik-Kys Sambuu with the released from school a month early to join his first calf of the new millennium, Spring 2000.



family out in the taiga. Opei-ooi, son of Piko's older brother who lives in the village of Adyr-Kezhig, also comes along. He's a quiet boy, but quick and clever and loves the reindeer and life out in the taiga. Ask these children what they want to do, and all of them say, in their native Tyva language, *Men ivizhi boluksap tur men* ("I want to be a reindeer herder!").

Valya's son by an earlier relationship, 24-year-old Sholban ("Morning Star") and Piko's older sister's son, 24-year-old Artysh ("Juniper") are away on an extended hunting trip, hoping to bring back meat for the camp. Although Sholban is not of the Tozhu ethnic group himself, he, like his mother, has taken to the nomadic reindeer-herding lifestyle. Artysh likewise looks forward to the time when he will be able to establish his own herd. Sholban and Artysh, and after them, Adygzhy, Cherlik-Kys, and Opei-ooi, represent the next generations of Tozhu reindeer herders.

November 2001. To the north, just on the other side of the Eastern Sayan Mountains from Cha-Cha's summer camp, 18-year-old Milya Amostaev saddles up a reindeer next to his family's wooden house in the picturesque village of Alygdzher, in the southwestern corner of Irkutsk Oblast' unofficially known as Tofalaxia. He's been in town for a few days to pick up supplies, and is getting ready to start out on the three-day ride back to the reindeer herd in the deep taiga. When asked if he would carry on reindeer herding in the future, he shrugs and answers in Russian, "I suppose. What else is there for me to do?" His father, Sergei, the last remaining full-time reindeer herder among the Tofa people and one of only a handful who still speak the Tofa language, is less equivocal. "If there was any other work, I'd work here in the village. I wouldn't work with the reindeer!"

This is a story of comparative change and continuity among two of the smallest and most neglected of Russia's ethnic minorities in the post-Soviet period, the Tozhu¹ of the Republic of Tyva² and the Tofa³ of southwestern Irkutsk Oblast'. The quotes that serve as epigraphs to this Introduction and the three vignettes above frame my fieldwork experience and help highlight the research questions this dissertation sets out to answer.

Simply put, those questions are:

¹ Also variously referred to as *Todzhu*, *Toja*, and *Tuvintsy-Todzhintay*.

² Tyva is more commonly transliterated as Tuva, which reflects the Russian pronunciation and spelling. I've chosen to transliterate it directly from the Tyvan as "Tyva," with the "y" representing a high, unrounded back vowel (⟨*ы*⟩ in Cyrillic, ⟨*u*⟩ in standard IPA, and ⟨*ʏ*⟩ in turcological convention). Likewise, I've chosen to refer to the people as "Tyva people," which is a direct translation of the Tyvan "Tyva kizhi," and is truer to the Tyva people's self designation than the more common "Tuvan" or "Tuvinian."

³ In earlier literature the Tofa were referred to as the *Karagas*, and since the 1930s they have been more commonly referred to as the Tofalar, singular, *Tofa*. The *-tar* is a suffix marking the plural form in the Tofa language, as it is in all Turkic languages. However, in most contemporary Russian-language sources, the Tofa are referred to as *Tofalar* (singular), and *Tofalary* (the *-y* forming the plural in Russian).

- 1) Why has there been such a drastic decline in the number of domesticated reindeer and a concomitant decline in the number of reindeer herders among both the Tozhu and Tofa?
- 2) What are the reactions of both Tozhu and Tofa peoples and government officials to this decline? How are they responding to the collapse of the Soviet Union, the withdrawal of state subsidies and other forms of support and organization? In the face of this institutional void, from where will new institutions emerge, and what will they look like?
- 3) Why is there such a difference in attitudes between the Tozhu and their cousins, the Tofa, on the other side of the Eastern Sayan mountains?
- 4) What might the future hold? Is there a future in reindeer herding in this Eastern Sayan region?
- 5) And what, if anything, can the experiences of these two groups tell us about the relationships between indigenous peoples and larger state systems, and the cultural survival of indigenous peoples more generally?

In this dissertation I have chosen to address these questions as a history of institutional change from pre-Soviet times through the Soviet period and now into this post-Soviet period of economic and political upheaval and integration into the global market system.

Background to the Study

The Tozhu and the Tofa are two of four closely related reindeer-herding and hunting peoples inhabiting the Eastern Sayan mountain region of southern Siberia. The other two are the Soyot of the Oka River region of Buryatia, and the Dukha of northwestern Mongolia, in the territory west of Lake Hovsgol. In Chapter 3, I will present a case for considering all four groups as having very closely related histories and ethnic backgrounds. For the purposes of this chapter, suffice it to say that geopolitics and accidents of history have set these otherwise closely related peoples on different historical trajectories. As a result they constitute a sort of a continuum, from the Tozhu and the Dukha, who have maintained to varying degrees their reindeer-herding traditions and native languages, to the Tofa and Soyot, who, with a few exceptions, no longer practice reindeer herding nor speak their native languages. These groups thus present compelling comparative case studies on the impact of different administrative regimes on historically very similar communities.

Map 1.1 Reindeer herding peoples of South Siberia.



For example, the Tofa live in Irkutsk Oblast' and the Soyot in the Buryat Republic, regions that have been under Russian influence for more than 350 years. Both groups were subjected

to the Soviet Union's nationalities policies⁴ from the very beginning, and both were among the original 26 officially designated Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples of the Russian Federation (*Korennye Malochislennye Narody Rossiiskoi Federatsif*), which entitles them to certain rights and privileges intended to protect their "traditional ways of life." Despite these rights and privileges, however, a number of factors including centuries of Russian influence, the small population of the Tofa and Soyot (at present approximately 730 and 2,300 respectively), the attraction of perceived improvements in various social services that came along with inclusion in the Soviet, family, and pressures to assimilate into the dominant Russian and Buryat linguistic and cultural communities have led to the decline of their native languages and traditional reindeer-herding lifestyle, and to the degradation of other markers of ethnic identity.

The Tozhu, on the other hand, live in the Republic of Tyva. Tyva is a constituent member of the Russian Federation today, and the Tozhu, like the Tofa and Soyot, are also among the Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples of the Russian Federation, although they only received this designation in 1993. Tyva was the last territory incorporated into the USSR, in 1944. Prior to that, Tyva was officially subject to the Manchu Qing dynasty until 1911, and was nominally an independent state from 1921-1944, therefore had much less exposure to Russian influence (see Chapter 3 for a more detailed historical background). In addition, the Tozhu population of approximately 5,200 is larger than either the Tofa or Soyot, and is generally considered a subgroup of the Tyva people, who make up the majority in the Tyva Republic, numbering approximately 210,000 of a total population of 310,000 within the republic. Thus the Tozhu have had far less exposure to

⁴This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

Russians over the years, and far fewer pressures to assimilate. All Tozhu still speak the Tyvan language as a first language, and reindeer herding, while undeniably in decline, is still practiced and is a vital facet of their economy and ethnic identity.

In contrast to these three groups on the Russian side of the border, the Dukha, most of whom fled to Mongolia from the Soviet Union in the 1930s and 1940s to escape forced collectivization and sedentarization, have only the most limited recognition as minority peoples. They face such extreme marginalization in Mongolia that they are forced to fall back onto the only support system they have -- their own people and culture. Numbering approximately 500, most Dukha still speak their native language (a dialect very similar to the Tozhu dialect of Tyva), and many still practice nomadic reindeer herding. Hence, somewhat paradoxically, the Dukhas' lack of protected status has served to encourage maintenance of their language, livelihood, and traditions.

With their transboundary distribution and different administrative regimes, these southernmost reindeer-herding groups provide a unique opportunity for comparative analysis of the impacts of different state systems, administrative regimes, and institutional environments on the livelihoods of indigenous peoples. In this dissertation I focus on two of these groups - the Tozhu and the Tofa. However, it is my belief that a study including the Dukha and Soyot would be not only more complete, but more productive theoretically and more widely applicable. For these reasons, I hope to be able to carry out research among the Soyot and Duldia in the future to build on the work of this dissertation.

The initial impulse for this study was the decline in the number of domesticated reindeer and, consequently, the decline in reindeer herding as a way of life among the

Tozhu. I first visited the Tozhu District in the summer of 1998, when i spent two weeks in the summer reindeer-herding camp of Aleksandr Shyngylai. I returned to Tyva in September of 1999, with the intention of living there for at least one year. For reasons outlined below, I was able to stay in Tyva continuously for two years. During that time I lived out in the taiga with nomadic reindeer herders for six months and spent another four months in the Tozhu villages where the herders' relatives live and where their children go to school. Most of the remainder of the time was spent in Kyzyl, the capital of Tyva, where I conducted research in archives and various government agencies.

My research confirmed, not surprisingly, that the decline in reindeer herding is inextricably linked to the collapse of the Soviet Union and all the attendant changes, including die collapse of the state farm (*sovkhov*) system; the establishment of the Russian Federation within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS); new constitutions at both the federal and republic levels; and measures to encourage privatization. Of particular interest to me were nation-wide efforts of the federal government to address the collapse of the state farm system by devising and providing incentives to implement new administrative structures, and the responses of the Tozhu reindeer herders to these efforts. Initially these efforts were aimed at forcing the state farms to be more productive and economically self-sufficient One such measure mandated the annual cutting of reindeer antlers-in-velvet for sale to the Far East.³ This measure, however, proved misguided as the practice was detrimental to the health of the

³ Known *aspanty* in Russian, antlers-in-velvet (also called wet antler) are the newly sprouted antlers. In the spring and early summer, before they have started to harden, they are covered in a soft down (hence the term "in velvet") and are still soft and full of blood. *Panty* is considered a valuable medicinal supplement and is in high demand particularly in the Far East; however, the process of cutting them is very bloody and traumatic for the deer.

reindeer and ultimately quickened the pace of the decline of the reindeer population. Once the total collapse of the state farms became imminent, these measures gave way to other initiatives such as state-granted private landholdings and family/clan-administered collective enterprises. These measures were ostensibly designed to give the Tozhu and Tofa herders and hunters themselves more control over their activities, and I expected that they would be enthusiastically embraced. This was not, however, the case, and these structures have for all intents and purposes collapsed (see Chapter 6).

Concepts from institutional analysis can help explain this failure of post-Soviet reforms and other initiatives to help stimulate economic growth. I was first introduced to anthropological applications of institutional economics (Acheson 1994) in an Economic Anthropology course at Indiana University taught by Dr. Richard Wilk in the fall of 1996. The following spring I came across the Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) framework (Ostrom 1990; Ostrom, Gardner and Walker 1994; Crawford and Ostrom 1995; Ostrom 1999), developed over the course of the past three decades at Indiana University's Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis, under the direction of Elinor and Vincent Ostrom.

I find the IAD framework compelling for a number of reasons. In the first place, it is conceptually very precise and detailed, thus provides an unambiguous analytical language and a very concrete and practicable approach. In the IAD framework, the term *institution* refers to "shared concepts used by humans in repetitive situations organized by rules, norms, and strategies" (Ostrom 1999:37, but see Chapter 2 for the modified working definition used in this dissertation). Humans are assumed to devise institutions on the basis of repeated interaction and reiterated behavior that occur in a social space

called an *action arena*, which is the fundamental unit of analysis in the IAD framework. The *action arena* is composed of an *action situation* and *actors*, each of which is in turn characterized by a specific cluster of variables (Ostrom, Gardner and Walker 1994: ch.2; Ostrom 1999:41-46). I find the *action arena* as defined in the IAD framework to be a more concrete unit of analysis than some others commonly invoked in anthropological studies to grasp the dynamic by which individual human actions aggregate into larger social "structures," and to help analyze and explain what occurs at the interstices of human agency and social structure. Secondly, IAD is *a framework* rather than a theory (Ostrom 1999:39-41). As such it is inherently interdisciplinary, bridging the disciplines of economics, political science, and anthropology, and is compatible with a variety of theories coming out of ecological and economic anthropology. In particular, the *action arena* as a conceptual unit maps very neatly onto what Sally Falk Moore has termed *diagnostic events* in her call for a more "processual" ethnography (Moore 1987:730 - see Chapter 2 for a more detailed outline of my theoretical orientation). Finally, while the IAD framework has built into it plenty of room for ethnographic data and anthropological analysis, it nevertheless employs a language that makes sense to policy makers, development planners, and other non-anthropologists in a way that some of the more esoteric jargon coming out of anthropology simply does not.⁰ This makes institutional analysis particularly appropriate for those interested in applied anthropology.

Institutional analysis has frequently been used to study changes in *property rights*, which some scholars see as the single most important institutional matrix (Eggertsson

⁰ See Ostrora *et al.* 2002b for an excellent example of institutional analysis applied to development programs.

1993, cited in Acheson-1994:2). It has proven particularly effective in analyzing rights to and management of a certain type of resource system, common-pool resources (CPRs - see Chapter 2), under a variety of property regimes (Ostrom 1990; Ostrom, Gardner and Walker 1994; Ostrom et al. 2002a). While I had been interested in the institutions regulating the management of CPRs since before my first field trip to Tyva in 1997, my interest in property rights as such did not coalesce until I made my first field trip to the Tofa in November 2000, as one of five researchers who make up the Altai-Sayan Language and Ethnography Project.⁷ During the first field trip in November 2000, I was struck by some remarkable similarities between the Tozhu and Tofa, but more so by the differences, particularly differences in their attitudes toward property rights and reindeer herding. Most notable was the sense of exclusive rights of access to assigned hunting grounds referred to as *rodovye taigi* (family/clan hunting grounds), and the very divisive conflicts that arose in connection to these hunting grounds. I heard about cabins that had been burned down as a result of arguments over rights to hunting grounds, and about people threatening to shoot their own neighbors for trespassing. One woman begged me to appeal to the United Nations to help her reclaim territory she felt she had been wrongfully forced off. One young man, having been denied access to hunting grounds he felt he had a right to, went to those grounds and shot himself. Such strict exclusivity with regard to assigned hunting grounds was striking in contrast to the very open and non-exclusive sense of property rights I had witnessed among the Tozhu. In interviews, virtually all Tozhu vehemently deny that there is or ever has been any feeling of

⁷ The Altai-Sayan Language and Ethnography Project (ASLEP) is an endangered language documentation project focusing on a variety of Turkic languages closely related to the Tyvan language in south Siberia and Mongolia. It is funded by the Volkswagen Stiftung under its Initiative for the Documentation of Endangered Languages (DoBeS).

exclusive property rights. "No one owns the taiga," they would assert. "Whoever wants to can come and get what they can."

In May and June of the following year (2001) I was able to make a return trip to the Tofa, specifically to pursue issues related to the assigned *rodovye taigi* for the purposes of comparing the Tofas' sense of property to the Tozhu people's sense of property. In the fall of 2001, Prof. Chris Hann, co-director of the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle, Germany, invited me to spend three months there to write up my research. While there, I began to understand property in a much broader and more vital sense, and came to see property rights as the key not only to understanding the differences between the Tozhu and the Tofa, but also to understanding the changes that were threatening their reindeer-herding and hunting way of life. Furthermore, I saw an institutional analysis of changes in property relations as a key to constructing culturally appropriate solutions to the problems the Tozhu and Tofa are facing with regards to the management of their common-pool resources specifically and their cultural survival more generally.

Significance of the study

My research is a test case for the applicability and usefulness of the IAD framework as a tool for systematizing the ethnographic process in such a way that will make cross-cultural comparisons possible. While institutional analysis is not entirely new in anthropology (see especially Acheson 2003, 1994; Ensminger 1996; Ensminger and Knight 1997), I feel that it is an underappreciated and underused analytical approach, and that its precision has a lot to offer anthropologists struggling with the vagueness and

protean nature of such more commonly used concepts as *practice* and *nodal capital*. In addition, this dissertation, with its focus on the "micro-processes of transition" (Burawoy and Verdery 1999) and local-level institution building in the face of the collapse of the monolithic and hegemonic Soviet institutional structures, is a case study in the responses of indigenous peoples to the transition from socialism to a market economy. Thus, it contributes to the burgeoning body of postsocialist literature (Burawoy and Verdery 1999; Hann 2002; Humphrey 1998, 2002).

Ethnographically, this dissertation will also make an important contribution to the body of literature on nomadic reindeer herding and hunting peoples. The Tozhu and Tofa herder-hunters (and the other South Siberian and Mongolian reindeer herding groups: Soyot, Evenki, and Dukha) represent the southernmost extreme of reindeer pastoralism in the world and practice a unique form of reindeer husbandry. They raise small herds of reindeer not for meat, but rather as pack and riding animals (to facilitate their hunting), and as a source of milk products, while fish and wild game are the principal sources of animal protein. Yet these groups and their cultures remain virtually unknown. There is nothing of note in the English-language anthropological literature about either the Tozhu or Tofa, and very little in the Russian-language literature (notable exceptions include Vainshtein 1961 on the Tozhu; Mel'nikova 1994; Petri 1926, 1927a, 1927b, 1928; Rassadin 1996, 1999 on the Tofa).

I will place this research in the broader context of indigenous Siberian peoples' struggles for access to and control over the natural resources that they have depended upon for centuries but which are being eroded out from under them. As such, my dissertation will address issues of indigenous minorities' struggles to adapt and survive

within large state systems. This leads into legal issues of land tenure and protection, of rights to land and resources, and more generally to the issue of the human rights of indigenous peoples. This is particularly relevant now, as we are nine years into the United Nations-declared International Decade of Indigenous Peoples (1994-2004), with yet little to show for it. The outcome of the struggle of the indigenous forest-dwelling peoples of Siberia for self-determination and control over natural resources will have a significant impact on the fate of the world's largest contiguous forest - the taiga and the boreal forests of Siberia and western Russia - and therefore an impact on the global environment. Securing indigenous Siberian peoples' rights to their traditional lands may well prove to be the best defense against wholesale, unregulated exploitation of this global resource and the most effective way to prevent cultural and environmental degradation.

The threats to the Tozhu and Tofa peoples presage further cultural and environmental degradation. The local and informal institutions emerging to manage pastures and hunting grounds in this contemporary contest allow us to observe the negotiation of the collective action problem, which has a significant impact on culturally and environmentally sustainable development. This case study will serve as a harbinger of the future of other Siberian and Inner Asian nomadic pastoral and hunter-gatherer groups that find themselves in a similar situation of economic transition and institutional flux.

Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation is divided into three parts. Part I consists of two chapters and provides the necessary background for the study. Chapter 2 provides a more detailed explication of my theoretical orientation and situates the study within the anthropological literature. Chapter 3 describes the unique ecology of the Eastern Sayan mountain range that has allowed that region to be the southernmost reindeer habitat in the world. I discuss the four ethnic groups in the Eastern Sayans that comprise the "Sayan Cross" of reindeer herding and hunting cultures, and which make up the core of the "South-Siberian Reindeer Herding Complex" (Donahoe 2003), and discuss those groups' ethnic, historical, and cultural similarities and connections. I discuss the remoteness and inaccessibility of these areas as a critical feature of their current political, economic, social, and cultural situations. I then move into more specific discussions of the Tozhu and the Tofa, the two reindeer herding groups who are the primary focus of the rest of the dissertation. I outline the ethnic, linguistic, and demographic characteristics of the two groups. In this chapter I establish the grounds for considering them as two branches of what was formerly the same ethnic group, split in the early 18th century by international geopolitics.

Part II compares the contemporary Tozhu and Tofa peoples with regards to their different senses of property in animals and land. Chapter 4 looks at the differential impact of Russian and Soviet state policies and imposed institutional arrangements on the relationship between humans and animals - both the reindeer they raise and the wild animals they hunt. I suggest that for the Tozhu, their relationship to wild animals is still predominantly a social one based on trust, mediated by the *cher eeleri* (sing, *cher eezi* - spirit masters / owners of places, who are also the masters / owners of the wild animals in

their places), and wrapped up in a "cosmic economy of sharing" (Bird-David 1992). Domesticated reindeer are often described as *angsyg* (wild animal-like); they have a special status that lies somewhere between wild animals and domesticated livestock, and are accorded respect similar to wild animals. In the Tofa case, these social relationships have almost completely broken down. Wild animals are seen in terms of their economic value, while reindeer are livestock to be used and dominated. These differences can be explained through an analysis of the different experiences the two peoples had with Soviet-era collectivization. In the Tofa case, the collective farms (*kolkhoz*; plural: *kolkhozy*), and later the state farms (*sovkhoz*; plural: *sovkhozy*) were set up exclusively for hunting, which diminished the cultural importance of reindeer for the Tofa. In the case of the Tozhu, the collective and state farms were set up for reindeer husbandry and, to a much lesser degree, hunting. This allowed for reindeer to retain their cultural significance in the lives of the Tozhu people, while their continued nomadic lifestyle allowed them to maintain their social relationships to the *cher eeleri* and, by extension, to wild animals.

Chapter 5 focuses on differences between the Tozhu and the Tofa with regards to their perception of the single most important set of institutional arrangements affecting natural resource management - land tenure and property rights. I draw comparisons between the Tofa people and the Tozhu people regarding senses of property rights, suggesting that one of the principal reasons for the differences is degree of contact with and influence from Russia and Russians. Specifically, I discuss the institution of *rodpyve laigi* (clan hunting grounds) among the Tofa as a sort of *de facto* exclusive, private property. This situation is striking in contrast to the sense of property just across the

border in the Tozhu District. Prior to being incorporated into the USSR in 1944, the Tozhu people had minimal contact with and influence from Russians. Non-exclusivity is still the salient feature of Tozhu people's sense of property today. However, the situation among the Tozhu is undergoing changes as a result of the collapse of Soviet-era institutions, particularly the *sovkhos* (state farm). These changes are manifest particularly in the Tozhu people's migration patterns, and suggest a gradual movement toward a sense of *de facto* private property in land similar to the Tofa.

Part III focuses on the constitutional level of governance with regards to reindeer herding and hunting among the Tozhu and Tofa. In Chapter 6 I provide a brief overview of the Soviet policy of collectivization of agriculture, which I characterize as one of the principal reasons for the failure of the Soviet experiment. I then analyze a variety of prescribed formal institutions and centrally mandated policies initiated since the collapse of the Soviet Union, which have also failed for many of the same reasons that collectivization failed.

Chapter 7 outlines the history of the legal framework affecting the indigenous people of Russia in general and the Tozhu and Tofa in particular. In doing so, I go back to the 1822 law known as Speranskii's law which first established legal rights for the indigenous peoples of Siberia. I discuss the official category of "Indigenous Small-numbered Peoples of the North," in which the Tofa have been included since 1926, but into which the Tozhu were included only in 1993. Then I examine three new framework laws that have been passed in the Russian Federation since 1999 specifically to provide a legal structure through which the indigenous peoples of Russia can assert their rights, and the potential problems and weaknesses with these legal protections.

Chapter 8 focuses on one of these potential problems with the legal structure, specifically the privatization of land, which has been formally legalized with the passing of the new Land Codex in 2001. Privatization of land has been presented as a necessary condition for economic development and the emergence of democratic institutional structures, but in the case of a nomadic hunting and herding population working at a subsistence level and within a virtually non-cash economy, privatization of land represents the single greatest threat to their cultural survival. The Republic of Tyva recognized this in 1993 when it passed its own constitution which forbade the privatization of land, in direct contradiction to the constitution of the Russian Federation. However, in 2001 Tyva passed a new constitution that allows the privatization of land. This potentially opens the Tozhu District up to wholesale privatization, which will favor outside gold mining interests, timber operations, and tourist operations, and will work against the indigenous population, who simply do not have the money to purchase the large tracts of land necessary to continue their extensive herding and hunting lifestyles, nor do they have effective political representation to protect their lands, despite the existence of federal-level laws designed to provide that protection.

By way of conclusion, Chapter 9 sums up the arguments presented, suggests reasons why my hypothesis that local-level governance structures would somehow spontaneously emerge out of the upheaval of Soviet-era institutional arrangements and the ensuing institutional void has not come to pass, and speculates on the future of reindeer herding among the Tozhu and Tofa. I compare the perceived cultural significance of reindeer herding to the Tozhu and Tofa people and the attitudes of young people (who make up the next generation of reindeer herders) to taking up and carrying

on the reindeer herding lifestyle. I also discuss existing and potential sources of financial and infrastructural support and development at the republic and federal levels, and from sources such as non-governmental organizations and private enterprise development. In light of all this, I discuss some of the forces working against the reinvigoration of reindeer herding in the region, and suggest ways to address the problems, including some suggestions as to how the new legal framework discussed in Chapter 7 might, be able to be used to protect these lands, if the political will and genuine representation to do so were to exist at the local, regional, and national levels.

Chapter 2

Property, Process, and Institutions in the Anthropological Tradition

Introduction

As Eric Wolf reminds us, history matters, and all peoples have history, even prior to being colonized by European powers (Wolf 1982). In this respect the peoples of Siberia are no different from other colonized peoples the world over (Forsyth 1992; Slezkine 1994). Within anthropology, various "processual" approaches have emerged as one way to incorporate history into the analysis and to overcome synchronic and deterministic neofunctional and neoevolutionary theories and assumptions (Moore 1975, 1987; Orlove 1980; Ortner 1984; Vincent 1986). Processual approaches operate within a diachronic, or historical time frame; incorporate actor-based decision-making models; and seek to discover the mechanisms of change through a focus on the *interaction* between human behavior and the social and physical environment (Orlove 1980:245, 262). Thus, the analytical approach throughout this dissertation is *processual*, in that it analyzes the social, political, and administrative changes that have occurred in the histories of the Tozhu and Tofa peoples. My approach is also *institutional*, in that it analyzes the impact those changes have had on the building up and tearing down of the institutional arrangements that channel human interaction at the local level, especially human interaction related to the management of natural resources and the environment. Douglass North, Nobel laureate in Economics and one of the founding fathers of the "new

institutional economics," observes that "Institutional change shapes the way societies evolve through time and hence is the key to understanding historical change" (North 1990:3). Institutional analysis provides a methodology for observing and analyzing institutional change. In addition to being inherently historical, institutional analysis uses an actor-based decision-making model of human behavior, thus supports and complements a processual approach from anthropology. Yet despite its compatibility with anthropology, the concept of institution has been neglected by anthropologists, an oversight pointed out by John Bennett: "All modern uses of the physical environment are mediated by *institutions*. The concept of institution is absolutely crucial to the problem of environment in the contemporary world. However, it is one concept that remains largely unfamiliar to anthropologists. . . . If anthropologists wish to adequately deal with contemporary environmental problems, they will be required to use the concept of institution" (Bennett 1990:441).

Institution Defined

Institution defies easy definition in part because the more specific meaning intended by institutional analysts is different from common, everyday usage of institution as an established organization or foundation set up for a specific purpose. Even within the "new institutional economics" literature there is a great deal of ambiguity and contestation over the definition of the term "institution" (see Maki 1993). As Thrainn Eggertsson has observed, "the new economics of institutions is a Tower of Babel, a field in search of a common language" (cited in Acheson 1994:6), and Acheson's 1994 collection of essays, *Anthropology and Institutional Economics*, demonstrates as much as

anything that conceptual consensus and a common language among anthropologists regarding the concept of institutions still have not been reached.

Nonetheless, Douglass North's oft-cited definition from his seminal study, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*, has met with general acceptance: "Institutions are the rules of the game in a society or, more formally, are the humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction" (North 1990:3). Within the Institutional Analysis and Development framework, institutions are defined as:

the shared concepts used by humans in repetitive situations organized by rules, norms, and strategies. By rules, I mean shared prescriptions (must, must not, or may) that are mutually understood and enforced in particular situations in a predictable way by agents responsible for monitoring conduct and for imposing sanctions. By norms, I mean shared prescriptions that tend to be enforced by the participants themselves through internally and externally imposed costs and inducements. By strategies, I mean the regularized plans that individuals make within the structure of incentives produced by rules, norms, and expectations of the likely behavior of others in a situation affected by relevant physical and material conditions. (Ostrom 1999:37; cf. Crawford and Ostrom 1995)

Leach, Mearns and Scoones define institutions as "regularized patterns of behavior that emerge from underlying structures or sets of 'rules in use'" (Leach, Mearns and Scoones 1999:237) I find Leach, Mearns, and Scoones' emphasis on "regularized patterns of behavior" more accessible to analysis than Ostrom's "shared concepts," which are not observable in the way that behavior is. However, in their definition the regularized patterns of behavior emerge from "underlying structures" or sets of "rules in use." This definition posits the underlying structures as *a priori* and generative of human behavior. I believe the definition of institutions must include the dialectic and feedback between the regularized patterns of behavior and the underlying structures. I contend that the "underlying structures" and "rules in use" that Leach, Mearns, and Scoones refer to

are in fact created by the regularized patterns of behavior in the first place, which in turn feed back into and recreate the underlying structures. Thus for the purposes of this study I combine the above definitions to arrive at the following working definition: *Institutions are regularized and repeated patterns of human behavior organized by rules, norms, and strategies, ifiat feed back into, and recreate those rules, norms, and strategies.*

Property and Common-Pool Resources

The institutional matrix I am most concerned with in this dissertation is property rights. Property and property relations *per se* have not been the focus of much anthropological inquiry in recent years, a trend Chris Hann laments in his edited volume *Property Relations: Renewing the Anthropological Tradition* (1998). In that volume, Hann sets out to "approach property as a key category in cross-cultural analysis with a view to restoring it to its nineteenth-century role as a fundamental concept in anthropology" (Hann 1998:9). While the common understanding of property is as a thing, an object - "something owned; a possession,"¹ *property* in the anthropological context is "not a thing, but a network of social relations that governs the conduct of people with respect to the use and disposition of things" (Hoebei 1966:424, cited in Hann 1998:4). But, as Hann observes, the emphasis on "things" in this definition is too restrictive in this day and age, where rights to "such intangibles as names, reputation and knowledge, personal and collective identities" are also viewed as "intellectual property" (Hann 1998:5). Hann continues: "Moreover, since people everywhere do taik about the ties that bind them to

¹ From *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 3rd Edition. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1992.

all sorts of non-human entities, and since these are often crucial to social identities, these relationships need to be included in our definition. ... The word 'property' is best seen as directing attention to a vast field of cultural as well as social relations, to the symbolic as well as the material contexts within which things are recognized and personal as well as collective identities made" (Harm 1998:5).

Property rights thus broadly defined determine access to resources. Of particular concern in this dissertation is access to reindeer pasturage, wood for fuel and tent frames, non-timber forest resources such as mushrooms, berries, pine-nuts, and medicinal plants, and most importantly, wild animals and fish. These resources were the basis of subsistence for south-Siberian reindeer herding peoples in pre-Soviet times, and have since the collapse of the Soviet Union once again become of paramount importance. Such resources in this context can accurately be described as "common-pool resources," or CPRs (Ostrom 1990; Ostrom, Gardner, and Walker 1994). In CPR systems, successful management of common-pool resources is critical both for the economic security of the local peoples and for the sustainability of the resource base. However, CPR systems are notoriously difficult to manage effectively because rights of access tend to be poorly defined and it is difficult and costly to exclude potential appropriators from using the resources or to limit the use of legitimate appropriators. Subtractability, lack of excludability, and difficulty in monitoring extraction and enforcing restrictions can lead to unregulated exploitation of scarce resources and ultimately the degradation of the resource base (the "tragedy of the commons" - see Hardin 1968). *Subtractability* refers to the degree to which "the benefits consumed by one individual subtract from the benefits available to others" (Ostrom 2000:337; see also Ostrom, Gardner and Walker 1994:4).

This leads to a situation in which users of a scarce resource "will be tempted to try to obtain as much as they can of the flow for fear that it will not be available later" (Ostrom 1999:55). *Excludability* refers to how difficult it is to exclude outside appropriators (those without legitimate rights of access) from exploiting the resource: "When the benefits of a good are available to a group, whether or not members of the group contribute to the provision of the good, that good is characterized by problems with excludability. Where exclusion is costly, those wishing to provide a good or service face a potential free-rider or collective-action problem" (Ostrom 1999:54, citing Olson 1965).

Problems of subtractability and excludability have been exacerbated since the collapse of the Soviet Union, as the Tozhu and Tofa have been forced to rely even more heavily on common-pool resources than during the Soviet era. Specifically, the withdrawal of state subsidies and subsequent pressures to become economically self-sufficient, have forced Tozhu and Tofa to intensify hunting and fishing, since wild game is the major source of meat, and furs (mostly sable and squirrel) are the principal source of income. Particularly in the Tozhu District, sports hunters and fishermen from other regions put additional pressures on these resources. Thus the institutions of particular interest when analyzing a common-pool resource system are the rules that "define who has access to a resource; what can be harvested from, dumped into, or engineered within a resource; and who participates in key decisions about these issues and about transferring rights and duties to others. The stimulus for changes of institutional arrangements frequently has been fights over the distribution of resources" (Dietz, Dolsak, Ostrom and Stern 2002: 21).

In the case of the Tozhu and Tofa, up until the Soviet era most common-pool resources were managed under a common-property regime, while domesticated reindeer were considered private property. During Soviet times, all such resources were nationalized and became the property of the state. The USSR imposed a very rigid administrative structure organized around *kolkhozy* (collective farms) and, later, *sovkhozy* (state farms) that strictly regulated many aspects of life and severely constrained people's choices at the local level. Ostrom notes that in such situations where "resources that were previously controlled by local participants have been nationalized, state control has usually proved to be less effective and efficient than control by those directly affected, if not disastrous in its consequences" (Ostrom 2000: 337).

Soviet policies did in fact prove disastrous in many ways. However, the collapse of Soviet-era administrative structures has proven even more disastrous for peoples like the Tozhu and Tofa, who are among the most remote, rural, and infrastructurally and technologically least developed peoples in Russia. By the time of my first visit to the Tozhu in 1998, it was clear that the *sovkhoz* system had collapsed completely, and it appeared that the Tozhu reindeer herding peoples (and the Tozhu population more generally) had fallen into an institutional void. The situation the Tozhu and Tofa find themselves in now makes for ideal case studies in the emergence of local-level governance systems in the face of the collapse of superimposed state-level governance systems. I hypothesized that new, local-level institutions would somehow emerge spontaneously and organically to provide the necessary structure to everyday interaction, and at a very small scale this has started to happen. The collapse of the Soviet administrative regime has given rise to new patterns of behavior, which could be the

seeds of new institutions. Examples of this include the unilateral decisions by some herder-hunters to move from one *obshchina* (a territorial-based, community-level administrative structure for managing economic activities) to another; to dispose of livestock (still technically the property of the state) without official permission from the *obshchina*; to build log cabins on what they are coming to consider "their" territory; to move closer to and establish regular trading relations with the nearby gold mining bases; and to move closer to the villages where their relatives live. These are very localized and often individual actions, and cannot yet be considered institutions — i.e., they have not been repeated and reiterated often enough to become *instituted* as predictable, shared patterns of behavior. In fact, some of these actions may well exacerbate rather than alleviate collective action problems. As the herder-hunters move in closer to settled areas and stay in one place longer than in the past, they are putting greater pressure on the natural resource base (forest cover, reindeer pastures, and fish and wild game populations). But effective local-level institutions to deal with these and other related problems have failed to emerge among the Tozhu and Tofa in the post-Soviet period. This dissertation in part aims to explain the factors underlying that failure.

The impact of the Soviet Union and its subsequent collapse has not been uniform between the Tozhii and Tofa, as this comparative study makes clear. Despite drastic declines in their domesticated reindeer stocks and severe economic deprivation, nearly 30 Tozhu families totaling 150 people still tenaciously and proudly cling to the nomadic way of life of the reindeer herder and hunter, with its very flexible and relatively non-exclusive sense of property rights with regards to common-pool resources. The non-nomadic majority of the Tozhu population lives in several small villages in the Tozhu

District, and while I am in no way claiming that they all should or would want to return to the demanding life of the nomad, the overwhelming majority of Tozhu people assert that having reindeer is an integral facet of their sense of ethnic identity, and that it is important to know that they have relatives out there in the taiga maintaining the reindeer herds. In addition, the Tozhu all speak their native language as a first language. Thus language and lifestyle are still important markers of Tozhu ethnic identity.

The Tofa people, on the other hand, have virtually completely abandoned reindeer herding, live a settled lifestyle, and their native language is moribund. While the Tofa have relinquished control over many of these forms of intellectual or cultural property, they have constructed a very strict sense of exclusive rights to hunting territories that in many ways resembles a private property regime, even though they do not hold formal legal title to these territories. So we see that in many ways, the attitudes with regards to property rights among the Tofa and the Tozhu are completely reversed. Over the course of the dissertation I will draw out these comparisons and suggest reasons for these differences.

Institutional Analysis and Development Framework (IAD)

Institutional analysis offers the most appropriate and useful combination of concepts with which to study such property rights dynamics within a common-pool resource system. Institutional analysis has become widely used in political science and has proven effective in demonstrating that in many CPR systems, a private property regime is inappropriate, Garrett Hardin's influential "tragedy of the commons" (Hardin 1968)

notwithstanding.² Institutional analysis has also been used successfully to illuminate the process of negotiating the collective action problem inherent in managing common-pool resources in small-scale societies (Ensminger 1996; see also case studies in Agrawal and Gibson 2001; Ostrom 1990; Ostrom, Gardner, and Walker 1994; Ostrom et al. 2002a),

Institutional analysis's theoretical foundations in game theory and rational choice theory may seem antithetical to the cultural relativity espoused by anthropologists, but such a reaction is based on a very narrow understanding of rational choice (i.e., that of strict neoclassical models). The important thing to bear in mind is the "relativity of rationality" (Tambiah 1990). Tambiah says that a minimal definition of rationality would include logical consistency and coherence (Tambiah 1990). At a minimum, we must work, under the assumption that what people do *makes sense* to them within a given context. Just such an assumption is built into institutional analysis through the concept of *bounded rationality*. Bounded rationality is a concept pioneered by Herbert Simon in response to the theory of subjective expected utility (SEU), which underlies neoclassical economics. Simon saw the rationality assumed in SEU theory as having no foundation in empirical evidence and therefore not a valid explanation of human behavior (Simon 1982). Simon defines bounded rationality as "the limits of human capability to calculate, the severe deficiencies of human knowledge about the consequences of choice, and the limits of human ability to adjudicate among multiple goals" (Simon 1982:270). Rationality must be defined by the *processes* used in reaching decisions, which are influenced by actors' perceptions of a given context, by how actors define goals, by what

² See Feeny, Berkes, McCay and Acheson 1990 and Ostrom et al. 1999 for cogent arguments against applying the "tragedy of the commons" assumption to all cases. It is especially inappropriate in situations involving common pool resources.

information they have, by how they strategize to achieve goals, and how they assess outcomes. According to Simon, actors will be particularly influenced by "contemporary social beliefs" which undergo change over the course of time. Thus Simon's bounded rationality is a *procedural*, as opposed to a *substantive*, rationality, and can only be determined *inductively*, based on empirical observation (Simon 1982).

Ostrom's Institutional Analysis and Development framework likewise assumes that users of a given resource are "fallible, boundedly rational, and norm-using" individuals who can learn from mistakes and improve upon the rules that govern their actions (Ostrom 1998). The rationality of their actions and decisions is bounded by incomplete information and imperfect information-processing capabilities, and the transaction costs that arise from these imperfections (North 1990). In response, people devise institutions, which "affect human choice by influencing the availability of information and resources, by shaping incentives, and by establishing the basic rules of social interaction" (Nicholson 1993). Because of its more flexible assumptions of human behavior, the IAD framework invites anthropological perspectives and systematizes the ethnographic process by providing a consistent and coherent structure for identifying and discerning the relationships among the hard-to-define, unquantifiable cultural values and social norms that form the basis of local-level institutions. In this way, the IAD framework is amenable to current anthropological approaches, especially processual approaches (e.g., *processual ethnography* [Moore 1987] and *processual ecological anthropology* [Orlove 1980]). Such processual approaches are actor-based, with a focus on the individual as a decision maker, and they are diachronic in that they examine the mechanisms of adaptation and change over time. *Event analysis* has emerged within

processual approaches as a method of examining processes of change (Lees 1983; Lees and Bates 1990; Vayda 1983; Vayda and McCay 1975; Vayda, McCay and Eghenter 1991).³ Processual analysis in anthropology was popularized by Victor Turner (1969), in part building on the foundation established by Arnold Van Gennep, whom Turner called "the father of formal processual analysis" (Turner 1969:166), Van Gennep, and Turner after him, analyzed religious rituals as *events* that embodied a process of transformation from one culturally defined status or state to another (Turner 1969:166). The importance of events in processual approaches is emphasized by Moore, who claims that "[E]vents are to processes what categories are to structures" (Moore 1987:736). Moore suggests that we must learn "how to understand the fieldwork time as a moment in a sequence, how to understand the place of the small-scale event in the large-scale historical process, how to look at part-structures being built and torn down" (Moore 1987:730). Lees and Bates note that an event-focused approach "offers a convenient 'point of entry' for the description of complex and changing relationships," and that it forces the data into a diachronic perspective (Lees and Bates 1990:255).

But what kind of events should one study? Processual approaches have expanded the field of potential events beyond the rituals favored by van Gennep and Turner to include a variety of different types of events. Vayda and McCay have written about

³ Pete Vayda has been championing an event-focused approach for years (Vayda 1983; Vayda and McCay 1975; Vayda, McCay and Eghenter 1991; Vayda 1999). In early work Vayda and McCay draw close connections between processes and events, particularly between "processes of group formation and dissolution and environmental... hazards" (Vayda and McCay 1975:301). However, in a later work, Vayda and McCay are critical of process-oriented social scientists for reifying processes, as if they "had lives of their own, as if they existed independent of human agency and were regulated by some larger dynamic in history" (Vayda, McCay and Eghenter 1991:320). For Vayda, events take precedence over processes: "A line of inquiry with greater explanatory promise and validity requires that we conceptualize processes as constituted of events and that we translate questions about short- and long-term processes into questions about events" (Vayda, McCay and Eghenter 1991:328).

"environmental hazards" as the appropriate type of event to study, because environmental hazards "carry the risk of morbidity or mortality, the risk of losing an 'existential game' in which success consists simply in staying in the game" (Vayda and McCay 1975:293). Studying the human responses to environmental hazards can help to illuminate processes of cooperation, group formation and dissolution, and the role of "such features of human social life as loyalty, solidarity, friendliness, and sanctity" (Vayda and McCay 1975:300-302). Lees and Bates recognize the value of the hazard approach, but suggest a broader "event-focused approach to human-environmental interaction," which would include "events generated by the human (social, economic, or political) environment that have environmental components and/or repercussions. Such events might include a change in the market price of a cash crop, or a land-reform law which alters land tenure, or a relatively large-scale migration into or out of a locality, or establishment of a quota on certain types of livestock" (Lees and Bates 1990:266). Moore suggests privileging what she calls "diagnostic events," which are events that carry a "burden of historical meaning" by revealing "ongoing contexts and conflicts and competitions and the efforts to prevent, suppress, or repress these" (Moore 1987:730). Such events - whether Moore's "diagnostic events" or Vayda's "ecological hazards" - act as external stimuli that propel people out of patterned and routinized forms of behavior that proceed with little or no reflection and force them to consciously and intentionally make decisions.

A number of such "diagnostic events" have occurred throughout the histories of the Tozhu and Tofa and especially in their more recent past, from major structural changes including forced collectivization and sedentarization during Soviet times (Chapter 6), the breakup of the Soviet Union, and changes in the legal system

encouraging privatization of land (Chapter 8); to smaller events that are nonetheless diagnostic, such as the thwarted sale of Tozhu reindeer to Mongolia (Chapter 4), forced antler cutting, and changes in migration patterns (Chapter 5).

Concepts from the Institutional Analysis and Development framework facilitate the analysis of such events in three main ways. First, the principal unit, of analysis in the IAD framework, the *action arena*, is analogous to art event in event analysis, but the IAD framework is methodologically more refined and explicit than anthropological treatments of event analysis. Second, the IAD framework's insistence on analysis at multiple levels responds to what Moore sees as one of the weaknesses of processual approaches in anthropology - the ignorance of larger-scale processes (Moore 1987:730). Finally, IAD provides analytical tools to address the *attributes of the physical world* and the *attributes of the community*, allowing for a more nuanced analysis of the *interaction* between human behavior and the social and physical environment (see Crawford and Ostrom 1995; Ostrom, Gardner, and Walker 1994, esp. ch. 2; Ostrom 1999 for very complete and detailed outlines of the framework and its concepts). In the next sections I shall deal with these three characteristics of IAD in greater detail.

The Action Arena

The principal unit of analysis in IAD is the *action arena*, which is composed of two sets of variables, an *action situation* and *actors*. The analyst must have information about (or make assumptions about) these sets of variables in order to proceed with the analysis. The variables used to describe an action situation include: "(1) the set of participants, (2) the specific positions to be filled by participants, (3). the set of allowable actions and their

linkage to outcomes, (4) the potential outcomes that are linked to individual sequences of actions, (5) the level of control each participant has over choice, (6) the information available to participants about the structure of the action situation, and (7) the costs and benefits - which serve as incentives and deterrents - assigned to actions and outcomes" (Ostrom 1999:43). The variables associated with the actor or actors include "(J) the preference evaluation that actors assign to potential actions and outcomes; (2) the way actors acquire, process, retain, and use knowledge contingencies and information; (3) the selection criteria actors use for deciding upon a particular course of action; and (4) the resources than an actor brings to a situation" (Ostrom, Gardner and Walker 1994:33).

Nested Levels of Analysis

The IAD framework addresses another shortcoming of processual approaches in anthropology. Moore identifies "a tentativeness about processual interpretations" due to "two significant zones of ignorance," the first of which is ignorance of "the character of the larger-scale, the supra-local domain. . . . The province, the region, the nation, the world are often taken account of as a generalized background.. ." (Moore 1987:730-731). The LAD framework, with its emphasis on linking different levels of analysis, can help fill this gap. The framework recognizes the "nested structure of rules within rules, within still further rules" (Ostrom 1999: 38-39), and the need to understand the configural relationships among "multiple levels of analysis." Ostrom identifies three broad levels of rules - the consdrational level, the collective-choice (or policy) level, and the operational level:

- 1) *Operational rules* directly affect the day-to-day decisions made by the participants in any setting.
- 2) *Collective-choice rules* affect operational activities and results through their effects in determining who is eligible and the specific rules to be used in changing operational rules.
- 3) *Constitutional-choice rules* affect operational activities and their effects in determining who is eligible and the rules to be used in crafting the set of collective-choice rules that in turn affect the set of operational rules. (Ostrom, Gardner, and Walker 1994:46)

In this dissertation I will be focusing predominantly on the operational level, as it is the rules-in-use at the operational level that are the building blocks of new local-level institutions and that best illustrate the micro-processes of institution building. I will also look at the collective-choice and constitutional-choice levels to see how they do (or do not) articulate with the operational level (esp. Chs. 6 & 7), because the changing of rules at one level impacts the rules at other levels. So for example, recognizing the Tozhu as one of the specially designated indigenous ethnic groups of the Russian Federation (a constitutional-level change) affects (in theory) the distribution of resources to them (a collective-action or policy-level change), which in turn provides incentives for Tozhu people to assert their Tozhu identity and set themselves apart from their non-Tozhu neighbors in order to lay claim to resources. The ways in which the Tozhu do this are changes at the operational level.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, as the Soviet Union was crumbling and in its immediate aftermath, numerous changes were being experimented with at the constitutional and policy levels. One effort at the policy level was to reduce state subsidies to the state farms, thereby forcing them to become more economically self-sufficient. Shock economic efficiency measures included withholding workers' salaries; no longer providing veterinary medicines and aid; retracting incentives and material

support for protection against predators; and imposing the cutting of antlers as a source of income. These policy-level decisions led to changes at the operational level, such as herders selling off or killing off the state-owned reindeer without permission, simply to survive. Ultimately, the majority of herders were forced to abandon reindeer herding altogether as a result of these policies. Another example is the privatization movement in Russia. Now that private property has been enshrined in law (a constitutional-level change); policy-level rules are changing to facilitate and encourage private enterprise and privatization of property. The impact this will have at the operational level is not yet clear.

In the Soviet context these institutional levels did not always articulate well. People at the local level had little or no influence on institutions at the constitutional or collective choice levels. Yet while the overarching Soviet administration provided institutional structure at the constitutional and collective-choice levels, and, most importantly, material support, it was so unwieldy and undifferentiated that it could not control all institutions at the operational level. This left plenty of room for people to devise their own operational-level institutions within the economic and material security of the Soviet constitutional and collective-choice institutional framework. Hence, within the confines of the superimposed constitutional and collective-choice level institutions, operational-level institutions either carried on from more traditional forms, or new ones emerged on the basis of everyday interaction among the local people. The collapse of the Soviet constitutional and collective-choice institutional framework has meant more freedom at the operational level, but the material means and administrative capacity to effectively devise larger-order institutions are lacking. People simply don't know where

to turn; these higher-order institutions have always been the work of the organs of government, and the Tozhu and Tofa peoples still look to organs of government and their representatives to fill these roles.

Attributes of the Physical World and of the Community

As actors do not act in a vacuum, neither environmentally nor culturally, attributes of the physical world and attributes of the community must also be taken into consideration in the analysis. As Ostrom notes, "What actions are physically possible, what outcomes can be produced, how actions are linked to outcomes, and what is contained in the actors' information sets are affected by the world being acted upon in a situation. The same set of rules may yield entirely different types of action situations depending on the types of events in the world being acted upon by participants" (Ostrom 1999:54). As mentioned earlier in the discussion of common-pool resources, key attributes of the physical world that must be taken into consideration include the *excludability* of the resource and the *subtractability* of the resource flow. Other important physical attributes include the *mobility* or *stationarity* of a resource; the availability of *storage*; and the renewability, size, productivity, predictability, and patchiness of the resource (Ostrom 1999:56). These attributes will be discussed in more detail later in the dissertation. For the time being, a couple of examples will suffice to illustrate how these attributes play out in the case of the Tozhu and Tofa peoples. At present it is particularly difficult to exclude people from hunting in the Tozhu District due to monitoring and enforcement problems and a non-exclusive attitude toward resources among the Tozhu people in general. In Tofalaria, exclusive rights to resources were established long ago and there are mechanisms in place

to enforce those rights, so exclusion is much less of a problem. Wild animals in both cases are fully subtractible (killing one elk means that there is one fewer elk available to others). Wild animals are mobile; there is virtually no storage, neither in nature, with the possible exception of the Azas Nature Preserve in Tozhu, nor within the community, in the form of freezers for meat, etc. While the wild animal population is renewable, the rate of renewability varies from species to species, and in no case is it keeping pace with the rate of extraction. The predictability of wild animal resources also varies by species, with small, abundant animals such as squirrel quite predictable, but more valued animals such as sable and moose quite elusive.

A non-timber forest resource such as pine-nuts represents a different set of problems. Problems with excludability and subtractability are the same as with wild animals, but the resource is stationary, its location is predictable, and it is easily stored. It is fully renewable, in that no matter how many pine cones are taken in a given year, the following year the pine trees will still produce a full crop, although yield does follow some cyclical fluctuations.

Clearly, such attributes of the physical world have been a central focus of ecological anthropologists (Ellen 1982; Moran 1979, 2000; Netting 1976, 1981; Steward 1955). While some ecological approaches have been accused of being overly deterministic, ecological anthropologists have tended to view physical attributes of the environment as constraints or limiting, rather than determining, factors. Thus while they limit options, they also provide a variety of possibilities. Which possibilities are developed depends in part on the people involved, and this is where the attributes of the community come into play. "Attributes of the community" are one of the central concerns

of Ostrom's IAD framework, and in this way it is particularly compatible with anthropological approaches:

The attributes of a community that are important in affecting the structure of an action arena include the norms of behavior generally accepted in the community, the level of common understanding that potential participants share about the structure of particular types of action arenas, the extent of homogeneity in the preferences of those living in a community, and the distribution of resources among those affected. The term *culture* is frequently applied to this bundle of variables. (Ostrom 1999:57)

Among the attributes of the community that come into play in the Tozhu and Tofa contexts are their relationship to property in the forms of land, wild animals, and domesticated reindeer; cultural proscriptions against certain extractive activities; overall lack of experience in management; lack of capacity; and lack of effective political representation. All of these attributes have an impact on the potential for their present and future success in managing resources (see Chapter 9).

With this set of analytical tools, the IAD framework offers a way of not only identifying, observing, and describing the institutions that are at the interstices between individual human agency and larger social structures, but also of analyzing how such structures come into being, change, and die out. The empirical and ethnographic rigor of an event-oriented processual approach from anthropology allows the analyst to understand and place within their cultural contexts many of the variables identified through the IAD framework. Throughout this dissertation, I analyze some events explicitly using terms and concepts from processual event analysis and the IAD framework, others less explicitly so. In any event, informing the overall analysis are the fundamental assumptions that underlie both processual and institutional approaches: a focus on change over time; an actor-based model of human behavior; and a search for the

mechanisms of change in the *interaction* between humans and their natural, cultural, and social environment.

A brief outline of 'institutions' in anthropology

As mentioned before, the IAD framework bridges the disciplines of economics, political science, and anthropology. While the language of IAD comes out of economics and political science, the framework has much to offer anthropology, and anthropology has much to contribute to institutional analysis. Yet, until recently, anthropologists have been unfamiliar with institutional analysis as a theoretical framework and method. Jean Ensminger's *Making a Market: The Institutional Transformation of an African Society* (1996, first published 1992) and James Acheson's collection of essays (1994) have been important first steps toward introducing the new institutional economics into anthropology. Acheson's volume hints at the potential of institutional analysis to elucidate many ethnographic accounts and anthropological issues, and Acheson himself offers a useful list of future directions for using institutional analysis in anthropology (Acheson 1994: 26-29).

In this section, I give a brief outline of the ways in which the term "institution" has been used in anthropology. This is in no way an exhaustive survey of the term institution as used throughout the history of anthropology - such a treatment is beyond the scope of this dissertation, as virtually all anthropologists have used the term *institution* in its more generic sense to refer to various social structures, conventions, customs, or organizations. Rather, I have selected for discussion those anthropologists who explicitly discuss *institutions* as concrete units of analysis, similar to the way I am

discussing it, or who present other concepts that strike me as analogous to the concept of institutions as I am using it.

A focus on institutions in anthropology goes back at least as far as Malinowski. In *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, Malinowski often uses the terms "institutions" and "social institutions," and even refers to the Kula as a "big institution connected with ever so many associated activities" (Malinowski 1984[1922]:13), yet he never explicitly defines the term. His most explicit statement regarding institutions in *Argonauts* is the following:

The natives obey the forces and commands of the tribal code, but they do not comprehend them; exactly as they obey their instincts and their impulses, tat could not lay down a single law of psychology. The regularities in native institutions are an automatic result of the interaction of the mental forces of tradition, and of the material conditions of environment. (Malinowski 1984[1922]:11)

Malinowski's emphasis on the "automatic result," the "forces of tradition," and the "material conditions of the environment" make institutions sound akin to large, deterministic social structures.

However, in his later theoretical work, institutions take on a much greater and more specific role in cultural analysis, with an effort to place individual behavior and agency at the center. The institution becomes for Malinowski the "legitimate isolate of cultural analysis" (Malinowski 1944:51-66), and institutional analysis becomes "not only possible but indispensable" (Malinowski 1944:54), because "the best description of any culture in terms of concrete reality would consist in the listing and analysis of all the institutions into which that culture is organized" (Malinowski 1944:49):

A theory which does not present and include at every step the definitions of individual contributions and of their integration into collective action stands condemned. . . .

Indeed, functionalism is, in its essence, the theory of transformation of organic - that is, individual - needs into derived cultural necessities and imperatives. (Malinowski 1939, reprinted in Bohannan and Giazar 1973:291).

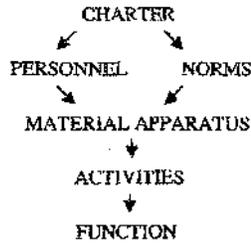
As Elvin Hatch observed, "According to Malinowski, the institutional framework provides the basis for cross-cultural comparisons. All cultural systems must satisfy the same needs, and consequently different societies have analogous institutions. . . . By recognizing the analogous nature of institutions we are able to understand them" (Hatch 1973:323-324).

Malinowski defines institution as "definite groups of men united by a charter, following rules of conduct, operating together a shaped portion of the environment, and working for the satisfaction of definite needs" (Malinowski 1939, reprinted in Bohannan and Giazar 1973:291), and as "an organized system of purposeful activities" (1944:52).

Examples of institutions include:

universal forms such as the family, the clan, the tribe, the age-grade, the association (club, secret society), the occupational group (professional or economic), or the church, and the status group of hierarchy in rank, wealth, or power. We have designated such organized groups, connected with definite purposeful activities and invariably united by special reference to environment and to the material apparatus which they wield, by the term "institution." (Malinowski 1939, reprinted in Bohannan and Giazar 1973:281).

In order to make his concept of institution a concrete and practical unit of analysis, Malinowski breaks it down into six *aspects*, which he lays out in a diagram (Malinowski 1944:53):



Elvin Hatch summarizes this diagram: "Each institution has six aspects: first, the charter, which is a set of values, myths, or beliefs which legitimize the activity; second, the personnel, the people who engage in the pursuit; third, the norms which the group follows; fourth, the material apparatus which is employed; fifth, the activities themselves; and sixth, the function of the institution" (Hatch 1973:322).

This schema provides the bridge between the actions of individuals and larger, more enduring social structures:

The analysis into aspects and the analysis into institutions must be carried out simultaneously, if we want to understand any culture completely. The study of such aspects as economics, education, or social control and political organization defines the type and level of the characteristic activities in a culture. From the point of view of the individual, the study of these aspects discloses to us the totality of motives, interests, and values. From the point of view of the group it gives us an insight into the whole process by which the individual is conditioned or culturally formed and of the group mechanism of this process.

The analysis into institutions, *on the other hand*, is indispensable because they give us the concrete picture of the social organization within the culture. (Malinowski 1939, reprinted in Bohannon and Glazer 1973:285-286).

But there are a number of problems with Malinowski's use of the concept *institutions*. In the first place, he never actually carries out a systematic, cross-cultural study using institutions as the unit of analysis. Phyllis Kaberry, one of Malinowski's closest students, notes that "He himself never attempted a systematic survey of one type

of institution from a selected range of societies. The difficulties would have been formidable, and one suspects that the generalizations would have been so vague as to be valueless" (Kaberry 1957:83).

Hatch criticizes Malinowski's focus on institutions on the basis of its extreme functionalism. The diagram outlining the six aspects is on the whole "directed toward the institution's function" (Hatch 1973:322):

Malinowski contended that there is an immediate and fundamental relationship between the functions of an institution and the biological needs and drives of human beings. He lists seven "basic needs" (metabolism, reproduction, bodily comforts, safety, movement, growth, and health). . . . A consideration of the hunger drive (a metabolic need) therefore leads directly to the institutions which function in relation to eating. The reverse is also true: the analysis of any institution leads eventually to the biological needs which it serves. (Hatch 1973:323).

Hatch concludes that "Malinowski's attempt to bring the institution into direct relationship with biological needs may be one of the most unfortunate aspects of his work.... It was an embarrassing failure. . ." (Hatch 1973:323-324).

Another problem with Malinowski's definition of institution is that it conflates institutions and organizations, a distinction that the new institutional economists have deemed of critical importance. "A crucial distinction in this study is made between institutions and organizations. . . . Conceptually, what must be clearly differentiated are the rules from the players" (North 1990:4), where "the rules" are institutions and "the players" are organizations. Organizations are

groups of individuals bound by some common purpose to achieve objectives," and include "political bodies (political parties, the Senate, a city council, a regulatory agency), economic bodies (firms, trade unions, family farms, cooperative), social bodies (churches, clubs, athletic associations), and educational bodies (schools, universities, vocational training centers). . . . Both

what organizations come into existence and how they evolve are fundamentally influenced by the institutional framework. In turn they influence how the institutional framework evolves. (North 1990:5)

While Malinowski fails to make this distinction between organizations and institutions, Radcliffe-Brown does make such a distinction, and thus his understanding of institution is more in line with the new institutional economists. According to Radcliffe-Brown, an institution is "an established norm of conduct recognized as such by a distinguishable social group or class Institutions . . . refer to the ordering by society of the interactions of persons in social relationships" (Radcliffe-Brown 1952, reprinted in Kuper 1977:20). "Social institutions, in the sense of standardized modes of behaviour, constitute the machinery by which a social structure, a network of social relations, maintains its existence and its continuity" (Radcliffe-Brown 1940, reprinted in Kuper 1977:36). Radcliffe-Brown distinguishes between institutions and organization, but for Radcliffe-Brown, organization is not a group of individuals, but rather the arrangement of their activities (Radcliffe-Brown 1952, reprinted in Kuper 1977:21). Radcliffe-Brown fails to address the question of where institutions come from. The closest he comes is the vague assertion that institutions "refer to the ordering *by society* of the interactions. . . ." (see above). He thus fails to work in the role of individuals and their interactions as the generators of institutions, and privileges structure over agency. In addition, he never focuses on the institution as a unit of analysis.

Raymond Filth, like Radcliffe-Brown, makes a distinction between social structure and social organization:

Social organization has usually been taken as a synonym for social structure. In my view it is time to distinguish between them. The more one thinks of the

structure of a society in abstract terms, as of group relations or of ideal patterns, the more necessary it is to think separately of social organization in terms of concrete activity. Generally, the idea of organization is that of people getting things done by planned action. This is a social process, the arrangement of action in sequences in conformity with selected social ends. These ends must have some elements of common significance for the set of persons concerned in the action.... This involves the exercise of choice, the making of decisions. (Firth 1961: 35-36).

However, unlike Radcliffe-Brown, Firth does not neglect individual agency; in fact, he regards a focus on social organization as more appropriate to the analysis of change than a focus on social structure:

Some views in social anthropology and sociology have regarded structure as the cardinal object of interest in social analysis, and would treat the behaviour of individuals as primarily determined by structural considerations.... But while structural considerations are of great importance, normally occupying first place in the order of analysis, human behaviour is the resultant of many considerations, in which alternative modes of procedure are presented to individuals, and in which their personal choice, decision, and adjustment are therefore also of prime significance. Hence, subjoined to the concept of social structure must be another concept, whether entitled social organization or not, which is concerned with such processual activities. (Firth 1961:x-xi)

Firth's understanding of "social organization" is quite similar to the concept of institutions as I am using it:

[T]he form of a society...consists really in the persistence or repetition of behaviour; it is the element of continuity in social life. The social anthropologist is faced by a constant problem, an apparent dilemma - to account for this continuity, and at the same time to account for social change. Continuity is expressed in the social structure, the sets of relations which make for firmness of expectation, for validation of past experience in terms of similar experience in the future.... At the same time there must be room for variance and for the explanation of variance.

This is found in the social organization, the systematic ordering of social relations by acts of choice and decision. Here is room for variation from what has happened in apparently similar circumstances in the past. Time enters here. The situation before the exercise of choice is different from that afterwards.... Structural forms set a precedent and provide a limitation to the range of alternatives possible - the arc within which seemingly free choice is exercisable is often very small. But it is the possibility of alternative that makes for variability.

A person chooses, consciously or unconsciously, which course he will follow. And his decision will affect the future structural alignment. In the aspect of social structure is to be found the continuity principle of society; in the aspect of organization is to be found the variation or change principle - by allowing evaluation of situation and entry of individual choice. (Firth 1961:39-40)

For Firth, social organization is the process by which individual acts of choice aggregate into "the continuity principle of society," but it is also the process by which the "change principle" is made possible. Implicit in social organization is a dialectic between human agency and social structure. In this way, my definition of institutions given in the Introduction echoes Firth's concept of social organization.

The work of Julian Steward, with its emphasis on the interaction between environmental factors and humans in culture change, should also be mentioned here. Steward's *cultural ecology* is an attempt to develop a theory and method for analyzing culture change, and, in its broad outlines, has much in common with Ostrom's IAD framework. Steward asserts that cultural ecology's "method requires examination of the interaction of societies and social institutions with one another and with the natural environment" (Steward 1977:43). Steward's explicit statements about the need to take into consideration the "interacting phenomena" of "features of the environment" and the "nature of the culture" (Steward 1977:45), along with his emphasis on "levels of sociocultural integration" (Steward 1951; Steward 1955, ch. 3), are analogous to the principal components of Ostrom's IAD framework (attributes of the physical and material world; attributes of the community; and the rules-in-use at multiple, nested levels of analysis).

Steward's theory of cultural ecology, while undeniably seminal and progressive for its time, reads more like a laundry list of variables that may or may not have explanatory value in a given situation. Ostrom's framework is much more specific in its methodology, precise in its definitions, and has a concrete unit of analysis (institution), all of which are lacking in Steward's theory. Steward does not use the term *institutions* in the way intended in this dissertation. For Steward, institutions are "supracommunity" or "supratribal" structures at the national or state level that serve as a means for the state to control and extract labor and resources from native populations (see Steward 1955, ch.4; Steward 1967). For Ostrom, institutions emerge out of "patterns of interaction" among actors in a given situation, and much of her framework is geared toward analyzing those patterns of interaction and understanding how they articulate with higher levels of institutions. For Steward, such patterns, which he terms "processes of change," are not the unit of analysis nor are they the focus of his efforts. These "processes of change" remain a vague, catch-all black box concept, somehow "caused by institutional factors," but "this causal aspect of process has not been clearly conceptualized nor have the more substantive processes been distinguished by appropriate terms" (Steward 1967:16).

In addition, Steward's theory lacks the dialectical element that allows for individual actions and operational-level institutions to feed back into and influence higher-order institutions. As noted by Murphy, Steward's work is characterized by a "total absence of dialectical process" (Murphy 1977:36). The influence of the "supracommunity (state or national institutions)" (Steward 1977:45) is wholly unidirectional, with the "supracommunity institutions" impacting and changing relatively powerless and passive "simple," "traditional" societies, which in turn appear not to have

much say in the matter (see esp. Steward 1967). Steward's theory of culture change is a very top-down approach, with no sense of agency at the individual or community level.

While institutions *per se* do not figure largely in Fredrik Barth's writing, he is nonetheless the anthropologist whose approach most closely resembles an institutional approach *à la* Ostrom. In a retrospective on his work, Barth claims that his perspective has been shaped in opposition to "conceptual habits that are deeply entrenched in anthropological thinking" (Barth 1981:4), namely, structuralism, a narrow historicism, and functionalism. Barth is particularly critical of structuralism's focus "on the macro-level of forms, institutions and customs, ignoring the micro-level of the distribution and inter-connections of concrete acts and activities" (Barth 1981:4). For Barth, these macro-level structures and forms are not *a priori* and determinative of human behavior, but rather are generated from human behavior. In his much celebrated (and critiqued - see Paine 1974) essay *Models of Social Organization* (1966), Barth tried to construct a generative model of human behavior. The basic building blocks are *transactions* between individuals (and later, *interaction* - see Barth 1981), which occur in a matrix of statuses and involve reciprocity, values, incentives, and constraints on choice. The problem, for Barth, is one of *institutionalization*: "how a multiplicity of individual decisions under the influence of canalizing factors can have the cumulative effect of producing clear patterns and conventions" (Barth 1966:3). Barth's model, rudimentary as it is (as he himself admits), is designed to generate the "gross frequentative patterns of behavior" (Barth 1966:11) - i.e., what I'm calling institutions. While these patterns of behavior are generated from aggregated acts of people exercising choice, the patterns then feed back and influence individual behavior. As Barth puts it, "I see a dialectic...between these

codes, values, and knowledge on the one hand and human acts on the other. Not only do the former provide premises and constraints for particular acts, but acts also affect codes, values and knowledge by increments and so can change and modify their own preconditions" (Barth 1981:3). Earth's model, based as it is on game theory and the concept of choice under constraints, is very similar in theory, method, and intent to Ostrom's IAD framework (although Ostrom's is much more explicit and nuanced).

Institutions play an important role in Giddens' theory of structuration. The most important aspects of "structure," according to Giddens, are "rules and resources recursively involved in institutions" (Giddens 1984:24). Giddens tries to provide a mechanism through which individual actors' behavior influence and alter more macro-level structures. He calls this mechanism, confusingly, "structures" (as distinct from "structure" in the singular). "Structures" are "relations of transformation and mediation which are the 'circuit switches' underlying observed conditions of system reproduction" (Giddens 1984:24). This is the mechanism by which individual actors construct and mediate the more enduring institutions, which then are "implicated" (a vague term that Giddens uses frequently) in the process of social reproduction. What I find potentially useful about this is the idea of "structures" (to use Giddens' term) as "circuit switches." This concept of structures (plural) strikes me as akin to Earth's idea of "transactions," as the observable building blocks of institutions. Thus, there is a two-way conduit or pathway, composed of structures, or transactions, at the interface between individuals' actions and institutions, and institutions, in turn, mediate between individuals and the larger, more overarching social structures.

In a discussion of institutional analysis within anthropology, I would be remiss to neglect to mention Karl Polanyi and the impact his substantivist institutional analysis had on anthropologists in the 1960s and 1970s.⁴ The very title of Part III of Polanyi, Arensberg, and Pearson's *Trade and Market in the Early Empires* is called "Institutional Analysts," thus calls attention to itself for the purposes of this dissertation. Indeed, Stanfield (1980) for one considers Polanyi a pioneer of institutional analysis, and finds it perplexing that Polanyi is largely ignored by recent institutional economists.

Polanyi's definition of the empirical economy - "an instituted process of interaction between man and his environment, which results in a continuous supply of want satisfying material means" (Polanyi 1971f[1957J:248) - emphasizes two terms that play a major role in theoretical underpinnings of this dissertation: *process* and *institution*. However, as we shall see, Polanyi uses both of these terms differently from the way I intend them in this dissertation. That the economy is a *process* suggests "change, but for Polanyi *process* is not *change over time*, as in processual approaches in anthropology, but rather the synchronic movement, transportation, or transferal of material elements: "Process suggests analysis in terms of motion. The movements refer either to changes in location, or in appropriation, or both. In other words, the material elements may alter their position either by changing place or by changing 'hands'. . . . Between them, these two kinds of movements may be said to exhaust the possibilities comprised in the economic process as a natural and social phenomenon" (Polanyi 1971 f[957 J: 248).

⁴ This is not the time nor place to go into a detailed account of Polanyi's work, nor to rehash the formalist-substantivist debate. For more on Polanyi and his work, see Annales J98.1 [1974]; Daiton and KScke 1983; Frankenberg 1975; Humphreys 1969; Neal and Mayhev 1983; Polanyi 1969; Polanyi, Arensberg and Pearson 1971[1957]; Smelser 1959; and Stanfield 1980. For overviews of the formalist-substantivist debate, see Kaplan 1968; Wilk 1996, ch.1.

In addition, what Polanyi means by the terra *institution* is quite different from the way it is used by the new institutionalists (and therefore different from the way I am using it in this dissertation). For Polanyi, institutions are *concentrations* of activities of a certain kind (Polanyi 1971 [1957]:249). The institutions he is most concerned with are trade, money, and the market. Such institutions do not simply arise from the aggregate of individual human behavior; human behavior must be structured by *a priori* "symmetrically organized structures" such as "kinship, neighborhood or totem" (Polanyi 1971[1957]:25i-253). Such "institutional preconditions" must exist before interpersonal behavior - what Polanyi terms "forms of integration" (reciprocity, redistribution, or exchange) - can "result in economic institutions of any importance" (Polanyi 1971[1957]:252). Polanyi does not concern himself with the question of where these preconditions come from; they are a structural given and as such appear somewhat deterministic. Institutions for Polanyi are larger overarching social structures and therefore not analogous to institutions as new institutionalists such as North and Ostrom use the term.

In fact, Polanyi's "forms of integration" are closer in meaning to institutions as the new institutional analysts use the concept, but they remain the unanalyzed underlying background activities Polanyi's formulation. It was Marshall Sahlins who took these "forms of integration" seriously as units of analysis (one in particular - that of reciprocity). Although Sahlins does not refer to these as "institutions," his treatment of reciprocity could be seen as a sort of institutional analysis in the way I intend the term (Sahlins 1965). However, Sahlins is concerned exclusively with the institutions regulating exchange among members of a society, and not with institutions regulating

1999: 232). The extended environmental entitlements approach goes beyond simpler and more static approaches by acknowledging the variety of means of gaining and legitimating access to and control over resources, including kin networks, customary law, social conventions and norms (Leach, Mearns, and Scoones 1999:233). As such, the extended entitlements approach is well-suited to anthropological and ethnographic approaches. Through its focus on institutions, this approach emphasizes power relations in the process of entitlement mapping, and in this way complements the IAD framework's attention to the actor within the action arena. In addition, the environmental entitlements approach maps onto the IAD framework's focus on the attributes of the natural world and of the community by taking into account ecological variability and disequilibrium (see also Botkin 1990; Behnke and Scoones 1993; Kates and Clark 1996); the dynamism and internal differentiation within a "community" (see also Benda-Beckmann and Benda-Beckmann 1999); and the diversity of potential stakeholders and ecological benefits. This is particularly applicable to the Tozhu and Tofa situations, with nomadic herder-hunters, their settled relatives, sport hunters and fishermen, gold-mining operations, tourists, and those involved *in* the black market in contraband animal parts all vying for limited environmental goods and services, with no effective regulation on any of these activities.

My research comes out of the long tradition of "ecological anthropology" ("cultural ecology") (Steward 1955; Geertz 1963; Vayda and McCay 1975; Orlove 1980; Netting 1981, 1986; Moran 1982, 1990; Ellen 1982; Crumley 1994). More specifically, my research is informed by the anthropological literature on the relationship between nomadic-pastoralists and state structures (Barth 1964; Shahrani 2002; Khazanov 1994;

Benson and Svanberg 1998), and on reindeer herding (Ingold 1980; Paine 1988; Beach 1990; Krupnik 1993); by new developments in "ethnoecology" (Berlin 1989; Nazarea 1999); and by work that has come to be known under the rubric of "traditional ecological knowledge" (TEK) (Brokensha, Warren and Warren 1980; Ellen, Parkes and Bicker 2000; Johannes 1989; Sadler and Boothroyd 1994).

This research is also a response to the recent anthropological critiques of development (Escobar 1995; Ferguson 1994; Gardner and Lewis 1996; Hobart 1993; Sillitoe, Bicker and Pottier 2002), in particular the literature critiquing development initiatives targeting nomadic populations (Goldschmidt 1981; Galaty and Aronson 1981; Sandford 1983; Fratkin 1991; McMillan 1995). Development planners have often assumed that nomadic pastoralism and hunting and gathering are inefficient, obsolete, and inflexible modes of production, and have exacerbated "the crisis of pastoralism" through forced settlement programs, destocking programs, programs to "rationalize" and "industrialize" herding, and forced privatization of land (Galaty and Aronson 1981). While all of the abovementioned sources focus on development initiatives in the post-colonial third world, much of what they have to say applies equally well to the forced sedentarization of nomadic populations and collectivization of agriculture imposed during the Soviet-era, as well as other Soviet-era efforts to industrialize and rationalize production (Andreev 1970[1968]; D'yachenko and Kuzakov 1970[1968]; Fedotov 1970[1968]; Zhigunov 1968[1961]). These measures, like development initiatives in the developing world, were dismissive of indigenous peoples' accumulated knowledge and of the cultural importance of their nomadic ways of life. In the case of the Tofa, the very abrupt and successful forced sedentarization campaign along with a mandated de-

emphasis on reindeer herding in the early 1930s distorted property relations and led to the rapid decline in reindeer herding. In the case of the Tozhu, the emphasis was in the opposite direction — an imposed increase in reindeer numbers to meet quotas for reindeer meat and hides. This forced the Tozhu into a very different type of reindeer husbandry and disrupted not only their indigenous institutions regarding land use, but also the relationship between herders and reindeer.

Efforts to jump-start the economy through increased production and to integrate the indigenous peoples of Siberia into a market economy since the collapse of the Soviet Union have focused on privatization of land, resources, and enterprises. As is the case with development projects in the post-colonial third world, planners have invoked Garrett Hardin's argument in "Tragedy of the Commons" (1968) to justify calls for wholesale privatization of common-pool resources (Feeny, et al. 1990; Ostrom 1996), under the assumption that privatization and the development of market economies are the only ways to economic development and "democratization." But as Hann (1996), D.Anderson (1996; 1998), Osherenko (1995) and Verdery (ND) all point out, privatization, exclusive land tenure, and market relations are more likely hindrances to the development of democracy and "civil society" than they are necessary preconditions, at least in the former Soviet Union. In fact, numerous empirical studies have demonstrated that many initiatives based on Hardin's analysis have failed and that nomadic pastoralism and hunting and gathering within a common-pool resource regime is often the most efficient, rational, and flexible use of resources (Artz, Norton, and O'Rourke 1986; Barfield 1993; Feeny, Berkes, McCay and Acheson 1990; Fratkin 1991; Gadgil and Rao 1995; Galaty and Aronson 1981; Gilles, Hammoudi and Mahdi 1986; Gilles and Jamtgaard 1981;

McCabe 1990; Mearns 1996a; Netting 1981,1986; Salzman 1981). The body of literature on common-pool resource regimes in forests is smaller but arrives at similar conclusions (Agrawal 1994; Gibson, McKean, and Ostrom 2000; Ostrom 2000:337; Tucker 1999).

Finally, recent development initiatives in the former socialist countries have focused on the development of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other structures that make up what is called "civil society." The assumption that civil society can only exist outside of the state often does not apply in the former Soviet Union, where there was a long tradition of civic practice in which people managed to manipulate, negotiate, and recombine elements of formal, state-imposed structures and elements of informal, indigenous institutions to construct various "citizenship regimes," through which they defined and secured their entitlements to resources (D.Anderson 1996; Hann 1996).

The IAD framework, event-focused processual analysis, and the extended entitlements approach offer a constructive response to these critiques, especially when informed by a cultural ecological approach to development planning (Galaty, et al. 1981; Sandford 1983; Salzman and Galaty 1990; Mearns 1996a, 1996b). In fact, Ostrom's Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis at Indiana University was commissioned by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) to study how "aid, incentives and sustainability are related" and to "suggest an approach as to how to evaluate the relation between aid, incentives and sustainability" (Ostrom et al. 2002:347). To conduct the study, Ostrom and her colleagues very effectively applied IAD to the analysis of Sida's international development operations (see Ostrom et al. 2002).

In the case of the Tozhu and Tofa, and Russia's indigenous peoples in general, more anthropologically informed approaches to economic development are imperative. Much of what occurred in Siberia and Central Asia during Soviet times under the auspices of the command and control economy is comparable to misguided development efforts throughout the developing world. In the post-colonial third world, development initiatives have often focused on increasing GNP and GDP through the extraction of natural resources, the creation of monocultures for export, and the exploitation of cheap labor. In the Soviet context, such initiatives find their parallels in "modernization" through forced collectivization of agriculture, unregulated natural resource extraction, and industrialization of production through massive technological inputs and specialization in a single product. In both cases, such initiatives generally did not take into consideration cultural variables (religious proscriptions against overhunting and against extractive activities on sacred sites; the cultural importance and ecological appropriateness of nomadism; indigenous systems of property rights), nor ecological variables (such as industrial pollution; depletion of the natural resource base; the renew ability of resources). Many third-world development initiatives have used GNP as an indicator of success, assuming it to be an effective measure of the overall welfare of a nation-state. However, GNP does not take into consideration problems of distribution of wealth and various other indicators of welfare such as life expectancy, education level, infant mortality, etc., all of which have generally suffered under various development programs (Cobb, Halstead and Rowe 1995; Davidson 2000; Donahoe 1994a, 1994b; England and Harris 1997; Huetting 1991). In the Soviet case, success was measured by similarly narrow indicators, such as the gross value of output, or simple technological

ratios such as fuel input per kilowatt hour of electricity produced (Campbell 1992:45). These measures, focusing as they did only on *quantity*, ignored both the *quality* of products and the quality of life of the great majority of Soviet citizens. Yet another parallel between the Soviet situation and that of the developing world are principal-agent problems and moral hazard problems (Ostrom et al. 2002:xviii), both of which can lead to corruption. This parallels the abuses of wealth in many third-world economies, where a small cabal of corrupt political elites get rich off the labor and resources of their countries (and off of international development assistance) while the great majority of the population and the environment suffer. In the case of the USSR, wealth was diverted to its military-industrial sector in order to maintain its status as a global superpower, while the general population and natural resource base became increasingly impoverished. In the post-Soviet context, with Russia and the other members of the CIS receiving large amounts of international development aid, similar problems are appearing in the guise of political cronyism, corruption, and organized crime (Wedel 1998).

The emerging body of literature about the former Soviet Union, its relations to peripheral regions of Siberia and Central Asia (Brower and Lazzerini 1997; Forsyth 1992; Friendly and Feshbach 1992; Humphrey 1983; Slezkine 1994), and the adjustments that these areas are making to the collapse of the Soviet Union and to the transition from a command economy model to a more market based economy (Alexander 2000; Burawoy and Verdery 1999; Hann 2002; Humphrey 2002; Kasten 2002; Marsh and Gvosdev 2002) also informs this dissertation. More specifically, the rash of new ethnographies on the impact of these changes on various Siberian peoples (D.Anderson; Golovnev and Oshercenko 1999; Fondahl 1998; Grant 1995; Gray 1998; Jordan 2005; KertulJa 2003;

King 2000; Pika 1999; Rethman 2001; Robinson and Kassam 1998; Ssorin-Chaikov 2003; Ziker 2002) have provided valuable insights and helped direct this research.

Chapter 3

A Line in the Sayans

Introduction

A critical assertion in this dissertation (and the proposed follow-up study involving the Dukha and Soyot) is that these four groups - the Tozhu, Tofa, Dukha, and Soyot - now recognized as separate ethnic groups, emerged from a loose collection of closely related bands and larger ethnic groupings, all living in adjacent quadrants of the Eastern Sayan mountains, speaking mutually intelligible languages, involved in hunting and reindeer herding, trading with one another, and moving relatively flexibly into one another's recognized territories. As lineage, band, trad / or territorial affiliation would have almost certainly been the most salient and conscious levels of identification,¹ these different groups would not have identified themselves as a single ethnic group, nor would they have identified themselves as the four ethnic groups officially recognized today. The purpose of this chapter is to establish the shared ethnic background and cultural history of these groups, then to sketch out the historical events that have led to their separation and delineation into what have come to be considered four different ethnic groups.²

¹ Much of pre-Soviet and Soviet ethnography, influenced by the theories of Morgan and Tengeis, assumed that the lineage-based *rod* (clan) was the fundamental unit of social organization among indigenous Siberians (see my discussion of *c.Inogenez* below.) However, this emphasis on lineage has been called into question more recently, with many ethnographers now asserting that the territorial *obshchina* (community) was the fundamental unit of social organization (Pika 1999:65). See also Skalnik 1981 for a discussion of the concept of "community" in Soviet ethnography.

² Several scholars have noted the similarities among these groups, but Wheeler has put it most succinctly: "Although these lesser-populated peoples of the Eastern Sayan region share a similar ancestry and are linked by common origins, the course and events of history have divided them into four distinct cultural entities in separate locales of south Siberia and northwest Mongolia" (Wheeler 2000:3).

It is also important for me to distinguish the Tozhu from the majority of Tyva who live in the central, southern, and western regions of the Republic of Tyva. Until 1993, the Tozhu were not officially recognized as distinct from the larger group of Tyva people. Yet many first-hand accounts remark on the differences between the Tozhu and Tyva peoples in language, dress, and lifestyle, and note the remarkable ecological disjuncture between the Tozhu region and the rest of the republic. In this chapter, I demonstrate that historically the ethnic boundaries (Barr 1998[1969]) between the Tozhu and the rest of the Tyva are much more distinct than the ethnic boundaries between the Tozhu, Tofa, Dufcha, and Soyot.³ Establishing this is crucial to my central assertion that historical differences in administrative regime and associated institutional arrangements have led to the differences we observe among these groups today with regards to their senses of property in land and animals.

Soviet *etnogenez*

It has become virtually axiomatic in anthropology today that ethnicity, like race, gender, and so many other differentiating categories, is socially constructed. Ethnic groups come into being and die out, expand and contract, merge and fragment. The territory associated with an ethnic group can likewise expand and contract, change, and be contested. Different names can be assigned to the same people, sometimes a more inclusive name subsumes several groups perceived by someone (often an outsider) to be similar on the basis of language, customs, phenotype, etc; in other cases several names may refer to the same people or to smaller groupings of people who might consider themselves the same.

³ See Wheeler 2000:ch 1 for a similar assessment of the ethnic situation pertaining to these groups.

Great confusion can arise from an inability to differentiate among the profusion of clan names, tribal names, territorial names, the ethnonym a group of people give themselves versus the ethnonym their neighbors refer to them by, and of course the different pronunciations and subsequent transliterations of the same ethnonym by various chroniclers. Ethnic group membership has likewise been shown to be fluid and flexible in many ways, and not "essential" and established "from time immemorial" (B.Anderson 1983; Barth 1998[1969]; Chatterjee 1993; Schlee 2002; Wilmsen and McAllister 1996).

A burgeoning body of literature is examining the processes of ethnic construction in the case of Siberian peoples within the Russian Empire, and later, the Soviet Union (D.Anderson 2000; Brower and Lazzarini 1997; Hirsch 1997; Slezkine 1994; Sokolovski n.d; Ssorin-Chaikov 2003; Weiser 1989). Starting in the late 1960s, the principal theoretical framework for Soviet ethnographers was *etnos* (ethnos) theory. *Etnogenez* (ethnogenesis) is a methodology that employs archeological, anthropometric, and linguistic data to try to establish the origins of and "ethnic processes" leading to the development of existing ethnic groups. Although *etnogenez* was around long before *etnos* theory came into prominence, it was pressed into service by the proponents of *etnos* theory as one of that theory's principal methodological approaches, and as a result has become closely associated with *etnos* theory. Soviet *etnos* theory has been roundly criticized in recent years (D.Anderson 2000; Dragadze 1990; Skalnik 1990; 1986; Tishkov 1992) for its essentialist and primordialist assumptions, for the way it reifies ethnoses, and for the way it was used to further Soviet social policies. *Etnogenez*, because of its associations with *etnos* theory, has likewise been tarnished by the same brush (Shnirel'man 1993; Slezkine 1996). But, as Peter Schweitzer points out, it is important to

separate out the method of *etnogenez* from the theory of *einós* (Schweitzer 2003, personal communication).

According to its official formulation, Soviet ethnography was based, first and foremost, "on historical materialism and on Marxism in general" (Petrova-Averkiewa 1980:19). This historical materialist, approach assumes a process of unilinear social evolution: "Soviet ethnographers proceed, first of all, from the Marxist-Leninist teaching concerning social progress and the onward march of history" (Petrova-Averkiewa 1980:19). On the basis of this Marxist-Leninist teaching, Soviet scholars use the material provided by the "vast experience of nation building in such a multinational state as the USSR" to "work out a scientific typology of ethnic processes, to reveal the factors and rate of their development, and to specify stages of their history" (Petrova-Averkiewa 1980:26).

Starting in the 1960s, Soviet ethnography was likewise based on an assumption of the fundamentally *essential* nature of the *etnas*. The *etnos* is defined most famously by ethnographer Yulian Bromley as "a firm aggregate of people, historically established on a given territory, possessing in common relatively stable particularities of language and culture, and also recognizing their unity and difference from other similar formations (self-awareness) and expressing this in a self-appointed name (ethnonym)" (Bromley 1975:11, cited in Dragadze 1980:162). In another context, Bromley asserts that

ethnoses belong to that variety of communities which emerge as a result of the natural-historical process and not as a result of the given people's will. At the same time we must remember that ethnoses are complex formations; each possesses not only a certain internal unity but also specific features which distinguish it from all other formations of the same type. A particular role is played by the ethnic consciousness of the members of an ethnos both through

mutual identification and by differentiation as a whole from other similar communities with a 'we-they' antithesis. ...

At the same time it would be an oversimplification to confine the essence of ethnos to the ethnic consciousness of its members, which delimits a given ethnos from all other similar communities; underlying this ethnic consciousness are the distinctive features of each ethnos which exist independently and which express its inner integrity. (Bromley 1980:153).

Foremost among these distinctive features are the "ethnic aspects of psychology"⁴ which form, in part, the unique "national (ethnic) character" of each *ethnos* (Bromley 1973:79-85⁵). This unique character is stable across generations and even spans the evolutionary stages of social formations (see Banks 1996:18-24), and is maintained through endogamy (Bromley 1969, 1974:65; Bromley and Kozlov 1989:430). Thus for Bromley there is something fundamentally essential, primordial, and deterministic⁶ in the concept of the *ethnos* that goes beyond and is independent of the consciousness of its members. Banks concludes that "the case of Soviet *ethnos* theory stands as an important example of a theory of primordial ethnicity" (Banks 1996:24). Or, as Skalnik has put it, "As a matter of fact the whole 'theory' rests on the presupposition of a biological and psychological nature" (Skalnik 1990:187).

But how can Bromley reconcile his insistence on these essential characteristics of *ethnos* with a Marxist-Leninist emphasis on historical processes and social evolution? This apparent paradox leads Bromley to break *ethnos* down into two components: the *etnikos*

⁴ *Emicheskie aspekty psikhiki*. Bromley also uses the term *psikhicheskii sklad* (psychological mold / stamp). See esp. Bromley 1973:78-113.

⁵ Bromley look up this psychological aspect of *ethnos* from Stalin's famous definition of "nation," which included "a common psychological make-up" (Rus: *psikhologicheskii uklad*). See Hutchinson and Smith 1994:18-21 for Stalin's definition of nation.

⁶ Bromley asserts a sort of ecological determinism in the formation of the more primitive forms of ethnic societies (i.e., those at the stage of *pervobytnoe obshchestvo* - primordial or primitive society), but notes that the influence of the environment rapidly decreases with the progressive development of societies (Bromley 1973:164-165).

and the "ethno-social organism" (ESO) (Bromley 1973:39-46; 1974:67-71; 1978; Broraley and Kozlov 1989; see also Banks 1996:19). The *etnikos* is that part of *etnäs* that is stable: "specific features of culture (including language) and psychology" (Bromley 1978:18, quoted in Skalnik 1986:158; see also Skalník 1990). The ESO, on the other hand, includes socio-economic factors that are "considerably more flexible than the ethnic ones" (Bromley 1978:19, cited in Skalnik 1986:158). These more dynamic aspects of ethnoses can be understood through the study of what Bromley terms "ethnic processes":

Ethnoses are dynamic systems. Hence one of the most important tasks of ethnography is to study the changes which take place in them, i.e., the ethnic processes. Though in the past these processes were rather slow, in the end they led to the disappearance of some ethnic units and the emergence of others. It is for this reason in particular that Soviet ethnographers pay considerable attention to the question of the origin of peoples (ethnogenesis) which they study jointly with archaeologists, anthropologists, linguists, etc. (Bromley 1980:160)

Thus the way to study the *origins* of peoples was to track the *changes* in ethnoses back through time from the present to their origins on the basis of material culture, historical linguistics (loan words, toponymy, other evidence of language contact and shift), archeological records, and various archival sources (including censuses, tax registers, trade receipts, travelers' reports). This

historical method of Soviet ethnography was especially productive when applied to the study of the genesis of ethnoses, the periods in the ethnic history of peoples, and their relation to the general history of mankind. Soviet scholars single out three types of ethnic communities which succeeded one another in the process of history, they are tribes, nationalities, and nations. All these bore their specific features in different historical epochs of different socio-economic formations. (Petrova-Averkieva 1980:25-26)

The hallmark of the "tribal" stage of development in this evolutionary schema was a lineage-based social organization; hence much of the work on *etnogenez* operated

on the assumption that all peoples at the "tribal" stage had a lineage-based clan structure. Contradictory data were assumed to be wrong and was reinterpreted to conform to the assumption (Skalnik 1981:185). Peter Schweitzer notes that

The reemphasis on the study of bilateral kinship systems, beginning in the West in the 1960s and 1970s, threatened the Soviet concept of *rod* (best English translation 'lineage,' 'exogamous clan,' or - in Engels's terms - 'gens'). The *rod* held a very prominent place in the Soviet theory of primitive society. The assumption that social evolution is characterized by the subsequent stages of matrilineal and patrilineal kinship organization was transformed into dogma in Soviet ethnography since the 1930s. This was to a large extent connected with Engels's work *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (Engels 1972), which gave priority to the notion of 'lineage' over the notion of 'community' (*Gemeinschaft*), still very much used by Marx. (Schweitzer 2000:37).

Thus all ethnographers engaging in *etnogenez* were operating under these evolutionary assumptions: all the tribes of Siberia at the time of contact with Russia were assumed to be at the stage of *pervobytnoe obshchestvo* (primordial or primitive society), which was assumed to be strictly lineage based and characterized by the *rod*⁷

Much contemporary Western anthropology regards such exercises in ethnogenesis as fruitless and misguided, in that they start from an assumption that *etnoses* can be defined by similarities in material culture, language, ritual practice, etc. In doing so, they objectify the *etnos* as something outside of and prior to the individual or even group, thereby denying the fluid, situational or relational nature of ethnic identity, and the individual actor's role in constructing it. Yet no matter how dismissive we might be today of ethnogenesis, the evolutionary assumptions of Soviet-era *etnos* theory, and their service in support of Marxist-Leninist historical materialism and the construction of the Soviet state, we cannot be dismissive of the quality of the empirical data gathered in the

⁷ Arakchaa 2002 is a good example of the persistence of these Marxist-Leninist assumptions.

name of *ettiogenez*. The methods were sound and called for "cooperation by experts in the spheres of language, ethnography, social history, physical anthropology, archaeology and so on" (Arutyonov 1980:261). The research was often meticulously carried out, leaving us with a wealth of valuable data and a sound basis on which to understand some of the dynamics of migration, movement, intermingling, trade relations, and other forms of interaction among ethnic groups. Peter Schweitzer asserts that "the 'ethnogenetic approach' as such should not be discredited. Among its positive aspects is that it calls for a combination of several anthropological subdisciplines and neighboring disciplines, .. ." (Schweitzer 2000:43). He goes on to note that, while in the American tradition, "the unity of the 'four-field approach' is often more an ideological statement than a fact in actual research practice, the Russian tradition of cross-disciplinary research is necessitated by historical questions that could not be answered otherwise" (Schweitzer 2000:43-44). From this research, we now have a wealth of data on the interactions among different ethnic groups that can be reevaluated and reanalyzed through different theoretical and analytical lenses, not looking for essential characteristics of ethnic groups, but rather seeing in the data the processes of the construction of ethnic identity.

The seminal work of B.O. Dolgikh, *Rodovoi i Plemennoi Sostav Narodov Sibiri v XVII v.* ("Clan and Tribal Structure of the Peoples of Siberia in the 17th c." - 1960), is a prime example of such valuable, meticulously conducted research that uses the methods of ethnogenesis to reconstruct the ethnohistory and ethnic processes of the peoples of Siberia.⁸ The following sections draw heavily on Dolgikh and other scholars who were

⁸ David Anderson is highly critical of Dolgikh as the epitome of a "state ethnographer" (ethnographers employed by the state to implement a "unique administrative ideology whereby ethnography was wielded

engaged in ethnogenesis (principally S.L. Vainshtein and N.A. Serdobov), while always bearing in mind the limitations of this type of research, in order to establish the close ethnic ties among the Tozhu, Tofa, Dukha, and Soyot. First, however, it is necessary to establish a corollary argument: that the Tozhu are historically and ethnically more distinct from the majority Tyva population than they are from the Tofa, Soyot, and Dukha, despite the fact that the Tozhu have generally been treated as an ethnic subgroup of the Tyva, if indeed any distinction at all has been drawn.

Tozhu vs. Tyva

In the aforementioned work, Dolgikh implicitly acknowledges the Tozhu as distinct from the majority Tyva. He does not explicitly deal with the majority Tyva population (the steppe pastoralists of western and southern Tyva) because they were not living in territory that was considered part of Siberia in the 17th century, and therefore were not within the scope of his research. However, he recognizes the Tozhu as distinct, asserting that they were a Samoyedic-language people (as opposed to the Turkic-Mongolic Tyva people). He goes on to note that the territory they inhabited was in fact within the borders of the Russian Empire until 1727, while the steppelands of the southern and western regions of present-day Tyva were never within the borders of the Russian Empire: "We can consider that the Todzhinskii khoshun [district - *BD*] of Tuva in the second half of the 17th c. and the first quarter of the 18th c. until the demarcation of the border with China in 1727 was included in the composition of the Russian domains" (Dolgikh

as a primary instrument of social power" (D.Anderson 2000:74; but see all of Ch. 4). Slezkine, on the other hand, singles out Dolgikh's best-known work, *Clan and Tribal Structure of the Peoples of Siberia in the 17th c.*, as "A remarkable example of a work deliberately — and apparently inoffensively — divorced from the Party line" (Slezkine 1994:320-321, n.67).

1960:260). Even after the Tozhu region came under the administrative control of the Manchu Dynasty, the central and western regions of the territory that is Tyva today remained under the control of the Oirat Empire (Dzhungaria) until this empire was finally defeated by the Manchus in 1757. Thus the territory associated with the Tozhu was administratively distinct from the rest of the lands inhabited by Tyva people up until 1757.

It should be noted here that most scholars refer to the ancestors of the present-day Tyva as a loose confederation of predominantly Turkic-language tribes (Serdobov 1971; Vainshtein and Mannai-ool 2001) descended from the Huns, who inhabited the steppe regions of present-day Tyva, northwestern Mongolia, and the Altai Mountain area as early as the 6th century c.e.⁹ In the territory of present-day Tozhu District and the adjacent Khövsgöl region of northwestern Mongolia (where the Dukha live), the most often named tribe was *Dubo* (from which it is generally believed derive, through various processes of phonetic change, the ethnonyms Tyva and other variants: Tuva, Tofa, Topa, Tuba, Dukha), first noted in Chinese chronicles of the 6th - 7th centuries. Whether this group was Samoyedic in origin (and later Turkicized), or Turkic in origin is a much debated and as of yet unresolved (and probably unresolvable) question (see Serdobov 1971:36-41, esp. 41, n.1; see also Vainshtein 1974; Wheeler 2000: Ch.2).

Be that as it may, the close ethnic affiliations among the four Eastern Sayan reindeer herding / hunting groups - the Tozhu, the Tofa (formerly *Karagas*¹⁰), the Soyot,

⁹ Most research on the ethnic makeup of the Tyva people emphasizes their Turkic and Mongolic roots (Arakchaa 2002:130-131; Dulov 1956; Kabo 1934; Potapov 1969:56; Serdobov 1971; Vainshtein 1970).

¹⁰ As noted earlier, until around 1930 the Tofa were referred to as *Karagas* (Mel'nikova 1994:22), a name that almost certainly derives from the Tola clan name *Kara-khash* (see Vainshtein 1961:21). This appears to be an example of a clan name coining to be used by outsiders as a general term for a larger grouping of

and the Dukha - are indisputable (see below). The inaccessible high-mountain fastness of the heavily forested Eastern Sayaits provided asylum for those fleeing from first Turkic and then Mongolian invaders. Those who retreated into the mountains (or who already lived there) were the ancestors of the present-day Tozhu, Tofa, Soyot, and Dukha. Larisa Pavlinskaya, an ethnographer who has worked with the Soyot, notes that the reindeer herding peoples of the Eastern Sayan "managed to resist the onslaught of [Turkic and Mongolian] cattle and horse breeders by retreating into the inaccessible mountains" (Pavlinskaya 2003:46). However, the Tozhu, by virtue of having been included in the Uriankhai Territory¹¹ and later in the Tyva Republic, are generally lumped together with the Tyva people of the steppes. The fact that until 1993 they remained officially undifferentiated from the Tyva in census data, and that once they were recognized, it was as Tuvinty-Todzhinty (Tuvan-Todzhins) indicates the degree to which the Tozhu have been assumed to be a sub-group of the Tyva ethnic group. It is my assertion that the Tozhu are historically, culturally, and ethnically more closely related to the other Eastern

peoples who may or may not have had a sense of ethnic unity. However, other etymologies have been suggested, including that it comes from *Kara kas* ("black goose" in many Turkic languages - see, e.g., Mel'nikova 1994:22). Since 1930, they have consistently been referred to as *Tofalary*, which is the Russian pluralization (-y) of the already pluralized form of Tofa in the Tofa language (-lar).

¹¹ In Russian and Mongolian documents of the 19th and early 20th centuries, and on maps of Mongolia during the Manchu Dynasty, the territory of present-day Tyva is marked as "Uriankbai" or "Uriankbai Territory." The exact etymology of the term *uriankhai* (also *uryankhat*, *urianghai*, *uraarikha*) is disputed (see Serdobov-1971:239-240; Vainshiein 1961:30-31, n.76; Krueger 1977:9-10). In any case, within Mongolia it was (and in fact still is) a very commonly used generic term to refer to all of the people (mostly Turkic-language populations, but also Mongolian-language) inhabiting the northwestern reaches of Mongolia, which until 1914 included the territory of present-day Tyva. Thus the term *Uriankhai* included all Tyva people, as well as the Tozhu, Soyot, and Dukha.

Sayan groups than they are to the Tyva people of the central., western and southern steppe zones of the Tyva Republic¹²

According to Dolgikh, the Sayan *zemlitsa*¹³ roughly corresponds to what is now the present-day Tozhu *Kozhuun* (district) (Dolgikh 1960:257). The first recorded mention of an ethnic group called *Tochigasy* was in a report from 10 August 1634, which noted that the population of the Sayan *zemlitsa*, including the *Tochigasy*, was under the jurisdiction of Krasnoyarsk (Dolgikh 1960:257). Then in 1636, the "Tochi" and "Sayany" are mentioned in a list of peoples who, as a result of the construction of a fort on the river Tuba were "to be forced over into Russian citizenship" (Dolgikh 1960:257). The *Tochi* (*Tochigasy*) are, presumably, the ancestors of today's Tozhu people. Sevyan Vainshtein, the author of the only monograph on the Tozhu (Vainshtein 1961), offers support for this theory in his suggestion that the name "Todzha" (the Russian transliteration of Tozhu) be compared to "the name of the tribal group known in Russian documents of the 17th century under the name tochi or tochigasy" (Vainshtein 1961:21) He goes on to note that the name *tochigasy* incorporates the common Samoyedic ethnonym marker *kasa / gasa*, meaning "man" or "person," and supports this argument by comparing the endings of the ethnonyms *Tochigasy* and *Karagasy*, i.e., the earlier ethnonym of the Tofa (Vainshtein 1961:21; see also Dolgikh 1960:259). Vainshtein also points out that several of the

¹²I am not making a claim for the originality of this assertion. As will be demonstrated below, this has long been recognized by scholars who have done research on the ethnic origins of Tyva (*inter alia* Dolgikh 1960; Serdobov 1971; Vamshlein 1961; Wheeler 2000).

¹³*Zemlitsa* was an older Russian territorial unit, without exactly defined borders: "A peculiarity of the administrative structure of the Krasnoyarsk uezd in the 17th c. was that it consisted of what were called 'zeaiitsy'. in this case, some of these zemlitsy coincided with the territory of a single tribe . . . , in others, a conglomeration of tribes and clans, even of different ethnic origins. . . in Krasnoyarskii uezd there were six basic zemlitsy. . . and closely abutting these six were the Sayanskaya and 'Kaisotekaya'" (Dolgikh 1960: 223).

principal clan names among the Tozhu - Choodu (Chogdu), Kyshtag, Khaazyt, and perhaps others, were Samoyedic in origin. The largest of the Tozhu clan names - Choodu - is cognate with the largest of the Tofa clan names - Chogdu and Kara-Chodgu - some of whom as recently as the late 18th century still spoke a Samoyedic language (Vainshtein 1961:20, citing Pallas 1788). In addition, Vainshtein determines another major Tozhu clan name, Todut (including Ak-Todut and Kara-Todut), to be of Ket origins (Vainshtein 1961:22). Despite this emphasis on the Samoyedic and Ket elements of the Tozhu in Vainshtein's work, in a later work he ultimately disagrees with Dolgikh (and Pallas and others) who claim the people of the Eastern Sayans were of Samoyedic origin, and concludes that all these people were already speaking a Turkic language in the middle of the first millennium, and that their origins can be traced back to the early Turkic Uigurs of the fourth century c.e. (Vainshtein 1974).

German ethnographer Otto Mänchen-Helfen is of the opinion that all the Tyva people were originally Samoyed: 'The Samoyed territory' extended into the Sayans, and there is much evidence that the Tuvans are in part merely Turkified Samoyeds" (Mänchen-Helfen 1992[1931]:55). According to Mänchen-Helfen, the people of the Tozhu region, by virtue of its remoteness and inaccessibility, managed to escape to a great degree pressures to assimilate to the Turkic and Mongolian conquerors, and still represent a more original form of Tyva culture.

As noted above, Dolgikh asserts the Ket and Samoyedic origins of the Tofa and Tozhu (but not of the steppe Tyva people, whom he sees as being of Turkic and Mongolic origin), and suggests that the Turkicization of the Ket and Samoyedic

populations of the Eastern Sayans probably began with the more compact groups living closest to the Turkic tribes of the Tyva steppes.

In any case, virtually all observers to Tyva have remarked upon the distinction between the reindeer-herding and hunting Tozhu and the pastoraalist Tyva people of the steppes. As Sevyan Vainshtein has put it,

Tuvans — the indigenous population of the Tuva Autonomous Oblast' - are divided by the form of their economic activities into pastoraalists of the steppes and the mountain steppes of the districts in Central, Southern, and Western Tuva and the hunter-reindeer herders, inhabiting the mountainous taiga districts of Eastern Tuva (Todzha and Tere-Khol¹⁴).

The hunter-reindeer herders differ from the pastoraalists not only in their economic activities, but also in many ethnographic specifics and in their origins. (Vainshtein 1961:3).

Pyotr Ostrovskikh, on assignment from the Imperial Russian Geographic Society in 1897, observed

Whereas the western regions of the Uryankhaiskii Territory are of a predominantly steppe character, the population is rather dense, and their main occupation is livestock herding, the eastern region is predominantly of a forested taiga character, inhabitants are rare, livestock herding is practically non-existent, but reindeer breeding and hunting of wild animals flourishes. The Uryankhais of western parts call themselves "Tuba" or "Tuva," but the Todzhins give themselves the name "Tuha" and "Tuhalar" (plural). (Ostrovskikh 1898:425-426)¹⁵

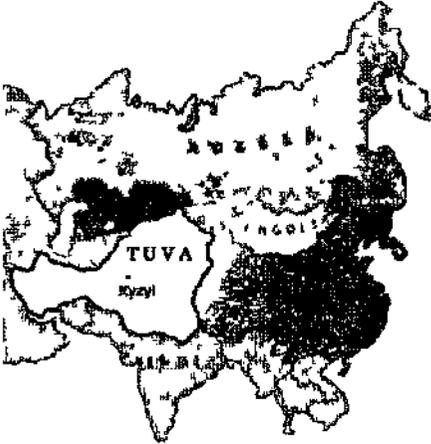
¹⁴ In this dissertation I do not separate out the reindeer-herding peoples of the Tere-Khol region (Kungmtuk) in southeastern Tyva. There are at present only two families still herding reindeer, with a total of fewer than 150 deer. These people are very closely related ethnically and historically to the Tozhu and to the Dukha across the border in Mongolia, and much of the analysis of the Tozhu is applicable as well to the people of Tere-Khöl.

¹⁵ Ostrovskikh goes on to note that the western Uryankhais' are "renowned thieves," but the Todzhins are "exceptionally honest, straightforward people and this can hardly be explained exclusively as a result of the Russian influence. .. but, I think, is also the result of tribal structure." (Ostrovskikh 1898:425-426).

The "Centre of Asia"

Since both Vainshtein and Ostrovskikh make such a point of the ecological differences between the Tozhu region and the rest of Tyva, it would be useful to situate

Map 2: Tyva marks in center of the Asia continent



the Republic of Tyva geographically (with a specific focus on orography), and then move on to differences between the Tozhu Kozhuun and the rest of Tyva.

Situated in the very center of the Asian land mass between 89° and 100° East and 49° and 53° North, the distance from Tyva to the nearest ocean is farther than for any other

place in the world. An obelisk with a plaque proclaiming "The Centre of Asia" in three languages stands in a small plaza in the capital city of Kyzyl, just below the confluence of the Bii-Khem and the Kaa-Khem, the two rivers that join at Kyzyl to form the Yenisei, the world's sixth longest river.

Tyva's territory occupies 170,000 sq.km. - approximately the size of the state of Washington - and is shaped like an east-west oriented chicken drumstick, with the meatier end to the east. It is 80 percent mountainous, with the remaining 20 percent predominantly inter-range depressions. Since Tyva's borders are defined by the peaks of several connected mountain ranges, its outline is clearly visible in satellite photos. An arc of mountain ranges with an east-west orientation, comprising the Western and Eastern

Sayan ranges, wraps around Tyva's northern border, while a matching east-west arc of the Eastern and Western Tannu-Ola ranges defines the southern boundary (the Tannu-Ola ranges separate the Arctic and North Pacific watershed from the self-contained watershed of the Central Asian basin). These arcs are joined together in the west by a series of massifs with a general north-south orientation, including the Shapshalsldi and the Chikhacheva Massifs, which define the western border of Tyva with the Altai

Republic, and are part of the Altai mountain range system. Tyva's southeastern border with Mongolia, is marked by the Sengilen Range. Finally, a series of north-south oriented spurs, the largest of which is called Ulaan Taiga, connects the Sengilen Range to the Eastern Sayans and completes the circuit, defining Tyva's eastern borders with Mongolia and the Buryat Republic.

There are also internal ranges within Tyva that divide the republic into four major inter-range depressions. Most dramatically, the Academician Obruchev Mountains, with an east-west orientation, separates the watersheds of the Bii-Khem and Kaa-Khem rivers (the two rivers that meet at Kyzyl to form the Yenisei), and in doing so separates the Tozhn (Todzhinskii) Depression from the Central (Tuvinskii) Depression. The peaks of this range, along with the peaks of the Eastern Sayans, also define the boundaries of the Tozhu *Kozhuun* ("district"; Rus. *raion*), at 44,800 sq.km., 26.2 percent of Tyva's territory and the largest of Tyva's 16 administrative districts. These mountain ranges also

Figure 3.1. The Centre of Asia Monument in Kyzyl, on the banks of the Yenisei.



•determine a peculiarity of Tyva's climate: its varied precipitation. While the Sayan ranges and the Tozhu Depression receive 600-10(30 mm of precipitation annually, the southern ranges and the Central Depression at their southern base get only 200 mm annually.

This disparity in precipitation causes remarkable differences in ecosystem types. The Tozhu kozhuun is characterized by deep, fast-moving rivers, hundreds of lakes, and dense forests, with mixed conifer (larch) and deciduous (birch) forests in the lower altitudes grading into fir, spruce and pine forests higher up. The high mountains above the tree-line are permafrost zones of glacier and alpine tundra. This northeastern quadrant of Tyva exhibits the geo-ecological characteristics of Northern rather than Central Asia, and can be considered a continuation of the eastern Siberia taiga ecosystem. The southern and western two-thirds of the country, on the other hand, resemble Mongolia, and can be considered part of Inner Asia. These regions have only very limited taiga zones, and are characterized by wide bands of mountain steppe, steppe proper, and desert steppe. In Tyva can be found not only the world's southernmost permafrost belt, but also the world's northernmost zonal desert ecosystems.¹⁶

Like Vainshtein and Ostrovskikh, the German historian and ethnographer Otto Mänchen-Helfen correlated ecological differences between the Tozhu region and the rest of Tyva with ethnic differences. Describing the road from Tyva's northern border with Khakassia to Kyzyl, which first runs through the Eastern Sayan taiga before dropping down into the steppe zone, Mänchen-Hslfen comments: "Suddenly the countryside is entirely different. The taiga has disappeared. To the south opens a wide plain, circled

¹⁶ In addition to personal observation, the information on the ecology of Tyva was culled from a variety of sources, including Carruthers 1913,1914; Govorov 1990; Grebneva and Shaktarzhik 1989; Krueger 1977; and lecture notes from "The Ecology of Central and Northern Asia," a course offered by Prof. Roman Zlotin at Indiana University in the spring of 1995."

by mountains and blown smooth by the winds of the millennia. The thin sod of hard grass makes it appear more denuded than bare ground. Siberia has ended; Central Asia has begun" (Mänchen-Heifen 1992[1931]:40). The Tozhu people of the taiga region "do not cultivate grain; climate and soil characteristics of the mountainous, wooded, swampy Northeast make agriculture impossible. . . . The Tozhuans live mainly from huntings" (Mänchen-Heifen 1992[3931]:59). In reference to the Tyva people of the steppes, Mänchen-Heifen observed: "Cattle, sheep, and goats are the animals kept by the Tuvans of the Khemchik Valley *kozhuuns* [west and central Tyva]. In fact, the western Tuvans live off their herds: hunting as a line of occupation is relatively unimportant (compared to hunting in Tozhu)" (Mänchen-Heifen 1992[1931]:69). Mänchen-Heifen also notes other significant differences in clothing, dwellings, and material culture between the Tozhu and the steppe Tyva.

As Mänchen-Heifen observes, the demarcation between 'the mountainous taiga region in northeastern Tyva and the semi-arid high steppes of central Tyva is abrupt and dramatic, and the differences between the peoples are likewise remarkable. In his elegantly written and highly informative two volume tome, *Unknown Mongolia*, the British geographer Douglas Carruthers pinpoints a certain stretch of the Bii-Khem¹⁷ (the northern source of the Yenisei) just above the confluence where the Bii-Khem and the Kaa-Khem¹⁸ join together to form the Yenisei, as the true demarcation between Siberia

¹⁷ Carruthers writes it as *Bei-Khem*. The Bii-Khem, referred to in Russian as the *Bol'shoi Yenisei* ("Big Yenisei" or "Greater Yenisei"), is the northern source of the Yenisei. The name comes from the Turkic word *beg*, meaning 'prince' or 'lord,' foccaase it is the larger of the two source rivers. In older sources it is referred to as the *Beg-Khem*.

¹⁸ The Kaa-Khem (Rus. *Malyi Yenisei* - "Small Yenisei" or "Lesser Yenisei") is the southern and smaller of the two source rivers. Its name is derived from the Turkic word *kkaa*, meaning 'manservant.' In some older sources it is spelled this way.

and Inner Asia. At this point the Bii-Khem squeezes through a narrow defile in the Academician Obruchev Mountains, creating the famed *Hut* rapids, and spills over into the Inner Asian steppelands of central Tyva:

Above the barrier are beautiful reaches of rapid-flowing rivers, clear deep back-waters and racing mid-streams, with their typical high-piled log-jams, spits of shingle, and palisaded banks of pine-trees. . . . Below the barrier there extends a more barren land of slow-flowing rivers which sweep in majestic curves across the wide steppe-valleys, a land of deforested hills and dusty plains, a land of altered conditions now suffering, it seems, from the great and far-reaching blight of desiccation — a condition brought about by the slow-moving but certain increase of aridity in the interior of Asia.

That part of the Upper Yenisei, which was truly Siberian in character, ended at the Bei-Khem rapids; below the rapids the land approached Mongolia in climate and in general aspect; a region which, as we came later on to learn, formed in reality a transition-stage between Siberia and Mongolia. (Carruthers 1913:177-178)

But it was not only the dramatic differences in topography and ecology that impressed Carruthers. Commenting on the differences between the reindeer-herding and hunting people inhabiting "that part of the Upper Yenisei, which was truly Siberian in character" and the rest of the Tyva population, Carruthers notes that

All other Uriankhai, apart from the reindeer-keepers, can be classed together. . . . [C]ertain conditions under which they live tend to make them all very alike in customs and character. The most potent influence in causing this resemblance is environment. . . .

An open country, which is easily accessible, has the effect of making these people less shy and more ambitious, with an eye to bettering themselves. (Carruthers 1913:236-237)

Among the differences Carruthers attributes to environment are the steppe Tyvans' use of felt yurts as opposed to the birch-bark tipis of the reindeer herders; their greater involvement in trade and commerce with the Mongols; their limited agriculture, which the reindeer herders assiduously eschew; and the fact that they raise livestock for meat,

whereas the reindeer herders rely on hunting for most of their meat and "probably never kill [reindeer] for meat, except under exceptional circumstances" (Carruthers 1913:236).

Carruthers, with his colonialist presentiments, cannot help but impute moral values to these differences: "The Uriankhai of the central and western basin, who own and cultivate their lands, live in a manner approaching to the more advanced state of the Abakan Tartars. The semi-sedentary habits which they are slowly acquiring indicate an approach to a higher state of culture, and grant, the possibility of the Uriankhai becoming in time a more useful and capable race" (Carruthers 1913:240). Compare this to Carruthers' depiction of the typical reindeer herder of the Tozhu region, who is

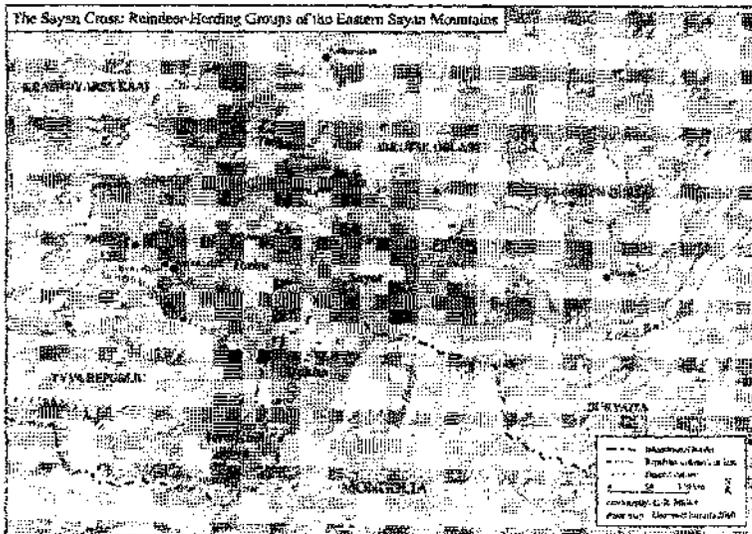
lazy and independent; he works only when he has a desire to work, and would far sooner run wild in the forest hunting the roe-deer and the maral and live in comparative poverty, than work for the Russian colonists and earn a good wage. He is a child of the forest, and has no desire to better himself. This has hindered his advance and doomed him to perpetual serfdom. (Carruthers 1913:215)

Reindeer Ecology and the Sayan Cross

While the Tozhu are notably distinct from the majority of Tyva people, they are much more similar to their neighbors in different administrative regions to the north and east. As discussed in the previous section, the Eastern Sayan mountain range wraps in a northwesterly-to-southeasterly arc, defining the borders between the Irkutsk Oblast' and Buryat Republic on the north, and the Tyva Republic and Mongolia to the south. A north-south running spur, the Uiaan Taiga, creates a natural border between Tyva and Mongolia. The peaks of these ranges neatly divide this region of southern Siberia into four adjacent quadrants - what ecologist Dan Plumley has dubbed the *Sayan Cross*. The mountain wall that Carruthers said marked the transition from Siberia to Mongolia also

marks the southwestern corner of this Sayan Cross region. While that wall of mountains serves to separate the reindeer-herding Tozhu people from the pastoralist Tyva people in the steppelands to the south and west, it is precisely this mountain ecosystem that allows for the existence of reindeer and thus unites the four closely related reindeer-herding and hunting groups inhabiting each quadrant of the Sayan Cross: the *Tozhu* in the southwestern quadrant; the *Tofa* of Irkutsk Oblast' in the northwestern quadrant; the *Ditkha* (*Tuha*; *Tsaatan*) of northwestern Mongolia in the southeastern quadrant; and the *Soyot* of the Republic of Buryatia the northeastern section, Inhabiting this fragile transition belt of taiga and alpine tundra between the Siberian boreal forest and the Inner Asian steppes, these peoples represent the southernmost extreme of reindeer pastoralism in the world and constitute the core of what I call the *South Siberian and Mongolian reindeer-herding complex* (Donahoe & Plumley 2003).

Map 3.2. The Sayan Cross



One of the most striking features of this area, and a feature that has played an important role in the cultural and political histories of these peoples, is the remoteness and inaccessibility of the Sayan Cross region. Compare the observations about the Tozhu District that we have seen above with the following. Regarding the Dukha, anthropologist Alan Wheeler has observed, "Of course, there is no wonder why little is known about this hidden people considering the extreme remoteness of their mountainous homeland of coniferous forests and patches of tundra" (Wheeler 1999:58). Larisa Pavlinskaya notes that reindeer herding among the Soyot managed to survive into the 20th century because "reindeer still enabled the Soyoi to travel through vast territories of mountainous taiga that were completely impassible by any other domesticated animal" (Pavlinskaya 2003:46). Tofalaria, the informal name for the region where the Tofa live, has been described as "that enigmatic country on the northern slopes of the Eastern Sayans, from its highest peaks down to its foothills, where roiling rivers finally calm down and smoothly carry their waters further, to the north. These severe, inhospitable places have from the earliest times been inhabited by tribal groups, who have come to be known under the name Karagas, or Tofa" (Svinin 1994:3). Linguist David Harrison, remarking that the three remote villages where the Tofa live "are accessible' only by helicopter or small 1950s vintage biplanes," links this remoteness to the Tofas' efforts at language maintenance: "The Tofas' extreme isolation has proved to be both a hardship and a benefit as they struggle with the impending loss of their language" (Harrison 2003:53).

Although this region lies at only between 50 and 55 degrees north, the altitude of the Eastern Sayan mountains (up to 3000m) makes for ecological effects similar to areas as much as 12 degrees (-1400 km) further north (Camithers, 1913:209, 218; see also Beach

1990:259), providing tundra habitat for the deer far below the tundra line. Further south, beyond the taiga zone, the landscape abruptly transitions into the semi-arid high steppes of Inner Asia, which do not get enough precipitation to provide the necessary vegetation for reindeer to survive. To the north "of this region, the Sayan Mountains descend quickly to a wide swath of flat, marshy lowlands — inhospitable to reindeer in the summer months because of the heat and swarms of biting, blood-sucking insects, with no opportunity for escape. For these reasons, the Sayan Cross region is like an island of ideal reindeer habitat far removed from the "mainland" of reindeer habitat in the tundra regions of the north.¹⁹

V.I. Rassadin described this situation with regards to Tofalaria (the homeland of the Tofa), but his description applies equally well to the entire Sayan Cross region: "The natural conditions of Tofalaria, situated in the mountainous taigas of the Eastern Sayan range, in the covered mountain taiga and supporting on the high mountain plateaux . . . wide expanses of high-mountain tundra, completely covered in *yagel'* - reindeer moss - presents itself as the ideal habitat for the northern reindeer" (Rassadin 1999:3).

Not only is the Sayan Cross region the ideal habitat for reindeer, but reindeer are the ideal animal for the people of the region. Carruthers himself, despite his criticism of the lifestyle of the reindeer-herding and hunting Tozhu, noted that "in such a region the only domesticated animal which could be of service to man is the reindeer" (Carruthers 1913:127). The reindeer has proven to be an exceptionally hardy, versatile beast (Paine

¹⁹ There are, of course, transition zones between this southernmost island of reindeer habitat and the tundra zones further north that in the past may have linked the Sayan Cross reindeer population with other reindeer populations. However, the reindeer population of the Eastern Sayans is now completely isolated from other reindeer populations, not only by features of the natural environment, but also by the Trans-Siberian railroad, which creates an east-west running line of population centers that bisects Siberia and has cut off the Sayan Cross region from the vast taiga and tundra regions to the north of the Trans-Siberian railroad.

1988:32), well adapted to the extreme cold temperatures of the Arctic tundra and the south-Siberian mountains (Kropnik 1993:166-167). The summer heat actually causes more problems than the winter cold. The heat of the summer causes the deer to move higher up into the mountains, above the tree line, in search of glaciers to avoid the heat and escape persecution from the swarms of mosquitoes, horse flies, midges, and other blood-sucking insects, which have achieved near mythical proportions in travelers' accounts of Siberia.

Reindeer have flexible, independent feeding habits (Beach 1990:269; Paine

Figure 3.2. Valya Sambuu milking a myndy (female reindeer).



1988:32-33). Their highly developed sense of smell allows them to locate lichens under deep snow, and their shovel-shaped hooves enable them to dig through deep snow to reach the lichens. Adults require little effort in the way of supervision and care; they are left free to wander and forage, and always return to their owner's tent. They require no prepared fodder to survive the winters as do other domestic livestock. Their broad hooves splay, preventing them from sinking as deeply into

snow as the much heavier horses (Beach 1990:270; Carruthers 1913:230, 234; Paine 1988:39). While certainly slower than horses in ideal conditions, conditions are seldom ideal, and reindeer are much more sore-footed on steep, rocky, ice-covered slopes than horses.

This coincidence of habitat and endemic species has given rise to a form of reindeer husbandry common to these Sayan Cross groups but otherwise unique in its history, methods, functions, ecology, and cultural expressions. While these south-Siberian and Mongolian reindeer herding peoples indeed breed and raise reindeer, they are very unlike large-scale reindeer "ranchers" of northern Siberia, European Russia, and Scandinavia, who live in tundra areas and raise large herds of reindeer principally for meat. The south-Siberian and northern-Mongolian groups raise small herds of deer in the taiga and alpine tundra (Donahoe and Plumley 2001, 2003). They use the deer predominantly as pack and riding animals (to facilitate their hunting). They avoid the slaughter of animals unless

absolutely necessary (Vainshtein 1980[1972]:126; Carruthers 1913:236; Ingold 1980:101), preferring instead fish and wild game as their principal sources of animal protein. Even though the herders of the Sayan Cross

Figure 3.3. A Tyvan postage stamp from the 1930s, when the Tyva Peoples Republic was, nominally, an independent state.



region don't raise reindeer for meat, the deer do provide an important supplement to their diets in the form of high-tat milk and milk products, especially in the summer, when the pastures are particularly luxuriant. Ingold says the Tozhu reindeer herders have "the closest approach to pure milch pastoralism based on reindeer," and considers this the most practical and efficient use of reindeer (Ingold 1980:100-101).

The colonialist assumptions and grand agricultural visions expressed above by Carruthers don't allow for the recognition that reindeer herding and hunting of the type practiced by the Tozhu and the other Sayan Cross groups may well be the most efficient and profitable use of this mountainous region of southeastern Siberia. The great majority of the land in the Tozhu District is not arable, and what minimal agricultural endeavors might be feasible would be vulnerable to the unpredictable vagaries of weather,

Reindeer herding in this region, on the other hand, has stood the test of time. Yairtshtein notes the existence in Tyva of 3000-year-old rock paintings depicting reindeer herding (Vainshtein 1980[19723:120; cf. Carruthers 1913:56), and cites a number of scholars who "have expressed the view that Tuvinian deer-herding is the oldest in Eurasia" (Vainshtein 1980[1972j:12i). Mänchen-Helfen likewise quotes Wihelm Koppers, who wrote, "[W]e believe the possibility remains that the reindeer was made the first herd animal by the prehistoric hunters in South Siberia" (Mänchen-Helfen 1992[1931]:48).

Reindeer herding for the Tozhu appears to be, like cattle and other livestock herding for the East African pastoralists and yak herding in the high Pamirs and Himalayas, the most efficient way to utilize available resources in light of the ecological risks and uncertainties, and an important buffer against environmental variability (Coughenour, et al. 1985; Ekvall 1983[1968]; Netting 1986:41-58; Shahrani 2002[1979]). Siberian herders have historically claimed that reindeer herding is the most economically stable form of subsistence, and that they never experienced the famine that periodically plagued Siberians who depended on other forms of subsistence (Knipnik 1993:87; see also Vitebsky 1992).

A unique culture has grown up around this mode of production, which is widely celebrated in the history, music, and folklore of this region (Carruthers 1913; Ergep 1994; Mendume 1965; Potapov 1969; Saryg-ool 1942; Vainshtein 1980[1972]; 1961; Wheeler 2001; Pavlinskaya 2002; Rassadin 1996; Kenin-Lopsan 1994, 1999; Sherkhunaev 1975). The Hungarian ethnographer Vilmos Diószegi has written extensively on the shamanic practices of the peoples of the Sayan Cross region, and noted the similarities in their shamanic practices and attributes in *contradistinction* to the shamanic trappings and practices of the steppe Tyva, Buryat and Mongol peoples (see esp. Diószegi 1962:147, 182-188). Even now, with Buddhism well established in the steppe regions of Tyva, Mongolia, and Buryatia, the reindeer herding peoples of the Sayan Cross are indifferent to Buddhism, retaining more of their animistic conceptions and practices (Pedersen 2001; Wheeler 2001 and personal communication 2003). Among the Tofa and Tozhu, any kind of Buddhist precepts are almost completely absent, while animistic beliefs are prevalent. One resident of Toora Khem, the provincial capital of the Tozhu District, newly arrived from the Erzin District in southeastern Tyva on the border with Mongolia, where Buddhism is quite predominant, complained that she had tried to organize study groups about Buddhism and other activities, and had gotten absolutely no interest from the locals.

All four groups of the Sayan Cross speak (or used to speak) very closely related dialects of the Tyva language. The dialectologist Sh.Ch. Sat, referring to the Tozhu dialect as "the most peculiar (T. *onzagai*) and interesting of all the Tyva dialects" (Sat 1987:73), observes that, "except for the Tozhu dialect, there are not such great differences among the Tyva dialects. . . . Because the dialect of the Tozhu people is so clearly different, the people of central Tyva refer to it as *tozhu chugaa*. ("Tozhu-talk"), as if it were a separate language" (Sat 1987:22). Linguist David Harrison likewise asserts

that "Dialects spoken on the periphery of Tuva differ considerably. These include the dialect of the former reindeer herding Tozha people²⁰ of northeastern Tuva," the dialect which "differs most radically from other varieties of Tuvan" (Harrison 2000:10). Z. B. Chadamba considered the Tozhu dialect interesting and different enough to devote an entire monograph to it (Chadamba 1974).

But while observers have remarked upon the differences between the Tozhu dialect and the other dialects within the Tyva Republic, others have commented upon the closeness of the Tozhu dialect to the other languages of the Sayan Cross. The Soyot no longer speak Soyot, having been linguistically assimilated into the majority Russian- and Buryat-language communities by the beginning of the 20th century, but the Soyot language was very similar to the Tozhu and Tofa languages (see Castrén 1999:265; Iriľdceva 2000:132-133). Only a handful of elderly Tofa still speak the Tofa language, which is easily understood by any Tozhu person,²¹ and shares many dialectal characteristics with Tozhu that are not found in the standard Tyva dialect. Writing in the 1930s, N.P. Dyrenkova explains that the linguistic similarities attest to the "unquestionable closeness of the Tofa to the Soyot-Tyva, especially to the Tyva-Tozhu, living adjacent to the Tofa" (Dyrenkova 1963[1934]:5). Petri cites Karagas (Tofa) informants as making a distinction between the language of the Tozhu and the language of the steppe Tyva people (whom Petri's informants refer to as "livestock people"):

²⁰ Harrison writes "former reindeer herding Tozha" here, and in fact the majority of Tozhu people have left reindeer herding. However, there is still a healthy population of reindeer herding families.

²¹ In fact, the Tofa language is quite understandable not only to Tozhu people, but also to any Tyva speaker, including the few non-native speakers of Tyva, such as myself, David Harrison, and Sven Grawunder. On field trips to Tofalaria between 2000-2002, we had no difficulty using our Tyva language to communicate with native Tofa speakers. In this sense, Tofa could be considered a dialect of Tyva.

To the south the Karagas territory is bordered by the Sayans, where live the Soyot. Here the border coincides with the international border as well. The Karagas distinguish two groups of Soyot: One of these is the "Soyot-Karagas".²² They live, nomadize, raise reindeer, and hunt just like the Karagas - they are "reindeer people," "nomads" - and speak the same language: "Almost exactly the same, just a bit different". . . , Besides these reindeer people live other Soyots - "livestock people" (steppe-horse raising Soyot). They "live in clear places" (steppes) and the Karagas "have nothing to do" with them; they've only "heard that such people exist." One Karagas who had come across these "horse Soyots" recalled that "it was possible to converse" with them, but that it was a "different language,*" "some words it was possible to understand, others it was not possible) (Petri 1927:23)²³

Another of Petri's informants succinctly concludes, "These Soyot, who travel by reindeer, speak exactly our language; but those others, who have livestock, they speak something different" (Petri 1927:23). Many of the remaining Dukha still speak their language, which is virtually indistinguishable from the Tozhu dialect of Tyva, except that it has more lexical items borrowed from Mongolian. As will be demonstrated below, the Dukha are close relatives to the Tozhu (and to the reindeer herding peoples of the Kimgurtuk region of southeastern Tyva²⁴), and their language is accordingly close.

Overlapping Ethnonyms

Beyond their shared ecology, economic activities, religious, linguistic, and other cultural similarities, these groups' overlapping ethnic histories, shared clan names, and the confusion of various self-designations and externally attributed ethnonyms, make it

²² *i.e.*, the Tozhu.

²³ Words in quotation marks are quotes from Petri's informants; words in parentheses are Petri's own clarifications.

²⁴ As mentioned earlier, in this dissertation I am not dealing explicitly with the reindeer herding Tyva people of the Tere-Khöl-Kungurtuk region in southeastern Tyva. However, by history, geography, and all the ethnic criteria discussed above (language, religion, economic activities, etc.), they also belong to the Sayan Cross reindeer herding peoples.

virtually impossible to separate these groups out from one another ethnically. The following excerpt of a table from Dolgikh will serve to introduce this confusion and highlight the constructed nature of ethnic groupings:

Table 3.1: Ethnographic Composition of the Population of *Krasnoyarsk Uezd in the 17th c.* (excerpted from Dolgikh 1960:272-273)

Ethnic Groups, Tribes, and Clans	Number of <i>Yasak</i> ²⁵ payers	Total Population ²⁶	Groupings of the 19 th c. Corresponding to the Clans and Tribes of the 17 th c.
SAMOYEDIC			
Karagasy	24	100	The Karagas [Tofa] of Nizhneudinskii Okrug; possibly some of them included among the Tuvinty-Todzhinty [Tozhu]
Kangaty	18	70	
Yugdinty	43	170	
Sayantsy	90	360	The Tuvinty-Todzhinty [Tozhu] of the Ak-Chodu and Kara-Chodu <i>sumons</i>
Kaisoty	30	120	Those who are now called "Tunkinskie Soyoty" [Soyot] of the Irkhit clan
TURKIC			
Sayantsy	60	240	Tuvinty-Todzhinty [Tozhu] of the Kol and Khoyuk <i>sumons</i>
Kaisoty	70	280	The Tuvinty-Khasuty [Dukha] near Lake Kosogol (Khubsugul) [Khovsgol] and part in south-eastern Tozhu District [Tozhu]

According to this table, the Sayantsy (a variation on the name Soyot), appear under both the Samoyedic and Turkic subheadings, and later came to be known as the Tuvinty-Todzhinty (Tozhu). Three different ethnic units (tribes or clans) appear to have consolidated to make up the Karagas, today's Tofa. However, some of the people from those three earlier groupings went into the composition of the Tozhu. Finally, the group referred to as Kaisoty in the above table appear to have been split into Turkic and Samoyedic groups in the 17th century. The Samoyedic branch becomes the Soyot, while the Turkic branch of the same group becomes the Dukha. The ethnonym Yugdinty is the

²⁵ *Yasak* is the term for the duty or tax paid to the Russian Empire, usually in the form of sable, squirrel, or other wild animal pelts.

²⁶ Dolgikh provides justification for assuming that the average family size at the time was 4; thus he arrived at these figures by multiplying the number of *yasak-paying* individuals by 4.

origin of the clan name Chogdu, which is widespread among the Tofa and Tozhu (see below). Sayantsy is, as mentioned above, a variant of the ethnonym Soyot, which is not only the name of the ethnic group living in the Oka and Tunka regions of western Buryatia, but is also a clan name among both the Tozhu and Dukha.

Iril'deeva explains that the ethnonym *Soyot* comes from a clan name, *soy an* (for a detailed discussion of this ethnonym, see Tatarintsev 1984). According to Iril'deeva, the first written records of the Soyot were Cossack tales of the 17th century, in which the Soyot were referred to as *kaisety*, *irkety*, or *soyoty irketskogo roda* ["Soyots of the Irket clan"] (Iril'deeva 2000:132-133). Other sources from the mid 17th century mention the Soyot (in the forms *sayany*, *soyany*) as living alongside the Tozhu (*tochi*, *tochigasy*) (Dolgikh 1960:257; Milier 2000[1941]:622; Vainshtein and Mannai-ool 2001:183), establishing a close link between these two groups from their earliest documentation. While the ethnonym Soyot (also *Oka Soyot*, *Tunka Soyot*) now refers exclusively to the officially recognized ethnic group of former reindeer-herding peoples living predominantly in the Okinskii District of Buryatia (the northeast quadrant of the Sayan Cross), it appears in many forms (*soiot*, *soyod*, *soyan*, *sayan*, *soyong*, *sain*, *soyeng*) in different sources as a clan name, a tribal name, or even the name of a much larger grouping of related tribes inhabiting an expanse of territory from the Irkut River in the northeast to the Altai Mountains in the west, and from the northern edge of the Sayan mountains in the north to northwestern Mongolia in the south. This territory includes all of present-day Tyva, the entire Sayan Cross region, parts of northwestern Mongolia and eastern Gorno-Altai Republic. Adding to the confusion is the fact that in many sources all peoples living in this area were indiscriminately referred to as *Soyot*. Serdobov points out that "In literary sources Tyvans up to the Revolution were called either *soyot* (*soiot*) or

uryankkaiisy"²⁷ (Serdobov 1971:239; see also Vainshtein 1961:38). Note, for example, Petti's comment above that the Karagas (Tofa) call all people on the other side of the Sayan mountains (i.e., in Tyva) "Soyot." Some sources refer to the Soyot as a subgroup of Tyva, as in the following definition from Wixman's *The Peoples of the USSR*: "SOYOT: Other designation: Tunica Soyot. The Soyot are a group of Tuvinians who have been partially assimilated by the Buryats" (Wixman 1984:180; see also Diószegi 1962:145; Vyatkina 1964[1956]:203). Other observers who make a distinction between the Tozhu and Tyva identify the Soyot more specifically with the Tozhu rather than the Tyva in general. For example, Serdobov cites archival sources as indicating that the Soyot (whom he refers to as *Soyan* in this context) came from the northeast of Tyva (Tozhu), and concludes that these facts "reflect the intimate kin connections [Rus.: *rodstvinnost'*] between the Soyans and the Tochi [Tozhu]" (Serdobov 1971:156). Iril'deeva asserts the ethnic closeness of the Soyot, Tozhu and Dukha:

The Okinskū District, where today live the main part of the Soyot, borders with the Tozhu District of the Republic of Tyva, where live the Tyva-Tozhu [*Tuvintsy-Todzhintsy*], and with Khubsugul'skii [Khövsgöl] *aimak* [region] of Mongolia, in the north of which live a people kindred to them, the Tsaatan [Dukha]. All three of these ethnic societies - the Soyot of Buryatia, the Tozhu of Tyva and the Tsaatan [Dukha] of Mongolia - are close to one another in language . . . , type of economy (hunting and taiga reindeer herding), and way of life. According to the suggestions of scholars, the Soyot are the descendants of ancient Samoyed population of the Eastern Sayans, who were subsequently subjected to Turkicization. (Iril'deeva 2000:132-133; words in square brackets are my clarifications.)

Moving on to the Dukha, it should be recalled that, according to Dolgikh's data, the Dukha emerged out of the Turkicised branch of the Kaisoty people, which, along with the shared clan names, links the Dukha to the Soyot, who also came out of the Kaisoty

²⁷ See note 11, p. 74.

people.²⁸ Until early in the 20th century, the Dulcha were, like the Tyva people in general, referred to as either "Soyot" or "Uryarikhai": "[the Dukha] were named without any distinction from the other Eastern [Tuvans] or Toji-Tuvinians to whom they originally belonged" (Farkas 1992, cited in Wheeler 2000:7). The Mongolian ethnographer Kb. Nyambuu links the Dukha (whom he refers to as *Tsaatan*²⁹) to both the Soyot and the Tyva in general: "The so-called Tsaatan are the Mongolianized forest Soyod Uriankhai of the Tuva ethnic group who nomadize in counties such as Ulaan Uul, Rinchenlkhumbe, Bayanziirkh, and Khankh of Khövsgöl *aimag*. They name themselves the Dukhalar and the Uigar, and the Mongolians named them 'Tsaatan,' metaphorically alluding to their herding of reindeer" (Nyambuu 1992:138).³⁰ In discussing the "Uryankhai" on the western shore of Lake Hubsugul (Khövsgöl) - i.e, the Dukha - Diószegi explains,

The members of this "Uryankhai" group call themselves *toha* (pi. *tohalar*). This self-given name furnished conclusive evidence regarding the problem at issue (transfer of cultural elements or ethnic identity), for the word *tohalar* is but a dialectal variation of the word *topalar*, the name the Tofas (living on the banks of the rivers Uda, Nerha and Gutara in South Siberia), as also of the word *tywalar*, the name the Tuvas (living along the Little and Great Yenisey and around the upper stretches of the Yenisey) have given themselves....

The self-given name *tohalar* and the said clan names make it evident that the *tohalar* (i.e. the "Uryankhai" group on the western shore of Lake Hubsugul) are ethnically identical with the *tywalar* (i.e. the Siberian Tuvas) and with the *topalar* (Tofas), so that — far from being different from the Tuvas - they are actually sylvan (Taigan) Tuvas. (Diószegi 1961:200)

²⁸ However, Wheeler saw no evidence of the existence of a clan name cognate with Kaisot among the contemporary Dukha (Wheeler 2000:20-21).

²⁹ The word *tsaaitan* comes from the Mongolian word *tsaa*, meaning "reindeer," and *-tan*, which means "with" or "having", thus gives the sense of "with reindeer" or "having reindeer" (for a more thorough discussion of the different ethnonymis variously applied to the Dulcha, see Wheeler 2000:6-10). Wheeler notes that while the term *tsaaitan* is used in Mongolia to refer to the entire Dukha ethnic group, the Dukha themselves only use this term when referring to their occupation, and do not consider it an ethnonym. In fact, the Dukha find the use of the term *tsaaitan* as an ethnic label offensive (Farkas 1992, cited in Wheeler 2000:8).

³⁰ I'd like to thank my colleague Kathy Petrie for bringing this source to my attention, and for translating relevant parts of it from the original Mongolian. The translation used here is hers.

Although in this passage Diószegi does not link the Dukha with the *Tozhu* specifically, his reference to "sylvan (Taigan) Tuvas" quite clearly aligns the Dukha with the Tozhu. Nyambuu is more explicit: "The Tsaatan people moved from the Tozh³¹ *khoshuu*^{λ2} of old Tuva and settled in their present herding area...." (Nyarabuu .1992:138).

Wheeler identifies two groups of Dukha, a northeastern group that has a long history in the area; and a southwestern group that came from the Tozhu District and the Tere-Khoi region in southeastern Tyva and settled permanently in Mongolia only in the 1940s (Wheeler 1999:60-61). If Dolgikh's interpretation is to be trusted, the northeastern group would most likely be composed in part of descendants of the Turkicized *Kaisoty* people, which suggests a relation to the Soyot. The second group can in fact be considered the same people as the Tozhu. The lands in eastern Tyva and the Khövsgöl region of Mongolia were hunting and grazing grounds for all of these Turkic-language reindeer herding and hunting peoples - the Tozhu, the Dukha, the Tyva of the Tere-Khöl region - who, until the first quarter of the 18th century, migrated throughout the region at will, without regard to international borders.

Wheeler explains that on several occasions between 1927 and 1956 the Mongolian authorities expelled the entire population of Dukha reindeer herders, along with their reindeer, to Tyva, but because of the good hunting grounds and good

" In fact, the Nyambuu text says "*Tom khoshuu*" which would translate as the "Large Banner." But this is clearly a typographical error in the text, since he goes on to list all the *khoshims* in the Tyva territory by name, including the "7Wi *khoshuu*," clearly meaning the Tozhu District. Then, in the same paragraph, Nyambuu enumerates all the smaller administrative units in the *Tozh Khoshuu*. As there never was a *Tom khoshuu* in the Tyva territory, and since the rest of the paragraph is specifically about the *Tozh-Khoshuu*, I must conclude that this first reference to *Tom Khoshuu* is an error. In a handwritten manuscript, the Cyrillic symbol for "zh" (*pic*) could be easily mistaken by a typist for the symbol for "m" (*M*).

⁴⁸ *Khoshuu* is the Mongolian word for "banner." It was a large administrative unit, and the term, in the form *kozhuun*, is still used in Tyva today as the largest internal administrative unit, equivalent to the Russian *term raion* ("district").

pasturage, these people persisted in returning to Mongolia (Wheeler 2000:41): "Due to these various periods of exile in the 1920s and 1930s, most of the current Dukha elders were born on the Tuvan side of the border and then brought to Mongolia as their parents returned to their traditional migration and hunting grounds" (Wheeler 2000:42). Shortly after Tyva became part of the USSR in 1944, forced collectivization was imposed upon the Tozhu, providing yet another reason for Tozhu people to cross over into Mongolia. Wheeler concludes that "After one final and unsuccessful attempt in 1952 to remove the Dukha, the Mongolian government finally recognized that the Dukha would not permanently leave the Mongolian taiga and in 1955 began to register them as Mongolian citizens" (Wheeler 2000:46). In 1958, Mongolia and the USSR signed a border agreement that more definitively demarcated the boundary between the two countries, and stipulated stricter surveillance from both sides. This effectively closed the border, thus permanently separating the reindeer herding people who stayed in Mongolia from their relatives on the Soviet side of the border (Wheeler 2003: personal communication).

In fact, "certain members of the Dukha population still have immediate relatives across the border in Tuva" (Wheeler 2000:10). Indeed, throughout my fieldwork among the Tozhu I often met people who had relatives in Mongolia whom they had not seen in decades. Baraan Sengeevich Davtk (b. 1928) explained that he had two older sisters (now deceased) who married reindeer herders from Mongolia and moved there in the 1940s. One had 11 children, the other nine. Since they moved, they had only had contact via the occasional letter.³³ Davik's daughter, Luda, was very interested in going to Mongolia to meet her cousins. Another elderly Tozhu woman explained that she had been born in the

³³³³ Interview with Baraan Sengeevich Davik, 14 January 2001, Adyr-Kezhig, Tozhu District, Tyva.

village of Tsagaan-Nur, in the Lake Khövsgöl area of Mongolia. She and her family crossed back and forth regularly, but when the border between the USSR and Mongolia started to be more strictly controlled, her mother returned with her younger brothers to Mongolia, while she stayed in the Tozhu Region of Tyva with her ailing father.³⁴ The border closed, and she has not seen them since. In a group interview with former herders from the *sovkhos Pervoe Maya* ("The First of May") in the Tozhu village of Iy, one elderly former herder chastised the Tozhu herders who had gone to Mongolia, saying, "Those people, they left here and went to Mongolia to escape work, to escape the work of the collective farm. They took our deer and ran away! Those are *SovTyva's*³⁵ deer. I even know which deer they took and who took them! There weren't any reindeer in Mongolia before!"³⁶

Even geopolitically, the Tozhu and Dukha territories have only recently been split into different nation-states. Until the Treaty of Kiakhta redefined the borders between Russia and China in 1727 (Dmytryshyn et al. 1988:70-78; Dubrovskii 1995:47-51), the area west of Lake Khövsgöl, referred to in Russian documents of that time as the *Kaisotskaya Zemlitsa*, was, like the Tozhu region, politically not part of Mongolia, but rather was considered within the territories of the Russian Empire (see Dolgikh 1960:263). Then, with the conquest of the Manchu Dynasty and the treaty of Kiakhta in 1727, both the Tozhu and Lake Khövsgöl regions were ceded to the Manchu dynasty.

These territories made up the northeastern corner of the Uriankhai Territory of Outer Mongolia, under the control of the Manchu dynasty. But with the collapse of the Manchu

³⁴ Interview with Aleksandra Charribalovna Baraan, 10 Dec. 1999, Iy village, Tozhu District, Tyva.

³⁵ Shorthand for *Sovietskaya Tyva*, the official name of the state farm after it consolidated with *Pervoe Maya*.

³⁶ Interview with Ak Koibu-ooJovich Myzhhyilai, January 2001, Iy village, Tozhu District, Tyva.

dynasty in 1911, the entire territory of present-day Tyva found itself in a tug-of-war between Russia and Mongolia, which Russia ultimately won.³⁷ Initially both the Tozhit and Lake Khövsgöi areas, so closely linked throughout history, were claimed by Russia, (as protectorate over Tyva) on behalf of Tyva (see Dubrovskii 1994; map #6 in Jackson 1968:78-79). Then, when the nominally independent Tyva People's Republic³⁸ was established in 1921, it also claimed within its borders the territory right up to the western shores of Lake Khövsgöi. This was never recognized by Mongolia, however, and at the third session of the Mongol People's Revolutionary Party in 1924, the Mongolian government made clear its intention of keeping the entire Tyva territory within the newly declared Mongolian People's Republic. The Soviet Union resolutely refused, conceding to Mongolia only "a small, sparsely inhabited strip of territory (about



Figures 3.4 and 3.5. A postage stamp from 1935 and a detail from a map clearly showing the Lake Khövsgöi region within the borders of the Tyva Peoples Republic.

Darkhat, west of Koso Kol [Khovsgoi] (Lake)" (Tang 1959:437; see also Friters 1951:130-131; Jackson 1968:61;



³⁷ For details see Bawden 1959[1965]; Dubrovskii 1994, 1995; Ewing 1980, 1981; Friters 1951; Tang 1959.

³⁸ Between 1921-1944, Tyva was known as the *Tyva Arat Respublika* (TAR - often rendered in English as the Tannu-Tuva People's Republic,) nominally an independent state but in fact a satellite of the USSR.

Leimbach 1936: 100-101).³⁹ This territory is, of course, the territory inhabited by the Dukha, and this decision, to which Mongolia reluctantly agreed, marked the first time that the Tozhu and Dukha territories were in different nation-states.

Despite this official cession of the area west of Lake Khövsgöl to Mongolia in 1924, Soviet and Tyvan maps of the 1930s and even a Tyvan postage stamp from as late as 1935 persisted in showing the territory of Tyva extending all the way to the western shores of Lake Khövsgöl (see Figures 3.4 And 3.5).

The Tozhit and the Tofa

As the remainder of this dissertation focuses on a comparison of contemporary Tofa and Tozhu, let us now turn our attention to their overlapping ethnic histories, and the common ground between these two groups. Some scholars have simply presented the two groups as the same people. In *The Peoples of Siberia*, Potapov identifies the Tofa as Tozhu: "A small group of northeastern Tuvans - the Todzhans - numbering several hundred, live at the present time in the Irkutskaya Oblast, in the taiga belt (Tofalarskiy Rayon) where they are known as Tofalars" (Potapov 1964[1956]:381).

Ronald Wixman, in his *The Peoples of the USSR*, claims that the Tozhu are simply Tyva people who have assimilated with the Tofa:

The Todzhan are a small group of northeastern Tuvinians (numbering in the hundreds) who resettled in Irkutsk Oblast among the Tofalars. These Tuviniars adopted the culture and language of the Tofalars and associated with them. They

³⁹ Darbaa (2000:36) gives 1923 as the year for this transaction. I'd like to thank Ivan Leighlon for bringing these sources to my attention, and for providing maps x and x, and the graphic of the Tyvan stamp. Mongolian sources indicate that the Darkhat region was never Tyva's (or the USSR's) to cede and that it was never part of the TAR. It has been suggested to me that the official surrendering of the Darkhat territory to Mongolia was simply official rhetoric allowing the USSR to save face while at the same time making the maps correspond to reality (Dr. Chris Atwood and Kathy Petrie 2003, personal communication).

now call themselves, and are called by the Tofalars and other neighboring peoples, Tofalars (Tubalar). (Wixman 1984:192)

Wixman concludes that "The only significant difference between the Tofalars and the Todzhans is that the Todzhans strongly resisted the influence of the Russians, whereas the Tofalars were strongly influenced by them. The Tofalars are being assimilated by the Russians" (Wixman 1984:192-193).

I have to take issue with both of these explanations: Potapov seems to be claiming that the Tofa (Karagas) are simply the Tozhu who remained in Russian territory (Irkutsk Oblast') after the demarcation of the border between Russia and China in 1727. This implies that the Tofa did not exist prior to that, yet Dolgikh has conclusively demonstrated that both the Karagas (the old name for the Tofa) and the Tochigas (the ancestors of the Tozhu) were recognized and documented by explorers and tax collectors in the service of the Russian empire well before 1727. Wixman seems to think the Tozhu are simply Tyva who happen to live in Irkutsk Oblast'. He appears to be ignorant of the fact that the great majority of Tozhu live not in Irkutsk Oblast', but in Tyva, where they are quite distinct from the majority Tyva of the steppelands. Nevertheless, the assertion made by both of these scholars that the Tozhu and Tofa are, in effect, the same people lends support to my argument of their ethnic and cultural closeness and interconnections.

Surviving clan names also suggest ethnic affiliation and closeness between the Tozhu and Tofa. Serdobov claims that "Among the clan composition of the Tofa was known the clan 'Tyudzhi'" (Serdobov 1971:155), clearly cognate with Tozhu.⁴⁰ Diószegi remarked upon the common clan names among the Soyoi, Dukha, Tozhu and Tofa.

⁴⁰ However, Serdobov does not cite a source for this information, and I have searched in vain for verification of the existence of such a clan among the Tofa.

Observing among the Dukha the clan names *sojan*, *aq čödu*, *qara čödu* and *sariy čdydu*, Diószegi noted that "we encounter . . . the *sojan* and *čödu* along the Great Yenisey [i.e., the Bii-Khem in Tozhu District], the *čdydu* among the Karagas (Tofas). The words *čödu* and *čdydu* are the Tuvanian. and Tofan variants of the same name" (Diószegi 1961:200).⁴¹ Variants of *choodu* (*chodu*, *chogdu*, *chota*, *dzhot*, *dzhotu*, *yogdu*) appeal* throughout the literature on the Tofa and Tozhu (see, *inter alia*, Doigikh 1960:258-259; Mel'nikova 1994:36-40; Petri 1927; Serdobov 1971:155-157; Vainshtin 1961:20-21; Vainshtein 1968:61-62). In fact, two of the five major clan names among the Tofa today - Ak ('White') Choodu and Choodu⁴² (formerly Kara ('Black') Choodu) - have direct counterparts among the contemporary Tozhu on the southern slopes of the Eastern Sayan, where the two most prominent family-clan names (of three) are Ak ('White') (shortened from Ak Choodu), and Baraan, which is somehow a mutated form of Kara ('Black') - shortened from Kara Choodu,⁴³

But how do the Tozhu and Tofa people themselves view each other? As noted above, Petri cites Karagas (Tofa) informants as distinguishing between the Tozhu and the Tyva people of the steppes, referring to the Tozhu as "Soyot-Karagas" and "reindeer

⁴¹ In addition, Diószegi observed the Dukha clan name *batiysi* in the Kaa-Khem region of eastern Tyva, where the Kungurtuk or Tere-Khöl reindeer herding peoples live (see note 14, p.77).

⁴² For two versions of a legend on the origins of the two Choodu clans among the Tofa, see Russadin 1996:41 and Sherfchunaev 1975:220.

⁴³ The fact that the Kara-Choodu among the Tozhu became today's Baraan clan is not disputed. However, I've never received a satisfactory answer as to the etymology of the name "Baraan," or why and when Kara-Choodu became Baraan. Serdobov is the only source I've seen that makes explicit mention of this: "In present-day Tozhu [1971] there are Ak-Choodu - 125 families, and Baraan-Choodu (evidently Kara-Choodu) - 73" (Serdobov 1971:158). Members of the Baraan clan explained to me that *baraan* means "black" in Mongolian, and that their name was simply the Mongolian translation of *kara*, which means "black" in Tyvan as well as in most Turkic languages. In fact, "black" in Mongolian is *khara* (cognate with Turkic *kara*). However, the word *baraan* is defined in Bawden's Mongolian-English dictionary as "dark, dark-coloured" (Bawden 1997:43), and is often used in conjunction with the word *khara* as an intensifier (e.g., *khara baraan kharankhi* "pitch-black darkness"; "extremely dark"). It is possible that in this way *Baraan* came to stand in for *Kara* in this clan name.

people," a clear indication of the Karagas (Tofa) people's own perception of ethnic identification with the Tozhu. In addition to stating that the Tozhu "live, nomadize, raise reindeer, and hunt just like the Karagas," Petri added that "With these people the Karagas live in constant interaction, especially in the summer. From them *the* Karagas acquire reindeer with which to increase their own herds. To them, the Karagas give in return gunpowder, shot, and other Russian goods" (Petri 1927:23). According to Tozhu and Tofa informants, there has always been intermarriage between the two groups, and Tozhu and Tofa regularly cross over the mountains to hunt, fish, trade, and sometimes to steal one another's animals.

Boris Akovich Oybak-ool, resident historian, story-teller, and jokester in the Tozhu village of Kham-Syra, explained that the Tozhu call the Tofa *Khaash*, while the Tofa refer to the Tozhu as *Choodu*⁴⁴ (see also Dolgikh 1960, n. 152). *Khaash* (variants *khash*, *kaash*, *kash*) is another of the five extant Tofa clan names, and a component of yet another, *Sary-Khaash*.⁴⁵ In fact, Vainshtein asserts that in the past there were not five Tofa clans, but rather eight, five of which included the component *-khash*: *Kara-khash*, *Tyrk-khash*, *Irge-khash*, *Tenek-khash*, and *Sary-khash* (Vainshtein 1968:61-62). (It should be remembered that, according to Vainshtein, *-khash* is a variant of *kasa / gasa*, which meant "man," "person" in Samoyedic (Vainshtein 1961:21), which is quite reasonable as a component of a clan name.) These various *-khash* clans were all in the northern and central parts of the Tofa territory, while the two Chogdu clans, *Kara-Chogdu* and *Ak-Chogdu*, were in the southeastern part of the Tofa territory, bordering

⁴⁴ Interview from 4 July 1998, Kham-Syra, Tozhu District, Tyva.

⁴⁵ The five extant clan names are: *Khaash*, *Sary-khaaxh* (or *Saryg-Khaash*), *Chogdu*, *Kara-Chogdu*, and *Cheptei* (or *Teptei*).

Tozhu. Thus the Tozhu refer to the Tofa in general using a widespread Tofa clan name, and the Tofa refer to the Tozhu in general using a different widespread Tofa clan name, an indication that, in the past, the ethnic boundaries were perceived by local people differently than the official ethnic groupings that have been more recently constructed and reified via tax rolls, censuses, official state proclamations and, of course, ethnographers.

A Line in the Sayans

What, then, caused a divergence of ethnic identification between these two otherwise virtually indistinguishable groups? Potapov, operating under the assumption that the Tofa are simply a branch of the Tozhu, explains that with the Manchu victory over Dzhungaria in the mid- 18th century, the territories north of the Sayans and west of the Allay mountains became part of the Russian state, while the lands and tribes to the south and east became the subjects of the Manchu (Tai-ch'ing or Qing) dynasty. Thus,

The genealogical and protracted cultural-historical connection between the Western Tuvans, Khakasy and Southern Altays was broken for almost two centuries. Also split up were the Northeast Tuvans-Todzhans. A large number of them remained *in* the Russian State - on their nomadic grounds in the Eastern Sayans, where they became known as the Karagasy, and after the October Revolution, as the Tofalars, (Potapov 1964[1956]:384)

Or, as Sergeev has put it.

The differences observed at the present time in the culture of the Tofalars and reindeer-breeding Todzhans stem to a large extent from their different historical destinies over the last three centuries. Whereas the Todzhans largely remained aloof from Russian influence, through their political conditions, the Tofalars had already felt the effect of Russian culture by the middle of the 17th century. (Sergeev 1964[1956]:474)

The defining political event that effected this division occurred in 1727, when representatives of the Russian and Chinese empires met three times to negotiate the border between the two great powers. The result of the first meeting, the Burinskii Treaty on the Definition of Borders between Russia and China,⁴⁶ outlines the border along a predominantly east-west series of mountain peaks and passes in the Eastern and Western Sayan mountains. The treaty continues:

Within the established borders of both empires, if again small ignorant people [i.e., indigenous nomads - *B.D.*] furtively migrate and within set up their yurts, if such be the case, then they shall be justly and diligently pursued, and all shall be conducted back to their own side.

Those people of both empires, who live together in mixed nomadic-camps,⁴⁷ if such be the case, then the situation must be justly and diligently examined, and each side must sort out and determine who belongs on which side so that the borders on both sides will be uniformly clear.

Those Uriankhai people who, on whichever side, paid *yasak*. (tax or duty) of five sables shall remain on that side of the border and continue to pay.

But those Uriankhai who in the past paid *yasak* of one sable to both sides shall from the day of the establishment of the boundary never again be required to pay.⁴⁸ (Dubrovskii 1995:49)

The second and third meetings resulted in the Treaty of Kiakhta⁴⁹ and a minor letter of agreement on the further definition of the border.⁵⁰ These two documents restate the conditions of the Burinskii Treaty, with minor clarifications. These agreements

⁴⁶ *Burinskii Traktat ob Opredelenii Granits Mezhdru Rossiei i Kitaem*, reprinted in Dubrovskii 1995:47-50.

⁴⁷ The Russian reads: "Oboikh imperil lyudi, kotorye kochev'yami pomesahV."

⁴⁸ While this is an accurate translation, it struck me as strange that any of the nomadic peoples should be exempted from paying the *yasak* forever after the signing of the treaty. Other interpretations of this treaty are also somewhat unclear on this point, but after extensive research and discussions with colleagues, my overall interpretation is the following: There were Uriankhai peoples (i.e., the ancestors of today's Tozhu, Tolà, Soyoi, and Dnkha) who were assumed to spend most of their time on one side or the other of the border. They would have paid *yasak* of five sables to that side. There were other Uriankhai who nomadized across the border who paid *yasak* of one sable to each side. As this treaty stipulates that such transboundary migrations must be prevented, those who paid one sable to each side will no longer be required to pay that, but would, presumably, still be subjected to the standard *yasak* of five sables, payable to whichever empire they ended up in.

⁴⁹ 21 October 1727 - see Dmytryshyn, Crownheart-Vaughan and Vaughan 1988:70-78.

⁵⁰ *Razmennoe Pis'mo o Dopolnitel'nom Opredelenii Granits Mezhdii Rossiei i Kitaem* (27 October 1727), reprinted in Dubrovskii 1995:50-52.

between Russia and China effectively drew a line in the Sayans separating the present-day Tozhu District of Tyva and the Khövsgöl Aimag in Mongolia, which fell on the Chinese side of the border, from Tofalaria and the Soyot National Aimag⁵¹ in Buryatia, which fell on the Russian side. The most telling statement in the Burinskii Treaty is the acknowledgement that these peoples were mixed, but that they nevertheless must be sorted out and defined, however arbitrarily, and prevented from further transboundary interaction, and that the boundary area must remain "clear." In this way, these treaties arbitrarily yet effectively split the Sayan Cross region into two and set the stage for the construction of separate ethnicities of the inhabitants.

While we cannot assume that, in an area so remote and peripheral to both empires, such externally imposed geopolitical borders could have been completely enforceable, it appears that the border delineation and increased efforts to strictly enforce it did have the desired effect of limiting transboundary nomadic migrations, and in doing so reduced the contact between the reindeer-herding and hunting peoples on opposite sides of the border. As Forsyth has put it, "The Treaty of Kiakhta in 1727 effectively closed the Russo-Chinese frontier. . . so that for the first time in history, movement between northern Mongolia and the southern edge of the Siberian forest was arrested by the phenomenon of a closed border" (Forsyth 1992:99). On the Russian side of the border, aggressive and ambitious colonization in southern Siberia proceeded apace, as Russian and Ukrainian gold miners, traders, trappers, and agriculturalists flooded the area, but for the roost pail, did not cross over into Chinese territory. As we have seen above, initial contact between

⁵¹ In 2000, the government of Buryatia changed the name of the Okinskii District to the "Soyot National Aimag" (see Pavlinskaya 2003)-

Russians and the ancestors of the Tolà, To?-hu, Soyot, and Dukha occurred at about the same time (in the 1630s); however, the 1727 treaties between Russia and China effectively brought such activity to a standstill in the areas that fell on the Chinese side, while colonizing activities were stepped up in those areas of southern Siberia that fell on the Russian side of the border.

In contrast to the very proactive colonizing efforts of the Russians, the Manchu approach to the nomadic peoples at the frontier was one of benign neglect: "Following the practice that had been applied so successfully throughout the rest of the frontier, the Ch'ing endeavored to disturb as little as possible the traditional system of government, preferring to adapt rather than to create" (Ewing 1981:187). Ewing goes on to assert that "Indeed, there were few areas of the empire which were so little affected by Ch'ing rule as Tannu-Urjankhai"⁵² (Ewing 1981:188), and, as a result, "Tannu-Urjankhai enjoyed a degree of political and cultural autonomy unequalled perhaps anywhere else in the empire" (Ewing 1981:189).

In this chapter I have demonstrated that, in addition to the ecological similarities, remoteness, and difficulty of access, the groups living in these regions have shared histories and closely related ethnic backgrounds, justifying ray treatment of this Sayan Cross region as an ethnic and ecological unit. However, the Tofa and Soyot have experienced some 350 years of intensive and at times overbearing contact with Russians and other "incomers," with far greater pressures (and opportunities) to assimilate, while the Tozhu, as a result of the delineation of the border between Russia and China in 1727,

⁵² Tannu-Urimikhai here refers to the territory of present-day Tyva and the Lake Khovsgol area of Mongolia.

have had interaction with Russians of a much less intrusive nature and of much shorter duration. An appreciation of these dynamics is central to understanding the present-day differences between the Tofa and Tozhu with regards to their senses of property in land and animals as will be detailed in the following section.

Part II

Property in Animals and Land

The previous chapter established the close links among the four reindeer herding groups of the Sayan Cross area with regards to their history, language, geography, and ways of life. In the remainder of the dissertation, I narrow the focus to the two principal groups of the study, the Tozhu and the Tofa. The focus on property in the next two chapters is inherently institutional, while the analysis of changes in property rights and conceptions over time as a result of pressures from political and economic events, and the ensuing impact on people's interaction with their social and physical environments, is essentially processual. Chapter 4 looks at the differences between the Tozhu and Tofa in their present-day conceptions of property with respect to the reindeer they raise and the wild animals they hunt, while Chapter 5 examines the strikingly different senses of property with regards to land expressed by contemporary Tofa and Tozhu peoples.

Chapter 4

Trust or Domination? Animals as Property

Introduction

The hunting and reindeer-herding way of life of the Tozhu and Tofa (and other South-Siberian reindeer herding peoples) confounds the neat typologies of production systems traditionally recognized in Western anthropology, as it blends traits of hunter-gatherers and nomadic pastoralists, thus blurring the distinction between these two production systems. For example, the south-Siberian reindeer herders share a number of characteristics with other nomadic-pastoral groups. Reindeer in these areas historically have had a great deal of cultural and symbolic significance, analogous in some ways to cattle in east Africa (Herskovits 1927). In addition to being measures of wealth (Vainshtein 1961:58; Mendume 1984; Petri 1927), they have served as important items of exchange cementing various social bonds (marriage) and at rites of passage (birth and death). In addition, shamans in this area were said to ride their reindeer into the spirit world, and reindeer images decorated their costumes and drums (Vainshtein 1961, 1991: ch. 6; Dioszegi 1961, 1962). Like other types of livestock, reindeer are ridden, used as pack animals, and milked.

Despite these parallels with other forms of nomadic pastoralism, reindeer herding in the taiga regions of Siberia is and always has been a secondary activity that facilitated the principal economic and productive activity, hunting. Wild game is the principal source of meat. In fact, hunter-herders of the south Siberian taiga have always been loath

to kill a domesticated reindeer for food, and only do so in times of dire need, or when one must be killed because of injury. Thus, Andreeva and Leksia note that, "One might say that in the taiga there are no reindeer herders but that there are hunters with reindeer" (1999:92). This has long been recognized by Russian / Soviet ethnographers, who even

Figure 4.1. Viktor Sambuu butchering an elk



have a special category for this type of reindeer herding — the Sayan type. Vainshtein, working within the framework of the "economic-cultural type" theory of Levin and Cheboksarov (see Humphrey 1980:5), takes great pains to specify the complex of productive activities and cultural attributes that define the Sayan type of reindeer herding, in which herders use the reindeer as pack animals, to ride, and to milk, but do not use dogs to help herd and do not use decoy deer to

attract wild reindeer to hunt (Vainshtsin 1980[1972]:121).¹

Ingoid (2000) has suggested that the relationship of hunting populations' to the wild animals they depend on is characterized by "trust," while the relationship between pastoral populations and their livestock is characterized by "domination." Using this distinction as a starting point, I suggest that for the Tozhu, their relationship to wild animals is still predominantly a social one based on trust, mediated by the *cher eeleri* (sing. *cher eezi* — spirit masters / owners of places, who are also the masters / owners of the wild animals in their places), and embedded in a "cosmic economy of sharing" (Bird-

¹ Vainshtein follows the typology of Vasilevich and Levin (1951), which breaks reindeer herding into 5 types: the Lapp or Saami type; the Western Siberian or Samoedi type; the Twigus or Siberian type; the North-Eastern type; and the Sayan type.

David 1992). Domesticated reindeer are treated analogously: reindeer are described as *angsyg* (wild animal-like); they have a special status that lies somewhere between wild animals and domesticated livestock, and are accorded respect similar to wild animals. The relationship between the Tozhu and their domesticated reindeer is not one of an owner and a property object, but rather a social relationship based on trust. In the Tofa case, these social relationships have almost completely broken down. Wild animals are seen in terms of their economic value and assumed to be the property of the person on whose land they happen to be at any given moment, while the great majority of remaining domesticated reindeer are the property of a single externally owned and operated enterprise that rents the reindeer to Tofa hunters during hunting seasons.

I suggest that the reasons for this difference lie in the different experiences the two peoples had with Soviet-era collectivization, and the fact that the *kolkhoz*' (collective farms; sing.: *kolkhoz*), and later the *sovkhozy* (state farms; sing.: *sovkhöz*), established during Soviet times were designed differently and set up for different purposes.² In the Tofa case, the collective and state farms were set up exclusively for hunting, with relatively small, well-defined hunting tracts doled out on a family-by-family basis that, somewhat paradoxically in the Soviet context, took on the character of *de facto* private property. The Soviet emphasis on meeting production quotas, along with ever-increasing competition from non-Tofa peoples, put great pressure on the wild animal resource base and led to intense competition for the wild game resources, disrupting the social relationships between humans and animals, humans and the *cher eeleri*, and between humans and humans. Reindeer were taken out of the domain of the family and raised by a

² See pp. 182-188 for a more general discussion of the impact of collectivization in the Soviet Union.

handful of specialists exclusively for purposes of transport. They became livestock for those specialists who raised them, and rental units for the rest of the Tofa, who used the deer for transport while hunting. This led to a de-emphasis on reindeer as a central part of the Tofa people's lives and culture and ultimately destroyed the intimate relationship between reindeer and people. In the case of the Tozhu, the collective and state farms were set up for reindeer husbandry and, to a much lesser degree, hunting. This difference has allowed the Tozhu to maintain their social relationships with their reindeer, while the lack of pressure on wild game resources (relative to the Tofa) has allowed them to maintain their trusting relationships with wild animals and with the *cher eeleri*.

Wild Animals as Property

In pre-Soviet times, when virtually all Tozhu and Tofa people were nomadic herders and hunters, wild animals, like land, were not considered anyone's exclusive "property" as such, but there were social relations among people built into the rights people could claim to wild animals. For example, a person from one band was expected to request permission to hunt on another's recognized territory (this permission was almost never refused), and if the hunter were successful, he was expected to share his kill with the recognized occupying band of that territory. Among the Tozhu at least, the practice of hunting on a different band's territory was so widespread that it gave rise to the custom of *uzha*, in which the member of the foreign band is supposed to give the highly valued ramp (*uzha*) of the slain animal to members of the band on whose territory he hunted.⁷

³ This custom most likely also existed among the Tofa, but I haven't found any references to it in the literature. Analogous customs have existed in almost all north Eurasian cultures (see Fondahl 1998:32 and

Thus while we cannot say that land or the wild animals on that land were objects of private property over which anyone had exclusive control, we can say that the recognized occupying band had the *rights* to the wild animal resources on their territory, and the *right* to a portion of any kill made on their territory by a visitor. The visiting hunter, in turn, could request permission to hunt on that territory with the *expectation* that that permission would be granted. This virtually automatic granting of permission and the subsequent sharing of the kill can be seen as an expression of a sense of *equal entitlement* to the wild animal resources (see Hann 1998:34). These rights and entitlements carry with them various social obligations as well. Ingold notes a "striking parallel between the alleged 'ownership' of territory, and the 'ownership' of animal kills in hunter-gatherer societies. . . . An owner is virtually obliged to distribute his spoils, just as he is to admit outsiders. It seems to be as rare, and to be regarded as equally reprehensible, for permission of entry to be refused as to withhold shares of meat" (Ingold 1987:134). As noted in the introduction, property can be defined as "a network of social relations that governs the conduct of people with respect to the use and disposition of things" (Hoebel 1966:424, cited in Hann 1998:4). According to this definition, the rights expressed above and the social relationships they're embedded in form a set of property institutions with respect to wild animal resources.

However, this standard anthropological definition usually assumes that the social relationships in which property is embedded are human-to-human. As Hann has put it, "property relations exist not between persons and things but between people in respect of

Forsyth 1992:50 on the custom of *nimat* among the Evenki and other Tungusic peoples; Ziker 2002a and 2002b on the "Law of the Tundra" among the Dolgan and Nganasan).

things" (Hann 2000:1). But in many indigenous contexts, the social relationships that property is embedded in are as likely to be human-to-non-human persons as they are human to human, and there are moral obligations that go along with those relationships, not only to other humans, but also to non-human entities.⁴

Numerous writers have remarked upon social relationship between the hunter and his prey, and it is this social relationship that gives the hunter the right to take his prey. In fact, many claim that the wild animal "gives" itself to the hunter as part of this social relationship, while the hunter, in turn, manages his hunting and protects the habitat of the wild animals in such a way as to ensure their continued existence (Brightman 1993; Harrod 2000; Ingold 2000, esp. chs. 3,4,7). Drawing on Bird-David's "cosmic economy of sharing" (1992), Ingold asserts that the relationship between hunter-gatherers and their prey is one of *trust*, characterized by a recognition that the hunter *depends* on the prey to present itself to the hunter, and a respect for the *autonomy* of the wild animal to either choose to give itself to the hunter or not (Ingold 2000:69).

In the Tozhu context there is likewise a social relationship, and one based on trust, as Ingold observes. However, in this case at least, the relationship is not so much between the hunter and the wild animal as it is between the hunter and the *cher eezi* (master / owner of the place), who is likewise the master of all the wild animals in his place.⁵

⁴ For discussions of social relationships between humans and non-human persons, see inter alia, Bird-David 1990, 1999; Brightman 1993; Hallowell 1960; Ingold 1987 (esp. ch.6), 2000; King 2002.

⁵ A note on the etymology: *cher* = place / land / earth; *cherlik* = literally, of the place / land, belonging to the place / land; but it always carries the connotation of "wild."

Stories of *cher eeleri* (plural) abound in Tyvan and Tozhu folklore. A *lool-chugcta*,⁶ *Askak ivilig aaryg angchy* ("The ailing hunter and his lame reindeer") recorded by Tozhu writer Alexei Nuguurak,⁷ features the social relationship between a hunter (and, remarkably, his deceased father) and a *cher eszi*. The tale begins with a young orphan hunter wandering in impenetrable, unforgiving taiga far from his home taiga. He has not eaten for days. He has used his last bullet and missed, and simply lacks the strength to search for food. He has practically given up, and is on the verge of death. And to top it off, his reindeer is injured and limping:

There's so much noise in the taiga it's as if a war going on all around him. The hoy imagines that the taiga is saying to him, "Hey, man, lie down and sleep for a bit, refresh your mind and body." The voice was so relentless that he couldn't resist, and he lay down beside a large white rock and fell asleep. In his dream, he saw the very taiga, he was in. He didn't know how he got there. An elk with ten thousand branching gold and silver antlers, legs as stout as huge larch trees, breast so broad that it pressed against both sides of the taiga valley and touched the raging river's rapids, touched his ear and said, "How I pity you, young man. Are you doing OK or not?" The young hunter was dumbfounded. He answered, "Nothing's good with me right now, Elk. I've fallen ill, and my friend reindeer is also ailing."

Then the Elk sniffed the hunter's ears, kissed his cheeks, his ten-thousand branching antlers reached up to the sky. "Understand this, hunter, and do as I say: The land will not deny medicine to a well-meaning creature. Be attentive, go find some medicine. I am very close friends with your deceased father: he protected me from being shot, he saved my life. So don't forget your father's words. You're very ill, young hunter, you can trust me. . . ." Then it left.

. . . And the hunter woke up. He felt much better. He began to think, "Did the Oran-eezi⁸ come to me? Did the Cher-eezi come to me? Is something good going to come, to me or am I going to die?" He began to remember his father's words: "Learn the many valuable uses of the elk: antlers, fat; also learn the mysteries of the taiga — its generosity with its wild animals, the medicine of its arzhaans,⁹ my son. For these supplicate, bow down your head. "

⁶ *Tool-chugaa* is a folk genre among the Ty va. It is sort of a tale with elements of the magical that is told as if it were factual, and it is often treated as if it were true.

⁷ This material is from a sheaf of unpublished materials that the writer Alexei Nuguurak gave to me.

⁸ *Oran* is another word for *cher*, hence *oran-eezi* is another word for *cher-eezi*.

⁹ Sacred mineral springs.

The hunter started walking, still tired and with, difficulty. He came to a place where the river leveled out and widened, and- he bent down and drank deeply. The reindeer also felt invigorated, started walking more quickly, shook off his rein and waded into deeper water where he could soak his aching legs, and began to drink. Both of them rested, then again drank from the cool clear waters. The hunter felt sated, his eyes cleared up. . . . The reindeer also. They drank their fill, and rested, and felt better.

The hunter looked around and saw something up on the cliff. He went up the cliff and found a fat mountain goat that had just fallen and died. The cher eezi had given him a gift to lift his spirits.

The fact that in this story the *cher eezi* is himself a wild animal (this is not always the case) further strengthens the argument; for the existence of a social relationship between humans and wild animals.

When preparing to go hunting, hunters will always supplicate the *cher eezi*. The hunter always feeds the *cher eezi* by tossing a morsel of food into the fire, even if all he has is dried bread (*sukhari*). In the morning, before setting out on a hunt, hunters will always fling spoonfuls of their morning milky tea to the fire and to the four directions of the earth (always beginning with the east),¹⁰ to show respect not only to the extent of the territory of the *cher eezi* whose land they happen to be on, but also to all the spirit masters of all the lands to the ends of the earth. When feeding the fire hunters will always say a few simple words to the *cher eezi*, sometimes out loud, sometimes silently. Dembirel Karanai, former hunter and reindeer herder resident in the village of Xharn-Syra, explained that part of his hunting ritual involved praying to the *cher eezi*:

I'd always go with a bottle or two of vodka. I *had to* take vodka. Then when I'd reach my hunting grounds, I'd first boil tea. Then I'd pray to the *cher eezi*, saying, for example:

¹⁰ There is a special nine-eyed spoon also for this purpose, the *tos karak*, which symbolizes the nine taigas (nine is the most sacred number in Tyvan cosmology — there are *tos deer* (nine heavens), *tos chuzun rnal* (nine types of domestic livestock), etc.) However, these aren't the same nine taigas for everyone, and although some people have concrete taigas in mind, it more symbolizes the cosmic unity of the hunter with all the taigas of the world.

*Please give me a big beast, a chilve with a fat uzha.
Please give me a young and willing beasi, a chtive with a fat tosh,¹¹*

Saying this you'd fling your tea, your vodka in the direction of the mountains and pray to the *cher eezi*.

Alexei Nuguurak has recorded the following chant, which he says a hunter would sing or chant to himself while preparing his bullets and cleaning and loading his gun. The hunter is very happy to be preparing to go out to the taiga to go hunting, and is in a very good mood:

*I've prepared and loaded my gun.
I'm gazing into the smoke of my fire.
Oh, my land! Be generous to me. (Present me with something)
I, your son, will soon come to you.*

*I've prepared few bullets.¹²
I'm sitting looking at the smoky deep dark forest.
My encircling Taiga, be generous to me,
I, your friend, your son, will soon come to you.*

*I'm not alone - I'm with a friend.
My trusty flintlock is in my hands.
I will go dreaming of a wonderful catch.
My true gun is in my hands.*

*I'm sitting thinking about my beloved land.
What you give me I'll thankfully accept.
I'll never complain that it's too difficult,
And I'll never brag that it was easy.¹³*

¹¹ *Chiive* means "tiling," and is used euphemistically to show respect for an animal by avoiding naming it directly. *Uzlia* and *tosh* are the rump and breast, respectively, the fattiest and most desired cuts of an animal. Recorded July 2001, in the village of Kham-Syra, Tozhu District, Tyva.

¹² It was a tradition to prepare and bring few bullets when one went hunting. This showed not only confidence in oneself as a hunter and faith that the *cher eezi* would present the hunter with some very good opportunities, but also a recognition of the power of bullets and the unfair advantage they gave to the hunter over his prey.

¹³ It was also a custom never to brag that the hunting was easy. To do so would be like patting oneself on the back and taking credit for a successful hunt, when in fact it's all up to the *cher eezi* and not the hunter.

If the hunter makes a kill, he cooks some of the meat and gives the first morsel of the best bit to the fire (e.g., the purely fatty tip of the *tosh*, breastbone). And when the hunt is unsuccessful, the hunter wonders how he has offended the *cher eezi*, if somehow he has not upheld his part of the trusting relationship, for this relationship entails certain responsibilities on the hunter's part in addition to feeding the fire. In some cases, there are places where hunters may not hunt at all, may not cut down trees, may not set fires, may not camp overnight, etc. For example, in the Serlig Khem region of the Tozhu district of Tyva, where I carried out much of my fieldwork, there is an unusual hillside of gray mud, approximately 50 meters high by 80 meters wide. Water springs from the top of this hillside and slowly trickles down, keeping the area permanently muddy. At various small level spots on the way down the hillside, water collects in small puddles, and strange-shaped "rocks" can be found. These in fact are not rocks, but accretions of hardened mud that have tumbled down and been smoothed and shaped by the flow of water into forms often resembling people or animals. Hence the name of the place, *Charash Tashtyg*, which means, "With Beautiful Stones." This is considered a sacred site among the Tozhu, and one must not spend the night on the top of this hillside. The story goes that if one does spend the night there, the *cher eezi* won't let you sleep, and if you manage to fall asleep, you'll die within the year. One of my informants told me that, approaching *Charash Tashtyg* in the dark and from an unfamiliar direction, she unknowingly tried to spend the night there. All night the wind blew through the trees and she could hear the *cher eezi* telling her to leave. She couldn't fall asleep, and finally at about 4 in the morning, a strange man came to her and got her up and told her to move

on. She left, and it was only as she was leaving that she realized she had been at *Ckara.sk Tashtyg*, and that, the strange man was not a man at all, but the *cher eezi*.

Tozhu hunters must also observe proscriptions against killing certain types of animals. As former hunter/herder Sbombul Sotbaevich Sambuu put it,

White animals must not be shot - it was said that they were the *cher eezi*- White elk, white moose, white bears - any completely white thing. Around here there was a white deer, and no one dared touch it. There was also a completely blood-red bear, and white breasted elks. If a hunter encountered such an animal, he would immediately go to the shaman to be shamanized over and purified. The shaman would look him over and decide: if it was a bad omen, then he would purify the hunter and get him out of danger; if it was a good omen, the shaman would compound the hunter's good fortune.¹⁴

Former hunter/herder Mikhail Kenden seconded the proscription against killing white animals with animals with otherwise distinctive markings, and added that one should never kill more than one needs: "If in one place a hunter were to shoot three or four animals, he would be scolded by the elders. 'Aren't there any other hunters who will come after you?' they would scold. 'Won't any of your own children come after you?'"¹⁵ By following these proscriptions, the hunters show their respect for the place, for the *cher eeleri*, maintain their part of the trusting relationship not only with the *cher eeleri* but also with their fellow hunters, and, in the process, help to protect the environment.

These examples clearly illustrate that wild animals are in a sense considered the property of the *cher eezi*. It is the *cher eezi* who decides whether or not to give an animal to the hunter; it is the *cher eezi* that the hunter fears and respects, to whom he petitions for help in the hunt, whom he thanks for success, and with whom he establishes the

¹⁴ Interview with Shombul Sotbaevich Sambuu (b. 1921) in his home in Adyr-Kezhig, Toihu District, 13 January 2001.

¹⁵ Interview with Mikhail Dondup-oolovitch Kenden (80 years old) in his home in Adyr-Kezhig, Tozhu District, Tyva, 14 January 2001.

relationship of trust, not with the animal directly. Wild animals are the medium constituting the social relationship between the hunter and the *cher eezi*. Hence the hunter's rights to take a wild animal, i.e., his property rights with respect to wild animals, are embedded in this social relationship with the *cher eezi*. In this way, then, these hunters are entering into a "cosmic economy of sharing" to use Nurit Bird-David's phrase.

Reindeer as property

Reindeer among the Tozhu also enter into this cosmic economy of sharing. Despite a series of transformations in the official (*de jure*) recognition of reindeer as property through Soviet times to the present, the relationship between Tozhu reindeer herders and their reindeer has remained fundamentally a social one. In this section, I will discuss how reindeer have been officially recognized as property first by the Soviet state and now, in post-Soviet times, by the Russian Federation, and how reindeer herders have reacted to that official status. This is an economicist conception of property imposed on the reindeer herders during Soviet times that *disembeds* (Hann 2000:4) property from its social context and in particular neglects the indigenous conception of social relationships between human and non-human persons and the moral obligations those relationships entail. Then, returning to Ingold's discussion of trust and domination, I will make the argument that the Tozhu reindeer herders' relationship to their reindeer is not a proprietary relationship, but rather a social one, based on trust and sharing (reciprocity) and not on domination, hence is akin to their relationship to wild animals.

In the following discussion of the officially recognized property rights with respect to reindeer, I am considering reindeer as the "property" of the entity who has proprietary and disposition (alienation) rights over reindeer, and am not considering use rights (because reindeer herders in all cases I'm aware of have always had use rights, whether the reindeer were considered state property or not).¹⁶

In pre-Soviet times, reindeer were customarily considered the private property of individual families, meaning that individual families had exclusive rights of access to and disposal of their reindeer and that reindeer constituted the principal form of wealth among the Tozhu.¹⁷ With the rise of the nascent Soviet state, the new Soviet government embarked on a massive collectivization campaign. Lees and Bates note that an "environmental event" suitable for analysis "need not simply arise from 'acts of nature' such as abnormal rainfall," but can also arise from "policy decisions and centralized planning" (Lees and Bates 1990:252). Collectivization then can be viewed as an event in Lees and Bates' terms, or as a "diagnostic event," to use Moore's terms (Moore 1987:730; see Chapter 2). In the case of the Tozhu, collectivization meant that all reindeer herders were encouraged to turn their entire herds over to the newly formed *kolkhozy* and to become members of the *kolkhozy*. Officially, the members of the *kolkhozy* held all property (land, livestock, buildings, equipment) in communal ownership. In practice, however, only the administrators of the *kolkhozy* could exercise any effective proprietary and disposition rights over *kolkhoz* property, including reindeer.

¹⁶ Here I'm discussing property as bundles of rights that can be divided into four kinds of rights: proprietary, exclusionary, disposition, and use rights (see Osherenko 1995 for one explanation of this). "This is according to ethnographic and travellers' accounts, all of which were written by non-indigenous peoples and as such carry with them ethnocentric European assumptions about property, therefore almost certainly don't reflect the indigenous conceptions about reindeer as property at that time.

The range of choices and decisions made by individuals under these changing circumstances exemplifies human agency at work. While most of my informants have told me that they (their parents) willingly joined the *kolkhozy*, there were a number who refused to join. In time, most of these recalcitrant herders were also forced to join. But the herder-hunters didn't always accept this passively. Herders employed a number of what Scott has called "weapons of the weak" (1985). Shamans and other community leaders incited reindeer herders to resist collectivization (Mendtme 1984:160). Several herding families fled to Mongolia to avoid having their personal herds seized and forcibly collectivized.¹⁰ Some reindeer herders slaughtered livestock to avoid having to give them over to the state; others hid parts of their herds in remote and inaccessible areas, thereby managing to underreport the number of head of livestock; still others simply retreated so deeply into the taiga that no one could effectively manage them or force them to join the *kolkhozy*. These people maintained private herds throughout Soviet Limes and have attained an almost legendary status, and they (or their descendants), if they are still herding, are spoken of reverentially as the real "private" herders.

in 1969, the three *kolkhozy* in Tozhu were transformed into *sovkhozy*. The principal difference between a *kolkhoz* and a *sovkhov* is that the property is no longer owned collectively by the members, but rather is officially the property of the state. Hence reindeer (in addition to land, buildings, etc), became the official property of the state. In practice, this didn't really change much, as the herders themselves had already been deprived of their proprietary and disposition rights under the *kolkhoz* administration,

¹⁰ The descendants of these people make up the *care* of the *Dukha* (Man.: *Tsaaiari*) reindeer herders in the Hövsgöl region of northwestern Mongolia.

but could still use the reindeer to ride and for their milk. However, herders managed to accrue small private herds in a number of ways. A few herders were allowed to maintain private herds of deer for exclusive use by the *gospromkhoz's* (state hunting enterprise) official hunters. The most productive *kolkhoz* (and later, *sovkhoz*) herders were annually recognized and awarded prizes in the form of live reindeer given over into their private ownership. Additionally, if a herder managed, to oversee the birth of more than 80 calves per 100 female deer¹⁹ he could keep the overproduction as his own private property. The offspring of these private deer were also considered private. Finally, some herders would falsely report deer as having died of illness or having been killed by predators, and then would keep these deer separate and raise them as private deer.

The relationship between the herders and the *sovkhoz* is in some ways analogous to a patron-client relationship (see Ensminger 1996:110ff), with the state acting as the patron. As such, it is susceptible to the same abuses. My informants have acknowledged with a wink and a nod that, somehow it seemed that, only the *sovkhozes'* deer, and never these private deer, died of illnesses or were killed by predators.²⁰

As the Soviet Union crumbled, state subsidies to the *sovkhozy* dried up, and the *sovkhozy* in Tozhu collapsed. This collapse of the state farm system throughout Russia in general and in the Tozhu and Tofa regions specifically represents yet another diagnostic event in the histories of these peoples. In this case, measures to improve economic efficiency and the withdrawal of state subsidies have thrust the transaction costs previously borne by the state onto individual herders. The herders' and other people's

¹⁹ Some herders told me it was 70 per 100.

²⁰ This recalls the experience of certain wealthy but unpopular livestock owners among the Orma whose hired herders sold off cattle and then claimed that the animals had died as a result of drought (Ensminger 1996:121).

choices, decisions, and actions in response to these new circumstances reflect the changing opportunities and constraints that confront individuals. Reindeer, as one form of *sovkhov* property, were doled out not only to herders, but to all members of the former *sovkhov*, including tractorists and drivers and kindergarten teachers, etc., no one got very many. A few herders who had substantial enough private herds²¹ officially registered themselves as *aratskoe (fermerskoe) khozyaistvo* (peasant enterprises), which gives them a long-term lease on land and allows them to operate as private, small-scale entrepreneurs. Others who had enough private deer simply went off on their own without any official lease on land. The majority of herders, however, didn't have enough deer to make it on their own. In many cases they were forced to slaughter their few remaining deer for food or sell live animals for money. Those who wanted to remain in herding but didn't have enough deer of their own joined their herds and created *obshchiny* (singular: *obshchina*: kin-based communal enterprises - see Chapter 6 for a more complete discussion of these responses to the collapse of the *sovkhovs*).

Regarding reindeer as property, the *obshchiny* were similar to the *kolkhozy* in that the reindeer were considered the collective property of the members, and the members, in theory, did not have disposition rights without the permission of the *obshchina* director. In practice, however, the herders treated the reindeer as if they had proprietary and disposition rights over them, justifying this by saying that since the *obshchina* had not paid them or provided the promised material support, the reindeer had in effect become their private property, in lieu of back pay. For example, all the herders of the Serlig

²¹ Or who had connections to get substantial numbers of deer. For example, one former *sovkhov* director managed to buy up a number of deer from other herders

Khem branch of the Ödtigen *obshckina* treated the *obshchina*-owned reindeer in their care as if they were private property, disposing of reindeer as they saw fit without getting permission from the *obshchina* director. If they desperately needed meat they would slaughter a reindeer without getting permission (albeit rarely). If they sold an animal, they would keep the money for themselves. While these activities had been going on somewhat surreptitiously for some time, the issue came out in the open when several herders challenged the authority of the *obshchina* director to participate in a large deer sale to Mongolia. When the *obshchina* director sent word that the herders were to contribute a few of the *obshchina* deer in their care to this sale, one of the herders stated flatly, "I just won't give them. I don't have enough deer." Another was willing to sell deer, but only if he were paid directly by the buyer and given 100% of the purchase price. "If they don't put the money right in my hand, I'll turn around and come back with the deer," he said. Rodion Sambuu, the *obshchina* director, acknowledged that there wasn't anything he could do about this situation. This proposed deer sale, which ultimately failed due to official restrictions on the cross-border transportation of livestock, was a "diagnostic event" that went far toward instituting *de facto* private ownership of reindeer. After this event, Svetlana Khoyadyr, in 2001 the mayor of the village of Iy and by default the director of the Ulug Dag *obshchina*, remarked that the *obshchina* hadn't been able to pay herders' salaries or provide them with basic necessities. In fact, the *obshchina* had for all intents and purposes collapsed, and the deer, while officially still the property of the *obshchina*, were now considered the private property of the herders. "There's no official paperwork," she said. "But everyone knows it and no one's arguing it. The deer have become theirs because we haven't paid them."

In 2001, the four largest *obshchiny* in Tozhu were restructured into a *GUP* (*Gosudarstvennoe Uniiatnoe Predpriatie* — Unified State Enterprise). The *GUP* is similar to a *sovkhos* in that the physical assets all once again belong to the state, and the state is supposed to pay the herders and hunters a salary. However, there are contradictory views as to what this means. The herders still feel that they have rights of disposition over the deer, while the *GUP* director and the representative from the Ministry of Agriculture

Figure 4.2. Social Deer



stated categorically that the deer were the property of the state, and not of the herders.

The above discussion pertains to the *official* recognition of reindeer as property. But reindeer in the indigenous Tozhu conception are non-human persons that, like the *cher eeleri* enter into social relations with humans. The rights that people have with respect to reindeer are negotiated through that social relationship and carry with them moral obligations. In this sense, I am not discussing property rights people hold over reindeer vis-à-vis other people and the social relationships among humans in which those rights are embedded, but rather the rights humans and reindeer have over each other and which are embedded in the social relationship between humans and reindeer.

In his discussion of trust and domination, Bigod asserts that the two principles are mutually exclusive, and that you will never find, for example, a relationship between a pastoralist and his livestock based on trust:

These principles of relationship [trust vs. domination] are mutually exclusive: to secure the compliance of the other by imposing one's will, whether by force or by more subtle forms of manipulation, is - as we have seen - an abrogation of trust, entailing as it does the denial rather than the recognition of the autonomy of the other on whom one depends. (Ingold 2000:72-73)

However, citing Pernille Gooch's study of the Van Gujjars,²² nomadic buffalo pastoralists in northern India, Ingold notes that the Van Gujjars present

a fascinating exception to this argument, in three respects. First, the Van Gujjars relate to their buffaloes in the same way that they relate to other animals native to the forest: thus if the latter are classed as 'wildlife,'¹ then buffaloes are wildlife too, despite their evident tameness and familiarity with humans. . . . Secondly, the principle of this relationship, according to Gooch, is one not of domination but of trust. . . . The key to understanding this case lies in the fact that the Van Gujjar do not hunt, nor do they ever kill or eat their buffaloes - the animals are kept exclusively for their milk, and eventually die of old age. . . . [This] divests the caring relationship of its more coercive, authoritarian aspects. Though more cared for than caring, buffaloes retain a measure of control over their destiny. (Ingold 2000:422)

I suggest that the Tozhu reindeer herders have a relationship with their reindeer that is based more on trust than on domination, analogous to that of the Van Gujjars with their buffalo. Reindeer "are not considered domestic animals" (Dongak 1994:91). Yet they are selectively bred, herded, castrated, saddled and ridden, used as beasts of burden, tied up, hobbled, milked and (rarely) slaughtered and eaten. How is it, then, that they are not considered domestic animals?

The relationship of domination between humans and domesticated livestock is based on two fundamental assumptions: 1) livestock need to be cared for - they must be constantly protected from predators by staying with them during the day and corralling them at night, fodder needs to be prepared for the winter months, etc.; and 2) the

²² The Van Gujjars are a subgroup of a large and diverse people known as the Gujjars. While the majority of Gujjars are village agriculturalists and may practice either Hinduism or Islam, all of the nomadic pastoralist Van Gujjars practice a syncretic form of Islam that has elements from a Hindu past (Gooch 1998:27).

livestock are raised as least partly to be slaughtered for meat Reindeer, however, are by nature independent, capable of defending themselves, and don't rely on humans for their food (although the herders provide rock-salt when they have it). In fact, in the dead of winter, the herds are often left to forage completely on their own, with the herders tracking them down to check on them once or twice a week just to make sure they know where the deer are. There is a feeling of respect for reindeer among Tozhu people. Herders talk of reindeer as *luskai* (special), *onzagai* (exceptional), *kaigamchyk* (remarkable). Reindeer are often referred to as *shydamyk*, which means "tough, capable, durable," in comparison to other livestock, even the revered horse. The following *kozhamyk*²³ celebrates the pride a Tozhu youth takes in his/her reindeer:

*Upon my reindeer I'm a fine fellow,
I'll go up into the Taiga.
Upon your cow you, my friend,
Can't follow in my tracks.*

*Upon my reindeer I myself
Will go up into Sharym Taiga.
Upon your ox you, my friend,
Can't hope to keep up with my reindeer.*

Among the Tozhu, reindeer are considered *angsyg* - wild animal-like - and the herder-hunters have a very ambivalent relationship to them. Domesticated reindeer differ very little from their wild cousins in appearance; they are of the same species (*Rangifer tarandus*), and can interbreed.²⁴ If not properly looked after, reindeer will turn feral - in

²³ *Kozhamyk* (pi. *kozhamyktar*) are rhymed ditties, usually humorous and / or boastful, often sung against another person or team in a back-and-forth form of good-natured competition. This one was recorded from Elizaveta Kenden, former reindeer herder and hunter and font of songs and stories, in her home in Adyr-Kezhig, Tozhu District, Tyva, 14 January 2001.

²⁴ The ambivalent attitude of Tozhu reindeer herders to allowing wild reindeer to mate with a domesticated female reflect the ambiguous position of the reindeer: There is fear that the female will run off with the wild male; fear that the calf will be too unruly to domesticate. Yet there is an interest in seeing this union

Tyvan, they become *cherlik* (of the land = wild). They are of the land and they can return to the land at any time - they are not dependent on the herder, and the herder knows this. There is a respect for their autonomy, which is one of the features in gold has noted as characteristic of the trusting relationship between hunters and wild animals. I believe that this relationship is one of the reasons the Tozhu, like the Van Gujjars with their buffalo, are loath to slaughter a reindeer for food - to do so is the ultimate abrogation of that trusting relationship. While the Tozhu will on occasion kill a reindeer, they must have very good justification for doing so - either for sacrificial purposes (usually to provide meat for a funeral or for a very ill family member), or because the deer's spine has cracked and it must be killed, or because the herders are in such dire need of food that there is simply no other alternative, at which time they will rationalize by manufacturing a sacrificial occasion to do so.

Gooch notes that "buffaloes are creatures which are seen to have sentiments and sensibility and which ought to be treated nicely within the moral order of things" (Gooch 1998:193). The Tozhu reindeer herders likewise treat their deer with care and respect, and doing so is an integral aspect of being an *ivizhi*, a reindeer herder, or, more literally, a *reindeer-er*.

Who is an Ivizhi?

The right to identify oneself as an *ivizhi* can be construed as a form of cultural property among the Tozhu. While few people seriously aspire to become reindeer herders because

on occasion, because the calf will be stronger and larger than others, and because it brings new blood into the herd (cf. Vainshtein 1980[1972]:123 for one opinion on this).

of the difficulties and deprivations of the lifestyle, the reindeer herding way of life is respected and held in some degree of awe among Tyvans generally. It is celebrated in poetry, song, myth, and fiction, perhaps most famously in the novel *Ödiligende Taiga* (Ergep 1994). A line from the popular folk song *Tozhu Yry* (Song of Tozhu) proclaims "*Ivizhi clep eres attyg*" (Kenesh 2001:21, words by Leonid Chadamba). This translates to "To be called an *ivizhi* is to have a brave and daring reputation."

Knowing how to treat one's reindeer is an important criterion for being accepted as an *ivizhi*. This was demonstrated to me in the fall of 2000. I had been taken on a fishing day-trip by two Tyvan men, neither of whom was a reindeer herder. One was the son of the herders I lived with. He was an accomplished hunter, but he himself had never lived with the herds for extensive periods of time, and only came out to the taiga in the fall to hunt. The other was a family friend who also had come out to hunt. We stayed at the lake a bit later than we anticipated, and when we saddled up to head back, the sun began to set and the temperature dropped dramatically. The leader of our expedition, the younger of the two and the son of the herding family, pushed the deer exceptionally hard, making them run faster and longer than I had ever seen anyone else do in my six months of living with the reindeer herders. In fact, I was surprised the deer could maintain the pace he was forcing, and was feeling sorry for the beasts. He pushed them beyond their capacity, ignoring all the signals of their distress that even I had learned to recognize. The next day, the deer he had been riding was limping and had an open saddle sore on its back. His older brother remarked on this, saying, "*Ol ivizhi eves-tir, Bilbes, toovas.*" ("He's not an *ivizhi* - he doesn't know, doesn't care.") Thus, knowing how to treat the deer with respect is an important part of the relationship between an *ivizhi* and his

reindeer, and is what gives an *ivizki* the right to claim the title. This is analogous to Anderson's discussion of "property as a way of knowing," and his claim that "knowing the land properly . . . is what legitimated their [Evenki herdsmen] right to fake wood, water and animals from the land" (D.Anderson 1998:69-70; see also Fondahl 1998 and Ziker 2002).

Tozhu *ivizhiler* (plural) treat their reindeer with care, making sure to place plenty of padding under loads, change heavy loads over the course of the day, get off the deer and walk on downhills following steep uphill. An animal that begins to exhibit a limp will be unloaded and allowed to go off on its own, to find its own way back to the camp at its own pace. And while it may sound funny, the humans discriminately distribute their urine (an important source of salt for the deer) to their favorites or to those they feel need it most, and in other ways make sure the deer have easy access to it (for example, by cutting troughs into tree stumps and urinating there).

Reindeer herders will go to extreme lengths to make sure their deer are never left in a situation where they can't forage for themselves. For example, after a long day of riding during an extended hunt, the deer are very hungry and must be allowed to forage for themselves, but you must not allow them to go completely free or you would risk losing them. Thus, the herders hobble them (in a couple of different ways), and while they can still wander pretty far away from the hunting camp in the course of the night, they can be tracked down and brought back. This is also what the Tozhu herders do when they go into the village or to the nearby gold-mining base to trade for supplies or for whatever reasons. They will hobble the deer and leave them several kilometers outside the village, in a place where there is forage, then walk into the village on foot. They do

this even if they're staying in the village for several days, walking out to check on the deer every day. Many of the herders will actually sleep out in the taiga with the deer and go in to the village only during the day to take care of their business. In the summer of 2002 I met with a group of reindeer herders who came down out of their high-mountain summer camp to return their school-age children to the village. We camped on the banks of the Kham-Sym River, in an area where there is not much *shulung* (various species of *Cladonia*; Rus.: *yagel'*, *olenii lishai* - "reindeer lichen"). At 4:00 in the morning I was awakened by the stirrings of the 71-year-old patriarch of the group. He had gotten up and was untying the reindeer. I asked him what he was doing. "I've got to take them to where there is *shulung*," he said. Noting that they had been eating fresh green grass the evening before, I said, "Isn't there enough fodder for them here?" He shrugged his shoulders and said, "They need meat." *Shulung* is considered the "meat" of the reindeers' diet, necessary for their health and strength. So off he went, at 4:00 in the morning, to lead his deer several kilometers uphill to where he knew there would be *shulung* so they could have a good breakfast before moving on. He was back by 8:00 in the morning.

The final way I want to discuss reindeer as property among the Tozhu is on a more symbolic and abstract level. Analogous to the way in which the title *ivizhi* can be considered the cultural property of the Tozhu reindeer herders, so the image of reindeer can be understood as the exclusive (within Tyva) cultural property of the Tozhu. Reindeer exist almost exclusively in the Tozhu district²⁵ and images of reindeer adorn virtually any and all material related to Tozhii (for example, official calendars put out by

²⁵ There is one herd in the bordering district of Kaa-Khem, which could be considered an extension of Tozhu, and a couple herds in the Kungurtuk district in southeastern Tyva.

the district administration). Having reindeer is an important element in the Tozhu sense of ethnic identity, and is one of the things that sets them apart from the Tyva population in general (others being dialect and, according to some, clothing and phenotype). In Tozhu I frequently heard expressions like, "Without reindeer, we can't be Tozhu," or "If there are no reindeer, there are no Tozhu." It's not important that everyone be a reindeer herder, but it is important for them to know that reindeer are out there, and that's what makes Tozhu different from other parts of Tyva, it's what gives Tozhu people a sense of a unique ethnic identity.

The Tofa

Now let me turn my attention to the Tofa. In this section, I will briefly look at the same four phenomena as I have analyzed in the Tozhu context, but in reverse order: 1) the image of reindeer as cultural property; 2) the right to claim the title *ibizhi*²⁶ as cultural property (and the social obligations to reindeer that the title implies); 3) reindeer as property; and Finally 4) wild animals as property, and by extension, the Tofas' social relationship to the *cher eeleri*.

Images of reindeer and reindeer herding are pervasive in the Tofa community's present-day efforts at cultural revitalization. For example, the cover of the Tofa language primer for schoolchildren, published in 1989, has a drawing of a schoolboy and schoolgirl in their Soviet school uniforms, standing next to a saddled reindeer (Rassadin and Shibkeev 1989); a book of Tofa legends, stories and songs likewise has a picture of a

²⁶ *Ibizhi*, a cognate to the Tozhu *ivizfri*, is the Tofa equivalent. However, almost no Tofa speak the Tofa language and so use Russian and Russian terms to discuss reindeer herding.

reindeer on its cover (Rassadin 1996); and the emblem of the recently reinvigorated Tofa summer cultural festival. *Argamchy*, also features a reindeer. In this sense, the Tofa are trying to (re)claim the reindeer as part of their cultural heritage, as their cultural property.

So the image of the reindeer, and the idea of the reindeer appear to be a form of cultural property and an important facet of the Tofa people's sense of a unique ethnic identity, much as among the Tozhu. But what of the reindeer herding lifestyle? In Alygdzher, the largest of the villages in Tofaiaria, only one young person said that he planned to be a reindeer herder. He's the son of the one remaining reindeer herder, and seemed to be of the opinion that it was his best (perhaps only) option of employment. His father, the only full-time reindeer herder left in all of Tofaiaria, told me he would jump at the chance to quit herding if there were any other employment opportunities at all. One Tofa informant, when asked if he was a reindeer herder, responded, "We're all reindeer herders here." - using the Russian term, *olenevody*, literally, reindeer "drivers." He was referring to the fact that virtually all the Tofa men in Alygdzher rent reindeer from the one remaining herd and use them to go hunting during hunting season. They all know how to saddle up and ride a deer. But would such limited involvement with reindeer allow one in Tozhu to claim the title *ivizhi* in the Tozhu context? I asked this question in an interview with the oldest still active reindeer herder in Tozhu:

B.D. Would you consider someone who only uses reindeer to hunt during hunting season an *ivizhil*

T.A. If it's just for hunting, then I'd say he's a hunter. If he takes an *ivizhi's* deer to go hunting, then that'd be a hunter, I'd say.

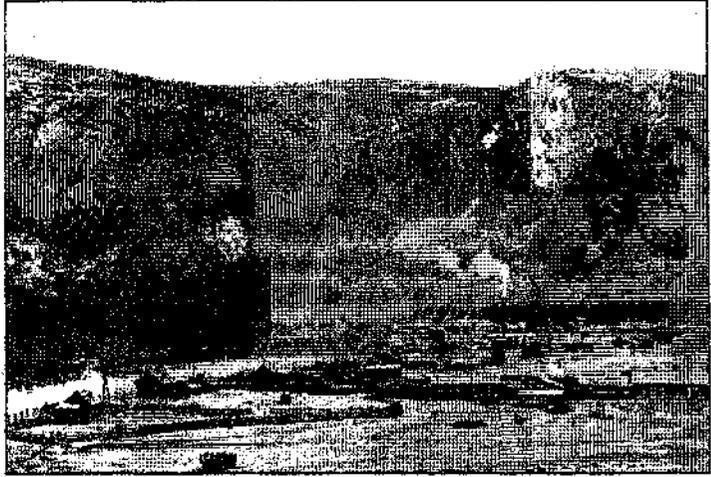
B.D. O.K., then, who's an *ivizhi*'?

T.A. A herdsman, a person who looks after (reindeer) would be that, I'd say.²⁷

²⁷ ²⁷ Interview with Dorbit Ak in the Tozhu taiga, July 2002.

As we saw In the Tozhu case, the right to claim, the title *ivizhi* comes from a commitment to the lifestyle as a full-time occupation, and requires demonstration of deeper knowledge and greater competence in far more than saddling and mounting a deer, to the extent of

Figure 4.2. View of Alygdzher, the largest Tofa village.



establishing a trusting relationship with the reindeer based on an ethos of caring for the animals' well being. In Tofalaria, reindeer are no longer vital, active, integral facets of people's lives, and the way in which reindeer are treated indicates the extent to which the social relationship between the Tofa people and reindeer has broken down. In contrast to the trusting relationship that pertains among the Tozhu, the Tofa have had, since their forced sedentarization, a relationship with their reindeer that is of the pastoral type, based on domination.

For example, in Alygdzher we met Mitya, the 18-year-old son of the one remaining full-time reindeer herder. Mitya was in town for several days, getting supplies

and taking *care* of other business. His deer were penned up in the fence next to his house in the village for the entire time he was in the village. Such a cavalier attitude toward the deer is something I never saw in Tozhu. He's the only young person who has expressed an interest in being a reindeer herder, the son of the only remaining full-time reindeer herder in all of Tofalaria, yet he doesn't *know* how to treat the deer in the Tozhu sense.

As another example of this lack of knowledge: As in Tozhu, with the collapse of the state farm system came the opportunity to experiment with a variety of ownership and management options with respect to reindeer. At least three Tofa men had enough of their own personal reindeer to try to make a go of it as private reindeer herders' *mfermerskoe khozyaiatvo* (peasant enterprises). When they started in the late 1990s they had a combined total of approximately 80 reindeer, but at the time of my fieldwork in 2000-2001, all three enterprises had folded, and the three men had a total of somewhere between 15-20 reindeer among them - just enough for them to hunt with, but certainly not an enterprise. An elderly former herder who explained this to me said that they simply *didn't know how* to raise the deer and increase the herd. "There aren't any older people among them," he said. "The deer need to live in several different places; they have to move around. But those people stay in the same place all year. They don't know how to increase the herd. I've told them, but they don't listen to me." Another former herder added that they would bring the animals into the village for long periods of time or leave

them out in the taiga unattended for too long.²⁸ In other words, these new herders lack the necessary knowledge, despite the claim that "we're all reindeer herders here."

The contrast is not as stark as I have made it out to be, as the Tofa also do not kill reindeer to eat, so the relationship is not exactly the same as one of herders with other livestock. Nevertheless, the differences between the Tofa and Tozhu with regards to their relationship to reindeer and to the reindeer herding way of life are striking enough to make us wonder why. I suggest that the different experiences the two groups have had both under Soviet rule and now in the post-Soviet era can provide an explanation for these differences.

As noted in earlier chapters, Russian influence among the Tozhu (and in Tyva generally) has been much less intense and of much shorter duration than in Tofalaria, beginning only in the late 19th century. In addition, historically there were far more deer in the Tozhu region than in Tofalaria — at the most, there may have been around 5000 domesticated reindeer in Tofalaria, while there were as many as 25,000 in Tozhu. Accordingly, the collective and state farms in Tozhu were set up for reindeer husbandry and, to a much lesser degree, hunting. While the Soviet-era emphasis on meeting production quotas for meat and other reindeer products certainly distorted the Tozhus' traditional methods and purposes for raising reindeer (most obviously in that reindeer were being raised for slaughter), it allowed for reindeer to retain their cultural significance in the lives of the Tozhu people, while their continued nomadic lifestyle and the relative lack of emphasis on wild game products allowed them to maintain their social relationships to the *char eeleri* and, by extension, to wild animals.

²²⁸ Interview with Al'bert Tulaev and Pave] Ungushtacv in Tulaev's home in Alygdzher, November 2000.

The Tofa, on the other hand, have a much longer history of interaction with Russians, beginning in 1648. Over the centuries, the influx of non-Tofa hunters and trappers put great pressure on the natural resource base and distorted the Tofas' traditional relationship to their land and to the animal resources on the land. In the early 1930s, the new Soviet government's collectivization and sedentarization programs were effected with great success in Tofalaria, where the entire Tofa population was settled in three villages between 1928-1932 (Slezkine 1994:279). Three *kolkhozy* were set up on the basis of hunting, and reindeer were to be raised and maintained only as transport for the state's hunters during the principal squirrel and sable hunting season (October-January). Since deer were only used for riding and pack purposes, fewer were needed. In addition, deer, which in some cases had been forcefully taken from the herders and in other cases had been given voluntarily over to the *kolkhoz*?²⁹ were now "rented" back to the *kolkhoz* hunters, which caused great resentment. According to Mel'nikova, in 1932 herders killed off 75% of newborn reindeer calves in protest against this new system (Mel'nikova 1994:226).

Thus reindeer were effectively removed from the sphere of everyday life. The social relationship between the Tofa and their reindeer broke down. Deer became even less than domestic animals, and more like equipment that needed to be maintained. A handful of Tofa were designated *aspastukhi* (herders) and *telyatniki* (specialists in caring for the calves), and these positions were relegated to the bottom rungs of social prestige. Mermkova, noting the Soviet-imposed transition from reindeer herding as an integral

²⁹ Perhaps with some coercion, though I have no evidence of this in the Tofa case.

and central aspect of daily life to simply raising reindeer for transport purposes, claims that

Beginning with programs to settle the nomadic population, the state machine very quickly destroyed the very basis of household economy that had arisen historically, giving nothing in return. ...

As a result there arose a strange, perverted economic situation, in which the settled population had to engage in a form of economic activity that demanded a nomadic way of life (hunting and reindeer herding). By the middle of the 1960s, the adult male and female indigenous population spent the winter period hunting, and only a small number of people (herders and calf-raisers [*pastukhi, telyatniki*]) tended the reindeer herds, for a miserly payment. (Mel'nikova 1994:278-79).

The ultimate impact of Soviet policies in Tofalaria was to turn deer into a sort of community transport service - a "rent-a-reindeer" service, if you will - and turn reindeer herding into a low-prestige occupation. This situation once again obtains in Tofalaria today. Following the final collapse of the *gaszverapromkhoz* (state hunting enterprise) in Tofalaria in the late 1990s, the assets, including all remaining reindeer, were purchased by the DELTA Group, a gold-mining interest in the area. The hunting enterprise was reformed into the ZAO "Tofalaria" (a type of closed stock company under the direction of the DELTA Group), in whose employ the one remaining reindeer herder works (there are fewer than 300 deer in the herd). Reindeer are now rented to hunters at a rate of 5 rubles (about 16 cents US) per day per deer.

Wild Animals

Not only did reindeer lose their cultural significance and come to be viewed in terms of their use-value only, but wild animals also lost their symbolic significance in the "cosmic economy of sharing." With the establishment of the *kolkhozy* in 1930, all band- and family-based hunting and grazing grounds were declared state property and carved up

into separate, small hunting grounds, controlled by the *kolkhozy*. Most Tofa families were assigned to a hunting tract, and most of the men became employed by the state as hunters. In return for a salary and various supplies, the hunters were supposed to fulfill a quota of squirrel and sable pelts. The formal delineation of these hunting tracts and the pressure to meet the *kolkhozes*'⁷ quotas led to a *de facto* sense of exclusive private property among the Tofa (see Chapter 5). This disrupted the social relationships between humans and animals, humans and the *cher eeleri*, and between humans and humans. The family head became, in effect, the *cher eezi* - the master of the place and of the animals on it — no longer answering to a spirit master, but rather to a *sovkhos* director. Matta Kangaraeva explained that in the past, the Tofa used to observe various hunting proscriptions, much like the Tozhu, but things have changed. "We never used to shoot a female musk deer, but now hunters do," she said. "In the past, we only took what we needed to eat, no more. Now, *kommersanty* [entrepreneurs/businessmen] fly in to our lakes and use nets to take out all the fish."³⁰

In present-day Tofalaria, the family hunting grounds (*rodovye taigi* - see Chapter 5) still remain, although use rights over them have in many cases changed hands, generally from indigenous Tofa to Russians, Ukrainians, and other *priezzhie* ("newcomers"). In order to maintain their rights to their hunting grounds, hunters must be officially registered with the ZAO "Tofalaria." Otherwise, there are no imposed limits on take or other restrictions (this includes non-Tofa who have hunting grounds). The local manager of the ZAO "Tofalaria" told me that the hunters know better than anyone how many and what kind of animals are on their *ugodya* (hunting tract), and how many

³⁰ Interview with Maria Kangaraeva in her home in Alygdzher, 17 November 2000.

they can take. In other words, with respect to rights to hunt and kill wild animals, the registered hunters are in effect the "masters" of their own hunting grounds and of the animals on them.

But any discussion of rights to wild animals must include a discussion not only of who has the right to hunt and kill, but also what they can or cannot do with the wild animal products. During Soviet times, not only the land but also all the resources on the land, including wild animals, were considered the property of the state. Official hunters in the employ of the state were provided with guns and bullets and licenses to hunt, but they were salaried employees and their job was to go out and get wild animals for their pelts, antlers and meat. Thus the products of the hunters' labor belonged to the state, not to the hunters. In Tofalaria today, while the ZAO "Tofalaria" isn't the owner of the land or the wild animals in Tofalaria, it has established what amounts to a monopoly on the products of the hunters' labor, much like the *sovkhos* in Soviet times. Tofalaria is very remote, and there are no roads into or out of it. The only effective way hunters have of disposing of pelts and other products for cash is through the representative of the DELTA group, so they are in effect forced to sell to the DELTA group, at prices determined by the DELTA group. The company provides hunters with licenses, and can if it chooses deny a license to an uncooperative hunter. In addition, the 11-person commission that determines who gets a hunting parcel and who doesn't (headed up by the representative of the DELTA group), can take a hunting parcel away from a hunter if the council deems that the hunter isn't making productive use of the parcel - i.e., if he isn't selling his products to the DELTA group. This arrangement clearly puts some limitations on the "ownership" of the wild animal products and of the hunting grounds. Hence, whereas in Soviet times wild

animal resources came to be seen in terms of production quotas, now, *in* the post-Soviet economy, these resources are seen in terms of their economic value.

Conclusion

Early on in this chapter I made a distinction between human-to-human relationships and human-to-non-human-persons relationships, and noted that property relationships are embedded in both kinds. Of course, these two different kinds of relationships are closely correlated and influence one another. As Ingold puts it, "Any qualitative transformation in environmental relations is likely to be manifested similarly both in the relationships that humans extend towards animals and in those that obtain among themselves in society" (Ingold 2000:61).

As a result of the highly successful collectivization and sedentarization campaigns during the early years of the Soviet era, the relations between the Tofa and their environment — i.e., between the hunter and wild animals via the mediation of the *cher eezi*; between the reindeer herder and his reindeer - appear to have broken down as land (in the form of hunting tracts) has moved toward exclusive tenure, akin to private property, and reindeer have been removed from the sphere of private ownership. Consequently the Tofa have experienced a phenomenon that has been called the "extinction of experience" (see Maffi 2001:7),³¹ which has led to a transformation in their

³¹ Often such an extinction of experience is associated with the loss of the indigenous language that served to convey the lost experience. "Life in a particular human environment is dependent on people's ability to talk about it" (Mühlhäusler 1995, cited in Maffi 2001:10). An indigenous people's language is undeniably a critical and valuable form of cultural and intellectual property, and a galvanizing force bolstering ethnic identity. In this realm, again, the Tozhu and Tofa present a crystallizing comparison. The Tozhu language (a dialect of Tyvan) is alive and vibrant, the true native language of all people in Tozhu. Russian is almost never heard in everyday communication and is truly a distant second language. The Tofa language (which

human-to-human relationships as well. No longer is there a sense of equal entitlement to animal resources; no longer does a hunter have the right to expect that he will be given permission to hunt on another's hunting ground; no longer are meat and other products of the hunt shared out. Tofa informants express dismay that Russians object to other people shooting an animal or fishing on their land, even when it's just for food in transit through the Russian's hunting grounds on their way to their own hunting grounds.³² Russians, on the other hand, have never had this tradition and express dismay that the Tofa expect to be able to do this. The Tofa themselves, however, now also object to this practice, and encroachment on another's hunting grounds causes tensions that can escalate into violence, not only between Tofa and Russian but between Tofa and Tofa as well. This contrasts strikingly with the open and non-exclusive sense of property and the ethic of sharing that still pertain among the Tozhu today.

Referring back to Bird-David's "cosmic economy of sharing," Ingold notes that:

hunters and gatherers model their relationships with life-giving agencies in their environments on the institution of sharing, which is the foundation for interpersonal relations within the human community. . . . Both movements, from non-human to human beings and among the latter themselves, are seen to constitute a single 'cosmic economy of sharing' (Bird-David 1992). . . . This principle which, I maintain, inheres equally in the activities of sharing and in those of hunting and gathering, is that of trust. (Ingold 2000:69)

Trust has broken down in the Tofa case. The formerly reciprocal relationship between humans and the *cher eeleri* has turned into a one-sided exercise in extraction of animal resources; the relationship between humans and their reindeer has become one of

could also be considered a dialect of Tyvan) is moribund, with perhaps a total of 30 speakers, all over the age of 40. This will be the topic of a future paper.

³² The hunting tracts closer in to the villages tend to belong to Russians, while more remote hunting grounds tend to belong to Tofa.

domination; and the relationship between humans and humans has become one of suspicion and exclusion.

Chapter 5

Property in Land Among the **Tofa** and Tozhu¹

Introduction

Starting in 1926, when they first received special attention as one of the USSR's "Small Numbered Minorities of the North,"² the Tofa, like virtually all the nomadic herding and hunting peoples of the USSR, were subjected to massive and thorough social engineering programs such as collectivization and sedentarization (see Chapter 6). Collectivization entailed the consolidation of virtually all property - land, livestock, agricultural equipment, guns, etc. - in the hands of the state, and the forced sedentarization of the nomadic populations in villages (and the creation of villages where there were none). In the early years of the Soviet Union, collectivization was based on a system of *kolkhozy* (collective farms), which were, in theory, collectively owned and operated by the members, not by the state. However, starting in the 1960s, many *kolkhozy* were restructured into *sovkhozy* (state farms), or *gozpromkhozy* and *koopzverpromkhozy* (state-organized hunting enterprises), which were state owned and operated, and members worked for a monthly salary. In 1967, the three *kolkhozy* in Tofalaria were reorganized into two *koopzveropromkhoz*, and then consolidated into one (Rassadin 2000:30; Sherkhunaev 1975:40). For the Tozhu, forced collectivization came later than for the

¹ The bulk of this chapter was published under the title "Hey, You! Get Offa My Taiga! Comparing the Sense of Property Rights Among the Tofa and Tozhu-Tyva." Halle / Saale, Germany: Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology Working Paper Series No. 38.

² See Chapter 7 for more on this designation. The Tofa, then known as the Karagassy, were one of 26 Indigenous minorities designated as *Malye Narodnosti* (Small Peoples) by the "Provisional Statute on the Administration of the Indigenous Peoples and Tribes of the Northern Extremes of the Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic," 25 October, 1926. This designation was later changed to *Malochislennye Narody* (Small-Numbered Peoples).

Tofa - in the late 1940s - and was not pursued as vigorously. In the Tozhu region of Tyva, all three *kolkhozy* became *sovkhozy* in 1969, and subsequently, two of the *sovkhozy* were consolidated into one. In practice, there generally wasn't much difference between the forms of collective farms, and for the purposes of this dissertation no distinction will be made.

Collectivization was considered necessary for the socio-economic development of this nascent leviathan of a political entity, the USSR. It was supposed to help develop the national economy via production of surplus agricultural products and other valuable raw materials for export, and to feed the rapidly expanding urban, industrial population. Collectivization was also, in theory, aimed at raising the living standards of all Soviet citizens, even the most backward Siberian natives (see Forsyth 1992:291).

In the case of the Tofa, part of this effort was the formal codification of the previously customarily recognized institution of *rodovye taigi*, or clan hunting grounds. This, as well as pressure from encroaching Russian and Buryat hunters and trappers, led to a sense of exclusive access to hunting grounds and the natural resources on them among the Tofa that is striking in its contrast to the sense of property just across the border in the Tozhu District of the Republic of Tyva. The Republic of Tyva was not incorporated into the USSR until 1944, and the Tozhu have just recently been recognized as one of the Russian Federation's "Small Numbered Minorities of the North." They never were completely sedentarized, and have never had such exclusive rights to land, nor any real sense of exclusive property rights. Non-exclusivity is still the salient feature of Tozhus' sense of property today. In addition, the Tozhu still engage in reindeer herding and still all speak Tyvan as their first language (although the Tozhu dialect is on

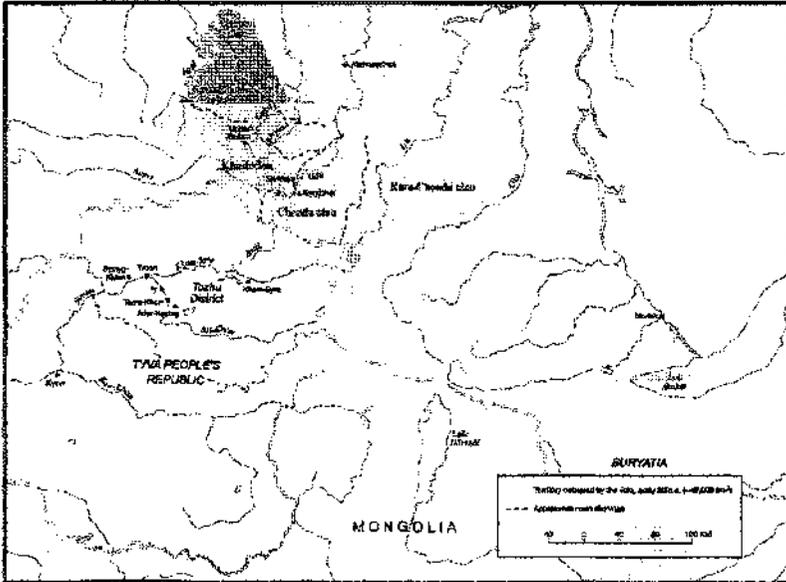
the wane). The Tofa have virtually completely abandoned reindeer herding and have almost completely lost their indigenous language.

This chapter follows much the same lines of reasoning as the previous chapter, but with a focus on *land* as property rather than *animals*. As in the previous chapter, both collectivization and the breakdown of the state farm system (*koopzveropromkhozy* in the case of the Tofa; *sovkhozy* in the Tozhu case) are treated as *events* that reveal ongoing conflict, contestation, and negotiation over rights and resources, and that create new constraints and opportunities for the exercise of individual agency. Specifically, I discuss the institution of *rodovye taigi* (clan hunting grounds) among the Tofa and how it has changed in response to these two major events. I will address the changes in the allocation of *rodovye taigi* that occurred with Soviet-era collectivization and sedentarization, and changes that have occurred since the collapse of the formal institutions of collectivization, as people scramble to reassert their rights to their clan territories. I will draw comparisons between the Tofa people and the Tozhu people regarding their sense of property rights to land, suggesting that one of the principal reasons for the observed differences is degree of contact with and influence from Russia and Russians. I also suggest that these differences have contributed to the Tozhu people's greater retention of their reindeer-herding way of life, while the Tofa have almost completely lost theirs.

The Tofa

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Tofa have a much longer history of interaction with Russians than the Tozhu, beginning in 1648. According to B.E. Petri, who produced a series of excellent ethnographic studies on the Tofa (whom he refers to as Karagas) in

Map 5.1: Tofa clan divisions, early 20th century. (Adapted from Petri 1927. Map prepared by Indiana University Graphics Services-)



the 1920s and 1930s, even prior to the arrival of Russians, the Tofa had been squeezed by other encroaching indigenous groups onto a fairly well defined, 49,000 km² area of heavily forested mountains in the Eastern Sayan range. This territory was subdivided along mountain ridges separating major watersheds into five unofficial but customarily

recognized *rodovye taigi*³ (clan territories) (see Map 5.1). Within each clan, these territories were further divided up among lineages.⁴ One old informant told Petri, "Long ago it was, I do not remember how many generations (*koleri*) ago. The Karagas gathered all the people together at the Suglam⁵ and divided among them the taiga. Each clan received its own share, each household its own river" (Petri 1927:21).⁶ Generally, the relatives of a single lineage hunted together (Petri 1927:25; see also Mei'nikova 1994:45). Rights to these hunting grounds were passed down through inheritance along the male line in a straight line of descent. The hunting territories were exclusive and inalienable. Petri notes that if, in a clan made up of several lineages, one lineage were to die out completely leaving no direct male heirs, then that lineage's hunting grounds would not be divided up among the remaining lineages, but would pass on to the nearest relative from a different lineage but within the same clan. "Under no circumstances will

³ Singular: *rodovaya taiga*. *Rodovaya* is the adjectival form of the Russian noun *rod*, meaning family, clan, kin. *Taiga* is a Turkic-language term that has been incorporated into Russian and refers generally to the heavily forested hilly and mountainous areas of Siberia. However, in both the Tofa and Tyva languages, it also often refers to a specific hill or mountain or cluster of hills or mountains, and often forms part of the toponyms of specific mountains, such as *Oduigen Taiga* or *Mongun Taiga*.

⁴ Here I'm translating the Russian term *familiya* as lineage.

⁵ The *suglan* was an annual gathering of all the clan leaders and as many other people as could make it. It occurred in late December. The principal business at the *suglan* was the election of a new *shulenge*, a sort of chief for all the Tofa, and new *ulug bash* or *darga* (boss) for each clan. In addition, punishments that had been kept track of all year were meted out, marriages were agreed upon, and "Affairs concerning all clans (questions regarding migrations, arguments over borders of hunting grounds, interrelationships among clans and their representatives) were decided" (Sergeev 1956:534-535). See also Petri 1926.

⁶ In this quote, I'm translating the Russian term *khozyuin* as household. However, Petri later states that "Each Karagas clan breaks down into separate lineages [*famili* (*aimak*)]. Clan territories are divided up only among lineages. Within such lineages there is no further division of territory among individual households, and all brothers, cousins, uncles, etc., hunt together." (Petri 1927:25). Thus there appears to be a contradiction between what this informant has told Petri and what Petri later asserts. I am inclined to go with Petri's assessment, i.e., that the clan grounds were not divided up any beyond lineages, as this seems consistent with what my informants told me. However, it's possible that there was an informal assignation of stream valleys to each household within the lineage, which would explain Petri's informant's comment. In addition, the line between household and lineage is often blurred, both in people's minds and in the anthropological literature.

the territory be divided up generally among the remaining lineages. In general changes in the hunting grounds among the Karagas are not known" (Petti 1927:25).⁷

Centuries of encroachment into their territory by Russian, Ukrainian, and Buryat hunters, trappers, and gold miners pushed the Tofa higher and deeper into the mountainous taiga of the Eastern Sayans, forcing them to redraw the boundaries of their ever-shrinking *rodovye taigi*. In addition, the Tofa fled into the Sayan Mountains to escape the heavy burden of *yasak* (tax, or duty, in the form of sable pelts). But the Tsar's forces pursued and managed to track them down anyway.

But the free life of the Tofa did not last long. People of the White Tsar came into the mountains and tracked down the small peoples. So it came to pass that the Tofa once again were forced to pay *yasak*, heavy, like a stone around the neck of a drowning man, and never-ending, like the Sayan taiga. But there was no place further to which they could flee, and thus the Tofa have remained forever in the Sayans. (Mel'hikova 1994:42, citing V. Rasputin 1966).

Despite the relentless erosion of their territory and the seemingly strict division of property that resulted from it, Petri and other researchers noted that historically if one lineage's hunting grounds were not productive in a given year, customary law of the Karagas (Tofa) dictated that all they had to do was request permission to hunt on someone else's territory. This permission was almost always granted. Permission was not needed to fish on someone else's territory (Petri, 1927:25).

But by the beginning of the 20th century, clan affiliation, while still important for marriage restrictions and other administrative reasons, had almost completely lost its significance with regards to territorial divisions and the distribution of hunting grounds

⁷ PeSri's asseition here is most likely an overstatement of the stability of the clan territories, probably based on statements of informants who recollected the cultural norms of the past more accurately than actual behavior.

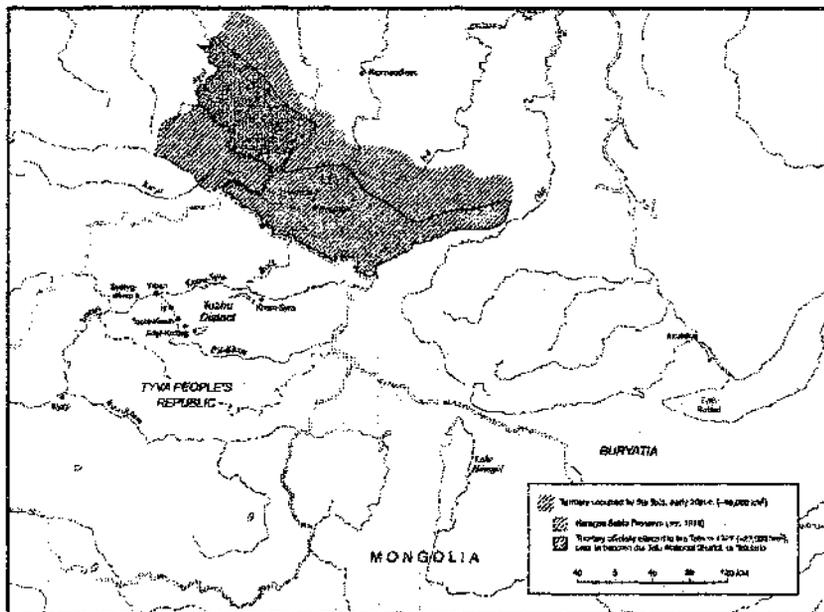
(Petri 1927:3, 14). This dynamic has been noted among other Siberian groups as well, including the Evenki (Fondahl 1998:48-49) and others (Slezkine 1994:173-174; Forsyth 1992:296ff.).⁸ Petri attributes this change to three factors. One was the competition for pelts resulting from the influx of Russian and Buryat hunters and trappers, and the ensuing collapse in the population of fur-bearing animals, particularly in the eastern section of Tofalana. This led some Tofa families to abandon their ancestral clan hunting grounds and go in search of new and more productive hunting grounds to the west, where Russians had not yet deeply penetrated (Petri 1927:3-4). This factor was to a degree offset by an opposing west-to-east movement of Tofa families who wanted to be nearer newly-established trading posts in the eastern section of Tofalana. Finally, Petri notes that poverty, measured in lack of sufficient deer to migrate regularly, forced some families to remain in the same area year round, thus violating the seasonally variable clan and lineage based boundaries (Petri 1927:25-26). Thus territorial group membership changed annually, depending on different families' priorities, as those in search of better hunting moved west, those in search of satisfying certain consumer demands moved east toward trading centers, and those with insufficient numbers of deer tended to remain in one place, whether it happened to be their *rodovaya taiga* or not (Petri 1927:4).

These pressures caused a general upheaval in the age-old system of distribution of hunting territories. In response, new hunting regulations were established, and a new, late-summer *suglan* was instituted specifically to address the issue of annual

⁸ It has been suggested to me that the fact of nomadic herding camps being composed of members of different clans is so common the world over that the concept of prior-existing "clan territories," in which only one member of a single clan lived, may simply be a historic invention (John Ziker, personal communication. See note 1, p.64). D.A.nderson's (2000:154) discussion of the artificially constructed nature of the national territories could be seen as support for this view, albeit at the scale of the entire ethnic group rather than of the clan.

redistribution of hunting grounds, no longer on the basis of clan and lineage affiliations (Sergeev 1956:534; Petri 1927:27-28). Petri summarizes, "Thus, from the former ownership-in-perpetuity the Karagas have moved to an annual redi vision of their hunting grounds" (Petri 1927:27-28).

Map 5.2. Reduction in Tofa territory, 1915-1927- (Adapted from Petri 1927. Map prepared by Indiana University Graphic Services.)



Yet another development further depleted the land resources the Tofa could rely on. In 1915, in response to the collapse of the sable population in Eastern Sayan region, the 500,000-hectare Karagas Sable Preserve was established (see Map 5.2). This territory, which was in effect the entire southwestern part of present-day Tofalaria, was "completely withdrawn from the use of the local inhabitants and declared 'zakaznoi,' [given over to the sole control and possession of the state]" (Mel'nikova 1994:206-207).

At that time, five Tofa families lived, migrated, hunted and herded more than 500 deer on that territory.

In the early years of the newly formed USSR, the influx of Russian, Ukrainian, and Buryat newcomers into Tofa territory was even more overwhelming than it had been previously. Trappers came in and in some cases even ran Tofa off their ancestral hunting grounds. For Tofa with winter hunting grounds along the Gutara River in western Tofalaria, it was especially difficult to resist, as the newcomers had leases to fishing rights on the river. "In this way, the Gutara River and neighboring rivers came to be divided up among renters. When winter fell, the Karagas made their way to their ancestral hunting grounds. As they reached their hunting grounds, Karagas . . . ran into new settlers, who did not allow them to hunt, saying, 'Go - I rent here,' and to prove the truth of their words, they would show a piece of paper" (Petri 1927:27-28).

As the new Soviet regime began to survey all within its purview, there arose an increasing awareness of the plight of the indigenous minorities within the Soviet territory, and an interest in defining and protecting them (see Hirsch 1997; D.Anderson 2000, esp. ch. 4). This led to the creation of the Committee for the Assistance to the Peoples of the Northern Borderlands (also known as the Committee of the North) in 1924 (Slezkine 1994:152; Forsyth 1992, ch. 12-13), and to enormous resources being poured into anthropological and ethnographic investigations to define these populations, and measures to protect their lifestyles. One of these projects - an expedition to the land of the Tofa in 1925 - was led by B.E. Petri.

Pattiy as a result of Petri's efforts, the Tofa were recognized as one of the USSR's original "Small Numbered Minorities of the North".⁹ Petri, noting not only the decline in the game population upon which the Tofa depended, but also the degradation of Tofa culture that was rapidly occurring as a result of contact with Russian traders, who fostered a dependence on alcohol among the Tofa by trading alcohol for pelts at exchange rates very disadvantageous to the Tofa, suggested the official mapping out of a territory for the Tofa, as far as possible from the negative influence of exploitative Russian traders. This approach was consistent with efforts of the Committee of the North in other areas of Siberia and the Russian Far East, and with the concept of delineating regions of native administration as outlined in the 1926 act, "Provisional Regulations for the Administration of Native Peoples and Tribes of the Northern Extremes of the RSFSR"¹⁰ (Kryazhkov 1999:26-32). The territory suggested by Petri, meticulously mapped out on the basis of long and intensive fieldwork, and with great participation from the Tofa, covered 27,000 km² (see Map 5.2). Petri noted that this was only 56% of the 49,000 km² historically attributed to the Tofa. However, it is an area larger than the Tofa themselves had suggested, and given the small population of Tofa (416 at time of Petri's writing), he felt that this area was large enough for the Tofa to thrive on. On September 10, 1927, the Soviet government agreed and created the Central Sayano-Karagas Enterprise to organize the hunting and other economic activities of the Tofa. The government likewise

⁹ In Chapter 7 I discuss this designation in more detail.

¹⁰ "Vrentennoe poloziienie ob upravlen'iu luzemnykh narodnosud i piemen severnykh okrain RSFSR," 25 October, 1926. See D. Anderson 2000, ch-7 for a cogent discussion of the concept and formation of national territories; cf. FondahJ 1998:53-57 to see how this played out in the Evenki case.

undertook the eviction of "parasitic"¹¹ elements, and organized the protection of the territory from poachers (Sergeev 1956:535-536). In 1930 this territory became the "Karagasskii Tuzemnyi Soviet" (Karagas Indigenous Council), which in 1934 became the "Tofalarskii Natsional'nyi Soviet" (Tofa National Council),¹² and in 1939 the "Tofalarskii Natsional'nyi Raion" (Tofa National District), also called Tofalaria (Sherkhunaev 1978:7)."

Meanwhile, the new Soviet government embarked on massive social engineering programs: collectivization of all property and settlement of the "nomadic" and "wandering" populations. Nowhere was this pursued more enthusiastically and with greater success than in Tofalaria. The entire Tofa population was settled in three villages between 1928 and 1932. Yuri Slezkine in *Arctic Mirrors*, his history of the indigenous minorities of the Russian North, notes that "the case of the Tofalar (the only northern group that had been subjected to wholesale forced settlement) was presented as an outstanding success story" of early Soviet collectivization and sedentarization policies (Slezkine 1994:279). All clan hunting and grazing grounds were declared state property and carved up into separate, small hunting grounds, controlled by the three newly Formed *kolkhozy*.

The new system of land use in Tofalaria followed the pattern imposed by the Soviet administration throughout much of Siberia (cf. Ziker 2002a, 2002b; Fondahl 1998). Taigas directly adjacent to the villages were considered communal grounds and

¹¹ The original Russian uses the term *netrudovye*, which literally means, "not engaged in labor," but in the ideologically imbued rhetoric of Soviet literature, this term carries connotations of parasitism.

¹³¹² As mentioned earlier, around 1930 the Karagas started being referred to as the Tofalar (see Ch.3, n. 10).

¹¹³³ Tofalaria as an official administrative unit was abolished in 1951 and folded into the Nizhneudinskii Raion (District), but it is still referred to as Tofalaria by locals.

were used mostly by women and children for purposes of gathering berries, mushrooms, and medicinal plants. Russians involved with running the *kolkhozy* and other village operations were granted rights to hunt on certain taigas. The remaining hunting grounds were assigned to members of the *kolkhozy* on a family-by-family basis rather than on a clan or lineage basis. In many cases, these territories were the same taigas that these families had always hunted on, and the hunting grounds of related families remained adjacent to one another, effectively keeping some lineage territories intact. Nonetheless, the Tofa were compelled to stop referring to the territories as *rodovye taigi*, or as "my taiga" (*miim taigam* in Tofa, *moya taiga* in Russian), terms which implied a sense of private property contrary to the socialist Soviet ideology. Somewhat paradoxically, however, the very imposition of socialist collectivization and the land-use dynamics it gave rise to — the formal delineation of these tracts on a family basis, the pressure to meet the *kolkhozes'* quotas of sable and squirrel pelts, the strictness with which the newcomer Russians guarded their territories, and the logic of private property such an exclusive sense of access rights was founded upon - replaced the formerly flexible understanding of access to resources and led to a *de facto* sense of exclusive private property hitherto unknown among the Tofa. For many of the newly settled Tofa, reindeer herding, with its extensive range requirements and demand for seasonal migrations, was no longer feasible under the conditions of a settled way of life. They abandoned reindeer herding and began to rely exclusively on hunting and gathering on their newly allotted tracts, renting reindeer maintained by the collective farm only as a means of transportation during the fall sable and squirrel hunting season.

With the onset of World War II, many young Tofa men were sent to the front, some of them never to return (Mel'nikova 1994:235-237). This left a number of taigas without a rightful occupier. These taigas were reassigned, in most cases to Russians and other newcomers, further decreasing the amount of land the Tofa had to hunt and make a living from. The following figures illustrate the demographic shift in favor of Russians; In 1931, of a total population in Tofalaria of 551, approximately 420 (76%) were Tofa, and the remaining 131 (24%) were non-Tofa, predominantly Russian (Mel'nikova 1994: 36 and 231). By 1970, the population in Tofalaria had increased to 1368, of whom 498 (36%) were Tofa, and 809 (59%) were Russian (SherkhunaeV 1975:23). However, during Soviet times, this demographic shift and the consequent transference of taiga rights to Russians and other non-Tofa was not such a problem, as virtually all able-bodied adults were employed in some capacity or another by the *kolkhoz*, so if someone did not have a taiga, they could get by on their salary.

With the breakup of the Soviet Union and the subsequent collapse of the *koopzverpromkhoz* (state hunting enterprise), the land that had come to be officially considered state property was redistributed in the form of hunting tracts which the Tofa are once again referring to as *nasha rodovaya taiga* ("our clan hunting grounds"). In many cases, the rights to these tracts have been given to the families who had been hunting on them for centuries on the basis of historically and customarily recognized prior occupation. However, much has changed over the course of the past century. Clan affiliations have broken down; individual Tofa families have moved away from their historically recognized clan territories; many non-Tofa families who came in with the establishment of the *kolkhozy* and their associated villages are staking their own claims to

hunting tracts. In addition, many of the tracts no longer had a clear rightful heir, and others tracts were unoccupied and considered part of the common pool. These have also been doled out, more often than not to Russians.¹⁴ One young Russian boy, eager to show his knowledge of which taigas were whose, followed the Uda River on our map rattling off the names of the taiga occupiers. Of 14 contiguous, demarcated hunting grounds along the Uda River, only one was occupied by a Tofa family. The rest were Russian.

Many Tofa now find themselves without paid work and without taigas of their own. Not having one's own taiga in these uncertain times means dire poverty in Tofalaria, where, according to preliminary survey results, the main source of income for 60% of Tofa is from the taiga (predominantly selling pelts, antlers, and musk glands) and 100% of respondents said they gather berries, pine nuts, mushrooms, and medicinal plants for their own use. As one informant said, "You can't survive here without your own taiga." Those who do not have their own taigas cobble together a precarious existence, either relying on the goodwill and generosity of relatives and friends to be able to have a place to hunt and gather, thus potentially straining relationships and creating new tensions; or simply limiting themselves to the overexploited common pool areas immediately surrounding the villages, further degrading that natural resource base.

¹⁴ This situation resembles what Fondahl terms the "socialist land enclosure" with regards to the Evenki (Fondahl 1998:72), and has been noted also among the Nenets (Golovnev and Osherenko 1999; 117). It is interesting in contrast to the dynamic observed by Ziker among the Dolgan and Nganasan of the Taimyr Autonomous Region, where previously assigned exclusive hunting grounds are being transformed into common pool resources, thus increasing the area of commonly held territory and decreasing the area of exclusive usufruct (Ziker 2002b)

The importance of the *rodovaya taiga* to the Tofa people was drivers home to me in two incidents I encountered during my first fieldtrip to Tofalaria in November 2000.¹⁵ The first and most dramatic demonstration came during an interview with an elderly Tofa woman living in a small village near the regional capital of Nizhneudinsk. In response to a question about her children, she hesitantly told us that she had had one son. After a thoughtful pause she explained that the taiga her son had grown op using had been her stepfather's taiga. When the stepfather died, no one used the taiga for a while. Then she married and had the son. The boy and his father (a Russian with no taiga of his own) hunted on the taiga. But then the brothers of the deceased stepfather lost the land they had always hunted on (in fact it had been within Tofalaria before, but with the redrawing of maps, no longer was within the official border's of Tofalaria), and laid claim to the land as the rightful heirs (closest relatives in male line). When the son returned from the army and found out that he no longer had a taiga to hunt on, he went up to the old family taiga, and shot himself.

The second instance occurred during our first field visit to Alygdzher. I had enlisted the help of a local woman to administer a survey. She returned one evening and handed me a batch of completed surveys. From the middle of one fell a handwritten note, touching in its hopefulness, trustfulness, and naiveté. Briefly, it said that the family's hunting grounds had been taken away from them and given to a wealthy "newcomer" (Russian) businessman (*kommersant*). The tract in question was not ever part of this family's "clan" grounds (they had moved to Alygdzher from another area), but had been

¹⁵ While most people talked willingly of conflicts over the *rodovye taigi*, most requested that I not use their names.

given to her brother after the collapse of the *zveropromkhoz* (state hunting enterprise) for his years of good service to the *zveropromkhoz*. Her brother died suddenly, leaving no heirs. Now her son, who lives in the regional capital, Irkutsk, but can find no work there, wants to come back to the village to make his living off this taiga, which they feel entitled to rightfully inherit.

Her dispute was heard by the recently established regional Commission for the Allocation of Hunting Territories, based in the village of Alygdzher. This commission is composed of 10 members (originally 11, but one died) who were reportedly selected in an open meeting. Seven of the members are ethnic Tofa. The *de facto* chairman of the commission is the former manager of the state hunting enterprise and currently the representative of the gold mining operation that bought out the state hunting enterprise and now runs its own private hunting enterprise. The commission rejected the petitioner's claim for the territory, but agreed to give the son a different tract in exchange for the disputed tract. However, according to the petitioner, this new tract is not very productive. Several commission members explained a variety of reasons why her petition was rejected. One said that since she was not originally from the Alygdzher area, she had no historic claim to her own taiga there and no right to inherit her brother's. In addition, her son is not the heir to her brother. Another commission member stated categorically that "We don't allocate *rodovye taigi* to women."

When I approached the claimant with these explanations, she pointed out that the "newcomer" who currently inhabits the disputed tract is the *de facto* chairman of the land commission, who runs the hunting enterprise. Since all the members of the commission

are hunters, she said they were all under his thumb, beholden to him for permits, guns and bullets. She said she wanted to appeal to the United Nations, but did not know how.

Further fieldwork uncovered yet more incidents. One informant who asked not to be identified gave the following account:

We've got a couple of guys here - well, one of them has already gone away, but the other one is still here. Anyway, they got into a scandal (*rasskandalisya*) up in the Barbitai River area with some *Arshantsy* [people from the Arshan area]. The guys who's still here, he used to hunt up there, but the *Arshantsy* said it was their taiga and kicked him out. Then he came back here. That's it. He doesn't go up there anymore. Now he bums around here. Well, last year near here, near the village, a taiga burned down, but a bit of it was left. It was given to him, and now he goes there. Half of it burned down, but there's still some little piece of it left that he can hunt on.

When asked to elaborate on the "scandal," he continued:

He has his own taiga up there, but with those... those *Arshantsy*, he got into this scandal, and now he's afraid to go back there. You know, this scandal started out small and just got bigger and bigger, until he went over to Arshan and burned down their hunting cabin! Well, that's it. Then it all blew up!

Another informant discussed the conflict he was having with another claimant to his taiga:

The person I'm having a conflict with - his taiga hasn't been productive, so he went to hunt over there, where the pine nuts are. But now someone else came there and is hunting there. Now he [the person he's having a conflict with] can't hunt there, so he's returned to his own taiga, next to mine. But it's small and not productive, and his son has just come back from the army, and he needs a taiga to hunt on, but his taiga isn't big enough for both of them. So now he's trying to lay claim to my taiga. My son has also just come back from the army. He also needs a taiga.... This conflict has blown up to large proportions now.

In a voice wavering on the verge of tears, he concluded, "I'm afraid it's reached the point where we're ready to start shooting. But that can't lead to any good."

In many cases this tension is characterized by undercurrents of ethnic resentment. The Tofa say the Russians are rapacious and greedy, overexploit the taiga, have no customary rights to it anyway, and that it would be better if they were not there. The Russians say the Tofa are lazy, drink too much, and do not deserve their own taigas because they do not put in the necessary work to make the most of the resources on their taiga, relying on the dole to get by and spending all they get on alcohol.

The demographic and economic pictures indicate that the situation will get worse before it gets better. Dubbing it a "population explosion without the explosion," researcher V.P. Krivonogov (1998) noted that, after centuries of relative stability (hovering around 450), the Tofa population began to grow rather quickly in the 1960s. Since the 1960s, the number of mixed marriages has increased rapidly, leading to an increase in the number of *metis*, or mixed, children. In the 1970s and 1980s, 90% of all newborns were *metis*, and of these, 90% were officially registered as "Tofa" in their passports. In 1995, there were 158 children under the age of 10 in Tofalaria. Of these, 134 were *metis*, and of these, 95.5% are registered as Tofa (Krivonogov 1998:55) (partly in order to be entitled to hunting grounds and other privileges accorded the Small-Numbered Peoples of the North). Another factor is the lack of out-migration from Tofalaria. Of the five "small-numbered" minorities that Krivonogov investigated, the Tofa were least likely to have any desire of leaving Tofalaria, with upwards of 90% saying they have no intention or desire to leave. As one informant said, "Here the biggest problem is that the population is increasing. Our children aren't going away after finishing school. They stay here." Krivonogov notes that one would expect the severe unemployment in Tofalaria to be an incentive for people to want to move out in search of

work. On the contrary, it seems to keep people in Tofalaria. Very few people receive any kind of higher education or special training, so they lack the skills and training necessary to compete for jobs. In addition, most do not have relatives or any means of support outside of Tofalaria. At least in Tofalaria, they can always make ends meet, supplementing meager government subsidies by hunting, fishing, and gathering.

In fact, there may even be a net in-migration into Tofalaria. One of the most commonly mentioned causes for such in-migration is that many young Tofa women who leave Tofalaria end up marrying Russian (or other non-Tofa nationality) men, and then move back to Tofalaria. As Yuri Ivanovich Antsiferov, the mayor of Alygdzher, put it, "Some conflicts are arising because these Tofa girls go off to the city [Nizhneudinsk] and meet boys, and tell them, 'I'm Tofa. I have rights to a taiga' when in fact they've never had such rights. Then they come back here and try to claim a taiga." I heard contradictory explanations of females' inheritance rights: One member of the Commission for the Allocation of Hunting Territories told me his daughter (who is only 10 years old now) would have the right to take over his taiga if her future husband did not have his own taiga. However, as noted above, another commission member asserted that the commission does not grant *rodovye taigi* to women.

All of this is leading to a very tense situation, as ever more people try to get a piece of a limited taiga. As one informant noted, "The taiga isn't made of rubber. It can't stretch." At present, disputes are referred to the abovementioned Commission for the Allocation of Hunting Territories, based in Alygdzher. The commission settles disputes on the basis of a number of criteria, including traditional inheritance rights and historical occupation of certain lands (one of the oldest men in the village is on the commission

exclusively to consult on matters of historical occupation of certain tracts). A newcomer with no inheritance rights can apply to the commission for a hunting tract, but at present there are no unoccupied tracts. A hunting tract can be taken away from someone if he does not use it for a period of time or if he does not supply enough pelts to the hunting enterprise.

The Tozhu

The sense of exclusive access to hunting grounds in Tofalaria and the conflicts it is provoking is striking in its contrast to the sense of property just across the border in the Tozhu District of the Republic of Tyva. Like the Tofa, the Tozhu traditionally recognized clan-based territories.¹⁶ And like the Tofa, the clan basis for territorial division eroded over time. Vainshtein notes that, while the administrative divisions in the Tozhu region reflected the old clan territories, in fact by the beginning of the 20th c. the herder-hunters no longer divided themselves along clan lines. Nomadic herding camps became mixed, containing members from different clans (Vainshtein 1961:37; Vainshtein 1959:83). "According to older hunter-herders, their grandfathers hunted sable only within their own clan territories. Already by the turn of the century (19th-20th c), this custom was no longer being observed" (Vainshtein 1961:43). While almost all Tozhu people could (and still can) tell you which clan they belong to and where the land of their ancestors is, the salient feature of their sense of property is non-exclusivity. This comes out in writing about the Tozhu from the turn of the century through Vainshtein's definitive monologue (1961), all of which note the openness and flexibility of access to resources on a given

¹⁶ However, see Chapter 3, notes I and 8 above.

land. For example. Skabeev (1925) notes that while only members of a certain clan have the right to hunt sable within their territory, the prevailing custom was to allow members of other clans to hunt on one's territory if, for any reason, their own hunting grounds were short of sable. As noted in the previous chapter, hunting on a different band's territory was so common that it was instituted in the custom of *uzha* (see pp. 1.04-105). Vainshtein cites one Tozhu informant as saying that at the beginning of the 20th century, one hunter lodged a complaint against another, not because the latter had hunted and killed an animal on the territory of the former, but because he had not observed the custom of *uzha* (Vainshtein 1959:85).

During Soviet times the Tozhu people's experience with collectivization and sedentarization was significantly different from the Tofa people's, a fact that further contributes to the differences in their present-day attitudes toward property. During the early years of collectivization, when Tyva was nominally an independent state very much under the influence of the Soviet Union (1921-1944),¹⁵ the nascent government of the *Tangdy-Tyva Ulus Respublika* (Tangdy-Tyva People's Republic, later shortened to the *Tyva Arat Respublika*, the Tyva People's Republic, or TAR for short) tried to force a rapid transition from a nomadic way of life to a sedentarized one, much as was occurring in the Soviet Union. While many Tyva people welcomed the advances in education, medical care, and access to goods that came along with sedentarization and collectivization, many others resisted, as has already been detailed in Chapter 4 (see p.124).

¹⁵ See Chapter 3, n. 38.

The government of Tyva recognized its mistake. Whereas among the Tofa, collectivization and sedentarization were externally imposed without due consideration of the role of the nomadic lifestyle, with disastrous results to the culture of the Tofa (as noted by Mel'nikova above), in Tyva generally and Tozhu in particular, the tempo of collectivization and sedentarization was slowed in recognition of the importance of the nomadic lifestyle to the economic and cultural vitality of Tyva (Grebnyev 1955:28-31; Mollerov 1991:55-58). This was due in part to simple demographics: in the 1930s there were some 90,000 Tyva people (among them approximately 2500 Tozhu) compared to approximately 450 Tofa, so collectivization and sedentarization were much larger projects. More important was the fact that the government of the Tyva People's Republic was made up predominantly of indigenous Tyvas who were more sensitive to the needs of their countrymen. As Mollerov notes, "Collectivization was realized on the basis of the workers who led a nomadic lifestyle" (Mollerov 1991:57),

But once Tyva was assimilated into the USSR (1944), the pace of sedentarization and collectivization picked up. In 1949 the Tozhu were, like the Tofa, collectivized into *kolkhozy*, and many, but not all, were settled into villages that were built to serve as the administrative centers of the collective farms. Collectivization and sedentarization were considered almost complete in Tyva by 1955.

Among the Tozhu, however, what it meant to be settled was interpreted more liberally than in Tofalaria, where virtually all the Tofa truly were completely settled in villages. For example, while all Tozhu reindeer-herding families had been assigned to a *kolkhoz* and given houses in villages (hence were considered settled), many continued to nomadize with their reindeer (now officially considered the collective property of the

kolkhoz), reflecting a recognition that, nomadism was still an integral part of the production system. The fact that even now some 30 Tozhu families still nomadize with their reindeer herds may explain to some degree the differences between the Tofa and Tozhu with regards to their senses of property. The extensive grazing needs of the deer and the vagaries of weather and the natural resource base (mainly pasturage and wild game) demand flexibility in access to these resources and militate against exclusivity. In addition, there are several other reasons for these differences in sense of property: Tozhu is larger than Tofalaria (44,000 km² as compared to 27,000 km²¹⁸), and while there are more people in Tozhu (app. 7000) and hence a higher population density (1 person per 6.3 km²) as compared to a total population of approximately 1100 in Tofalaria (1 person per 24.5 km²), the proportion of Russians and other "newcomers" in Tozhu is smaller than in Tofalaria (20% and 40% respectively),¹⁹ hence interethnic competition for and conflicts over resources with Russians and others is much less pronounced, and their influence on the understanding of property rights is likewise much weaker. Finally, the inhabitants of Tozhu District are on the whole less dependent on the taiga for their survival. The fact that the Tyva people (of whom the Tozhu are a subset) make up the majority of the population of Tyva and are politically more powerful than any other ethnic group within Tyva allows for greater diversity of employment opportunities for indigenous Tyva people within Tyva. Tyva people have always controlled Tyva

¹⁸ This figure doesn't include the 500,000 hectare (5000 km²) sable preserve (*zakatnik*) in the southwestern corner of Tofalaria, where people are forbidden to hunt.

¹⁹ The population of Tofalaria is approximately 1100, of whom about 60% are officially registered as Tofa (however see p. 164 above on children of mixed marriages) and 40% Russian and other non-Tofa peoples. However, my fieldwork was carried out in the largest village (of three) in Tofalaria, Alygdzher, which has a population of 554, of whom 274 (49%) are officially registered as Tofa and the remaining 280 (51%) are non-Tofa, predominantly Russian. By contrast, Tozhu has a total population of 6957 (1991 figures), of which approximately 65% are Tozhu, 15% Tyva, and 20% non-Tyva, predominantly Russian.

administratively, and schools, hospitals, etc., are predominantly Tyva-administered and staffed. During TAR times and later during Soviet times, young people who decided not to make a living off the land could get an education and pursue professions in state sectors such as local or regional administration, education, medicine, and law-enforcement. In doing so, they became less dependent on the taiga, thus were more willing to relinquish any claims to land and resources they might have had, thereby reducing competition for these resources.²⁰ Such opportunities have historically been virtually non-existent for the Tofa.

Following the breakup of the USSR, the state farm system went into steep decline in the early 1990s and was officially abandoned in the Tozhu District in 1996. The responses of the herder-hunters to the institutional void left by the collapse of the state farm system fall into three categories, each of which has implications for property relations. These will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. For the purposes of this chapter, suffice it to say that the salient feature common to all three of these arrangements remains non-exclusivity with regards to rights of access. Even the potentially most exclusive of these new property arrangements, private leases for legally sanctioned peasant enterprises (*arat azhyl-agyi* in Tyvan, *fermerskoe* or *krest'yanstvo khozyaistvo* in Russian - see Chapter 6) are not treated as exclusive by the Tozhu. One

²⁰ With the collapse of the Soviet Union, many of these opportunities have dried up in Torfiu as well, forcing people to once again rely more heavily on the taiga for their survival. However, this is most pronounced in the most remote villages of Tozhu, namely Syslyg Khem and Kham Syra, located in the far southwestern and northeastern corners of the district respectively, surrounded by the richest taigas in all of Tyva. With populations of around 150, of whom more than 95% are Tozhu, and given the difficulty of access to these villages, there still isn't much competition for or disputes over the Datura! resources in these areas. In the principal, closely clustered, and more accessible towns of Toora-Khem (pop- 2600) and E and Adyr-Kezhig (approximately 1300 and 1200 respectively), there is still a fair degree of access to salaried employment.

young Tozhu herder-hunter has such a legal lease to some 580 hectares along the Oina River, from which he has the legal right to exclude others or to charge others for use. When asked what he would do if he caught someone fishing on his territory, he at first said, "Nothing." Then he got a mischievous grin on his face and said, "No, I'd tax him. One fish!" The traditional "Law of the Taiga" continues to be one of helping out guests and visitors.³¹ When I asked Tozhu hunter-herders what they would do if they saw an unknown Russian (playing a bit on inter-ethnic tensions) hunting on what they considered their territory, a typical response was, "I'd help him. I'd put him up in my tent; I'd feed him; I'd show him where to hunt. What else can I do?" On more than one occasion I heard Tozhu people say, "No one owns the taiga. Whoever wants to can come and get what they can." Simply undertaking the rigorous trip into the taiga seems to entitle those who do it to whatever they can get.²²

This sense of inclusiveness extends as well to people's sense of their own entitlement to hunt and fish wherever they want. Tozhu herder-hunters would outline for me the territory that they considered "theirs" (territory they habitually ranged over), but when I asked them to outline the territory they felt they had a right to range over, most included the entire Tozhu District, and several included the northern section of the neighboring Kaa-Khem District as well. When asked about any sense of having one's own exclusive taiga, as among the Tofa, former herder-hunter Bernbirel Karanai said: "There isn't anything like that here. Wherever I want to go and hunt, I go there and hunt."

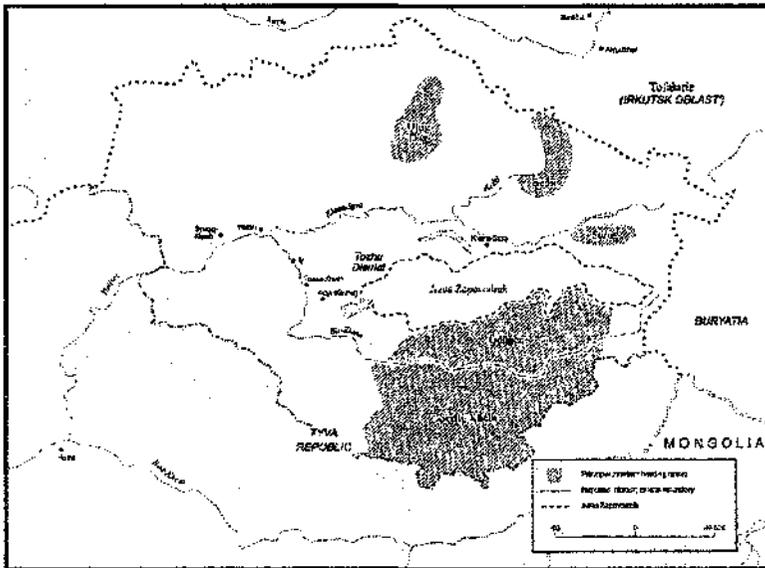
²¹ Cf. Ziker on the "Law of the Tundra" in the Taimyr (Ziker 2002a: Ch. 6; 2002b: 12).

²² This sense of entitlement to resources for those who "know the land" (D.Anderson 1998) has been noted throughout Siberia. Cf. D.Anderson 1998, 2000; Fondahl 1998:34. Curiously, in the Tozhu case this entitlement seems to extend to anyone who can make it out to the taiga, whether they really "know the land" or not.

Even when there were assigned hunting territories in the Kham-Syra region (there was a state hunting enterprise in Kham-Syra), Karanai said, "Even though there were assigned hunting territories it was no problem; other people could still go there and hunt."²³

This sense of freedom and flexibility regarding access to land and resources was demonstrated to me as I was trying to get a fix on how many herders there are and where they tend to live. One of the largest groupings of herders, with 5-7 *aals* (households) camping together and approximately 300 deer, migrated in the far eastern part of Ödügen Taiga (see Map 5.3) near the border with Buryatia, just south of the Azas Zapovednik (strict nature preserve - see Chapter 8). When I expressed my intention to get there and

Map 5.3. Principal Tozhu reindeer herding areas. (Compiled from informants' hand-drawn maps and maps provided by the Land Committee, Tozhu District. Map prepared by Indiana University Graphics Services.)



²³ Interview with Dembirel Karanai at his home in Kham-Syra, Tozhu District, July 2001.

spend some time with them, I was informed, by my hosts that they had all pulled up stakes the previous winter (1999-2000) and moved into the Serlig Khem region - a completely different area that was part of a different *obshchina* and that also historically was part of a different clan territory. These people took the decision to move because it was simply too difficult to reach their village (Adyr-Kezhig) or the Kharaal gold mining base from the Ödiigen herding and hunting grounds except in the dead of winter when the rivers were all frozen over. I asked the director of the Serlig Khem *obshchina* if they needed any special permission to move into his *obshchina's* territory, and he simply shrugged and shook his head, as if the thought had never occurred to him. In turn, the group in the Sorug River region on the north side of the Azas *Zapovednik* and part of a completely different *obshchina*, moved around to Ödiigen Taiga on the south side of the *zapovednik* to escape bears.

But this freedom of movement and lack of exclusivity with regards to hunting and herding territories may change if recent developments continue putting pressure on the herder-hunters'



Figure 5.1. A Tozhu campsite in the autumn.

natural resource base. For example, Tozhu herder-hunters are changing their migration patterns. According to older ethnographic works and former herders' recollections, in the past, Tozhu herders would migrate 12-20 times per year in search of good pasturage and good hunting.²⁶ Former herder Mikhail Kenden explained that it takes at least 10 years for the *shulung* (reindeer lichen) to reach its full height of 8-10 cm., and several herders

²⁶ For example, Vainshtein cites a figure of 18-20 times per year (Vainshtein 1961:66).

explained that, ideally, they would not return to the same camp site for 10-15 years, in order to allow the *shulung* to regenerate. In fact, however, most of the herders were migrating 4-6 times per year, and many did return to some of the same campsites year after year. Cha-Cha Sbyngylai had used the same summer camp in the upper Bedii River area three years in a row, and told me he would use *it* again for a fourth year. "We don't have so many deer now, so there's enough *shulung* up there nowadays," he said. Likewise, Piko Sambuu and his family returned to the same fall camp on the Chaiynda River several years in a row, and that was the very spot where they built their cabin in the fall of 2000, and then stayed there through until the spring of 2001. However, Gleg Orai-ool, an experienced herder in the Serlig-Khem area, was critical of the reduced migratory activities of other herders. He claimed that he had moved 16 times in the previous year (1999), although he acknowledged that he would camp in the same site several years in a row.

Last year I moved 16 times. That's why this is a difficult life. But in the summer you don't need *nara* [sleeping platform inside tent built of small logs], and I've got wood already prepared for ray tent frame at every place along my route. But if you don't move often, it's bad for the deer - they'll get sick, there won't be enough food for them. The longest I ever stay in one place is three months - December, January and February. I move so often to preserve the pasture, so next year I can come again. There's enough food for the deer here around this lake. That's why I'm building a cabin here. But after three years, I'll have to find another campsite to spend the winter. But you can't stay for three months in one place in (he summer - the deer will get sick. In the spring, after calving, you've got to move - stay in one place at the most seven days, at the least three or four days.²⁵

The construction of cabins mentioned above represents a new and interesting development regarding land tenure and property rights. In the past, when herders moved

²⁵ Interview with Oleg Baraanovich Orai-ool at his winter camp in the Serlig-Khem region, 9 March 2000.

more frequently and would not return to the same campsite for several years, there was no reason to build more permanent structures. However, in the first year I was conducting fieldwork for this research (2000), all the herders of the Serlig Khem group who had not

Figure 5.2. Sholban Bimba working on his family's cabin near the Chaiynda River.



yet dons so decided to build small log cabins on "their" territories, at places where they habitually establish their fall and/or winter and/or spring camps. This investment in time and labor not only indicates a sense of property ownership — a way of staking a claim to a certain territory - but also has implications for migration patterns and a variety of ecological factors associated with migration. For example, for the Sambuu cabin, we sawed down 45 mature larch trees of between 30 and 40 cm. dbh

(diameter at breast height). Trees in Siberia grow very slowly, and based on ring counts, I determined that these mature trees were all 150-200 years old. Toward the end of the project, we were having to range several hundred meters in any direction from the building site to find suitable trees. Hence cabin building causes immediate deforestation, albeit on a very small scale. More threatening is the fact that herders were building these cabins where they intend to spend the winters, so wood for heating the cabins becomes a critical factor. The ideal type of fuelwood is standing dead trees, and where those are in short supply, the Tozhu will strip the bark off living trees with the expectation that this will kill the trees for the next winter. Finally, simply having the comfort of the cabins,

which are roomier and much warmer than canvas tents, will encourage the Tozhu not only to return to the same sites winter after winter, but to go earlier in the fall and stay later into the spring, as the Sambuu family did in 2000-2001, when they stayed in the cabin from October through March. All of these factors combine to put extra stress on the wood, reindeer pasturage, and wild game resources in the areas immediately surrounding these cabins.

In addition, these cabins and indeed most current campsites tend to be within one or two days' ride on reindeer-back from populations centers or the gold mining bases. In Soviet times, when the costs of transportation were completely borne by the state, the Tozhu herder-hunters ranged much further afield than they do today, often establishing summer camps in the highest mountains along the borders with Mongolia, Tuva, and Irkutsk Oblast'. At that time, the state provided vehicles and heavily subsidized fuel costs, while the state farms paid the remaining nominal fee. In the 1980s, for example, the nominal fee the state farms had to pay for helicopter use was 60-70 rubles for an hour of flight time. Translating this into dollar terms, even at the highly inflated official exchange rate of 1 ruble to \$1, helicopter usage was very cheap.²⁶ One former state farm director told me that on one day alone 21 helicopter flights were made from the provincial capital out to various herding camps. Now, however, the price of one hour of helicopter flight time is 50,000 rubles (approximately \$1,750), a price that more accurately reflects the actual costs of operating these large, fuel-inefficient Soviet-era helicopters. The fact that all transportation costs must now be borne by the herders

²⁶ In fact, the ruble was worth only a small fraction of its official rate on the world market, so the actual cost to the state farms in dollar terms was much less.

themselves and that the *annual* income of even the richest Tozhu reindeer-herding family would barely cover the cost of one hour of helicopter flight time means that helicopter transportation is simply out of the question for Tozhu reindeer herders. Herders must now rely on their reindeer for all their transportation needs. Thus it makes perfectly good sense for them to limit their migration routes and build cabins closer to population centers for easier accessibility to their settled relatives, consumer goods, basic necessities, and transportation to the capital.

In addition to the potential ecological impact of such circumscribed migrations, these changes will almost certainly drive up the relative value of the land and resources closer to population centers. Not only are reindeer herders moving close in to the villages and more intensively exploiting the resources, but, as alternative employment opportunities have dried up, people in the villages are also forced to more intensively exploit the taiga within a day's walk from the villages. Increasing numbers of hunters and fishermen - both legal and illegal - from outside the Tozhu District are invading the taiga in the Tozhu District, leading to noticeable declines in the fish and wild game populations. This, along with encroachment from gold mining, timber interests, and tourist resorts, and the threat of privatization (see Ch. 8) may force the Tozhu herder-hunters to more jealously guard their territory and develop a sense of exclusivity that could lead to an increase in conflicts and tensions such as has been occurring in Tofalaria since the early part of the 20th century.

Conclusion

In this chapter I suggest that encroachment first from other indigenous groups, then starting in the mid-17th century, from Russians and Ukrainians, squeezed the Tofa into a defined territory and led to the establishment of their *rodovye taigi*. As they were yet further squeezed into an ever-shrinking taiga, they were forced to strictly limit access to their taigas, which was contrary to their earlier form of flexible, fairly open access. After the formation of the USSR, the Tofa people's early recognition as one of the "Small-numbered Peoples of the North" led to an effort to protect the Tofa by codifying in law their reduced territory. The Soviet regime's highly successful collectivization and sedentarization campaigns settled the Tofa people in villages and further distorted their *rodovye taigi*, turning them into very small family hunting grounds, which had to be jealously guarded if a family was going to try to meet the quotas of the state hunting enterprise. This also made reindeer herding impracticable, and led to the decline of reindeer herding as a way of life and as an important component of the Tofa people's sense of ethnic identity.

The Tozhu, on the other hand, have never been completely sedentarized, have never developed such a sense of exclusive private property, and still engage in reindeer herding as an active and important facet of their lives and sense of ethnic identity. The difference lies mostly in the Tofa people's longer contact with Russians and the sense of exclusive rights of access to resources within a given territory that have come about as a result of that contact, and the attention they received as one of the Small-Numbered People's of the North. In laying all this out, I am not suggesting that the formal establishment of Tofalaria was in any sense an intentional way of disempowering the

Tofa. I believe that it was initially suggested and implemented with sincerely good intentions toward the protection of the Tofa. In fact, it probably saved the Tofa from complete annihilation, and has to this day guaranteed a modicum of protection and a source of food and income for the Tofa. The extant writings of B.I. Petri, who championed the Tofa cause (then known as Karagas) with vigor and dedication, attest to this sincerity, as does Petri's ultimate fate for his commitment - an "Enemy of the People" label and a firing squad in 1937. But with collectivization, forced sedentarization, and the formal establishment of clearly demarcated family-based hunting grounds came a sense of possessiveness and exclusivity not known previously. Such a sense of property proved incompatible with a nomadic, reindeer herding and hunting existence, and thus contributed to alienating the Tofa from the basis of their unique culture and ethnic identity.

Part III:

Moving Up to the Constitutional Level:

Indigenous Peoples In Russian Law and the Threat of Privatization

Part II of this dissertation dealt with differences between the Tozhu and Tofa with regards to their perceptions and management of different kinds of property. I have suggested that these differences can be attributed to their divergent histories over the past three centuries, and the degree to which historical events have or have not led to supplanting indigenous institutions. Recall that property rights are the single most important institutional matrix that institutional analysis deal with (see inter alia Alston, Eggertson and North 1996; Eggertsson 1993; North 1990; Ostrom 1990). For the most part, the impetus behind the ideas in Chapters 4 and 5 came from my direct observations of and interactions with Tozhu and Tofa people on the ground, at what the institutional analysts call the "operational" level. What I observed at the operational level was in part a response of the Tozhu and Tofa to actions taken at the "collective choice." (also called "policy") level. However, a thorough institutional analysis must also link these two nested levels to the more overarching "constitutional" level and, in the case of indigenous peoples, to the global level of international law. It is at the constitutional level where official definitions of rights and who qualifies for them are established and codified. Many of these rights and restrictions have important implications for local-level institutions regulating common-pool resource use, especially regarding the inclusion and exclusion of those who have the rights of access to resources. This is the focus of Part III of this dissertation.

Chapter 6

Institutional Upheaval from the Top-Down

Introduction.

In his polemical study of the breakdown of communist regimes, Antoni Kaminski asserts that "Clarifying why the Soviet experiment failed is crucial to understanding how to cope with problems of governance" (Kaminski 1992:x). Now, more than a decade after the collapse of the USSR, Kaminski's imperative needs to be recast: Clarifying why the *post-Soviet* experiment is failing is crucial to understanding how to cope with problems of governance. Perhaps the single greatest reason for the failure of the Soviet experiment was the misguided policy of collectivization. Now, in the post-Soviet period, policies designed to pick up where collectivization left off and which in many cases have been, like collectivization, centrally mandated with the same top-down mentality, are likewise failing. This chapter first outlines the impact of Soviet-era collectivization, then examines the formal institutions that have been prescribed since the collapse of the state farm system to manage economic activities, but which have failed. While this collapse of institutional structures and subsequent institutional void has devastated the reindeer herders, it has also given rise to new patterns of regularized and repeated behavior, which could be the seeds of new grassroots institutions.

Collectivization

Collectivization of agriculture was the crown jewel of the Soviet Communist Party's social engineering policies in the 1930s (Forsyth 1992: 290-291). Ostensibly geared toward the social and economic development of the Soviet Union's rural population, collectivization proved to be more a method of socio-economic control than socio-economic development. Forsyth believes that the true aim of collectivization "was to proletarianise them [Siberian peoples] by binding them in collectives subordinated to the superstructure of the Soviet state" (Forsyth 1992:291), while Campbell asserts that "the collectivization of agriculture provided the basic institutional mechanism for eliminating the economic power and independence of the peasantry" (Campbell 1992:44).

Leaving the question of motive aside, collectivization was flawed from the beginning, principally because it was predicated on imposing a uniform institutional structure on all rural communities throughout the vast Soviet Union, without adequately taking into consideration differences in the physical attributes or characteristics of the diverse communities.¹ In outlining their "design principles" for robust institutions for the management of common-pool resources (CPRs), McGinnis and Ostrom note that "*Given the diversity of the settings, one should not expect to be able to discover a single formulation or set of optimal mechanisms*" (McGinnis and Ostrom 1992:54; italics in original). Siezkiné likewise criticized the "mechanical and crude application" of the

¹ Of course, the collectives did allow for regional variation in that they were set up to exploit the "competitive advantage" of each region, so, for example, collectives in Uzbekistan focused on cotton production, while those in the far north of Siberia focused on raising reindeer for meat. But even these superficial efforts to match production to ecological suitability proved misguided, with the Uzbek cotton monoculture being perhaps the most dramatic example. The failure of the Soviet experiment has been cogently discussed by, inter alia, Kaminski (1992) and Campbell (1992). Campbell in particular discusses the perverse incentives built into the Soviet system that prevented effective functioning (1992:43ff.).

methods of collectivization based on more "advanced" regions of European USSR and nomadic peoples of Siberia (Slezkine 1994:206). The indigenous populations of Siberia were nomadic reindeer herders, hunters, and fishermen who did not produce a surplus of valuable raw materials that could be used by the Soviet state as exportable commodities" (Forsyth 1992:291). Thus, production had to be increased via rationalization and industrialization, along the lines of the model that had been implemented in the more "advanced" agricultural regions of European USSR. Management mandates designed by agricultural experts in Moscow were handed down to be implemented in these very remote areas. Production quotas for reindeer meat were mandated. Productivity was determined on the basis of live weight or processed weight of meat. Reindeer were devalued because they weren't as productive as other large livestock, but the fact that reindeer are far better suited to the ecological conditions and require no imported feed was not taken into consideration. Efforts aimed at increasing meat production were implemented, including separating females and calves from the males: building corrals which to pen up the animals; dictating migration dates and routes; establishing "brigades" of workers who would be helicoptered in and out of herding areas on a rotating basis. This approach completely ignored the cultural value of reindeer to the south-Siberian peoples, the traditional use-value of reindeer as a means of transportation and as a source of milk, and the fact that the south Siberian reindeer herding peoples were loath to slaughter a reindeer unless absolutely necessary.

Throughout the Soviet Union, reindeer husbandry was viewed by the Communist Party's agricultural apparatus as problematic to centralized Soviet agricultural goals because of its range requirements and associated nomadic lifestyle. A 1957 law that

Infrastructural development and social services contingent upon the "complete 'liquidation'¹ of the reindeer herders' way of life" (Vitebsky n.d.:2) further exacerbated the problem.² To move this process along, the Soviets made an administrative distinction between "production nomadism" and "nomadism as a way of life," and did all they could to discourage the latter. "Production nomadism" was an effort to "rationalize" and industrialize herding practices. It included only the able-bodied men who were directly involved in reindeer herding and excluded all others who had formerly been integral to "nomadism as a way of life." Herders' children were forced to attend full-time boarding schools in village centers, while herders' wives were also settled in village centers and assigned to secondary economic activities such as sewing and fur processing. These policies in general had a negative impact on production: "Once again, we see the inappropriate transfer to herding of industrial models of the organization of labor. It is precisely because herding is much more than a productive process that this attack on the family was inevitably destructive of production as well" (Vitebsky n.d.:5).

Many indigenous Siberians resisted collectivization however they could:

The native response took traditional forms: they asked for more time, withdrew into silence, or tried to placate the Russians by passing resolutions. . . . Those who could do so moved away or changed their migration routes. When confronted directly, they often refused to pay new taxes and part with their animals. . . . When there were no more people, ploys, and arguments left and no more pastures to go to, the herders slaughtered their animals... or killed the collectivizers.

Finally, there was the ultimate and most traditional act of resistance - suicide. (Slezkine 1994:203)

² *O merakh pa dal'neishemu razvitiyu ekonomiki i kui 'fury narodnostei Severn: Postanovlenie TsK KPSS i Soveta Ministrov SSSR No. 300* (On measures for the further development of the economy and culture of the peoples of the North), dated 16 March 1957. This is discussed in Vitebsky n.d.

Such measures are representative of what Scott has dubbed "weapons of the weak" (Scott 1985), and what Levi has described as "the behavioral withdrawal of acquiescence with or consent to current institutional arrangements" (Levi 1990:403) and "undermining. . . contingent consent" (Levi 1990:407).

The experience of collectivization started out differently in Tyva than in other parts of Siberia. Forsyth points out that the Tyvan collective farms "were at first organized on the basis of traditional communities and clan pastures, but later the Soviet Russian authorities imposed new measures of amalgamation and denomadisation intended to break down clan-territorial allegiances and reduce the tribespeople to a single amorphous class of collectivized peasants" (Forsyth 1992: 374). Throughout Tyva, this forced collectivization, sedentarization, and intensification of production to meet quotas disrupted established migration patterns and overrode indigenous strategies regulating herd, pasture, and game management (Humphrey 1989; Humphrey, Mongush and Telengid 1993; cf. Yitebsky 1992, n.d.). As in other parts of the Soviet Union, Tyvan herders engaged in various forms of resistance, principal among them, the slaughter of their own livestock. In just three years, the livestock population throughout Tyva was reduced by 34 percent (Forsyth 1992: 373).³

But it is important to note that Soviet policies were not entirely negative and destructive, nor were they completely at odds with pre-Soviet traditional institutional arrangements. Indeed, in some senses, Soviet collectivization was (unintentionally) built on a continuation of traditional structures. In discussing collectivization in Tyva's neighboring republic, Buryatia, Caroline Humphrey asserts, "Although the economic and

³ I haven't been able to come up with accurate figures specifically for reindeer in Tyva.

political functions of their communal institutions (clans, land-holding communities) were destroyed by collectivization, the Buryats were provided with Soviet institutions of an equally non-individualist, non-capitalist kind" (Humphrey 1983:2). This holds true far the Tyva as well. The collective (and later, state) farm was, as Humphrey has called it, a "total social institution." It was not only employer, but educator, doctor, bank, social life, and *raison d'être* for entire communities. In fact, there were no permanent settlements in the Tozhu District prior to the establishment of the *kolkhozy*. The handful of villages in the region were built to serve as administrative bases for the *kolkhozy*- Hence these villages became very much like "company towns." Humphrey takes issue with Marshall Sahlins' famous and widely accepted concept of the Domestic Mode of Production (Sahlins 1972), which states that "in many kinship-based societies, both production and consumption are restricted to the requirements of the household sphere," giving households a sort of "natural autonomy" to use Sahlins' phrase (Humphrey 2002:164). Sahlins' view imputes rational egoistic motives, but to the household rather than to the individual. Humphrey, however, disagrees. She claims that "The indigenous idea. . . is one in which farmers are social beings right from the start, from their innermost inclinations, from their understanding of the person to their concepts of the state" (Humphrey 2002:165). Humphrey believes that the collective "appears as a stage in a series of nested hierarchies, from the household, through production teams, brigades, collectives, the sub-district, the district, and the republic itself," and that this vision is propagated through public pronouncements, which "reinforce indigenous ideas of belonging to a whole within which there is a process of allocation" (Humphrey 2002:166). Far from being naturally autonomous, there is in fact "resistance to the idea of

independence" on the part of domestic groups, because the domestic group is "economically incomplete" (Humphrey 2002:167). Humphrey suggests that "this is not just a 'fallout' of the socialist economy but is also a reflection of an indigenous view of how things are or should be" (Humphrey 2002:167). Humphrey's notion, which she calls "hierarchical shareholding" (Humphrey 2002; 165), finds support in some of the recent literature on co-evolution (see, *inter alia*, Jones 2001; Reyna 2002). Noting that much of human behavior does not conform to predictions based on rational choice theory (with assumptions of the rational egoist), Bryan Jones builds a strong case for the genetic development of social behavior as advantageous:

In human societies, however, we observe more fitness-sacrificing behavior than can be accounted for by such kin altruism. The only answer for the continuing appeal of so-called altruistic motives is that some other factor offers even more evolutionary advantage.

It must be the case that the fitness of individuals is advanced by social interaction. (Jones 2001: 116)

While it may well belie a selective memory in choosing to ignore the repressive measures of forced collectivization of the Soviet period, both the collective farms and state farms are remembered fondly and with nostalgia today among the Tozhu and Tofa and indeed throughout Siberia generally, not only because they provided all basic necessities, but also because they were in some ways a continuation of an earlier way of life. Konstantinov and Vladimirova have coined the term "sovkhoism" to describe the tendency of many former state farm workers to idealize the state farm as "a fatally lost world, to somehow be regained," and to imagine "a desired life, but this time retrospectively - one ideally lived again in a protected social reality like that of the state

farm" (Konstantinov and Vladimirova 2002:3). The collective became an important aspect of people's sense of identity (D.Anderson 2000; Humphrey 1983).

While on paper and in fact much of the peoples' lives was dictated from Moscow, people working on collective and state farms, especially those most removed from Moscow, managed to devise internal, informal institutions within the broader framework of the farms. Levi points out that while formal institutions like the collective and state farms are often very difficult to dissolve, "they remain susceptible to change that is the consequence of internal institutional decisions that alter, often subtly, the distribution of resources" (Levi 1990:415). David Anderson has termed this "citizenship regimes" (D.Anderson 1996). Anderson, rejects the myth of the "complete absence of any kind of autonomously managed or socially meaningful public sphere" (Anderson 1996:99), i.e., "civil society," in Siberia. "[T]hirty years of resistance and negotiation with a rigid yet segmental bureaucratic structure also formed a tradition of civic practice which came to be experienced as varied citizenship regimes" (Anderson 1996: 107). He insists that "civil society in Siberia was harboured within different 'citizenship regimes' which formed restricted yet significant channels for economic and political practice" (Anderson 1996:100). In this way, a form of civil society (often assumed not to have existed during Soviet times) managed to percolate up from within the state-run institutions.

Institutional Upheaval in Post-Soviet Russia

When the Soviet Union began weakening and showing signs of collapse in the late 1980s, a general directive went out to force the state farms to become more economically "rational" and self-sufficient, State subsidies were drastically reduced. The state farms

based on reindeer herding were suddenly and for the first time to be held accountable for their economic performances.⁴ One misguided measure implemented on the reindeer herding farms in the Tozhu District of Tyva was the annual cutting of fresh reindeer antlers for sale to Moscow and the East Asian market. In the early summer, when reindeer antlers are still soft and full of blood, they are covered in a soft down, hence are known in English as being "in velvet." The soft antlers contain a variety of compounds believed to have powerful medicinal and aphrodisiac properties, and have proved to be a valuable export commodity for Alaskan as well as Siberian reindeer herders. In the early 1990s, the *sovkhozy* in Tozhu started cutting the antlers in order to generate income. Some herders explained that cutting antlers was simply bad for the deer no matter what. As one former herder put it,

The blood in new growth antlers is flowing with vitamins, you know. It's important for the immune system. If you cut them while they're growing, it weakens the reindeer's organism, and illnesses will result. They start coughing, and get lung diseases. When you ride them, after two or three hours they're ready to collapse.⁵

Chanchangmaa Dovut, another former herder, gave this account:

It's better not to ever cut the antlers. When you cut the antlers, the deer get weak, they begin to feel bad, and they lose their strength. Right from the beginning they start trembling and shivering, they're just pitiful. And the bleeding - it just doesn't stop, it keeps pouring out. Even their legs get covered in it - sometimes it really stinks! So then the deer start to feel sick, after cutting, they start to feel really sick. It was a really damaging thing for a lot of reindeer, that antler-cutting time. One family suddenly lost 10, maybe 20 deer - they just immediately died. And they were that guy's best deer - his *charylär* [castrated males for riding].⁶

⁴ In Soviet times, the great majority of state farms in Siberia chronically operated at a loss (see Humphrey 1983:13 and note 19)."

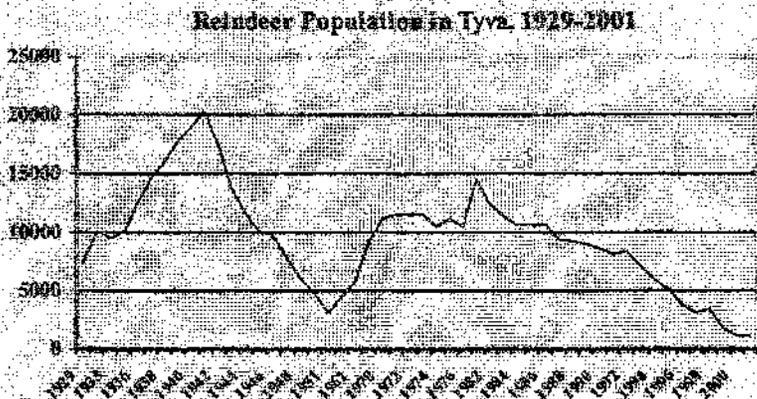
⁵ Interview with Aleksei Chykymaa, 21 January 2001, in his home in Toora-Khem.

⁶ Interview with Chanchangmaa Dovut in her home in Adyr-Kezhig, 19 January 2001.

While some herders insist that this practice is inherently detrimental to the health of the deer, other herders and former *sovkhos* administrators maintain that the cutting of antlers, if done properly, is sound practice, and that the herders did not follow the prescribed method properly. There is no dispute, however, that in this case the practice proved detrimental to the health of the reindeer and led to a massive die-off, culminating in the loss of 400 deer in 1996, at which time the practice was discontinued.

The state farms fell into arrears and could no longer afford to provide basic supplies and services, nor to pay salaries. When I first arrived in Tozhu in 1998, herders had not been paid for several years. In the face of this economic crisis and rampant inflation, many herders were forced to slaughter deer to feed themselves or to sell the meat for cash. The state farms were no longer able to provide necessary services such as veterinary assistance and predator control. As a result, large numbers of deer died of easily treatable diseases, or were killed by wolves. This combination of factors led to the drastic decline in reindeer herds - from 14,000 in 1982 to 1,100 in 2001 - as illustrated in Graph 6.1. This decline is equaled only by the decline in the period from 1940 and 1951. For the first half of this period - during World War II - thousands of deer were slaughtered to send meat to the front. Then from 1946-1951, the decline continued due to resistance to forced collectivization, as many Tozhu fled to Mongolia with their deer, and others slaughtered their own deer rather than surrender them to the collective farms.

Graph 6.1



When it became undeniably clear that the state farms could not survive on their own, they were liquidated in 1996. The failure of the state-subsidized farms sounded a clarion call for market-based reforms and wholesale privatization, assumed by many to be the only alternative. Former members of the state farms were encouraged to take their "shares" and strike out on their own. *Sovkhoz* property was shared out to the members in two forms; land shares (*cher Ulugleri* in Tyvan, *zemel'nye doli* in Russian) and property shares (*onchu khorenge ulugleri* in Tyvan, *imushchestvennye pai* in Russian). But land shares were only very small plots in and around the villages, and did not include reindeer pastures or hunting grounds. The property shares — equipment, machinery, vehicles, and livestock - were very unequally doled out, with the *sovkhos* administrators managing to garner most of the physical property for themselves. As mentioned in Chapter 4, reindeer were shared out not only to herders, but to all members of the former state farm. Most of these people weren't reindeer herders and didn't know what to do with the deer, so they

slaughtered them for food or sold the deer to someone who could afford to buy them. This further contributed to the decline in the number of reindeer in the Tozhu District.

The Tozhu people have responded to the collapse of the state farm system in one of three ways: 1) officially and legally sanctioned peasant enterprises (*ami azhyl-agyi* in Tyvan, *fermerskoe* or *krest'yanstvoe khozyaistvo* in Russian); 2) officially and legally unrecognized private ownership of reindeer and usufruct of land; and 3) legally sanctioned, state-affiliated, kin-based communities *torel bolukteri* in Tyvan, *rodovye obshchiny* in Russian).

Peasant Enterprises

In order to establish a peasant enterprise, applicants must demonstrate a legitimate historical claim to the territory, meaning that they can show that their family lived within that territory in pre-Soviet times. This arrangement-gives them a renewable 5-year lease on a certain territory, explicitly mapped out, and complete freedom to exploit the resources on that land as they choose, which includes the right to exclude people from the land or to charge people who want to extract resources. Successful applicants were given a state-subsidized loan to get their enterprises off the ground, which they were to start repaying in the second year, in addition, they were granted a five-year tax holiday on the revenues from their enterprises. But the entire initiative was plagued from the beginning by an intimidatingly complex, bureaucratic, and time-consuming application process (cf. Ziker 2002a: 128-134); a cultural predisposition against private enterprise⁷ (D.Anderson

⁷ Tyva flew in the face of the overwhelming pressures toward privatization, and even forbade private ownership of land in the 1993 constitution. This was reversed in the new constitution of 2001. See Ch. 8.

1996; Humphrey 2002; Tavemise 2003); and a perverse incentive structure that encouraged people to abuse the system. For example, many people with no intention of setting up private enterprises applied for these peasant enterprises only to get the initial state-sponsored loan. They used the credit for other purposes, e.g., to fix up their houses or purchase vehicles, then defaulted on the loans, and had the land taken away from them.⁸ Others managed to pay back the loans, thus were allowed to maintain leases on their landholdings, but haven't been able to turn a profit or even to pay taxes on the landholdings (after the initial 5-year tax-free period), so have had to restructure into "personal subsidiary activities" (*lichnoe podsobnoe khozyaistvo* — LPKh). This arrangement allows them to keep the plots they were granted in perpetuity and with inheritance rights, but they are allowed to use the land only for subsistence purposes, and not for any kind of entrepreneurial activities. The Tozhu, as specially designated "Small-Numbered Indigenous Peoples of the Russian Federation," do not have to pay taxes on this land. In 1997, there were 118 registered peasant enterprises. Now there are zero. Sixty-eight have reformed into LPKh, and the rest have folded.

From the beginning only two reindeer herders tried to form peasant enterprises for purposes of reindeer herding.⁹ In the first place, most of the herder-hunters did not have enough private reindeer to establish a private herd, nor the financial resources to purchase livestock from other former *sovkhos* members when the *sovkhozy* collapsed, so private ownership of livestock was out of the question. These two herders who initially registered as peasant enterprises had the financial resources to purchase deer from the state farms or

⁸ They would still retain their land share, which included the land their houses sat on and the land enclosed within their fences - usually between $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ hectare - enough for a vegetable garden and a potato patch.

⁹ The rest were established as hunting and fishing camps, private vegetable plots, or hay fields.

had managed to accumulate sizeable private herds during Soviet times (see Chapter 4), and had representatives (usually relatives) with political connections and legal savvy. The largest of the two, at 580 hectares, was set up by the then-director of the Azas *Zapovednik*, who is the current mayor of the district capital, and put in his older brother's name. The other, a 200 acre lease, was set up by a former *sovkhos* director. These territories, however, are much smaller than the herder-hunters have traditionally used, and are not large enough to meet the extensive range requirements of reindeer. This has not yet posed a problem, as the herder-hunters simply range over the territory they have always ranged over, not bothering to observe the limits imposed by the agreement, but it could pose a problem now with the current politics of privatization (see Chapter 8).

Unofficial Private Reindeer Herding

There is one small but persistent group of herder-hunters who have always defied the authorities. These herders maintained private herds even when *it* was forbidden to do so, either by staying in such remote locations that authorities could not track them down, or by maintaining herds for the state Institutions (the state farms, the state hunting operations, the state forestry operations) and also maintaining, but not reporting, their private herds. In addition, these few herders are the ones who have tended to keep to lands their parents and grandparents historically used. Now these herder-hunters have no official affiliation with the *obshekiny*, nor do they have officially recognized leases to land. They own their livestock and range them as they see fit, secure in their right to do so because of their family histories of herding and hunting in a certain territory. This right

is acknowledged and respected by all the other herders, although not officially recognized by the state.

Obshchiny

Since the majority of the reindeer herders didn't have enough reindeer to strike out on their own, establishment of the *rodovye obshchiny* was the most common reaction to the collapse of the state farms. In his seminal work on the rights of the indigenous peoples of Russia, Russian ethnographer Aleksandr Pika champions the concept of "neotraditionalism" (Pika 1999). According to Pika, the institutional foundation of "neotraditionalism" must be the *obshchina* (plural: *obshchiny*), which he asserts is distinct from and more socially fundamental than "clan" structures, a concept he considers problematic.

[T]he term "clan" in Siberia obscured a different form of social organization: the territorial *obshchina*, consisting of groups of relatives, by blood and by marriage, through various genealogical lines. The *obshchina* is a universal form of social organization of peoples found at the pre-class or pre-industrial stage of social development. The significance of the *obshchina* as a universal form of economic territorial organization, and as a structural unit for survival [*zhizneobespechenie*], autonomy, and the reproduction of the ethnos is especially important for minority peoples seeking to preserve their cultural and economic distinctiveness. (Pika 1999: 63-65)

Pika notes that such territorial *obshchiny* "were relatively stable, economic and demographic collectives, oriented to self-sufficiency and reproduction, which were able to exert real control over their territory, and effectively use local natural resources" (Pika 1999:66-67).

The concept of the *obshchina* found its way into Russian central planners' lexicons, and soon it was being touted as the ideal intermediate step between the state

farms and the shock therapy of abrupt and complete privatization. Thus it was a system of *obshchiny* that was supposed to replace the *sovkhkozy* among indigenous peoples throughout the former Soviet Union. The *obshchiny* were in effect built on the ruins of the *sovkhkozy*, and were intended to fulfill many of the functions formerly performed by the *sovkhkozy*, i.e., organize the productive activities of the herders and hunters, provide food, tents, clothing, guns, bullets, transportation and a regular salary in return for the products of the members' work as herders and hunters.

In the Tozhu region, six *obshchiny* were initially established in 1996. Of these, four were founded on the economic basis of reindeer herding and hunting; the other two were founded on hunting only. While in theory this was an effort to return to traditional forms of self-organization and should have placed more control in the hands of the indigenous Tozhu, the plan was hampered from the beginning. In the first place, it was mandated from the center and implemented in a uniform fashion throughout Russia. Secondly, the *obshchiny* started with nothing. While ostensibly they should have started with the remaining assets of the *sovkhkozy*, the *sovkhkozy* had been cannibalized by the *sovkhkoz* administrators. Finally, the membership rolls of the *obshchiny* were notable for their lack of community leaders. As mentioned earlier, the handful of former *sovkhkoz* members who had the means to do so chose not to join the *obshchiny*, preferring instead to try to set up their own enterprises. Other defiantly independent reindeer herders simply struck out on their own. This left the poorest and in many cases least able reindeer herders and hunters to stay with the *obshchiny*.

These problems, along with the failure of the state to provide the promised support and the collapse of the formerly state-subsidized transportation and distribution

networks, rendered it virtually impossible for the *obshchiny* to effectively organize themselves as going concerns. While the *obshchiny* gave their members a legal guarantee of sorts that they could continue herding and hunting on the territory officially recognized as *obshchina* territory, the herder-hunters learned to expect nothing in the way of material support from the *obshchiny*. This failing of the *obshchiny* did, however, have one potentially positive, albeit unintended, result. As Margaret Levi has put it, "In the case of formal institutions, an individual's cooperation or compliance is conditional upon the provision of promised benefits by institutional managers and personnel and upon the continued compliance of others" (Levi 1990: 409). Because they failed from the beginning to fulfill their stated purpose, the directors of the *obshchiny* had no leverage to dictate and control the activities of their members. Hence there was a great deal of freedom and flexibility at the operational level for the reindeer herders, which allowed for the emergence of new patterns of regularized and repeated behavior - the seeds of new institutions. For example, as discussed in Chapter 4, the *obshchina* members treated reindeer as personal property despite the fact that, in theory at least, the deer were the property of the *obshchiny*. Likewise, as detailed in Chapter 5, the herder-hunters saw no need to stay within the officially demarcated boundaries of the *obshchina's* territory, and continued to range their herds in effect wherever they wanted.

So while the herder-hunters readily asserted their membership in the *obshchina* in order to guarantee their right to continued usufruct of the land and its resources, and to claim their share of the rare delivery of provisions from the *obshchina*, they did not feel compelled to obey the director.

In another new arrangement that has developed since the collapse of the state farms and the subsidies they provided, the herder-hunters have turned to the gold mining bases as their principal trading partners. They trade fish, game meat, antlers, berries, and pine nuts for necessary foodstuffs (primarily flour, sugar, tea, oil, cigarettes). They also take in guns and axes to be repaired at the bases; pick up useful scrap metal, nails, boards, plastic sheeting; and get free transportation to and from the capital in the vehicles operated by the gold mines. Whenever they're at the bases, they eat free of charge at the base cafeteria. One private herder even had a contract with one of the gold-mining bases that allows the base to use some of his territory as cattle pasture in the summer in exchange for delivery of flour. These examples of new arrangements and self-organized activities, while admittedly not without their drawbacks, demonstrate that when given the flexibility and freedom to act, the Tozhu herder-hunters will experiment with a variety of activities in search of the combination that best satisfies their needs and enhances their chances for survival.

The failure of the *obshchiny* has forced the Tozhu herder-hunters to rely on their own resources to survive and to muddle through, as McCay puts it:

The value of muddling through processes, through which initial changes are small, relatively cheap, and not necessarily informed by consideration of larger values and goals, is similar to an argument made by Bateson (1963, 1972) and Slobodkin (Slobodkin and Rapoport, 1974; Slobodkin, 1968) concerning the 'economics of flexibility' in evolution and adaptation. (McCay 2002:375)

Contrary to popular preconceptions of "traditional" societies as static, stable, and stagnant, such flexibility has always been the hallmark of indigenous institutions. Bjorn Bjerkli has used the term "deinstitutionalized institution" (Bjerkli 1996:9) to describe the

flexibility of the nomadic lifestyle as the true "institution" of indigenous peoples. Hunters, gatherers, fishermen, and herders have always depended on flexibility of lifestyle to survive in the unpredictable conditions and fluctuating resource base that characterize the Arctic and subarctic environments. Their "tradition" is and has always been one of change and flexibility.

However the newest turn of events in the post-Soviet saga could threaten to eliminate this flexibility for the Tozhu reindeer herders. The Tozhu District is 4,475,749 hectares (44,000 km²) in area, the largest of 16 districts in Tyva (26% of Tyva's territory). Within this district, the six *obshchiny* covered nearly half of the district. As *obshchiny*, they provided a degree of security to the land tenure for the Tozhu reindeer herders under the new law on *obshchiny*.¹⁰ In 2001 the four largest *obshchiny* in Tozhu were unilaterally closed down¹¹ by the state (without consulting the president of the Tozhu branch of the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North), and consolidated into a *GUP* (see p. 128). The critical difference between the *GUP* and the *obshchiny* is in the amount of land that is protected from sale to private firms or individuals (I will discuss the problems of privatization in more detail in Chapter 8). Under the *obshchina* system, the four reindeer-herding *obshchiny* had usufruct rights to approximately 1,500,000 hectares (15,000 km²). The *GUP* has control over 26,132 hectares (261 km²). Kyzyl-ool Sangy-Badra, the president of the Tozhu branch of the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, points out that the transformation from *obshchiny* to *GUP* will be disastrous for the Tozhu because the

¹⁰ "On the General Principles of Organization of Clao Communes (*Obshchiny*) of the Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples of the North, Siberia, and the Far East of the Russian Federation" (20 June, 2000).

¹¹ In fact, all had already collapsed for all intents and purposes and only still existed on paper.

government won't support the *GUP* in the way they've promised, because there are no legal protections for *GUP* lands, and because the transformation from *obshchiny* to *GUP* will make it easier for the formerly protected *obshchina* lands to be sold out from under the indigenous peoples of the Tozhu district.

Chapter 7

"Indigenous" and "Traditional" in the New Russia

Introduction

Well-established, clearly defined membership, and the authority to monitor and exclude ineligible people from access to a given resource, are among the most important design principles for effective common-pool resource management institutions (McGinnis and Ostrom 1992). In the case of the Tozhu, Tofa, and other officially recognized indigenous peoples of the Russian Federation, these rights are being worked out at the constitutional level through a series of laws specifically aimed at defining the rights of the indigenous peoples of the Russian Federation. The federal constitutional level articulates with the global level of international law in that these new laws are very much influenced by the international movement of indigenous peoples and debates over their rights (see Anaya 2000; Ivison, Patton and Sanders 2000; Niezen 2003). In fact, Article 69 of the Russian Constitution explicitly guarantees the "rights of the indigenous small-numbered peoples in accordance with the universally recognized principles and norms of international law and international agreements that the Russian Federation has entered into."¹

Eligibility for the status of "indigenous small-numbered peoples" and the rights and privileges that attach to it hinges on the definition of the term "indigenous," which in turn hinges on the definition of a closely related concept, "traditional." These are highly

¹ From *Konstitutsiya Rossiiskoi Federatsii*, Moscow: Iuridicheskaya Literatura, 1993. As discussed in the next chapter, Russia has not ratified ILO Convention 169, but has ratified both the U.N. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the U.N. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Osherenko 2001:703).

abstract and controversial concepts, and some have argued that it is misguided even to attempt to define them (Magnarella 2001:428). Yet these are also questions of immediate practical significance that have a very direct impact on the day-to-day lives of millions of people the world over.

It is not my intention here to review all the Russian laws that touch on indigenous peoples.² That would be an enormous task that would lead me into dealing with the confusing array of often overlapping and at times contradictory statuses that include not only the "Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples," but also "Territories inhabited by the Indigenous, Small-Numbered Peoples," and "Regions of the Far North and Regions Equivalent to Regions of the Far North," all of which touch on the indigenous peoples and in principle confer upon them (and at times others) a variety of rights and privileges that are nowhere laid out clearly and that tend to get hammered out at the local and regional levels.

Rather I want to discuss how Russia's indigenous peoples, particularly the peoples who have come to be known as the "Indigenous, Small-Numbered Peoples of the North" (*Korennye Malochisennye Narody Severn*), have been defined. I take issue with the concept of the "traditional" as a central concept in defining these peoples, and suggest that as a defining concept it can only serve to fossilize the indigenous peoples of Russia in an externally imposed and artificially constructed "traditional" ethnographic present. I argue that to truly grant these indigenous peoples any degree of self-determination, the indigenous peoples must not be limited to a "traditional way of life," and must be given

²This task has been approached by numerous scholars (see *inter alia.* Foudahl and Poelzer 2003; Kryazhkov 1996, 1999; Novikova and Tishkov 1999a, 1999b; Osherenko 2001; People's Friendship University of Russia 1997; Pika 1999).

more actual control and even ownership over their lands and the valuable natural resources on those lands, including subsurface resources.

Background

Historically, Russia's (and the USSR's) relationship with the peoples within its territory who are now referred to as "indigenous" has undergone a series of transformations, in the 17th century, as representatives of the Tsar moved eastward in their effort to claim and colonize Siberia in the name of the Russian Empire, they began to encounter the native populations of these areas. The initial reaction was simply to collect *yasak* - a tax or duty - from these peoples, usually in the form of sable and squirrel pelts, and otherwise to let them be. But as the abundance and wealth of Siberia's natural resources came to light, more and more Russians began to move into the area to exploit these resources, and the need was felt to try to assimilate the native Siberians into a Russian way of life. This proved a failure and had a disastrous impact on the native populations, leading the Russian government to try a different, more enlightened and humanistic tack. This effort culminated in Count Mikhail Speranskii's Charter of Administration of Siberian Aliens of 1822, the "first 'civilized' law governing the non-Russian peoples of the empire" (Pika 1999:37; see Kryazhkov 1999 for the text of this charter; see also Siezkine 1994 and Forsyth 1992 for detailed discussions), and Russia's first official effort to grant rights and protections to its indigenous populations. While this Charter was indeed very progressive in its treatment of the native Siberians, its very title is a telling indication of how native Siberians were viewed at that time - as *inorodtsi*, or aliens (literally, "of different stock" or "different by birth"), even in their own land.

In the early years of the Soviet Union there arose an increasing awareness of the plight of the indigenous minorities within the Soviet territory, and an interest in defining and protecting them (see Hirsch 1997; D.Anderson 2000, esp. ch. 4). This led to the creation of the Committee for the Assistance to the Peoples of the Northern Borderlands (also known as the Committee of the North) in 1924 (Slezkine 1994:152; Forsyth 1992, ch. 12-13), and to enormous resources being poured into anthropological and ethnographic investigations to define these populations and to protect their lifestyles. One of the results of this committee was the "Provisional Statute on the Administration of the Native Peoples and Tribes of the Northern Borderlands of the Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic" (25 October, 1926), which identified and enumerated 26 indigenous ethnic groups designated as *Malye Narodnosti Severnykh Okrain RSFSR* (Small Peoples of the Northern Borderlands of Russia). Again, the title of statute gives a clue as to how the native Siberians were viewed. The term I have translated as "native" is, in Russian, *tuzemnyi*, which literally means "from that land," i.e., not from this land, thus still carries the implication, like the earlier term *inorodtsy*, that the native Siberians were considered aliens in their own land. This term is now considered demeaning.

The term *Malye Narodnosti* (Small Peoples) also came to be seen as demeaning, and was replaced in official documents by the term *Korenny'e Malochislennye Narody Severn.* *Korennye* is from the Russian word for "root," hence gives the idea of being rooted in a place, autochthonous. It is this term that most closely approximates, and is most often translated into English as, "indigenous" (some people translate it as "aboriginal"). *Malochislennye* means, literally, "small-numbered" (also often translated as "numerically small"). According to Novikova (1999a:55), this designation first

appeared in the statute, "On the fundamentals of state regulation of the socio-economic development of the North" in 1966. That same 1966 law also provided the definition of *korennye malochislennye narody Severa* that is the basis of the contemporary understanding of this term: "Peoples, living in the territories of traditional settlement of their ancestors, preserving a traditional way of life, traditional economic system and economic activities, numbering within the Russian Federation less than 50,000 persons and recognizing themselves as independent ethnic communities" (Novikova 1999a:56). Thus, when I use the term "indigenous, small-numbered peoples," I am referring specifically to this group of specially designated peoples³ (which has, since the collapse of the USSR, been expanded to include more than 60 peoples, not all of whom are Siberian⁴).

Article 69 of the new constitution of the Russian Federation (1993) guarantees the rights of Russia's indigenous peoples, but nowhere does it actually define the "indigenous, small-numbered peoples," so it must be assumed that the framers of the Constitution were operating with the above-mentioned definition in mind (see Pavlenko 2001:92 for confirmation of this).

In his book on neotraditionalism, Aleksandr Pika wrote, "The legal status of minority peoples of the Russian North as it now exists is inadequate" (Pika 1999:29, first published in Russian in 1994). The vagueness of the Constitution is a case in point.

³ Fond ah] and Poelzer (2003) make a distinction between "indigenous" and "aboriginal" in the Russian context, using the former to refer to the broader category that includes native peoples who number more than 50,000, and using the term "aboriginal" to refer only to those peoples officially designated as "indigenous, small-numbered peoples of the North." They note that this usage, while not yet widely recognized, is gaining acceptance. I have chosen not to make this distinction.

⁴ The *Yedinyi perechen' korennykh malochislennykh narodov Rossiiskoi Federatsii* ("Unified list of the indigenous small-numbered peoples of the Russian Federation") of 24 March 2000 lists 45 groups, but Pavlenko says there are more than 60 now (Pavlenko 2001:92).

Recently, however, there have been numerous attempts to address this shortcoming. These attempts have resulted in the passing of several major new framework laws that are designed to clarify the legal status of the indigenous peoples of Russia and provide them with a legal basis for asserting their rights as indigenous peoples.⁵

These laws are:

- 1) "On the Fundamentals of State Regulation of Socioeconomic Development of the North of the Russian Federation" (19 June, 1996)
- 2) "On Guarantees of the Rights of the Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples of the Russian Federation" (30 April, 1999).
- 3) "On the General Principles of Organization of Clan Communes (*Ohshchiny*) of the Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples of the North, Siberia, and the Far East of the Russian Federation" (20 June, 2000).
- 4) "On Territories of Traditional Natural Resource Use of the Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples of the North, Siberia, and the Far East of the Russian Federation" (7 May, 2001)

(In addition, a draft law specifically concerning reindeer herding is being worked on).

The first, third and fourth of these laws are specifically directed toward the indigenous peoples of the north, Siberia, and the Far East (thus they don't apply to indigenous groups in, for example, the Caucasus), while the second applies to all the recognized indigenous, small-numbered peoples of Russia. The working definition of "indigenous, small-numbered peoples" in these laws has come down from the 1966 law

⁵ "These laws have been thoroughly analyzed and discussed in a variety of publications in English and Russian (see *inter alia* Fondahl and Poelzer 2003; Novikova 1999a, Kryazhkov 1996, 1999, Oshcherko 2001; Mischenko 1999; Peoples Friendship University of Russia 1997; *Mir Korennykh Narodov Zhivaya Arktika* No.6-7, 2001).

virtually unchanged: Article i, paragraph 6 of the law "On the Fundamentals of State Regulation" defines the indigenous small-numbered minorities of the North as "peoples living in the areas of traditional inhabitation of their ancestors, preserving their original ways of life, numbering within Russia fewer than 50,000 people and recognizing themselves as independent ethnic communities."⁶

Thus there are 4 separate components involved in this definition. The first stipulates *where* people must live to qualify for this status; the second stipulates *how* they must live; the third specifies a population maximum (thus excludes larger indigenous groups such as the Sakha, Buryat, and Tyva); and finally the fourth is the criterion of self-identification.⁷

These laws and a variety of other laws and decrees confer special rights, privileges, and concessions on those who qualify for this status: They are exempt from land tax if they are engaged in "traditional economic activities in places of inhabitation and economic activities of the small-numbered minorities."⁸ They are exempt from income tax if they belong to officially registered nomadic clan communities (*obshchinas*).⁹

They also have, in theory, special rights to natural resource use, including "the priority right to the application of traditional methods of harvesting wildlife and products

⁶ This definition is virtually identical in all four of the laws mentioned. See Article I, para. 1 of the law "On the guarantees of the rights. . ."; Article 1, paragraph 1 of the law "On the general principles of organization. . . ." The law "On Territories of Traditional Natural Resource Use. . ." doesn't give a definition, but it can be assumed that the same definition applies.

⁷ Fondahl and Poelzer (2003) suggest that the criterion of self-identification is the principal reason for the proliferation of groups with this status (see note 3 above), as it has allowed many of these ethnic groups who were formerly not recognized to successfully assert their claims to official recognition.

⁸ Law on Payment for Land, N44, Statute 1424, Oct. 11, 1991, Article 12.

⁹ Law on Income Tax. from Physical Persons, Dec. 7 1991.

of wildlife activities unless these methods cause, .. reduction in biological diversity," and "priority choice of hunting and fishing grounds. . . . privileges in terms of dates and areas of harvesting wildlife, the age and sex. composition and the numbers of harvested wildlife. . . . an exclusive right to harvesting definite items of wildlife and products of their activity "¹⁰They are supposed to be compensated for mineral extraction by the state in the form of special funds directed to their social and economic development;¹¹ and for damage caused to their traditional places of inhabitation caused by economic activities of the state.¹²

They have the right to substitute military service for alternative civil service.¹³ While even in Russian Constitutional Law the specifics of "alternative civil service" still haven't been delineated (Pavlenko 2001:78), informants told me that they were under the impression that "alternate service" could simply mean continuing as reindeer herders. (Nevertheless, none of the reindeer herders I met availed themselves of this right, and most consider serving in the army a good opportunity to see something of the world and to improve their Russian language skills.)

They can start collecting retirement benefits at an earlier age (45 for women and 50 for men as opposed to 55 for the general population), although only 6% of the indigenous northern peoples actually ever reach the age when they can collect a pension

¹⁰ Law on Wildlife, April 24, 1995.

¹¹ Law on Amendments to the Law of the RF on Mineral Resources, March 3, 1995.

¹² Law on the Guarantees of the Sights of Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples of the Russian Federation, April 30, 1999.

¹³ Law on the Guarantees of the Rights of Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples of the Russian Federation, April 30, 1999, Article 9.

(Haruchi 1999:24).¹⁴ Recognized reindeer herders are exempted from the mandatory 5-year probationary period with a shotgun before they become eligible to purchase a rifle.

"Genealogical" vs. "Relational"

At this point, I'd like to take a moment to look at the Russian definition of "indigenous" within the context of a dichotomy set up by Tim Ingold in *The Perception of the Environment* (Ingold 2000). Ingold constructs a provocative argument contrasting what he terms the "genealogical method" of defining indigenesness with the "relational method." Ingold points out that the most commonly cited definitions define "indigenous" in terms of descent from inhabitants who lived in a certain place prior to contact with colonizers. Ingold cites Article 1b of the International Labour Organisation's "Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention" (ILO Convention 169): People "are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from populations which inhabited the country, or geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest of colonization or the establishment of present state boundaries."¹⁵ Ingold objects to such definitions on

¹⁴ Reasons for short life expectancy among indigenous Siberians include alcohol-related violence and accidents; tuberculosis; and limited access to medical care.

¹⁵ In a sense, Ingold is overstating his case for the purposes of argument. He provides only the part of the ILO definition that supports his argument. The oilier half of the definition, article 1a, states that the Convention applies to "tribal peoples in independent countries whose social, cultural and economic conditions distinguish them from other sections of the national community, and whose status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions or by special laws or regulations." This definition is more in line with Ingold's "relational" method. However, the two criteria in the Convention are mutually independent, hence at least one of the criteria is certainly based on the "genealogical method." Another international definition of indigenesness - that put forth by the World Bank in their Operational Directive 4.20, is quite "relational." It suggests that "Indigenous peoples can be identified in particular geographical areas by the presence in varying degrees of the following characteristics: (a) a close attachment to ancestral territories and to the natural resources in these areas; (b) self-identification and identification by others as members of a distinct cultural group; (c) an indigenous language, often different from the national language; (d) presence of customary social and political institutions; and (e) primarily subsistence-oriented production." Hence, this international definition is much more "relational," to use Ingold's terminology. Ingold could have better supported his argument by referring to the way the United States determines

the grounds that they define indigenusness on the basis of descent (the "genealogical model") rather than on the basis of "emplacement in the world" (the "relational model"), and in doing so provide a definition of indigenusness that reflects a colonial mentality:

To describe indigenus people as those who were 'there first' is to situate them within a history conceived as a narrative of colonial conquest and state formation. . . . In a sense, then, the official definition of indigenus status faithfully reflects the self-perception of the non-indigenus populations of nation states, as descendants of settlers who founded the nations they represent on alien soil. . . . For the genealogical model is fundamentally a colonial model. . . . (Ingold 2000:151).

The very idea that originality can be passed on by descent, along chains of genealogical connection, seems to imply that it is a property of persons that, can be transmitted, rather like a legacy or endowment, independently of their habitation of the land. On the other hand, this very habitation is claimed as the root source of aboriginal identity. How, then, can an identity that lies in people's belonging to the land reappear as a property that belongs to them? (Ingold 2000:132).

Ingold argues that "the genealogical model fundamentally misrepresents the ways in which the peoples whom *we* class as indigenus . . . actually constitute their identity, knowledgeability, and the environments in which they live" (Ingold 2000:133). People actually constitute their identity and recognize one another as sharing an identity *not* through "their genealogical proximity as determined by a past history of relatedness, but the extent to which their own life-histories are intertwined through the shared experience of inhabiting particular places and following particular paths in an environment" (Ingold 2000:148).

In Ingold's view, then, indigenusness is relational to and inseparable from inhabiting the land. In this way it recalls Anderson's concept of "sentient ecology," in

Native American status, which *h* by blood quantum (generally 1/8) and is therefore quintessentially "genealogical."

which it is through "knowing the land" that one acquires rights to the land and its resources (D.Anderson 2000, 1998; see also Fondahl 1998:18, 34 for a discussion of this among the Evenki in Transbaikalia). Thus the more restrictive definition in Russian law of those eligible for the status of "indigenous, small-numbered peoples," with its insistence on residence "in the territories of traditional settlement of their ancestors," and on "preserving a traditional way of life" more closely approximates Ingold's relational model. In fact, such emplacement in and engagement with the land has consistently been more important in the Soviet / Russian context than the genealogical criterion, at least for the determination of who qualifies for certain concessions. For example, the original 1926 statute enumerating the indigenous minorities of the Soviet Union states that "Persons and groups belonging to any small ethnic national group living a settled way of life in cities and settlements, the inhabitants of which are not included in small ethnic national groups" shall not qualify for special consideration (quoted in Novikova 1999:55). Hence, they lose out on the privileged status by virtue of not living what was at that time considered a "traditional way of life." Likewise, two of the three new framework laws discussed above extend to "persons not belonging to the small-numbered peoples, but permanently living in places of their traditional residence and traditional economic activities, and conducting, like the small-numbered peoples, traditional nature use and a traditional way of life."¹⁶ Lifestyle and connections to the land are critical criteria for this status, and in this way, the Russian definition of who qualifies for

¹⁶ Article 3 of the law "On Territories of Traditional Natural Resource Use of the Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples of the North, Siberia, and the Far East of the Russian Federation"; see also Article 3 paragraph 3 of "On Guarantees of the Rights of the Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples of the Russian Federation" for a similar statement of extension of rights to non-indigenous peoples.

concessions is a "relational" one rather than a "genealogical" one, to use Ingold's terminology.¹⁷

While I'm sympathetic to Ingold's objections to the genealogical model and find his relational model compelling in theory, I am uncomfortable with its policy implications. To be fair to Ingold, he explicitly acknowledges and addresses this objection, and qualifies his analysis by saying, "[W]hat follows is not intended as a contribution to the analysis of the relations between indigenous minorities and nation states" but rather an exploration of the patterns of thought that underlie official definitions of indigenous (Ingold 2000:133, 151). In this dissertation I am less interested in defining "indigenous" as an analytical concept and more interested in understanding what the concept *does* and how it is *used* by actors and stakeholders to lay claim to certain rights and privileges.

Any attempt to put Ingold's relational definition to work in policy would effectively limit indigenous peoples to a subsistence lifestyle based on the land if they are to qualify for the rights and privileges that go along with the status. Hence, it would either discourage people from choosing a "non-traditional" path off the land, or, in the event they were to choose such a path, would jeopardize their indigenous status. In many cases it is exactly these people who have formed the cores of politically active and

¹⁷ In fact, in practice in the Russian context, the genealogical method comes into play, as in Soviet Union and until very recently in Russia, all citizens had their nationalities written in their passports, and it was on the basis of this official identification of nationality that census figures were derived and on this basis people could qualify for the concessions allotted to the indigenous minorities. At birth, the parents would declare a nationality for the infant; then, when a person turned 16, they had the right to determine their own nationality, which would be selected from the nationalities of their parents or grandparents. So, for example, a person with one Russian grandparent, one Ukrainian, one Tyvan, and one Tofa could choose to have any one of these four nationalities in his/her passport. See below for the impact this has had on the demographics of the Tofa people.

effective indigenous intelligentsia who have done much to advance the causes of indigenous peoples.

If, for example, a family of reindeer herders has five children, and two of them continue with the reindeer herding lifestyle while the other three do other things - one gets married and moves to the regional capital but can't find work; one finds work with a gold mining operation; and one goes on to university and medical school and becomes a doctor. Do these three children (or if not they, then their children) lose indigenous status by virtue of having left the life on the land, while their siblings are still indigenous? This strikes me as problematic. It is important to recognize that an increasingly crucial component of indigenous people's cultural survival and their continuing movement toward self-sufficiency and self-determination will be just this sort of diversification of the population, this branching out into non-traditional as well as traditional spheres, and the interdependence between them. In my research among the Tozhu, I had expected to find marked differences in attitudes between settled villagers on the one hand and nomadic taiga dwellers on the other. What I found instead is that they perceive these as two interdependent, mutually compatible aspects of the same lifestyle, and shift quite easily from one to the other. The taiga-dwelling nomads go into the village several times a year for supplies, and their children tend to live with settled villagers during the school year. The villagers, on the other hand, send their children out to stay with their nomadic relatives for the summer, and will spend several weeks a year out in the taiga with their relatives, hunting and gathering pine cones, medicinal plants, berries, and mushrooms. While the distinction between the taiga/village and the city was much more marked, there are examples of taiga dwellers with friends and relatives in the city, and they each

provide certain necessary services to one another, Piko Sainbuu, my principal host when I was in the taiga, has relatives in Kara Khaak, a village near Kyzyl. He and his brothers from the Tozhu District stay with them when they have to come into the city. Their urban relatives, in turn, go out to Piko's camp to hunt and gather pine cones in the autumn. Indeed, such diversification is one more manifestation of the flexible and adaptive tradition of indigenous peoples, and shouldn't be constrained or prevented by legal definitions stipulating conformance to an idealized "traditional" lifestyle and place of residence.

Another objection I have to the "relational method" in practice is that it could arguably grant indigenous status (or at least a status equal to indigenous) to non-aboriginals living "a traditional way of life," who, using the relational method, could be considered "indigenous." Indeed, many have argued that the special status, if there is to be one, should be conferred not on the basis of ethnic affiliation, but rather on the basis of lifestyle (i.e., the relational method). As mentioned earlier, this was the rationale behind the initial 1926 statute mentioned earlier and is to some degree present in the current laws discussed above.¹⁸ Pika acknowledges this objection: "Does the accordance of special rights to minority peoples on their historic territories not "simultaneously infringe upon the rights of those living on the same territory but not belonging to that group?" (Pika 1999:31). He responds with an unequivocal "NO," and justifies this response on the basis of the overwhelming demographic, economic, and political domination of non-

¹⁸ The Constitution of the Sakha Republic protects non-indigenous "Russian and other 'old residents'" (such as Old Believers) (see Osherenko 2001:712). Osherenko (citing Fondahl) also notes that the temporary rules for creating territories of traditional nature use in the Chita Oblast' "avoid ethnic criteria and extend use rights not only to the indigenous Evenk population, but also to non-Evenks who participate in traditional activities such as hunting" (Osherenko 2001:722).

indigenous peoples throughout Siberia (Pika 1999:32; see also Kurilov 1999:73-74 and Yamskov 1999:122 for similar responses to this objection).

I second that argument and would further argue that non-aboriginals should be excluded from the preferential treatment because, in general, they have very different relationships to the land and to the natural resource base than do the descendants of aboriginals. This is not to put forth the naïve and romanticized notion of the noble indigenous, nor to suggest that there is a single "native" or "aboriginal" or "indigenous" mentality or worldview that is "in harmony with nature." Indeed, I have witnessed To/hu reindeer herders violate their own stated norms of behavior with regards to hunting- For example, while traveling up to Cha-Cha Shyngylai's summer campsite, he explained to me that he would not kill a female elk or moose during the summer, while it was still nursing its young. Yet the very next day, when he saw a female elk with a calf, he grabbed his gun and ran off to try to shoot it (he was unsuccessful). On another occasion, while returning from a fishing trip with two Tozhu herder-hunters, a white owl flew low over our heads. One of the men raised his shotgun and shot at it. I had often heard that owls, especially white ones, might be *cher eeleri* (spirit masters), so I asked him why he had tried to shoot it. He shrugged his shoulders a bit sheepishly and replied, "Well, It's not like I could have really hit it."

Nor is it to say that all non-aboriginal people are rapacious and unconcerned about the consequences of their actions. Even Pika makes an exception for what he calls "nativized" people - especially the *Starovery* (Russian Old Believers) - who practice "traditional economic activities" and "traditionally sensitive resource use" (Pika 1999:71). Yet one can say that, in general, there are deeply ingrained differences in

attitudes toward nature and natural resources between indigenous peoples and colonizers or descendants of colonizers that are often the source of conflict between these two groups. Colonizers' attitudes toward land are historically rooted in Enlightenment philosophy and the Bible and best exemplified by John Locke's arguments that "God has given to Humanity the earth and the reason to make use of it to its best advantage" (Durman 2000:81), and that "ownership of land required *the* transformation of nature through the investment of human labor. In this view, one had to farm **Hard** in order to claim it" (Perry 1996:15; cf. Cumberland 2002). A similar rationale underlay the U.S. Homestead Act of 1862, which granted "unappropriated public lands" to anyone who cultivated it continuously for five years, and the legal fiction of *terra nullius* used to justify British colonizers' expropriation of land from aboriginals in Australia. The Brazilian government has justified clearing rainforest (and the indigenous people on it) to create cattle pasture using a similar argument - that the land is not being used productively. While living on an Israeli kibbutz in predominantly Palestinian populated territory, I often heard Israelis justify such settlements in Palestinian territory with a similar argument: "The Palestinians don't use the land, but look what we've done! We've made the desert bloom!" All such initiatives have operated on assertions that the land in question was unoccupied, unappropriated, or underutilized, and that it must be "improved" or "transformed" through labor to meet the needs of the human population. Such an approach to property rights denies either the existence of the indigenous peoples occupying those lands, or, where it recognizes their existence, denies their rights to those lands.

The Russian Empire and its successor state, the Soviet Union, was perhaps the greatest advocate of transforming nature of them ail, using many of the same rationales as European colonial powers. In some cases Russian / Soviet authorities used a *terra nullius-type* argument to justify this transformative impulse (Forsyth 1992:182, 186). As Meshcheryakov has put it, in official Soviet ideology the natural landscape prior to industrial transformation was "at best qualified as an empty void, as a sort of nothingness" (Meshcheryakov 1993:45). In other cases, the authorities acknowledged the existence of the indigenous population, but presented the indigenous peoples as lazy, dirty, godless, uncivilized, and in need of guidance and salvation (see Khodarkovsky 1997; Slezkine 1994), and justified the radical transformation of nature by blaming the environment for the social and cultural shortcomings of the native Siberians: "The environment bore the sole responsibility for backwardness and superstition [of the indigenous population], and a revolutionary change in the environment was expected to result in prompt and predictable changes in society and the human psyche" (Slezkine 1994:254). Nature was, in fact, "depicted not as an ally of man, but his enemy," and "the main duty of Soviet man is to conquer the earth" (Meshcheryakov 1993:44-45). I needn't to go into the ecological consequences of this attitude toward nature (Feshbach and Friendly 1992; Komarov (Wolfson) 1980). The whole emphasis on ever-increasing production quotas in the five-year plans, without regard for carrying capacities or the regenerative capacity of the natural resource base imposed a regime upon the indigenous peoples totally at odds with their understanding of their relationship with nature and their role as integral parts of nature. The "virgin lands campaign" in the Kazakhstan steppes in the 1950s and the introduction of a cotton monoculture in Uzbekistan are just two

examples of culturally and ecologically devastating Soviet initiatives based on this attitude. In many cases, it is this conquering and transforming approach to nature that carries over in the descendants of the early colonizers, and it is still at odds with the overall attitudes of the indigenous population.

Such conflicting attitudes are manifest in the Tozhu and Tofa peoples' perceptions of Russians, and vice-versa. Many of the Russians who still live *in* Alygdzher were born there and have roots there that go back three or four generations. They were all, to a person, gracious, open, and hospitable to me. Their homesteads were impressively appointed, tangible results of their own hard work and industriousness, and presented quite a contrast to what appears to the Russians (and indeed it is the overriding impression of most Westerners) as the generally dilapidated conditions in which most of the indigenous Tofa population live. But for the Tofa, their spartan lifestyle simply reflects the fact that they do not feel the need to accumulate wealth in the form of personal belongings.

Russians in Alygdzher hold virtually all the administrative posts, from mayor of the village to director of the post office to school librarian to representative of the gold mining firm (de facto director of the hunting enterprise), and even, somewhat paradoxically, director of the Tofa cultural center. They see Alygdzher as their village, and express the belief that it would simply disintegrate if they didn't maintain it. They resent the subsidies the indigenous Tofa people are entitled to - in addition to a monthly *posobiya* (subsidy), the Tofa get free helicopter transport to the nearest town (Nizhneudin.sk) to deliver babies and for other medical situations, which the Russians do not get. Yuri Antsiferov, the Russian mayor of Alygdzher, complained that the benefits

inscribed in the new laws are ail for the indigenous Tofa, "But this is our place too," he said. "Here live Tofa and Russians, and we're all mixed up, intermarried. Our lives are the same, we all have the same problems. We've also been here for three or four generations." Russians also express resentment at the attention the Tofa people have gotten from international journalists and anthropologists, which has included material support to establish programs to help Tofa students get into university with below minimum qualifications, and financial resources to help jumpstart a Tofa culture and language revitalization program.¹⁹ The Russians say the Tofa are lazy and drink too much. If only they were willing to work harder, they could be doing fine on their own. But they don't get out and hunt enough, don't work hard enough at it, and that's why they're still poor. Of course, from the Tofa perspective, the Russians are rapacious and overhunt. One Tofa man who sits on the Land Commission exclaimed, "It would be better if there were no Russians here at all. The city is for Russians - Russians shouldn't leave the city. They have cows, milk. Come winter, all they have to do is slaughter one cow - that's enough for a family. They don't need wild game meat. We do. Why should they come here and hunt?"²⁰

Similar undercurrents of ethnic tension and resentment exist in the Tozhu District in particular and throughout Tyva in general. The Tozhu people accuse Russians of poaching and of indiscriminately shooting all they see. At the *First International Exhibit of Hunting Trophies - 2002* in Moscow, representatives from Tyva - mostly Russians - won by far the most medals of the 84 administrative regions participating. One Russian

¹⁹ In the interests of full disclosure, I was involved in both of these activities.

²⁰ This particular respondent asked not to be identified.

hunter in particular from the Tozhu District won more medals than any other single individual. When I have shown the catalogue to Tyva people and they see this particular hunter's name attached to so many of the trophies, they express anger and dismay at the excess this demonstrates. As one informant told me, "If a Russian sees five elk, he'll shoot them all, then just take the *parity* [the antlers-in-velvet] and the penis and leave the rest to rot. A Tozhu will only kill one and use all of it, and let the others go free."

This is not only an issue between Tozhus and Russians, but between Tozhus and other Tyva people as well. As an example, in 1999 a Tyva *kommersant* (entrepreneur) from Kyzyl had used a *tanketa* (a sort of tractor with tank treads) to make his way from one of the gold-mining bases out to a lake in one of the principal Tozhu reindeer-herding regions. There he and his partner fished with nets - a practice the local Tozhu people do not consider acceptable - and caught some two tons of fish to bring back to the city to sell, but on his way back to the gold-mining base, his *tankeia* broke down, and all the fish rotted. The wasting of the fish added insult to the injury of perceived overfishing using unacceptable means. When the reindeer herders heard that he was planning another such trip in 2000, one young herder asked if I could help him try to blow up the *tanketa*. This reaction was quite surprising, especially in light of the generally non-exclusive attitude toward outsiders that most Tozhu expressed, and I can only attribute that to the sheer *volume* of the fish caught, so much in excess of subsistence needs. However, from the *kommersant's* perspective, he was doing nothing wrong. In fact, he had official permission, and as far as he was concerned, he was simply conducting business and working hard to make some money.

These observed differences in attitudes toward the environment and natural resources lead me to agree with Pika and others that non-aboriginal peoples should not be considered "indigenous," nor should they be granted the same rights and concessions simply because they live a life on the land. There truly is a different attitude toward the environment and natural resources that is expressed in their behavior. The Russian hunter mentioned above has lived his life in the taiga and is highly regarded as one of the best "taiga men" - a tough, resourceful person who can handle whatever situation the forces of nature throw at him. Yet his relationship with the taiga and with the animals of the taiga, his attitude toward the resources of the taiga, is distinctly different from the Tozhus' attitudes.

On "traditional"

The more important objection I have to the Russian definition of "indigenous" has to do with exactly what makes this definition "relational," to use Ingold's term. That is the insistence in all these Jaws - and in the very definition of "indigenous small-numbered peoples" - on the "traditional."

In outlining his concept of "neotraditionalism," Pika explicitly asserts that neotraditionalism "does not mean a return to the past. It is a forward-looking development" (Pika 1999:23). Pika discusses at length the artificial dichotomization between the "traditional" and the "modern" (Pika 1999:ch,2), and is careful to avoid this trap: "Rather than get lost in a sea of false oppositions, we need to search for alternatives, or better, create them. One such alternative, free from the extremes of a narrow 'traditionalist' or 'modernizing' approach, is the concept of *neotraditionalism*"

(Pika 1999:20). According to Pika, "Normal development (especially for numerically small ethnoses) should allow for a person to inculcate the 'modern,' 'developed' and the 'ethnic' simultaneously" (Pika 1999:20-21). Such development would include "not only monetary help from state funds. . . , but transfer of the means of production (land, resources, and special economic rights). Land and water resources, rights of resource use, rights to a share of profits from developed sub-surface resources. . . should all be transferred directly to obshchinas, family-clan groups, northern associations, and individuals" (Pika 1999:23-24). If this were the case, "Peoples of the North themselves could then develop entrepreneurial activities in the non-traditional branches of the economy such as services for the infrastructure of their villages, allocation of paid services to newcomers, tourism, and so on" (Pika 1999:24-25).²¹

The framers of the new Russian laws appear to have taken the "traditional" to heart, but to have left the "neo-" out of the picture. Thus Article 1 of the law "On the General Principles of Organization of *Obshchiny* of the Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples of the North, Siberia, and the Far East of the Russian Federation" (20 June, 2000) limits the activities of the *obshchiny* to "protection of the primordial environment of their inhabitancy preservation and development of their traditional ways of life, economic systems, economic activities and cultures." Article 6 of the same law explicitly prohibits any activity that doesn't fall within these limitations, while article 5 explicitly states that "The activities of the *obshchiny* must be of a non-commercial nature." The law "On Territories of Traditional Natural Resource Use of the Indigenous Small-Numbered

²¹ However, at another point, Pika asserts that special laws for the ethnic minorities "should reach out primarily to culturally specific issues," and that "Ethnic law should encroach to a lesser extent (perhaps even a minimal one) upon general civil law, and the formulations of macro-economic structures in the regions" (Pika 1999:32).

Peoples of the North, Siberia, and the Far East of the Russian Federation" (7 May, 2001) stipulates that members of the small-numbered peoples and their *obshchiny* "have the right to free-of-charge use of common mineral and fossil resources, located within the territories of traditional natural resource use, *for personal need*' (my italics) (see also Article 14 of the Law on Territories of Traditional Natural Resource Use for a similar restriction). The "for personal need" stipulation again limits the members of the small-numbered peoples to subsistence use of these resources. In addition, economically valuable mineral and fossil resources such as gold, natural gas and oil are not included in the term "common mineral and fossil resources."

Of course, this insistence on the "traditional" begs the question of definition. There is a large literature discussing and analyzing the concept of "traditional" (see, *inter alia*, Bjerkli 1996; Gusfield 1967; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). But in the Russian-language literature, "traditional" has become a buzz-word, and phrases with "traditional" have become catch-phrases, bandied casually about without ever questioning their premises. Witness not only the use of the terms "traditional way of life," "traditional economic systems and activities," and "territories of traditional settlement" in these laws, but also, in the Russian-language literature, the proliferation of studies with such terms as "traditionalism" (*traditsionalizm*), "traditional natural resource use" (*traditsionnoe prirodopol'zovaniye*), "traditional land use" (*traditsionnoe zemlepol'zovanie*), "traditional branches of economy" (*tradiisionnyye otrasli khozyaistvovaniya*), etc. in their titles.²² Many of these articles and studies have

²² As an example, no fewer than eight of the articles in the collection *Customary Law and Legal Pluralism* (Novikova and Tishkov 1999b) have these phrases in their titles.

sophisticated and nuanced analyses of such difficult topics as customary law, assimilation, representation, the pros and cons of granting special rights and privileges to indigenous minorities, etc. However, with the notable exception of Pika (1999), to there has been little discussion questioning or problematizing the term "traditional" and its underlying assumptions (however, see Ovsyanikov 1999; Fondaht and Poeizer 2003 and Sokolovsid 2002 also note that, this concept needs to be clarified). When I have discussed this with some of my Russian and Tyvan colleagues, they've expressed surprise that I feel a need to have the term "traditional" defined. As one colleague put it, "If your parents and grandparents were hunters and reindeer herders, then that's what's traditional for you. My parents and grandparents are goat herders, not hunters, so goat herding is traditional for me, not hunting. We hunt anyway, but it's not traditional." When I suggested that the means of carrying out these activities have changed so much that they are no longer traditional, she objected: "It's not the way you do it that makes it traditional; it's *what* you do."

Yet the laws themselves indicate that the way of doing things does indeed matter. The only one of these laws that posits a definition of sorts is the 1996 law "On the Fundamentals of State Regulation": "The traditional lifestyles of indigenous small-numbered peoples of the North is the mode of existence based on the historical experience of their ancestors in the areas of natural resource use, social organization, and way of life, based on their original culture and customs, and religious beliefs" (Article I, paragraph 7). The law "On territories of traditional natural resource use" defines "traditional natural resource use" as the "historically formed ways of using natural resources by the indigenous, small-numbered peoples that guarantee inexhaustible natural

resource use" (Article 1). The same article goes on to define the customs (*obychai*) of the indigenous, small-numbered peoples as the "rules for conducting traditional natural resource use and traditional ways of life that have been traditionally formed and widely practiced by the indigenous peoples." These definitions certainly imply that the *way* of doing things, the *means*, and the *goals* of the activity do matter. But the activities that are considered "traditional" - hunting, fishing, gathering, reindeer herding - while still being pursued, are in all cases I know of in the Soviet/Russian context very different from the way they were pursued in "the historical experience of their ancestors." For example, the introduction of snowmobiles has revolutionized reindeer herding in the tundra areas of Siberia. During Soviet times, helicopters were routinely used not only to get all sorts of supplies out to herders and hunters - supplies that certainly wouldn't have been considered traditional - but also to herd reindeer, to hunt wild reindeer and other game, and to hunt predators such as wolves. Prior to that, the introduction of firearms caused a revolution in the lifestyles of the hunting populations in Siberia. Thus the *means* of leading a "traditional" lifestyle have changed dramatically over the years. What now of the *goals*? It is generally assumed that indigenous peoples leading traditional lifestyles are engaged in subsistence activities. How exactly does one define "subsistence," and what is necessary for a subsistence lifestyle? Is a snowmobile necessary? A high-powered rifle with a scope? A house in the village for the wife and children during the schoolyear? A television for the house? A truck to move one's belongings from camp to camp? If so, are the activities necessary to generate the cash to purchase such necessities still considered subsistence? In pre-Soviet times, the indigenous peoples of Siberia had to kill more fur-bearing animals than they needed for subsistence to pay the required *yasak* (tax

or duty). During Soviet times, hunters were organized into state-run hunting enterprises to hunt fur-bearing animals far beyond their subsistence needs to generate state revenues. So hunting hasn't since the 17th century at least been a purely subsistence activity. Was hunting for these purposes still "traditional"? If so, then is it still to be considered "traditional" when indigenous hunters kill fur-bearing animals and other wild game beyond their subsistence needs to supply the black market in contraband animal parts to generate cash to purchase the abovementioned items? These are obvious examples of how difficult it is to define "traditional," and yet the term is still bandied about as if everyone knows exactly what it means.

What are the underlying assumptions about "traditional" that are not being dealt with in the Russian context? First, the insistence on the "traditional" in the Russian laws assumes that there is an objectively identifiable "traditional" out there. Secondly, it assumes that this "traditional" remains more or less intact, or at least is somehow available and accessible to the indigenous, small-numbered peoples for them to reconstruct. Let me deal with these one at a time.

The Russian conception of indigeness as being based on "living a traditional way of life" assumes that "traditional" is something that was always there before Russian contact changed it all, something that was static, stagnant, and unchanging, as opposed to the dynamism of progress and modernity (see Pika 1999 Ch. 2; see also Gusfield 1967; Bjerkli 1996). Yet in fact the real "tradition" of indigenous peoples has always been one of flexibility, adaptability, and change, not stability and stagnation. Tradition itself is not ahistorical, as Eric Wolf (1982) has so convincingly reminded us. It is a historical process, a product of change, growth, and development, the shedding of some elements

and taking on of others. As Gusfield observes, tradition "is rather plucked, created, and shaped to present needs and aspirations in a given historical situation" (Gusfield 1967:358). Gusfield further notes that what is considered "traditional" within a single "traditional" society often includes a wide variety of expressions, some of which may even seem contradictory. He suggests that such diversity "provides legitimizing principles for a wide set of alternative forms of behavior" (Gusfield 1967:354). Witness the alacrity with which indigenous peoples the world over have accepted innovations introduced by foreigners. But forcing people to identify and define a certain way of doing things as "traditional" risks "traditionalizing the traditional" (Bjerkli 1996:18). "If we codify the flexible, we risk standardization. Hence adaptation will lose some of the elasticity that it requires, and a genuine 'traditional'⁵ condition slips between our fingers" (Bjerkli 1996:18).

The problem is that the people involved face a situation where they feel that their rights are not recognized unless they live up to a certain understanding and certain expectations. A consequence could be that they are forced to 'invent' the [land] use as a fixed 'tradition.' Such a situation could do damage to the flexibility that is an important element both in previous and present use. (Bjerkli 1996:4-5).

Ronald Niezen likewise sees the need for indigenous peoples to live up to an unrealistic, romanticized image as a constraint on their options:

Indigenous peoples are unlike other ethnic minorities in the extent to which they must rely upon such presentations of collective self to achieve a desired degree of political influence. . . . Indigenous identity is thus not a simple reflection of timeless values and practices; it is based in large measure on a compendium of cultural facts and artifacts intended for consumption within a dominant national society and an international audience. Indigenous lobbying is inseparable from the cultural and spiritual trends within its audiences, trends that seek some form of perfection or ancestral source of wisdom from the native, aboriginal, or indigenous "others." From the point of view of indigenous lobbyists, this is as much a source of constraint as influence. . . . [T]he expectations of those from a

dominant culture seeking indigenous wisdom as a corrective to their own lives intrude upon the abilities of indigenous peoples to adapt, to develop (their economies, and to move beyond compelling cultural images as the source of their entry into global society. (Niezen 2003:191-192).

The second major problem with the concept of the "traditional" is the underlying assumption that the "traditional" forms survive - in either active or latent form - and are readily accessible to the indigenous minorities of Russia. I have already cited the tautological Article 1 of the law "On territories of traditional natural resource use," which defines the traditions of the indigenous, small-numbered peoples as "rules for conducting traditional natural resource use and traditional ways of life that have been traditionally formed and widely practiced by the indigenous peoples." The implicit assumption is that these rules are still more or less intact in some vague original form: Phrases such as "the indigenous peoples. . . of the Russian Federation, who continue to live the way their ancestors did" (Haruchi 1999:23), and "historically arising folk norms of land and natural resource use, that is to say, those norms which were completely formed by the beginning of the 20th century, which are partially preserved by elders to this day, which have been recorded by ethnographers and which are today accepted by the population as 'of the people from time'immemorial' (*iskonno narodnykh*)" (Yamskov 1999:120) abound in the Russian-language literature: It's not as if these researchers have ignored the impact of the Russian and Soviet influence on the indigenous minorities. On the contrary, both of these articles I've just cited and many more have discussed it eloquently and at length (see, inter alia, Ovsyanikov 1999; Yetylin and Tregubov 1999). Yet there persists in these writings a disconcertingly sanguine assumption that the "traditional" - living "the way their ancestors did," the "mode of existence based on the historical experience of their

ancestors," the "historically arising folk norms" - are still out there just waiting to be released. In discussing the Chukchi, Krupnik and Vakhtin remark

During the early 1990s, both the district administrations and many native leaders were convinced that as soon as the cumbersome state-operated reindeer farms were dismantled, the indigenous Chukchi herding culture would recreate itself almost immediately and be all but intact. With this, all the former subsistence knowledge, individual herder's initiative, and social support network would soon flourish again. The reality turned out to be quite different. . . . To almost everyone's surprise, the core and the 'soul' of the Chukchi herding culture was, in fact, crashed by the pressure of the Soviet welfare state and by the modernisation it enforced. (Krupnik and Vakhtin 2002:16-17)

Gray, also referring to the Chukchi reindeer breeders, has arrived at similar conclusions about the lack of a ready "traditional":

. . . it must be recognized that the Soviet system both systematically destroyed reindeer herding as it was practiced in Chukotka prior to collectivization - what is often called 'traditional' reindeer herding - while at the same time it reconstructed it in a new, Soviet form and then maintained its existence throughout the twentieth century. This new form was a reinvention in the image of the Soviet socialist economy, and by the 1980s any resemblance it bore to pre-collectivisation reindeer herding was for the most part superficial. In other words, *that*, form of reindeer herding - a diversified subsistence economy that had been developed over many generations and which was rather beautifully self-sufficient - simply does not exist any more. What does exist is a thing created by the state, a thing which survives only by virtue of the extent to which it is propped up by that state. (Gray, forthcoming)

As with the Chukchi, so among the Tozhu and Tofa there is very little left of such traditional structures to fall back upon. The profound transformation of Tofa culture wrought by Tsarist Russian and Soviet policies has already been detailed in Chapters 4 and 5. While the situation among the Tozhu is more hopeful, I would still argue that there is no ready or latent "traditional" for the handful of remaining reindeer herders to fall back on. The Soviet system created a dependency on the state so complete that once the state retreated in the early 1990s, nothing was left to fill the void. Herders had become

dependent on the state for all basic necessities - clothes, tents, guns, bullets, and food staples such as flour, sugar, and tea. Today's Tozhu herders have no experience with making their own clothes out of animal skins; peeling and boiling birch bark with which to cover tipis; locating, digging up, drying and grinding lily bulbs for flour and porridge; making deadfalls and snares to catch game; etc. They also have lost much of the necessary veterinary knowledge for administering to ill reindeer, since during Soviet times a trained veterinarian would be helicoptered in on a regular basis to perform this function.

Finally, with this insistence on the "traditional" with the federal government as its guardian, these laws ran the risk of degenerating into a modern version of the old Soviet state paternalism. Note, for example, the wording in the title of Article 5 of the law "On the Guarantees of the Rights of Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples of the Russian Federation" (April 1999): "The Participation of the Russian Federation in the Protection of the Small-Numbered Peoples." The Russian government has the right (but not the obligation) to provide federal funds for programs to protect the "primordial dwellings, traditional ways of life, economic activities and trades" - but note again the emphasis on the "traditional" and even "primordial"! Such laws as written will freeze people in a "traditional" way of life and engender dependency on the government to protect and perpetuate that way of life.

Why descent matters

Ingold's insistence on the "relational method," like the insistence on "traditional" in the Russian laws, threatens to fossilize indigenous peoples in a prescribed way of life that

should in fact remain fluid and flexible, as it has always been. Ultimately the criteria determining who is indigenous for purposes of rights to resources and ownership of land should not impose an unrealistic expectation of an idealized "traditional" way of life on people. While it cannot be asserted that *all* non-indigenous people dominate nature and overexploit resources, while *all* indigenous peoples integrate harmlessly with nature, I would argue that there *are* significant differences that can be generalized across ethnic groups. These differences in attitude, it is often argued, are what make indigenous peoples better stewards of the land.

But this sort of presumed indigenous ecological ethic should not be the justification nor a necessary prerequisite for granting indigenous peoples rights to land and resources. Their entitlement to land and resources is not grounded in a specified way of life nor in an idealized relationship to nature, but rather on the fact that the land and the resources are *theirs* by virtue of prior or "original occupancy" as the basis for entitlement to land and resources (Makka and Fleras 2000:89; Niezen 2003:19), no matter what they choose to do with them now. These lands and resources were incorporated into modern nation-states often by force, coercion, and treachery. As a result of economic, technological, military, and demographic inequalities between indigenous peoples and colonizers, indigenous peoples are disadvantaged, disenfranchised, discriminated against, and underrepresented in the political process. The World Bank's Operational Direction 4:20 defines "indigenous peoples" as "social groups with a social and cultural identity distinct from the dominant society that makes them vulnerable to being disadvantaged in the development process." The important point is that their distinct cultural (ethnic) identity works against indigenous peoples vis-a-vis the dominant

majority, and for this reason a distinction must be made.

Other definitions of "indigenous" emphasize a sense of *continuity*: "Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those. . . having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-coonial societies. . . ,"²³ and *recognition and acceptance* by the community (see Cobo's definition in Howard 2003:96). These are criteria that pertain at different levels: original occupancy and historical continuity confer entitlement upon a collectivity - an indigenous ethnic group. Recognition and acceptance by that collectivity confer entitlement upon an individual (see Niezen 2003 for a thorough discussion of the individual vs. collective rights issue). Recognition and acceptance by the collectivity may be gained through place of birth and / or current residence of an individual (or the individual's relatives), through affinal relationships with an accepted member, and / or through descent. In the face of the impracticality of determining group acceptance for each and every individual, for policy purposes, *descent* (the "genealogical method") and *place of residence* (of an individual or members of an individual's family) serve as the best proxies for determining individual membership in indigenous groups.

No single definition of indigenous will satisfy everyone in all cases. The original or prior occupancy criterion risks infinite regression, especially in places with long histories of conquest, invasion, and occupation. This also causes problems for historically nomadic populations who migrated over large areas. There will always be conflicting claims between different indigenous groups, issues of internal differentiation and fragmentation within indigenous groups, and the potential for what Niezen calls "indigenous despotism" (Niezen 2003:100) - the tyranny of one faction or group of an

²³ From a United Nations study, cited in Anaya 2000:5.

indigenous people over others: "To what extent might indigenous peoples themselves become oppressive states within states, purveyors of small-scale nationalist chauvinism, xenophobia, intolerance, and - almost as a corollary - strident repression of those, weaker still, with whom their vision and identity are at odds?" (Niezen 2003:137).

The genealogical criterion is also not without its problems and ambiguities. According to Chapter 1, article 26 of the Russian Constitution of 1993, "Each person has the right to determine and declare his/her own national affiliation." As noted by Fondahl and Poelzer, "No language requirement, blood quantum, or acceptance by other members of the people is stipulated" (Fondahl and Poelzer 2003). Even if there were some kind of blood quantum requirement as the genealogical method implies, there is always the thorny issue of defining percentages, and the potential to start inclining toward racism. As Ingold observes, "All attempts to ascribe indigenous identity on the criterion of descent have been plagued by the problem of miscegenation, and by concern over the degrees of racial impurity to which this is perceived to give rise" (Ingold 2000:137). The lack of such requirements leads to situations such as among the Tofa, where anyone with a remote Tofa ancestor somewhere down the line and who doesn't speak a word of the Tofa language²⁴ can claim to be Tofa (and have it written in passports), in order to claim the privileges (and potentially be saddled with the constraints) that come with the status. This has resulted in the somewhat misleading population increase among Tofa (see pp. 164-165 above).

The Tozhu case presents ambiguities of another sort. While there is very little

²⁴ The Tofa language is moribund, and almost no one under the age of 40, no matter how Tofa they may be by descent, speaks Tofa today.

Russian-Tozhu intermarriage, there has been a great deal of intermarriage between the Tozhu and the Tyva populations. Complicating matters is the fact that, while the Tozhu are recognizably distinct from the majority of Tyva people, they are nonetheless considered an ethnic subgroup among the Tyva, identify themselves as Tyva as well as Tozhu, and were only officially recognized as one of the indigenous, small-numbered minorities in 1993, a status the rest of the Tyva population doesn't qualify for because the population exceeds 50,000 (see Chapter 3). Thus far the Tozhu have received very little in the way of extra benefits from this status,²⁵ but if they were to press for their rights, particularly to priority rights to wild game resources, it could cause quite a bit of resentment among the general Tyva population, and create ethnic tensions that do not at present exist.

At the practical level of policy making, recognizing indigenous peoples based on principles of descent from people who originally inhabited an area prior to colonization and, where applicable, on continuity of residence / occupancy, is still the fairest and most practical way of providing those peoples with opportunities that have been systematically denied them. These opportunities are needed to compensate for the loss of opportunities associated with colonialization, the loss of control over land and resources, and all the other negative consequences of their forcible incorporation into large state structures - along the lines of what we call "affirmative action" in the United States for minorities. Ingold's analysis attempts to remove the concept "indigenous" from the political context in which it has arisen. It is a bit late for this, as the term "indigenous" has acquired a

²⁵ In fact, when I started my research in 1998, most Tozhu didn't know they had been granted this status, and there was absolutely no effective representation.

certain currency and cultural capita] in international spheres that lends deserved and needed legitimacy to the political projects of these peoples.

Chapter 8

The Threat of Privatization

Problems with the new legal framework

While the new framework laws outlined in the previous chapter appear to be quite progressive with regards to indigenous minorities' rights, in fact they suffer from a number of weaknesses that render them ineffectual. In addition to the ambiguity introduced by the term "traditional" in the definition of "indigenous," these laws all studiously avoid the term "self-determination" (*samoopredelenie*), preferring instead "self-administration" (*samoupravlenie*). This allows the Russian Federation to continue to deny indigenous peoples true control over their economic resources. Natalia Novikova, a legal anthropologist who was instrumental in drafting the original version of the law "On the General Principles of Organization of *Obshchiny* of the Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples of the North, Siberia, and the Far East of the Russian Federation," clearly expresses her disappointment with the final version of the law: "The draft has been changed so drastically that it has almost nothing in common with our original version. The very ideology of the law had been changed - now there is no provision for definite land rights or self-government left in it" (Novikova 2002:86).

Russia has not ratified ILO Convention 169, which explicitly and unequivocally asserts the right to self-determination for all indigenous peoples. Russia is, however, a member of the United Nations, whose charter somewhat vaguely states that one of the

purposes of the United Nations is "to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples" (Article 1, paragraph 2). Article 1 of both the U.N. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the U.N. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (both of which Russia has ratified - see Osherenko 2001:703) more specifically assert that "All peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development" (cited in Magnareila 2001:433). There has been much heated debate over who qualifies as "peoples" (see Niezen 2003). The United Nations has limited its application of the term "peoples" to those who already have "full membership in the community of nation-states," but not for "stateless peoples" (Niezen 2003:139). The United Nations recognizes indigenous peoples of *classically* colonized lands - i.e., colonized lands that lie *across an ocean* from the colonizing country (the "salt-water test" - see Magnareila 2001, 2002; Niezen 2003:138), but has carefully eschewed recognizing indigenous minorities who are not separated by an ocean from their colonizers as "peoples." This lack of recognition implicitly denies such indigenous peoples the right to self-determination. This is the case for the indigenous peoples of Siberia.

In addition, these laws are only very general framework laws. The actual details of how they are implemented tend to get hammered out at the regional level, so they are not always interpreted in the same way or evenly enforced. This is further complicated by the fact that the benefits and privileges that go along with various special statuses and designations are expressed through a variety of laws, acts, decrees, and codes (e.g., republic and federal level forest codes, republic and federal level laws on hunting,

republic and federal level land codices - see Fondahl and Poelzer 2003). In many instances, decrees are not taken as seriously as laws, and in some cases may simply be selectively disregarded where it serves the interests of more politically and economically powerful stakeholders. In the Tozhu case, for example, the president of the Tozhu branch of the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North told me that a republic-level law had to be passed in order to activate these federal-level laws within the Tyva Republic. He has written one and submitted it to all the necessary legislative bodies, but has heard nothing back. He asserts that those in power do not want to recognize the rights of the Tozhu because the resources are simply too valuable to lose control over. In addition, as numerous commentators have noted, the court system in Russia is still very weak and ineffectual as a means for indigenous peoples to assert their rights. Finally, the commitment of the government to these processes is questionable. The vague wording of the documents imposes no concrete commitments on the government and provides for no mechanisms of enforcement that the indigenous peoples can fall back on in the event the government does not show good-faith efforts at protecting the lands and lifestyles of the indigenous peoples. For example, Article 5 of the law "On the Guarantees of the Rights of Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples of the Russian Federation" (April 1999 - cited above, p. 208) lists 12 actions that the federal government "has the right" to undertake in order to protect the lifestyles of the indigenous minorities, but nowhere does it *require* the federal government to undertake these actions.

Privatization

The average Russian's suspicion of the market economy and privatization and deep-seated distrust of the wealthy goes back at least as far as feudal tsarist times, and was, of course, reinforced by 70 years of anti-capitalist rhetoric. Nowadays it is manifest in the sneering way Russians and indigenous people alike refer to businessmen as *kommersanty* and in the popular play on the word privatization: *prikhvatizatsiya*, from the Russian verb *prikhvatif*, "to seize" (see Humphrey 2002; Tavernise 2003). Privatization of land poses the greatest threat to both the cultural survival of the indigenous peoples of the Russian North and to the environmental health of Siberia.¹ David Anderson has observed that "the assault on forms of civic entitlement and participation has never been greater than with the current politics of privatization" (D.Anderson 1996:100). Anderson and others (Verdery (ND); Osherenko 1995; see also Hann 1996) have conducted case studies demonstrating that the Soviet system of property allowed "multiple modes of appropriation to coexist" (D.Anderson 1998:64). Within this system of social property, which Verdery characterizes first and foremost as a "cultural system," and as a "system of power and social relations" (Verdery ND:2), actors employed a variety of strategies and social relations to gain entitlements to resources. Where post-Soviet land reform policies of privatization and exclusive land tenure have been instituted, they "have had the effect of entitling only those who know how to reach the marketplace" (D.Anderson

¹ Virtually all observers have commented on the threat of privatization to the indigenous cultures of Siberia. Cf. *inter alia*, D.Anderson 1996:100; 1998; Fondahl 1998:84ff.; Golovnev and Osherenko 1999:114-115. Both Ziker (2002) and D.Anderson (2000:16Qff; 19,98) discuss the Doigans's, Nganasans', and Evenkis' unwillingness to participate in the decollectivization and privatization processes.

1998:83), and have tended to disenfranchise politically and economically disadvantaged groups, especially those leading subsistence lifestyles.

Tyva is an interesting case with regards to privatization. Until 2001, Tyva had flown in the face of the trend toward privatization that swept the rest of the formerly socialist world (except Mongolia) by explicitly refuting articles 9 and 36 of the 1993 Constitution of the Russian Federation, which allow for private land ownership. This was even written into the defiant Tyvan constitution of 1993, in which Tyva claimed sovereignty over its territory and natural resources, and even asserted its right to secede from the Russian Federation. The relevant article (Article 9) of Tyva's 1993 constitution states that "Within the territory of the Republic of Tyva private ownership of land will not be allowed." This rejection of private property reflects an underlying understanding, developed over centuries of hunting and gathering and free-range pastoral activity, that, given the low resource density and low predictability of the resource base, management of forests, hunting and fishing areas, pastures and grasslands under a common-property regime is more productive and sustainable than under a private-property regime (Mearns 1993; Netting 1976, 1981; Berkes 1989; Gilles and Jamtgaard 1981; Ostrom 1996). In addition, to this divergence from the Russian constitution, the Tyvan constitution of 1993 unequivocally asserts that it takes precedence over the Russian constitution (Articles 1, 2, and 11).

In 1998 the president of the Tyva Republic, Shcrig-ool Oorzhak, put before the voters a referendum to reverse the clause on land privatization. It was soundly defeated. However, in May of 2001, Oorzhak rammed a new constitution through the parliament and got it passed. In addition to capitulating on the assertion that Tyva's constitution

takes precedence over the Russian Constitution ("The constitution of the Russian Federation, as an act, possesses supreme juridical authority . . ." Article 8, paragraph 2), the new constitution also replaces the clause prohibiting private ownership of land with the following (Article 14):

Possession (*Vladieniye*), use and disposal of land, subsurface minerals and other natural resources within the territory of the Republic of Tyva shall be realized in the interests of the people of the Republic of Tyva and in accordance with the conditions of the constitution of the Russian Federation, federal laws, laws and other normative legal acts of the Republic of Tyva.

Questions of ownership of land will be regulated by federal legislation and the constitution of the Republic of Tyva. . . .

The private form of ownership of land within the Republic of Tyva will be determined by the constitution of the Russian Federation, federal laws, and also by the constitution of the Republic of Tyva.

These concessions to the Russian Federation in Tyva's new constitution will pave the way for wholesale privatization in Tyva now that the Russian Federation has passed the new Land Codex legalizing the privatization of land (*Zemel'nyi Kodeks*, 25 October, 2001). In practice, small-scale buying and selling of land has been going on since the early 1990s, mostly in and around urban areas. But the passage of this Land Codex makes enormous tracts of land throughout Russia eligible for purchase by private firms and individuals, thus threatens the insecure tenure of Russia's indigenous peoples.

In the debates leading up to the vote on the new Land Codex, the single most contentious issue was whether land classified as "agricultural" should be subject to privatization or not. The Russian government ultimately decided that agricultural lands will be subject to privatization. In the Russian classification system, reindeer herding falls under agricultural activities, and reindeer pasturage in some cases is considered agricultural land. In the Tozhu District, 91,000 hectares of designated reindeer pasture is

classified as agricultural lands. Most officially designated reindeer pasturage, however, lies in lands categorized as *lesnoi fond* (forest fund), which, under the Land Codex., could be leased for up to 49 years, but not purchased. However, in an effort to stimulate development of the timber industry in Russia, on September 17, 2003, the Russian government approved in principle a new draft of the Forest Codex (*Lesnoi Kodeks*) that allows the outright sale of forest lands to private companies, or the opportunity to lease forest lands for 99 years, with the option of purchase.

As discussed in Chapter 6 (pp. 178-179), the restructuring of the four largest *obshchiny* into a *GUP* took away from Tozhu reindeer herders certain guarantees to usufruct rights to large tracts of land. The *GUP* has control over 26,132 hectares (261 km²). In addition, a bit less than 14,000 hectares (140 km²) is split up among 66 private leaseholders in the form of *LPKh* (*Lichnoe Podsobnoe Khozyaistvo* - Private Supplementary Economic Activities). To put this into perspective, the local people living in the Tozhu district have some form of limited legal control over 39,740 hectares (397 km²), which represents less than one percent of the total area of the district.

Almost all of the remaining territory - 4,040,040 of the Tozhu District's total 4,475,749 hectares (90%) - is officially listed as stale forest land,² and thereby remains ineligible for sale to private firms or individuals. At present, the Tozhu reindeer herders range freely over much of this land, but without secure legal rights or tenure. If the

² The statistical information in these two paragraphs has been culled from documents at the State Committee for Land Resources and Land Tenure of the Republic of Tyva, especially the "Amended Active Cadastre Map of the Territory of the Tozhu District" (Inv.# 689D, 24 May, 2001), and the "Resolution of the Chairman of the Administration," No. 312 (26 November, 2001). My thanks to the State Committee for access to these documents.

suggested changes to the Forest Code are implemented, all of these forest lands could suddenly be up for sale.

Timber and Gold

The Tyvan government has been planning for the opportunity to develop its timber resources. Small-scale timber operations have been working in the more accessible areas of southwestern Tozhu District for some time now. In July 2002, the Tyva government

Figure 8.1. Slag heaps along the Oina River, the remains of gold mining activities in the area.



announced a project to improve water transportation on the upper Yenisei River specifically to take better advantage of timber resources. The Tozhu District is the most heavily forested region of Tyva, and the Bii Kheni River, one of two large rivers that come together to form the Yenisei, runs

through the southern part of the Tozhu District, while the Kham Syra River, a large tributary of the Bii Khern, runs through the northern part. Forests in the vicinity of these rivers will most likely be the first to be exploited for timber, with the timber either floated downriver or brought downriver by barge. Gold mining is another extractive industry that has expanded in the Tozhu District since the introduction of privatization. Gold mining is an important part of Tyva's economy, with revenues from the nine existing mines making up 15% of Tyva's industrial output, more than half of that coming from the

Tozhu District. At present, there are two active mines in Tozhu, one along the Oina River, and one along the Kharaal River, both located in the southwestern corner of the district. The director of these mines, A.A. Nivolin, is conducting explorations for new veins of gold to the north and east, along the Oo, Temirchi, and Ulug-Bash rivers, and to the northwest along the Kadyr-Os River. These are prime reindeer herding territories, and also important hunting and fishing grounds for the Tozhu. In addition, in 2002 the Tyva Ministry for Natural Resources granted permission for Nivolin and another entrepreneur to set up yet another gold mining operation in the Tozhu District, along the heretofore untouched upper reaches of the Bedii River, which serves as the lifeline for one group of reindeer herders. The Bedii dumps into the Kham-Syra River, the most prolific fishing river in the Tozhu District. Silt, run-off, and other pollution from the mines will threaten the fish stocks in the Kham-Syra (although one of the organizers of the new mine denies that this will be a problem). A crude road linking the upper Bedii to Toora-Khem (the district capital) has already been built, and stalling in the summer of 2003, heavy machinery was being transported to the region.

Gold mining has a negative impact on the natural resource base upon which the hunter-herders depend. The method of river-bed scouring used in Tyva muddies rivers and severely disrupts riverine ecosystems, and the noise and human activity chases away wildlife. Nivolin insists that his operations use no chemicals, and denies that they are detrimental to fish stocks. In fact, he claims that the holding pools their raining operations create actually serve as food reserves for fish and as safe breeding grounds. The Tozhu reindeer herders, on the other hand, have complained that there simply are no more fish downstream from the active gold mines.

Many of the 150-200 mine workers (all non-Tozhu, and only 6 Tyva) hunt and fish throughout the mining season (March-October). The gold mines pay a certain surcharge that grants miners the right to exploit the natural resources within the land leased by the mining operation, including timber, fish, and wild animals. But their hunting and fishing activities often go beyond the borders of their leased land. One of my Tozhu informants told me that the manager of one of the gold mining bases tried to exclude him and other Tozhu from a prolific tract of hunting ground, arguing that the gold-mining base had the right to exclude them. But according to my informant, the tract the manager tried to exclude him from extended well beyond the mine's leased land. The construction of a road to the Kharaal and Oina bases has facilitated access to the taiga regions of the Tozhu District and enabled a rapid rise in the number of hunters and fishermen - both legal and illegal - into this region. The gold mining bases provide a comfortable base of operations for non-Tozhu hunters and fishermen from the capital city and other areas outside the region to come in and extract resources. The new road and mining base in the Bedii River region will almost certainly have the same impact.

The new privatization policies threaten the Tozhu in other ways as well. The government of Tyva has started awarding exclusive fishing rights in certain lakes to the highest bidder. One woman tried to purchase an entire lake in the Tozhu region. Her bid was unsuccessful, but that was several years ago, before the new Land Code went into effect, and her attempt shows that there are people out there just waiting to snatch up land as soon as it becomes available.

Tourism in Tyva is developing rapidly, and many tour operators have their eyes on Tozhu. There is already one large and active private *turbaza* (tourist camp) and a

private fishing operation on the shores of Lake Azas in Tozhu. Hunting tourism presents a particular threat. Stored in the left-luggage facility in Moscow's Sheremetyevo airport were 12 enormous racks of moose antlers, each rack spanning at least five feet, and each individual antler as broad as an armchair. The attendant explained that they belonged to German tourists, and while I cannot confirm that these came from Tyva, the attendant did say that they came from southern Siberia. While hunting tourism in the Tozhu region is not yet developed, it is developed in other parts of Tyva, and it's only a matter of time before it reaches Tozhu. Several tour operators (and even employees of the Hunting Directorate, and other governmental agencies entrusted with protecting the wild animal populations) have asked me to find foreign tourists interested in hunting. They have also asked me to help them make arrangements with reindeer herding Tozhu people to serve as guides and hosts for foreign hunters. I have refused to participate in such arrangements, as they seldom benefit the local people, and more often serve to disrupt their lifestyles and have a negative impact on their resource base.

The problem with parks

In the past, the Russian Federation has tried to combat the negative consequences of such environmentally detrimental human activities as poaching, gold-mining, and timber operations by establishing protected territories. The Russian Federation has one of the world's most extensive systems of protected areas, with some 100 *zapovedniki* (sg. *zapovednik*: "strictly protected nature reserves") encompassing 34 million hectares, 1.4% of Russia's territory. Within Tyva, there are two *zapovedniki* - the 300400 hectare *Azas Zapovednik* in the Tozhu District and the 323,000 hectare *Ubsunurskaya Kotlovina*

Zapovednik, based in Tyva's southeastern corner. When other protected territories are taken into consideration,³ protected territories of various statuses occupy 1.3 million in Tyva (nearly 8% of Tyva's territory). Tyva has a particularly ambitious program for expanding its protected territories by 44%, with 35% of the proposed increase planned for the Tozhu District (Kupriyanov 2001).

While these are laudable goals, the philosophy behind protected territories in Russia has been one of top-down planning, excluding humans from the territories and prohibiting all human activities. Under the current thinking, there is no difference between protected territories and privatized land as far as the Tozhu are concerned. In either case, they are prevented from entering and using the resources. The Azas *Zapovednik* offers an instructive example. With the establishment of the Azas *Zapovednik* in 1984, rich reindeer pastures, hunting grounds and rivers important to the subsistence of the Tozhu people suddenly became off-limits. Tozhu reindeer herders protested vociferously until in 1991 the government made a minor concession, opening up a narrow migration corridor across the eastern end of the *zapovednik* that allows herders to migrate from the north side of the reserve to the south side. But the great majority of this rich territory remains off-limits.

Such disregard for the local people in the establishment of parks, combined with reduced hunting territories and the withdrawal of state salaries since the collapse of the Soviet Union, have forced local inhabitants to turn to poaching to meet subsistence needs and to generate an income. In August 2000, one Tozhu person admitted to having killed

³ In addition to *zapovedniki* (here are less strictly protected *areas* such as *zakazniki* (wildlife refuges), *natsional'nye parki* (national parks), and *pamyatniki prirody* (natural monuments).

18 musk deer (a threatened species) already that year, principally to sell the highly valued musk gland.

Experience in other parts of the world has shown that "decentralization of management over natural resources will provide local benefits, and thus encourage their conservation" (Taylor 2001:157). As Tyva plans to increase its protected territories, especially in the Tozhu District, a policy of co-management of protected areas that would involve the Tozhu herders and hunters in the design of protected areas and give them some responsibility for monitoring and enforcing regulations is called for. Such a policy would recognize the Tozhus' reliance on wild animals for their subsistence and respect their right to hunt, and give them a sense of ownership over the land and resources.

Conclusion

For the time being, such economic activities as gold mining, timber extraction, and tourism are being conducted on land that still officially belongs to the state and therefore can co-exist to some degree with the reindeer-herding and hunting activities of the Tozhu people. But the threat of privatization has suddenly become much more imminent now that the Russian government has passed the new Land Codex and is preparing a new Forest Codex. This puts the Tozhu and other indigenous reindeer herders and hunters at particular risk. They operate in a virtually non-cash economy, and could not possibly afford to purchase the extensive tracts of land necessary to migrate seasonally, which is crucial to reindeer husbandry and effective exploitation of wild animal resources alike. They would be prevented from hunting and grazing their herds on newly privatized land. Parks and other forms of protected areas can provide protection for indigenous peoples against the threats

posed by privatization, but only if they are designed in such a way that involve the indigenous peoples in their design and implementation.

Chapter 9

Grappling with Self-Governance and Collective Action

This study was inspired by Cha Cha Shyngylai's dire prediction in 1998 that "In a year, maybe two, three at the most, there will be no more reindeer in Tyva." Fortunately, that has not come to pass. As I was designing and preparing for this research project, I had formed the naïve and somewhat romanticized expectation that effective indigenous institutions for managing both reindeer and common-pool resources would somehow spontaneously emerge among the Tozhu, perhaps on the basis of some latent, long-suppressed "traditional" knowledge. That has also not come to pass. The reality of the situation lies somewhere in between. The circumstances the Tozhu and Tofa find themselves in now are just as precarious as in 1998, and it is quite possible that Cha Cha's prediction was only off by a couple of years. As we cast our gaze toward the future, the question then becomes: How likely is it that the Tozhu and Tofa will ever be able to (or ever have the opportunity to) develop effective local institutions of self-organization and collective action? Examples of successful self-organization at the local level and creation of local-level institutions for the management of common-pool resources abound (Bromley, et al. 1992; McCay and Acheson 1987; Berkes, Fecny, McCay and Acheson 1989; Ostrom, Gardner and Walker 1994; Ostrom 1990). But many of these success stories point out structural issues that render self-organization in the Tozhu and Tofa situations especially difficult.

Ostrom, Gardner and Walker suggest that an institutional analysis might begin with an examination of three factors that affect the action situation under study. These are "attributes of a physical world," "attributes of the community," and "the rules individuals use to order their relationships" (Ostrom, Gardner, and Walker 1994:37). These three factors are intricately intertwined, and interrelated and virtually impossible to separate out, as I have been showing throughout the dissertation. However, for the sake of analysis let me start with the attributes of the physical world.

Attributes of the physical world

In both the Tozhu and Tofa cases, the single most important economic resource is wild animals, both for meat (predominantly elk, moose, and deer), and for furs (predominantly sable and squirrel). Blomquist, Schlager, Tang and Ostrom's discussion of the "physical characteristics that make a difference" (in Ostrom, Gardner, and Walker 1994:308ff) brings up the issues of *storage* and *stationarity*. For the Tozhu and Tofa, wild animals represent a common-pool resource with nonstationary resource units and unavailable storage. As Ostrom, Gardner and Walker have put it, "All other things being equal, appropriators of CPRs that lack storage and / or yield nonstationary resource units face greater difficulty in devising allocation rules that reduce appropriation externalities" (Ostrom, Gardner and Walker 1994:309). With nonstationary resource units, it is often difficult to determine beyond doubt that there is a decline in the resource base, and even if it were determined definitively, it isn't always clear whether this is a temporary, cyclical change or evidence of a more permanent condition. Schlager cites J. Wilson's

argument that CPR dilemmas meeting the following three criteria are more amenable to institutional solutions:

- repeated encounters among appropriators
- an effective information network
- a collective means for enforcing rules

(Schlager 1994:251).

The Tofa are settled in villages and their hunting grounds are clearly defined, compact, and adjacent to one another. Hunters often run into one another during the hunting season, and return trips to the village during hunting season are common. This facilitates communication and information exchange (as well as violent encounters as detailed in Chapter 5). The Commission for the Allocation of Hunting Territories discussed in Chapter 5 settles disputes of rights to *rodovye taigi*, and the closed stock company ZAO "Tofalaria" mentioned in Chapter 4 has the power to give and take away hunting permits, distributes guns and bullets, and is in effect the sole buyer for hunters' products. As such, these two organizations provide a means - however imperfect and imbalanced - for enforcing rules. Thus with regard to regulating the wild animal resources within their territory, the Tofa meet the above criteria to a greater degree than the Tozhu reindeer herders and hunters.

In the Tozhu case, none of the three conditions holds, leading to a situation where appropriation externalities are extremely difficult and least amenable to solution (Schlager 1994:251-252). The Tozhu were until 1950 or so entirely nomadic, and even today all those intimately involved with reindeer herding still lead a nomadic existence. In addition to regular migrations as outlined in Chapter 5, since the collapse of the

sovkhozy, the size of the herding camps has shrunk to one or two tents (families) as souse herders feel they can herd and hunt more successfully in smaller groups. Both of these factors limit opportunities for face-to-face communication (see Ostrom, Gardner and Walker 1994: Chapter 7 on the importance of face-to-face communication). In Soviet times, every herding camp had a two-way radio with which they could maintain contact and exchange information with other herders and with the *sovkhov* base. Now, only three herding camps I know of have functioning radios.

The Tozhu have very little accurate information on the wild animal populations beyond their personal experience, which varies greatly. While some hunters claim that the animals are out there and you just have to know where to go to find them, most of the

Figure 9.1. Viktor Sambuu (Piko) with a large male kara kush (wood grouse).



Tozhu herder-hunters complain that it is becoming more and more difficult to find wild animals to hunt, and indeed my fieldwork bears this out. For the first six weeks I was with the herders (March-April 2000), all of us in the camp ate nothing but fried bread, macaroni, and rice. Despite almost daily forays into the nearby taiga and several extended hunting trips, wild game was simply not to be found. Even tracks were a rare sight. It was not until mid-April that Piko came home with a large male *kara hush* (wood grouse), the first meat we had had in six weeks. Viktor Syratovich, the former assistant director of the Hunting Directorate of the Republic of Tyva, the governmental agency entrusted with the task of monitoring wild animal populations,

acknowledged that lack of funds had prevented his agency from conducting an accurate animal population count since 1985.

Monitoring and enforcement of sanctions against illegal hunting pose yet more problems. For example, the Azas *Zapovednik* could, in theory, serve as a source of storage for wild animal resources. However the structure of the monitoring system has perverse incentives built into it. All employees of the *zapovednik* have the right to harvest natural resources (berries, pine nuts, mushrooms, medicinal plants, and wild animals) from preserve lands for subsistence purposes, while everyone else is prohibited from entering the preserve. Such activities are considered a perk of the job and a necessary supplement to the meager salary (about \$30 per month).

In a comparison of the monitoring and enforcement arrangements in 44 irrigation systems throughout the world, Tang observes that "Effective rule enforcement often depends on guards that are proactive and willing to impose sanctions whenever rule violations are found" (Tang 1994:240). At the Azas *Zapovednik*, the rangers and inspectors are the opposite of "proactive." In addition to being allowed to hunt and gather as a result of their employment, *zapovednik* employees are culturally bound to share what they take with friends and family, and to allow friends and relatives to come in to the preserve to hunt and gather. While I was staying with the director of the Azas *Zapovednik* in the summer of 2003, a young man presented him with five fresh bear paws, which are considered a delicacy. The director explained that they came from three different bears, a mother and two cubs. When I pointed out that it

Figure 9.2. Bear paws.



appeared to my Western sensibilities to be a bit of a contradiction for the director of a nature preserve to be accepting the meat of illegally killed animals (out of season and without a license), he said, "Well, what can I do? It would be insulting of me to refuse them." Indeed, it would not only be insulting, but it just would not make cultural sense, and would serve to alienate him from the community at large. Only later did I learn from another acquaintance that the person who gave the bear paws was an employee of the *zapovednik*, and that it was quite likely that he had killed the bears within the park. On another occasion, a *zapovednik* ranger (Tozhu) asked me completely unselfconsciously if I could hook him up with foreign tourists who wanted to go hunting in the *zapovednik*. The head ranger (non-indigenous) of the *zapovednik* has a storehouse full of trophies, and is commonly referred to as one of the biggest poachers in the entire republic. Such abuses lead to resentment among those who don't have such easy access to the resources, so they are not very inclined to respect the rules. Hence some of the Tozhu herders who feel that they have a right to hunt and graze within *zapovednik* territory anyway as a result of long family histories of use of that area feel no compunction about hunting within the *zapovednik*. This situation recalls the resentment the Harijans feel toward the Brahmins that leads them to break rules in the Ahmora region of India (Agrawal 1994).

Despite the lack of accurate wild animal population counts mentioned above, anecdotal evidence of the decline of certain wild animals was strong enough to convince the government to place a moratorium on licenses for mink and musk deer in 2001, and to cancel the one-month summer elk hunting season (when elk antlers are in velvet) in 2002. Despite these measures, I still personally knew of two hunters who killed elk during this time. In addition, Syratovich estimated that some 18,000 musk deer were

taken illegally. He said that the illegal take of sable was at least three times as great as the legal take; for elk, he estimated that illegal take was at least 700 - two and a half times the legal take - out of an estimated total population of 5000 (Donahoe 2003b). The problem with poaching is further aggravated because appropriators tend to deny that their own individual actions have anything to do with the decline, and blame other appropriators (Ostrom, Gardner and Walker 1994: 311). With mobile resource units such as wild animals it is also more difficult to determine whether people are violating rules or not unless you catch them in the act, because there is not the same kind of clearly visible physical evidence that exists when stationary resources are harvested (e.g., freshly cut grass or branches), as Agrawal describes in his case studies in the Almora district of India (in Ostrom, Gardner and Walker 1994: 267-282).

In addition, there are exogenous pressures hindering the development of effective management of wild animal resources. With the collapse of the USSR and withdrawal of all state subsidies, a thriving black market in contraband animal parts (bear gall bladders,

Figure 9.3. Kiosk in the central marketplace in Kyzyl with signs in the window offering to buy musk-deer glands.



musk deer glands, elk genitalia) has emerged as the best source of income, not only for the Tozhu but for everyone in Tyva. In Kyzyl, one young man in the central marketplace who was wearing a sign

around his neck offering to buy gold, dollars and various animal parts, explained that he would pay up to 4000 rubles (\$130) for a large musk gland or bear gall bladder. Such prices create quite an incentive to poach for anyone in Tyva, where the average monthly salary for those lucky few who have regular jobs is about \$30, but especially for reindeer herders, who have no regular income at all, Samuel Bowles notes that markets can frame choices and affect behavior; "The morality of economic agents embedded in a market context may. . . be quite different from their morality in isolation. While we are not claiming that people change their nature when they function in markets, it may be that the competition inherent in markets and the need to survive offers justifications for actions that in isolation would be unjustifiable" (Bowles 1998:11). As detailed throughout the dissertation, since the collapse of the *sovkhoz* system, the Tozhus' financial situation has become ever direr. Many have been forced to abandon herding altogether and have returned to the villages, where there is no work. They have no regular income and they receive little or no support from the *GUP*, thus they are forced to rely completely upon themselves, and the most fungible currency for them is wild animal parts. Hence they are also implicated in a competitive market system and engage in poaching even though this violates their expressed ideological aversion to overhunting. As put by Ovsyanikov, "Under the attack of the industrial civilization indigenous peoples either perish or get involved in the competition for resources according to the laws of market economy. Participating in that competition, they inevitably pass from traditional use of natural resources to their use under the rules of industrial civilization" (Ovsyanikov 1999:115). The Tozhu herder-huntsr who had killed 18 musk deer for their musk glands (mentioned

in Chapter 8) is but one example of what may become a more common occurrence among the Tozhu.

Attributes of the community

Equally significant in the Tozhu case are the attributes of the community. As discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, in pre-Soviet times, when virtually all Tozhu people were nojuadic herders and hunters, land was not exclusively "owned" by anyone (although there were recognized band territories), and wild animals were not considered anyone's exclusive "property" as such. This lack of exclusivity, and the generosity and hospitality Tozhu people show to any and all outsiders who come to the Tozhu District for whatever purpose — whether to hunt or fish or gather pine nuts or conduct anthropological fieldwork - are admirable cultural values, but they violate McGinnis and Ostrom's first "design principle" for robust CPR institutions: "Individuals or households who have rights to withdraw resource units from the CPR must be clearly defined, as must the boundaries of the CPR itself (McGinnis and Ostrom 1992:55). Without such boundaries, common pool resources such as wild game animals and fish cannot be effectively managed to the advantage of the local indigenous population. Ensminger's study of institutional change among the Onna and Galole of Kenya could prove instructive here. Ensminger observes that changes in relative prices (of land and cattle) had the effect of changing the Ormas' ideological resistance to selling cattle and the Galoles' ideological commitment to common grazing (Ensminger 1996:169). If the Tozhu perceive these pressures on resources to be severe enough, it could force a change in their ideology of non-exclusivity.

Another attribute of both the Tozhu and Tofa communities that works against self-organization is lack of effective leadership. The fact of their nomadic existence prior to entering the Soviet Union in 1944 combined with the very low population density and a traditional social organization based on camps of three to seven families would also have limited their experience with conflict resolution and having to negotiate collective choice problems. In times of serious interpersonal problems, the preferred solution was for one person or one group to leave and join up with a different group. There was a fair amount of flexibility between bands, and with such low population density, there was always someplace else to go to. This lack of leadership and experience with self-governance reveals itself in the Tozhu people's general lack of interest in establishing private enterprises, as outlined in Chapter 6. Applying for and establishing such an enterprise requires access to a variety of different kinds of resources, including the information that such opportunities exist, the time it takes to run around chasing down officials and getting signatures, facility with the Russian language in order to fill out the necessary paperwork, an understanding of and patience for bureaucratic processes, money to be able to travel to the capital, etc. Most of the Tozhu herder-hunters I know lack formal education, are somewhat ashamed of their poor Russian, and are easily humiliated by condescending officials and clerks; they feel intimidated by bureaucratic processes; and they have little or no financial resources. Most importantly, they have to be out in the taiga with their reindeer. A trip in to the district capital can take up to four days each way (if indeed it's possible at all), and is very demanding for both humans and reindeer. Travel to Kyzyl, the republic capital, requires far more time and resources, including money and a place to stay. Herders simply cannot leave their herds for such

lengths of time. These are all transactions costs that outweigh the perceived benefits for individual Tozhu herders, who have confidence that they can go out to the taiga and survive on their own if necessary, as long as they have reindeer. As discussed in Chapter 6, the only two private enterprises set up for reindeer herding were established by people in positions of power, who had financial resources and political savvy. The *obshchiny* likewise were set up not by reindeer herders themselves, but by others who had the necessary time, patience, and resources to do so, and who for one reason or another saw an advantage to going to the trouble of setting them up (see example in next section). As Bowles has put it, "self-direction . . . requires opportunities and experiences that are much more available to people who are more favorably situated in the hierarchical order of society" (Bowles 1998:17).

The Tozhu also have problems with effective representation. During Soviet times, educated Tyvans from the more populated areas of central and western Tyva, who were more familiar with the demands of administration, were brought to the Tozhu district to administer the villages, to direct the *sovkhozy*, to teach in the schools, to run clinics, etc. Historically, almost all of the *kolkhoz* and *sovkhoz* directors were non-Tozhu and still today the Tozhu people are greatly undersrepresented in positions of authority and influence, even in their own district. The district governor from 1992-2002 was non-Tozhu (the current governor is Tozhu). The school director, the director of the Azas *Zapovednik*, the director of the *GUP*., even the representative for the Tozhu to the Russian Association for the Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON) are all non-Tozhu. In a group interview with high school seniors in Toora-Khem, one young man started to

complain that there wasn't any work in Tozhu, when another senior, Nadia, impatiently interrupted him. "There's work here," she said,

The problem is, for the most part, that people who have already become *dargalar* [bosses, managers] in other districts come here after they retire to work.¹ Then when the *korenyye* [indigenous] Tozhu people come here [to Toora-Khem, the regional capital], they can't find work because these other *dargalar* from outside have got all the good jobs and then give other jobs to all their unemployed relatives and *churitakchyyar* [people from their district].²

There is no well-educated Tozhu intelligentsia living in urban areas to represent their interests to those in power. The earlier lack of distinction between the Tozhu and the Tyva population in general has also led to problems of effective representation of the Tozhu at both the republic and federal levels. At the republic level, none of the people in the administration who deal with issues related to the Tozhu people and the Tozhu District is ethnic Tozhu. At the federal level, the failure to distinguish

Figure 9.4. High school seniors in Toora-Khem. The sign above their heads reads, "My Language – My Pride."



between Tozhu and Tyva has led to even greater problems of representation. The presumption has been that, since Tyva is a republic where the majority of the population is ethnic Tyva, the best interests of all Tyva people, including the Tozhu, are

¹ Throughout Russia people can retire quite early (50-55) and start collecting their pensions, but they can also continue working. People from other parts of Tyva want to go to Tozhu because of its special status as a "region equivalent to regions of the far north." This status makes it a sort of "hardship post" and grants state employess and pensioners a significantly higher amount of money than regions that do not have this designation,

² Group interview with the senior class of Toora-Khem High School in their classroom, 23 September 2003.

automatically considered. But the Tozhu are an underprivileged indigenous minority within a republic dominated by an indigenous (but not small-numbered) majority. One non-Tozhu Tyva man used his political connections and legal savvy to establish one of the reindeer-herding and hunting *obshchina* in the Tozhu region. He then managed to use his documentation as director of one *obshchina* to convince authorities in Moscow that he was the representative of all six *obshchiny* in the Tozhu region. He proudly displayed to me a letter officially acknowledging his right to represent these Tozhu *obshchiny* at the federal level. In fact, except for the two members of his *obshchina*, the Tozhu people very openly acknowledged that they did not recognize him as their representative. When I asked a RAIPON representative in Moscow how this had happened, she said that they didn't know any Tozhu people and he was very convincing, so there was no reason not to believe him. Now, still claiming to represent the Tozhu reindeer herders, he has applied for and been granted permission to set up the new gold-mining operation in the Bedii River area (mentioned in Chapter 8).

As we have seen throughout the dissertation, Tozhu herder-hunters have exerted their own agency in an effort to take control of their situations. During Soviet times they employed a variety of strategies to gain entitlements to resources, even within the framework of the *sovkhozy*. Now, in post-Soviet times, we see that they are "muddling through" (McCay 2002:374) by deciding on their own to build cabins, change migration patterns, vary camp size and composition, and assert their *de facto* ownership of reindeer. Yet the attributes of the community outlined above are proving to be obstacles to effective management of the commons. The building of cabins and changes in migration patterns may make sense for individual families in the short term, but as such activities

become institutionalized they may well prove to be inefficient institutions that actually exacerbate the collective action problem. This result runs counter to the assumption of those institutional analysts who, following Oliver Williamson (1981), believe that "institutions are expressly designed to reduce transaction costs and that, in a competitive market, those that fail to do so will not survive" (Ensminger 1996:22). More anthropologically minded institutional analysts whose investigations range beyond Western market economies will immediately recognize that there are differences between individual and group rationality, and that "Given that some actors have more bargaining power than others, as well as diverging goals, it is not surprising that the institutions they promote rarely represent the most efficient outcome for society as a whole" (Ensminger 1996:22). Without effective organization and leadership, without communication between different members of the community, decisions taken as different individuals "muddle through" will never have the chance to aggregate into effective institutions. At the time of my last visit to the Tozhu (2003), I would have to say they were still at this stage of acting as isolated units (whether individual herders or families or camps), muddling through, more or less uninformed about the activities and goals of the larger community.

The Brighter Side

I have presented a rather pessimistic picture of the possibilities of the development of effective self-governing institutions among the Tozhu. Let me now search for the silver lining. A number of recent positive developments appear to have arrested the decline in reindeer numbers and begun to provide the necessary support and incentive for Tozhu people to continue with reindeer herding. At the forefront of these initiatives has been the

Figure 9.5. TOTEM Project founder Dan Plumley (far right) delivers veterinary medicine to Tozhu herders.



Totem Peoples Preservation Project, a U.S.-based NGO that has been making deliveries of veterinarian medicines and other necessary supplies, as well as veterinary training, to the Tozhu (and Dukha) reindeer herders.³ The Totem

Project, through its affiliation with *Cultural Survival, inc.*, has also brought some international attention to the plight of the Sayan Cross reindeer herders that seems to have made officials at the republic and even federal levels take notice. In 2000, Valentina Matvienko, Minister for Social Development and Russian president Vladimir Putin's right-hand woman, helicoptered into a Tozhu herding family's camp. One of the herders' principal complaints was the poor condition of their tents and the lack of new tents (which in the past were provided by the *sovkkoz*). Shortly thereafter, 1000 meters of canvas for herders' tents arrived from the federal government - enough to make 20 new tents. More importantly, since 2001 all reindeer herders have been receiving an annual

³ I should reiterate that I have been involved with this project.

subsidy based on the number of reindeer they have. This subsidy has gone from 350 rubles per head (\$11) in 2001 to 500 rubles per head (\$16). This has proved to be important encouragement for the reindeer herders, and even a powerful incentive for new people (mostly former herders) to enter reindeer herding. At least three new herders have started up herds since 2000. One former herder in the village of Kham-Syra was putting together a new herd by recapturing domesticated reindeer that had turned feral during the previous years of neglect. The number of domesticated reindeer in the Tozhu District has increased from a low of 1,100 in 2000 to 1,500 in 2003.

Reindeer herding is taught at the regional vocational school in Toora-Khem (although in fact few students express serious interest in pursuing it). In September 2003, two recent high school graduates were given scholarships to study veterinary medicine with specialization in reindeer at the respected Reindeer Institute in Yakutsk (Sakha Republic). More importantly, the sons and other relatives of current herders willingly and eagerly carry on the reindeer herding lifestyle. Almost every Tozhu herder has two or three sons or nephews living with him and helping out, hoping to start their own herd. Reindeer herding is not only economically important in that it provides the transportation necessary to exploit the resources of the taiga, but it is culturally important as well. It is a highly respected occupation and way of life, and remains the central element in Tozhu people's sense of ethnic identity,

Figure 9.6. Valentina Matvienko at Samhuu camp near the Oina River.



The outlook for reindeer herding among the Tofa is not as rosy. The only thing keeping reindeer herding alive at all is the efforts of the DELTA group, because they have a vested interest in facilitating the successful hunting of the Tofa, and they know that the hunters need reindeer for transportation. DELTA bought the assets of the former *zveropromkhoz* (state hunting enterprise), paid the hunters half of their backpay (three years in arrears), and maintains the only viable herd by paying the salary of the one remaining full-time herder. If for any reason the DELTA group folds or decides to withdraw its support for the ZAO "Tofalaria," I suspect that the one remaining viable reindeer herd would slowly dwindle to nothing or, perhaps more drastically, the DELTA group could decide to slaughter the entire herd in order to get what they could in meat, skins, antlers, etc., before pulling out completely. There would still be two or three Tofa with a few reindeer each, but these would not make a viable or sustainable herd. Ultimately, without some sort of heroic measures and a great deal of external support, reindeer herding among the Tofa appears destined to die out, as has happened among the Soyot of Buryatia. Hunting, however, will continue to be the basis of the Tofas' economy and a fundamental aspect of their culture.

Steps Toward a Change

If the Tozhu and other south-Siberian reindeer herding and hunting peoples are to stand any chance of genuine cultural survival, they must gain greater control over their lands and the natural resources on those lands, and be granted the opportunity, freedom, and support to design and implement their own institutions of self-governance without the overbearing control of interested outsiders, secure in the knowledge that they will not be

displaced by industrial development or have their land bought out from under them. The following suggestions could form the basis of future policy initiatives in this direction:

- Market-based privatization is not the only path toward good governance, and can in fact be detrimental. As Caroline Humphrey has pointed out, "collective enterprises of one kind or another are still highly relevant to our times.... [L]arge numbers of collectives still exist in Russia, and in many regions they and other forms of joint agricultural enterprise are indispensable to the way farming is now organized and the way people imagine their lives. ... It is not just in Russia that people see that the problems facing them cannot be resolved simply by a choice between the State and the Market" (Humphrey 1998:ix).
- The indigenous reindeer herding peoples must find a way to make the new changes at the constitutional level translate into real opportunities and protections at the collective action and operational levels. The first and most important step along these lines would be to use the new federal laws to establish secure land tenure and exclusive access to resources immediately.
- The indigenous peoples must be allowed to establish some boundary rules defining who has rights to hunt, fish, and extract other natural resources, and they must have a way of monitoring and enforcing these boundary rules (see McGinnis and Ostrom 1992: 55-57).
- Communication and information networks must be improved. Face-to-face communication is most desirable, but if that is not feasible due to the nomadic nature of the herders, at least each herding camp should be equipped with a two-

way radio so that the herders could maintain contact with one another and exchange important information.

- Government officials must demonstrate more genuine and sincere efforts to enforce hunting restrictions and crack down on the illegal trade in animal parts. They must pursue and prosecute violators at every stage of the process, from the point of taking the animal to the final sale (within Russia) of animal parts to agents who will ultimately take them to foreign destinations.
- Education and training programs for Tozhu people should be established to provide the technical skills necessary to effectively manage their resources and develop a self-governing, self-sufficient, sustainable economy; to build leadership capacity; and to learn how to effectively represent the Tozhu people at the republic and federal levels.

Great strides are being made the world over in establishing and protecting indigenous peoples' rights. In the Russian context, the designation of "indigenous, small-numbered peoples" clearly has its advantages, even with its insistence on the "traditional." The "traditional" aspect inherent in the definition can form the basis of an explicit ideology (Gusfield 1967: 351). It can serve as a flag to rally round for purposes of ethnic revitalization movements (Gray, forthcoming). The status can also be asserted, coopted, and manipulated by indigenous peoples themselves to further their own goals, where they can be "traditional" and claim indigenous status where it is to their advantage, but ignore the dictates of artificially imposed tradition - whether imposed by the state, the international movement of indigenous peoples, or well-meaning but naive outsiders -

where it doesn't serve them. In this way, perhaps this is a potential successor to the unwritten perquisites that went along with various Soviet-era "citizenship regimes" as discussed by D.Anderson (1996).

At the constitutional level, despite the weaknesses in the new laws aimed at protecting the rights of Russia's indigenous peoples, there is room for optimism (see, for example, Fondahl and Poelzer 2003 and Osherenko 2001 for a more positive reading of these laws). Now that the Tozhu have been designated as one of the "Small-Numbered Indigenous Peoples," these laws may provide a basis for them to assert their independence and gain some control over the management of their resources. But proponents for indigenous peoples' land rights will have to move more quickly than more politically and economically powerful entrepreneurs determined to buy up large tracts of land for extractive industries or to set up tourist resorts if they are to take effective advantage of these new laws' potential. For example, the law "On Territories of Traditional Natural Resource Use" might be able to be used as a mechanism to have indigenous peoples' land declared "specially protected natural territories." Doing so could delimit at least some territories, which would be declared federal lands, and make them federally protected for the exclusive, inalienable rights of the indigenous peoples (see Bicheldei 2001:21; also Semenova 2001, personal communication).

Another creative use of the new laws suggested to me by Tamara Semenova of the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON) is to put lands inhabited by indigenous peoples under the protection of the *Sovet Bezopastnosti* - the Federal Security Council. Such a move would effectively put such lands out of reach even of the president of Russia, so, for example, the president could not issue an act to

withdraw the protected status in favor of industrial development. This ploy is based on the notion that the environmental sustainability of the land is important to national security (Semenova 2001, personal communication).

While "indigenous" status is at present advantageous, it is a two-edged sword. There is always the danger that the authorities will at some point decide to enforce the letter of the law, and divest those who are not "traditional" enough of their privileges. More importantly, as discussed in Chapters 7 and 8, there has been very little discussion of granting Russia's indigenous peoples control over the real wealth that lies in their lands. While they might in theory be granted some degree of control over the wildlife and fish and perhaps even the forests, except for suggestions from disaffected indigenous peoples themselves, there has been no serious discussion of granting indigenous peoples control over the subsurface minerals and fossil fuels.

There have been a few fairly feeble attempts to increase indigenous people's control over *other parties'* exploitation of subsurface resources. Article 5 paragraph 5 of the law, "On Guarantees of the Rights of the Indigenous Small Numbered Peoples of the Russian Federation" (30 April, 1999), notes that the "Organs of state power of the Russian Federation" have the right "to establish limitations on the non-traditional-for-small-numbered-peoples economic activities of organizations under federal control, in places of traditional residence and economic activities of the small-numbered peoples." But this doesn't give the actual small-numbered peoples the right to limit these activities, nor does it *require* the organs of state power to limit these activities. Novikova (1999b) discusses efforts of the Khanty and Mansi (two more officially recognized indigenous, small-numbered peoples) to regulate their own relationships with representatives of

extractive industries, but these measures have proved unenforceable, easily circumvented, or otherwise ineffective. Yet even such explicit attempts to gain more control over subsurface resources for indigenous peoples do not broach the subject of the indigenous people actually having title to land and control over subsurface resources for the purposes of exploiting them for their own economic development. This seems to be forbidden territory to tread upon.

These new laws still fall short of realizing Aleksandr Pika's vision of providing a framework within which the indigenous peoples of Russia will be able to develop economically and socially with any degree of true self-regulation or self-determination, and it is because of this insistence on "traditional" ways of life that they fall short. In fact, while I personally know that many of the people who worked on these new laws had the best interests of indigenous peoples in mind, these laws can still be viewed as ways to placate the indigenous peoples while making sure that they will not cause any real problems when it comes to the natural resource extraction that the Russian economy so depends upon. The state still owns all the land, and while it gives leases of various types to indigenous peoples for their *obshchiny* and other forms of landholdings (and in the case of the Tozhu at least, tracts far too small to support their "traditional" reindeer herding and hunting lifestyle), those leases only apply to the above-ground resources, while the state retains control of and rights of extraction over the subsurface resources - the minerals and fossil fuels.

In this context a brief comparison of land claims agreements between indigenous peoples and states in other parts of the world would be instructive. While such agreements are far from uniform in their approach, the tendency has been to recognize

indigenous peoples' legal title to land, and in some cases to recognize their right to exploit all the resources on those lands, including subsurface resources. In Canada, for example, in 1984 the MacKenzie Delta Inuvialuit won recognition of title to approximately 91,000 sq. km. of land, including the rights to subsurface minerals on 11,000 sq.km of that land (Osherenko 1995:228). More recently, the Nunavut Land Claims Act of 1993 gives title of 350,000 sq. km. to the Nunavut Inuit, of which one-tenth (35,250 sq. km.) include mineral rights. It also gives the Nunavut a share of government royalties from oil, gas and mineral development on Crown Lands that lie within the Nunavut Settlement Area (which is nearly 2 million sq. km.).⁴ In the United States, the much discussed Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 granted title of 44 million acres (approximately 175,000 km. sq.) to Native Americans and gave them the right to negotiate contracts with oil, gas and mineral companies to exploit their mineral resources.⁵ US Code Title 25 (most relevantly, chapters 12 and 14) recognizes Native Americans' rights to subsurface resources and therefore their right to negotiate leases for the development of those resources. In 2002, George Bush approved legislation addressing mineral rights of the Acoma Pueblo.⁶ These rights are not conditioned upon living a "traditional" way of life. Witness, for example, the very non-traditional casinos

⁴ The Act also provides for financial compensation to redress past grievances (\$1.1 billion to be paid out between 1993 and 2007).

⁵ The ANCSA has not been without its problems and controversies (see, for example, Garber 1985), and is a perfect example of how indigenous peoples have been forced to negotiate their land claims within an imposed European discourse of property and rights that is often not compatible with indigenous conceptions (see Nadasdy 2002 and Niezen 2003 for cogent discussions of this).

⁶ The legislation recognizes the Acoma Pueblo tribe's rights to subsurface resources under 67,000 acres of their land. The land had been declared in the public domain in 1866, in direct contradiction to an earlier 1848 treaty agreement that gave ownership of that land to the Acoma Pueblo. The legislation provides for funds to buy out the current owners of the mineral rights and put the subsurface mineral rights into a trust for the tribe. (From a press release, "Skeen-Udall Praise President for Signing Acoma Pueblo Mineral Rights Legislation," dated 7 Feb., 2002.)

that so many Native American nations have set up, and the right to negotiate contracts for and receive revenues from natural resource extraction. These activities, while not without their attendant problems, have in many cases provided the impetus for a resurgence of ethnic identification and the financial means for the revitalization of cultures and languages among these Native American communities. It is not until the Russian Federation is willing to grant true ownership of land and rights to all the resources on those lands, including economically valuable ones, as in the cases mentioned above, and the right to pursue non-traditional lifestyles and activities, that the indigenous peoples of Siberia will have any chance of realizing true self-determination.

Of course, giving such control over economic resources is not without its own share of problems and conflicts. In the first place, there will always be problems with answering the question, "Who's indigenous here anyway?" - and therefore who should have rights of access to resources of all kinds? Then there's the very real possibility that a particular group of indigenous people, once given control of resources on territory that has been officially recognized as "theirs," will engage in (or consent to) wholesale extraction of those resources without regard for the long-term sustainability of the natural resource base or for the environmental consequences. After all, indigenous peoples too have to compete in the global marketplace to survive economically (Ovsyanikov 1999:115, cited above), and indigenous peoples too can mismanage natural resources (Yamskov 1999:122-123; Osherenko 2001:721). But at least they should have the right to do so for themselves rather than be forced to stand by idly, "traditionally," while someone else mismanages their resources right out from under them.

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BRIAN DONAHOE
Siberian Studies Centre
Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology
P.O. Box 11 03 51
06017 Halle / Saale, Germany
(49)(345) 29 27 220
donahoe@eth.mpg.de

EDUCATION

Indiana University, Bloomington, IN

Ph.D. in Anthropology, February 2004.

Areas of Specialization: Social Change and Development; Ecological Anthropology.

Minors: Public and Environmental Affairs; Central Eurasian Studies.

Indiana University, Bloomington, IN

M.A. in Journalism, January 1998.

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI

B.A. with Honors in English Literature, December 1985.

RESEARCH, FIELDWORK, AND RELATED POSITIONS

- June 2004-
Present: Post-Doctoral Researcher, Siberian Studies Centre, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle / Saale, Germany
- 2000-2002: Project Anthropologist, Altai-Sayan Language and Ethnography Project (a Volkswagen Foundation funded project).
- August 2000-
Present: Consultant, TOTEM People's Preservation Project (a Special Project of Cultural Survival, Inc.). Facilitate the delivery of veterinary training, medicines, and basic necessities to the reindeer herding communities of southern Siberia.
- Sept. 1999-
Sept. 2001: Ph.D. dissertation research, Kyzyl and Tozhu District, Republic of Tyva (Russian Federation); Tozhalana, Irkutsk Province (Russian Federation).
- May 1998-
August 1998: Pre-dissertation research, Kyzyl and Tozhu District, Republic of Tyva (Russian Federation).
- May 1997-
August 1997: Feasibility study and Tyvan language study, Kyzyl, Republic of Tyva (Russian Federation).
- June 1993-
August 1993: Journalism fieldwork on the Southeast Anatolia Project, Istanbul and Diyarbakir (Turkey); Iraqi Kurdistan.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- Fall 1996 and
Spring 2003: Indiana University Department of Anthropology.
Associate Instructor, Anthropology L200, "Language and Culture"
- Spring 2002: Indiana University Department of Anthropology
Associate Instructor, Anthropology E105, "Culture and Society."
- Spring 1997-
Spring 1998: Indiana University Department of Anthropology.
Associate Instructor, Anthropology E105, "Culture and Society." (Designed, administered and taught the course for one class each semester, average 45 students/class.)

- Spring 1994: Indiana University Writing Tutorial Services.
Writing Tutor.
- Feb. 1989: Darüçşafakz Lisesi, Istanbul, Turkey.
- August 1992: English Teacher, Assistant Head of English Department.
- Feb. 1986- U.S. Peace Corps; Yemen-America Language Institute, Sana'a, Yemen.
May 1988: Teacher of English as a Foreign Language

JOURNALISM EXPERIENCE

- May 1995- Office of International Programs, Indiana University.
Sept. 1995: News Editor, Reporter, Photographer, *Office of International Programs Newsletter*.
- May 1994- Friends of the Earth, Washington, D.C.
January 1995: Journalism and Publications Fellow, Photographer, *Friends of the Earth Newsmagazine*.
- January 1993- *Indiana Daily Student*, Indiana University.
Dec. 1993: Environmental Sciences Reporter, Editorial Board Member.

AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

- Oct.-Dec. 2001: Visiting Scholar, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle, Germany
- Spring 2001: Visiting Scholar, Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, Leipzig, Germany
- 1999-2000: Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Fellowship
- Summer 1999: Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowship for the Study of Russian
- 1998-1999: Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowship for the Study of Russian
- Summer 1998: Indiana University Office of International Programs Summer Pre-Dissertation Fieldwork Grant
- Summer 1998: Indiana University Department of Anthropology Summer Fieldwork Grant
- Summer 1997: Indiana University Office of International Programs Enhancement Grant (for the study of Tyvan)
- Summer 1997: Indiana University Department of Anthropology Summer Fieldwork Grant
- Summer 1996: Social Science Research Council (SSRC) Summer Language Fellowship to study Uzbek
- 1995-1996: Social Science Research Council (SSRC) Fellowship for First-Year Graduate Work in Post-Soviet Studies
- Summer 1995: Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowship for the Study of Languages of the Former USSR (Uzbek)
- Sept. 1994: Population Institute Study Scholarship to attend and cover the UN Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, Egypt

PUBLICATIONS

- 2003 Guest Editor, *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, Spring 2003 (27:1). Special Issue on South Siberian and Mongolian Reindeer Herding Cultures (with Dan Plumley).
- 2003 "The Troubled Taiga: Survival on the Move for the Last Nomadic Reindeer Herders of South Siberia, Mongolia, and China." *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, Spring 2003 (27:1).
- 2003 "Hunting for a Solution: Tozhu Wild Animal Resources Threatened." *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, Spring 2003 (27:1).
- 2002 "Hey, You! Get Offa My Taiga! Comparing the Sense of Property Rights Among the Tofa and Tozhu-Tyva." Halle / Saale, Germany: Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology Working Paper Series No. 38.
- 2001 "Where Have All the Reindeer Gone?" *Russian Conservation News*, Fall 2001.
- 2001 "Requiem or Recovery: The 21st-Century Fate of the Reindeer-Herding Peoples of Inner Asia" (co-authored with Daniel Plumley). *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, Spring 2001(25:2): 75-77.
- 1997 "Tuva Sees Sights on Sustainable Development." *Surviving Together: A Quarterly on Grassroots Cooperation in Eurasia*, Winter 1997:38-40.
- 1997 "Ubsu-Nur Accepted into World Network of Biosphere Reserves." *Surviving Together*, Winter 1997: 40-41.
- 1997 "Turvan NGOs Hold Conference on Development." *Surviving Together*, Winter 1997: 42.
- 1997 "For Love of Horses: A Musical Gallop Through the Siberian Landscape." *Bloomington Voice* (Bloomington, IN), 27 February, 1997.
- 1994 "Women, Men, North, South: Putting Population into Perspective." Cover article in *Friends of the Earth Newsmagazine*, Fall 1994: 7-11.
- 1994 "50 Years is Enough!" Cover article in *Friends of the Earth Newsmagazine*, July/August 1994, pp. 9-11.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- Sept. 2002 "Who's Indigenous Here Anyway? The Definition of Indigenous in the New Russia." Paper delivered at the Ninth Conference on Hunting and Gathering Societies (CHAGS9), Edinburgh, Scotland.
- Aug. 2002 "Trust or Domination? The Tozhu-Tyva and the Tofa and Their Relationship to Reindeer." Paper delivered at the workshop *Collective and Multiple Forms of Property in Land and Animals*, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle, Germany, 19-21.
- Nov. 2001 "Mobility and the Maintenance of Language and Lifestyle Among the Tozhu-Tyva and Tofa Reindeer Herders." Paper delivered as part of the panel session, *The South-Siberian and Mongolian Reindeer Herding Complex: Endangered Lands, Languages, and Livelihoods in Comparative Perspective*, at the American Anthropological Association's Annual Meetings, Washington, D.C.
- Nov. 2001 Organizer and Chair for panel session, *The South-Siberian and Mongolian Reindeer Herding Complex: Endangered Lands, Languages, and Livelihoods in Comparative Perspective*, at the American Anthropological Association's Annual Meetings, Washington, D.C.

- Spring 1994: Indiana University Writing Tutorial Services.
Writing Tutor.
- Feb. 1989-
August 1992: Darüßsafaka Lisesi, Istanbul, Turkey.
English Teacher; Assistant Head of English Department.
- Feb. 1986-
May 1988: U.S. Peace Corps; Yemen-America Language Institute, Sana'a, Yemen.
Teacher of English as a Foreign Language

JOURNALISM EXPERIENCE

- May 1995-
Sept. 1995: Office of International Programs, Indiana University.
News Editor, Reporter, Photographer, *Office of International Programs Newsletter*.
- May 1994-
January 1995: Friends of the Earth, Washington, D.C.
Journalism and Publications Fellow, Photographer, *Friends of the Earth Newsmagazine*.
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Environmental Sciences Reporter, Editorial Board Member.

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- Nov. 2001 "Mobility and the Maintenance of Language and Lifestyle Among the Tozhu-Tyva and Tofa Reindeer Herders." Paper delivered as part of the panel session, *The South-Siberian and Mongolian Reindeer Herding Complex: Endangered Lands, Languages, and Livelihoods in Comparative Perspective*, at the American Anthropological Association's Annual Meetings, Washington, D.C.
- Nov. 2001 Organizer and Chair for panel session, *The South-Siberian and Mongolian Reindeer Herding Complex: Endangered Lands, Languages, and Livelihoods in Comparative Perspective*, at the American Anthropological Association's Annual Meetings, Washington, D.C.

- Feb. 2000 Conference co-organizer, *Language and Cultural Preservation of the Tozhu-Tyvan People*, Toora-Khem, Republic of Tyva.
- Feb. 2000 "Protection of the Reindeer-Herding Culture as the First Step in Language Preservation." Paper delivered (in Tyvan) at the conference *Language and Cultural Preservation of the Tozhu-Tyvan People*, Toora-Khem, Republic of Tyva.
- May 1999 "Institutional Collapse and the Decline of Reindeer Herding in the Republic of Tyva." Paper delivered at the *Society for Human Ecology Tenth International Conference*, McGill University, Montreal, Canada.
- April 1999 Conference co-organizer for the 8th Annual SOYUZ Conference, *Peripheral Visions: Views from the Margin*, Indiana University.
- March 1999 "Institutional Change and Development: The Case of the Reindeer Herders of Tyva." Paper delivered at the *Seeth Annual Central Eurasian Studies Conference*, Indiana University.
- April 1997 "The Next Chechnya? Shamanism and Nationalism in Tyva's Quest for Sovereignty over Natural Resources." Paper delivered at the *Duke University Conference on Nationalism and Identity*.
- Feb. 1997 "The Role of Shamanism and Ecological Perceptions in Tyva's Quest for National Sovereignty." Paper delivered at the *Fourth Annual Central Eurasian Studies Conference*, Indiana University.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

American Anthropological Association, Anthropology and the Environment Section
 Society for Applied Anthropology
 SOYUZ - The Research Network for Post-Socialist Cultural Studies

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Tyvan (fluent); Russian (reading fluency); Turkish (formerly fluent, but now rusty); Uzbek; Arabic; Spanish