

THE SIBERIAN WORLD



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INTRODUCTION



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INTRODUCTION



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THE CHALLENGE OF SIBERIA

Spanning eight time zones and thirteen million square kilometers, Siberia is home to Indigenous Siberians—the so-called “small-numbered native peoples of the North” (*korennyye malochislennyye narody Severa*), more populous Indigenous Siberian ethnic minorities, Russian old settlers, and newcomers and their descendants from all across the former Soviet Union and east Asia. Siberia as a region has been geographically defined in slightly different ways throughout history and different regimes; at its broadest delineation (which we take here) it encompasses all of northern Asia from the Ural Mountains in the west to the sea of Okhotsk and Pacific Ocean in the east, the Arctic Ocean in the north and the borders of central-east Kazakhstan, Mongolia, and China to the south. Around 37 million people call this vast space home as of 2022, according to estimates made in late 2021 (Goskomstat, 2022).

Siberia consists of seemingly endless boreal forests (taiga), large rivers that empty into the Arctic and Pacific Oceans, and vast wetlands critical for migratory birds. The region contains a variety of ecological zones from temperate grasslands, savannas, and shrublands to Arctic marine biomes and polar desert (tundra). Much of Siberia is underlain with permafrost—ground that is permanently frozen for two or more years—although with global warming trends differentially affecting the north, the extent of permafrost and its depth is changing quickly. With its population living in remote communities across the tundra and taiga, towns and regional centers, areas of intense industrial development, and large cities mainly along the trans-Siberian highway, the Siberian world is a human mosaic as well as environmental mosaic—one that is as dynamic as it is expansive.

This is not the first attempt at capturing the cultural diversity of the region. One of the inaugural English-language volumes on the ethnography of Siberia was Maksim G. Levin and Leonid P. Potapov’s (eds.) *Peoples of Siberia* (1964), first published in Russian in 1956 (Levin & Potapov, 1956). Dedicating a chapter to each of 30 Siberian Indigenous groups, and also touching on the Russian population of Siberia, the archaeology of the region, and physical anthropological characteristics, the Levin and Potapov volume is a comprehensive descriptive account leveraging Russian (Soviet) ethnography of the region at that point in time. It is organized in a very straightforward, descriptive manner, with each chapter covering

livelihoods, dress, dwellings, food, religion, social organization, etc. for a specific group. However, *Peoples of Siberia* does not engage with anthropological theory or provide much cross-cultural comparison outside of the region. This volume is not meant to be an update of Levin and Potapov, but rather, our authors have contextualized their work in respect to theoretical discussions in anthropology and history, and they engage in deeper, multivocal ethnographic description rather than a stock summaries of the ethnographic present.

This book traverses socio-cultural diversity and human-environment systems across Siberia along six major research themes, each discussed in detail below. Thus, instead of trying to capture each and every corner of this vast social and geographic space, this book is organized along contemporary themes of anthropological research in Siberia, providing rich case studies within each thematic cluster. By focusing on these themes emerging in the current research, we can go beyond a collection of encyclopedic entries in order to learn more about the dynamics of change and perceptions of local peoples.

A region of such diversity deserves to be discussed by an inclusive set of researchers. This volume has a diverse mix of contributors, representing an international group of authors from locations such as North America, Europe, Russia, Japan, and China, among them Indigenous anthropologists. We also present young scholars alongside established researchers who have been working in Siberia since the 1990s or earlier. This varied set of contributors provides more variation in methodological approach and theoretical orientation than one might find otherwise; having this diverse methodological and theoretical background is a benefit for interpreting the complex and varied social-cultural processes in the region and assessing new shifts and developments from multiple angles and perspectives. By bringing together this international group of scholars of Siberia, we hope to contribute an enduring reference volume on current research. By examining these research themes and identifying the linkages between them, we also have some insights into research questions and applied research problems that we think will be relevant for the near future.

In this introduction we will first review the topics covered in this book, highlighting significant points of the contributions within each section. Next, we draw out and highlight overarching themes that cut across many of the case study contributions. At the conclusion we present some insights drawn from these materials and contextualize them in light of the future of Siberian studies.

RESEARCH THEMES

This volume is organized around six research themes: Indigenous language revival and cultural change; land, law, and ecology; co-creation of people and the state; formal and grassroots infrastructure and Siberian mobility; religious mosaics in Siberia; and conceptions of history. As mentioned above, we have attempted to capture some of the major areas of research and theorization within the field of Siberian studies. These themes came about through a variant of grounded theory (Inaba & Kakai, 2019). We started out with a research question: how can we best represent the Siberian world today? With the original proposal for this book, we had divided up the chapters into more than double the number of themes based on author abstracts. However, as the chapters started to arrive, we realized that some themes were failing to produce relevant case studies. Also, in a number of cases, the chapters originally

planned for two separate themes ended up being closer than expected, so the themes were combined. We had an initial theory of how we might answer our question. As we collected our data (the chapters), we pulled out the relevant concepts and grouped the chapters into our research themes. This process also helped us to identify the relationship between themes.

In the sections that follow, we provide a short introduction to each theme and highlight the major points of our contributors. While these themes are separated out, the reader will notice numerous spaces of overlap and interconnection throughout as these divisions are more for ease of organization than definitive categorization. For example, it is difficult to talk about land and ecology without also talking about relations with the state, as well as religion and worldview. Relations with the state are also tied up in issues of infrastructure and mobility, for instance, or due to state influences at various points in history, communities may be now initiating processes and programs that aim to revitalize language and culture. Our aim in providing these categories is to give the reader a place to begin their exploration. When reading chapters from different sections, we hope that the salience of these interconnected themes will clearly emerge and shine through.

INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE REVIVAL AND CULTURAL CHANGE

We begin the book by addressing the region's linguistic and cultural diversity and revitalization movements. Current trends in Siberian language documentation and activism, coupled with the importance of not only research on language, but also cultural knowledge, rituals, and practices are discussed in this section. While relatively sparsely populated, Siberia is actually quite linguistically diverse. Aside from the ubiquitous Russian language, approximately 30 languages (not counting their numerous dialects) from at least 7 language families (and four language isolates) are spoken across the region. While many of these languages share certain areal features common to other parts of inner Asia, a number of these languages—particularly the Paleo-Siberian languages and some of the isolates—have unique typological features rarely seen in the area or the rest of the world (see Vajda, 2009, for more linguistic details). Taking both linguistic and anthropological approaches into consideration, the chapters of this section investigate both language contact and resulting change, as well as efforts for revitalization and maintenance. While some languages spoken in Siberia—notably Sakha, with up to ~450,000 speakers, Tuvan with ~280,000 and Buryat with ~265,000 speakers (Goskomstat, 2010)—are considered to be in a more stable position, we also find others (e.g., Itelmen, discussed by Degai et al., this volume) which are much less widely spoken at present, with just dozens of speakers. Language endangerment and revival, a highly relevant issue and phenomenon worldwide, is considered in light of social and political shifts in Siberian history as well as contemporary phenomena such as globalization. In this section we see both the echoes of language loss as well as linguistic transformation. The variety of situations that set these processes in motion are considered in light of theorizing what language vitality might look like for speakers of these languages.

After the first three chapters (Grenoble et al.; Kantarovich; Degai et al.) dealing more closely with language change, documentation, and revival, the following three chapters (Mamontova et al.; Laptander; Davydova) in this section engage with

notions of cultural preservation and change. Increasing globalization and connection to other parts of the Russian Federation, and the world, which have only accelerated more and more swiftly in the last few decades are leading to shifts in how people travel, engage in subsistence activities, and otherwise make a living. However, as we will see, knowing the land—how to navigate within it, how to gather sustenance, and engage with its various fellow beings—still remains important for many Siberian communities. Amidst new and transforming practices, old ones do persist, and the cultural knowledge related to these activities remain valuable, and valued.

To begin this section of the book, the chapter by Grenoble, Vinokurova, and Nesterova discusses the situation of minority Indigenous languages in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia). Using the Language Vitality Network Model (Grenoble & Whaley, 2021), the authors show how disruption in one part of the network can lead to language shift and language loss. The authors consider stressors, protective factors, and their interactions, and how these factors play into the vitality and sustainability of Indigenous languages. As a specific example, the status of the Even language and culture is discussed as an illustration of how these factors come together. The authors discuss ways to increase protective factors to offset the impacts of ongoing cultural and linguistic disruption.

Next, Kantarovich discusses linguistic features used by speakers of Modern Chukchi revealing the changes occurring in this polysynthetic language in recent years. After reviewing the sociohistorical context and presenting a discussion of the social positioning of contemporary Chukchi speakers, Kantarovich outlines the reasons for the linguistic changes in the structure of Chukchi. Some of the linguistic impacts turn out to be the result of contact among ethnic groups, while other changes are due to shifts in social life (from small, tightly knit communities to urbanized spaces increasingly connected to a globalizing world).

Degai, Koester, Bobaljik, and Ono provide a rich case study of language revival in their discussion of a years-long effort at language documentation and revitalization among Itelmen communities in Kamchatka. While the language is still spoken, active speakers are few and far between. The chapter reviews the history of Itelmen language documentation, showing how it has intensified significantly since the 1980s. In particular, the chapter highlights the collaborative efforts of the authors with Itelmen scholars and enthusiasts. In addition to field research by Ono and Bobaljik, a gathering of speakers and cultural knowledge bearers from across Kamchatka was organized in 2012. The chapter presents a snapshot of these efforts and the meanings created by such revitalization events.

The next chapter reveals the interplay between language and understandings of the land and water. The river as a landscape feature is a core concept in Evenki culture, among many other Indigenous and non-Indigenous Siberians. Rivers have long served as the reliable water routes helping Evenki to travel, orient, organize, and make sense of space. Mamontova, Thornton, and Klyachko describe the naming principles and toponymic affixes for riverine names in two Indigenous Evenki communities—one in Khabarovskii Krai and the other in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)—in their chapter on the phenomenology of riverine names and hydrological maps. The chapter contributes to understanding how hydrological networks contribute to navigation, migration, ontology, and subsistence among Siberian Indigenous peoples, and what can be revealed by language.

We then move into intersections of language and culture by examining a case of humans communicating with an other-than-human force—in this case, fire. Laptander focuses on Nenets women’s fire rituals which she knows intimately as a Nenets woman and anthropologist. Laptander shows how women interpret the language of fire that brings omens to their family and community life and hunting luck. Fires are a paradoxical force in tundra life: a domestic fire can be protective, but without human control, fire is destructive and dangerous. In Nenets culture, the hearth is physically and symbolically associated with women, family wealth, cooking, heating, needlework, and childbearing. Thus, it follows that women are responsible for making the fire, along with all rites connected to the fire and smoke. The Nenets regard and respect for fire is reflected in folklore, cosmology, and many religious rites; parallel rites are also found in numerous other Indigenous groups in Siberia.

Another key realm of cultural change and revitalization involves food. Research on the consumption of food across the region reveals how “modern” technologies, the loss of collectivization and social structures collide with a desire for nostalgic food, creating new intersections for the revival and recreation of foods associated with the past. In our final chapter in the section, Davydova describes the transformations of gathering practices, cooking, and food preservation technology among reindeer herders of Chukotka. Davydova’s chapter begins with an analysis of how local people employ refrigerators, sugar, and salt in food conservation in the village of Amguema and in the surrounding Amguema tundra in Iul’tinskii raion. The appearance and distribution of these consumer goods has led to a change in both the technology of cooking and the composition of products gathered in the tundra. The chapter examines how these changes, which are rapid, significant, visual, and lived by the people on a daily basis during the mealtime, are reflected upon by the local people, and which role the food memory plays in their present life.

The chapters in this section all point to the increasing importance of both ethnographic and applied projects geared to document and revitalize Indigenous languages and related cultural practices. Identifying the pressures that endanger—as well as the conditions that bolster—the maintenance of such traditions is also deeply intertwined with social and ecological sustainability in these communities. As we will cover in the next section of the book, Siberia, like the rest of the world’s Arctic and Subarctic region, is already being intensively affected by processes of climate change; urbanization and industrialization happening concurrently continue to exacerbate processes of change on the land. Siberian communities are actively dealing with these impacts as they affect both the practical aspects of their daily lives and the ways that they engage with and relate to the land.

LAND, LAW, AND ECOLOGY

In this section we have a selection of chapters that present the diverse ways that people interact with ecosystems in Siberia. The relationship between human populations and the environment is now conditioned by formal legal rights (Fillipova et al.) and administrative processes (Safonova and Sántha), whereas in the distant past (Takakura) resource distributions were largely determinant. Traditional systems that regulate access to resources and social relationships in society are pluralistic in nature and often involve non-human actors facilitating individual action and community

well-being (Novikova). Resource distributions are still important today, and the changing climate also changes available resource distributions and the perception of these changes, even within one region and one Indigenous population (Terekhina and Volkovitskiy). Different strategies can develop over time depending on the climatic and legal-political environment (Oehler). Finally, the type of knowledge ecology that develops is likely dependent on the type of resource being discussed (Mertens). In all, the land, legal, and ecological relationships are an important element to success in Siberia. The nuances of these studies show that traditional knowledge systems play important roles in regulating social and environmental interactions.

Traditional subsistence activities tie local peoples to the land and the dynamics of reproduction of its flora and fauna. Rather than seeing the natural and human systems as semi-autonomous but interconnected systems, Indigenous peoples in Siberia widely view the world as a multitude of inter-relationships and connections. Ingold (2002) and Anderson (2000) first developed this relational perspective between human and non-human persons in the cosmos, environment, and home based on materials in the Eurasian Arctic, and many researchers in this section follow in this tradition.

This characteristic holistic worldview is no less apparent than in Indigenous Siberian customary law. Customary law is commonly thought of as a set of traditions and rules that regulates natural resource use and social relations in a population. With decades of research in the arena of legal anthropology, Novikova (this volume) discusses examples of customary law across several Indigenous groups in Siberia where she has conducted both basic ethnographic work and applied research. Novikova argues that customary law is relevant to Indigenous status, regulation of social relations, equality, and justice in natural resource management, and sustainable development. Furthermore, Novikova suggests that customary law can be successfully incorporated into a pluralistic legal framework within Russia in order to ensure cultural continuity among Siberian Indigenous people.

Turning to a more formal aspect of the Russian legal system that impacts Indigenous people trying to maintain traditional lifeways—the creation and registration of Indigenous enterprises—Filippova, Fondahl, and Savvinova (this volume) examine specific Russian federal and regional laws relevant to land rights for Indigenous Siberians. Such enterprises, known as *obshchinas*, depend on legal rights to traditional lands for their traditional economic activities, such as reindeer herding, hunting, and fishing. As it turns out, the implementation and experience of these laws varies across jurisdictional spaces as discussed in the chapter. Some regions have been more amenable to Indigenous land rights whereas in others, Indigenous peoples have no choice but to make concessions to industrial developers. Both chapters are relevant to understanding the sustainability of traditional economic strategies in light of ongoing industrialization in Siberia.

Continuing our glimpse into the impacts and shifts stemming from industrialization, Safonova and Sántha deliver a case study of a now-defunct Indigenous Evenki jade-mining enterprise in eastern Siberia. Traditional activities such as reindeer herding allowed the enterprise to access mines in remote areas and sell their semi-precious stone to buyers in China. The focus of the chapter is how the manipulation of the enterprise's accounting became a unifying element for members of the enterprise.

We then confront the impacts of climate change on Indigenous perceptions and trace the way that different communities are responding to its ecological impacts.

Climate change in Siberia is having immediate and often devastating effects on local livelihoods and subsistence; many of the impacts and scenarios seen in the Arctic parts of the world are providing a prophetic glimpse of what may occur if decisive steps are not taken to stall warming processes. Rising summer high temperatures are driving the rapid melting of permafrost which covers most of Siberia; the melt releases formerly sequestered carbon dioxide and greenhouse gases, contributing to a cycle of even warmer temperatures (for a recent study on sites on Lena river delta, see Melchert et al., 2022). Hot temperatures combined with drier weather in the summers also spur on the development of vast fires which destroy the taiga forests and further exacerbate permafrost melting. Melting destroys grazing area for reindeer and horses, turning it into swamplands dotted with sinkholes—herders must then adapt quickly to these often unpredictable shifts. The next several chapters engage with the dynamic accumulated bodies of knowledge that herders possess and how they apply and modify their practices in accordance with changing ecological conditions—both those related to climate change as well as industrialization and other kinds of environmental degradation.

Terekhina and Volkovitskiy find that Nenets views on environmental change emphasize the temporality of crucial climate and weather events as these events impact reindeer herding. As Nenets reindeer herders' success is closely tied to their reindeers' success and environmental variations, their understanding of the timing of the seasons as well as the increasing frequency of extreme weather events is something they pay close attention to for decisions around migrations.

Takakura examines ecology from a long-term perspective. He discusses how a particular constellation of environmental variables in eastern Siberia provided opportunities for ancestral Sakha to migrate northward while maintaining their horse and cattle breeding economic strategy. Introducing the concept of nature on the move, Takakura explains how people modify their economic strategies depending on the underlying ecological process.

Oehler's work in the Altai-Sayan region in southern Siberia with Oka-Soiot herders provides another example of the modification of economic strategies depending on changing environmental conditions. Oehler argues that such transitions are carried out through a process of experimentation in a diverse landscape. The result is that subsistence strategies can change over environmental gradients.

Moving from modification of economic strategies to ecological knowledge, Mertens (this volume) looks at the relationship between traditional ecological knowledge and two aspects of ecology among Evenki of the northern Irkutsk region: sable hunting and snow conditions. Mertens finds that there is a lot more variation in the explanation of sable behavior and the traditions associated with it than with the traditions of dealing with various snow conditions. Mertens looks at the individual variation in learned behaviors for specific topics, rather than simply attributing them to the "group" or "culture."

Thus, in periods of accelerating change—whether due to climate change or the push toward industrialization fueled by ever-intensifying globalization in the region—understanding the ways that people (and communities) adapt is vitally important. These adaptations never happen in a vacuum, but are influenced by forces beyond the communities themselves, such as those of the governing state (seen particularly in Filippova et al.'s chapter). We move next into an examination of relationships

between Indigenous Siberians and the state and how this has shaped and transformed group identities and practices over (and at various points in) time.

CO-CREATION OF PEOPLE AND THE STATE

Despite the popular outsider's image of Siberia as a remote, disconnected expanse of the globe, Siberian Indigenous groups have always lived in places with varying degrees of cultural interactions and contacts. Since the 1600s, these interactions have been dominated by the Russian Empire, Soviet Union, and Russian Federation. Prior to those times, however, extended trade networks connected Siberians to populations from the Greek colonies as well as states farther afield in southern Asia.

For the last 500 years especially, there were practically no places where Indigenous peoples would stay in isolation, without relations with their neighbors and the administrative bodies created by the state. In many respects the state institutions initiated specific developmental policies which gradually changed local people's way of life. The chapters in this section analyze complex interactions occurring in the context of different intentions, some of which people manifest due to the presence of the state. They are focused on the process of construction and failure of the Soviet project, qualitative changes in the public sphere, and local people's publicity and institutionalization of religious practices. A distinctive feature of these changes is the emergence of the events serving as the displays of ethnic identity. Official feasts and institutionalized ritual practices at public events are co-created by local people and the state institutions, gradually transforming social relations at different levels. In this section we highlight eight studies that examine co-creation of contemporary identity and economy as a result of interactions of Siberia peoples and the Russian state.

During the Soviet Union, the state sought to control and influence social relationships at all levels and phases of the life cycle. In the shadows of the formal economy people could often pursue their own economic interests via what authorities termed the black market. As the Soviet Union ended the black market essentially transformed into the free market across urban centers in Russia. In remote regions the economy faltered and the (likely) unintended consequence was increased reliance on informal social relations, such as Ventsel's food sharing networks and Crate's "cows-and-kin" strategy described in this volume became paramount for achieving economic aims, especially in the remote regions of Siberia. Locally, the provisioning families and communities with locally procured foods and other products from the taiga and tundra was paramount (cf. Ziker, 2003; Ziker, Nolin, & Rasmussen, 2016), alongside the distribution or sharing of consumer products and equipment. In this section we highlighted researchers working on the opportunities provided by state integration, as well as the pressures and effects of state development policies. State regulation of civil society still provides avenues for individual and collective expression such as in Watanabe's study of Buryatia and Peers study of the *yhyakh* ritual. Reification of hunting-and-gathering (Ssorin-Chaikov), gender differentiation (Rygovskiy), use of alcohol (Yarzutkina) are unintended consequences of Soviet and post-Soviet development.

Peers's chapter initiates this section through an examination of the interplay between state influences and spirituality, revealing how spiritual revitalization often intersects with national revival. The Sakha ritual *yhyakh*, a festival that formed a key

part of the Sakha yearly calendar in pre-Soviet times. Peers discusses how late-Soviet activists in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) revitalized this local and regional ritual which has now become a large, unifying event for the Sakha people. In addition, the revitalization of this ritual has gone alongside the revitalization of shamanic and spiritual practices overall, and Peers discusses the relationship between post-Soviet revitalization of spirituality and the revival and mobilization of Sakha national identity and ideas of belonging.

We then move on to a case study examining the interface between state-approved youth movements and individual self-realization. In the Russian Federation, youth organizations are managed by the authorities, and this results in sometimes ambivalent connotations for civil society. Watanabe's chapter examines publicity of a youth movement in the Republic of Buryatia in eastern Siberia. Considering both policies in the republic and the patterns of fragmentation of NGOs across Russia, Watanabe shows how even these administratively-mediated civil society movements can deliver ways to empower the self-realization of local citizens.

Gavrilova's chapter provides unique insights into the Russian petro-state. Gavrilova contributes to the theme of co-creation through a case study of Yamal LNG—a corporate state within a state—centered in the town of Sabetta on the Yamal Peninsula. Despite heavy restrictions on her work, Gavrilova's fieldwork at Yamal LNG (which engages in natural gas production, liquefaction and then shipping/transport) explores how it behaves as a sovereign actor governing its territory, including the spatial isolation of the site, infrastructural independence of the enterprise, a strict labor routine for shift-workers, and corporate gifts for nearby Yamal Indigenous communities. Nevertheless, this regime exists only through its participation in a symbolic competition with other sovereign actors that manifest their power over Sabetta, including the other national and regional actors.

While the first chapters in this section highlight how the state creates and facilitates ethnic identity, local communities, and organizations, the remaining chapters in the section focus on how local communities incorporate the dynamics of the state into their lifeways. Yarzutkina takes a biographical approach to alcohol and its consumption in an Indigenous community in Chukotka. Through her in-depth ethnography, Yarzutkina shows how alcohol is an actor—an actor that has become an indispensable element within mediations of the human-animal-spirit world relationships in this community. While not viewed as the most virtuous element in this Indigenous worldview, this “biography” of alcohol allows us to investigate the social environment surrounding its use and how the state helped make it so.

Ssorin-Chaikov then examines the role of failure in understanding Soviet and Russian developmental policies in Indigenous Siberia based on ethnographic and historical work with an Evenki community in central Siberia. The goal of state development policies was to turn Indigenous Evenki lifeways from “primitive” to “scientific” communism. As it turns out, however, the failure of development resulted in the creation of an Indigenous underclass and new forms of hunting and gathering, including hunting Soviet welfare and gathering from the infrastructure of these projects. Ssorin-Chaikov's study identifies the ways that the failure of state-sponsored development co-creates the conditions among contemporary Indigenous groups.

Ventsel examines the effects of increasing regulation of big-game hunting in northern Sakha in a Dolgan-Evenki community. Since the early 2000s the state has

increasingly regulated hunting activities through requiring the purchase of hunting licenses. Thus hunting has moved from an informally-managed, common pool resource to a specialized activity among just a few hunters operating on a commercial basis. The remaining hunters have turned their pooling efforts to fishing. This is a common story across the Arctic and other regions around the world as well, as fishing can be a low risk activity even in harsh climates (Dombrowsky et al., 2020). Ventsel's longitudinal insights in this Indigenous community illustrate the flexibility of local subsistence and food sharing strategies given the changing dynamics of state intervention.

Similarly, Rygovskiy examines gender relations in an Old Believer Chasovennoe community, asking how “traditionality” is produced and transformed through interactions with the state. Siberian Old Believers are now more restricted than during Soviet times, and more closed as a group than prior to the Revolution of 1917. Rygovskiy shows how the growth of informal economic relations in Old Believer communities paralleled the building of official Soviet society. The so-called traditional gender division of labor in taiga villages—where women were supposed to keep the household while men were providing resources (e.g., furs, fish, etc.)—constituted a part of that informal, horizontal economy.

Crate rounds out this section of the book with her longitudinal work on changing social networks in a Sakha community. In the 1990s Viliui Sakha adapted to the dissolution of the state farms and disruptions in the local food supply by developing intra-household food production strategies that Crate famously called “cows-and-kin” (Crate, 2006). As the Russian economy became more globalized in the 2010s and climate change made access to pastures more difficult, parents were encouraging their children to leave rural areas and explore opportunities for education and employment in urban centers. The Viliui Sakha have changed from a risk-minimizing buffering subsistence strategy to investment in embodied capital. It remains to be seen how this strategy of urbanization will develop with the Russian state's military actions in Ukraine and resulting isolation from the global economy.

FORMAL AND GRASSROOTS INFRASTRUCTURE AND SIBERIAN MOBILITY

Contemporary energy problems in Siberia acquired a systemic character in connection with the processes of globalization. As will be demonstrated in the chapters in this section, the problems of choosing a direction of modernization and finding new resources are questions that remain unresolved. This makes the study of changes in the local communities, resources, their utilization and conservation, as well as the adaptation of the local people to the socio-economic and environmental changes, especially timely and relevant. In this section of the volume, we have collected texts reflecting different kinds of infrastructural innovations in Siberian context. It aims to consider the exploitation of resources in Siberia in the context of the functioning of industrial development projects, the rationalization of local economic practices, and the effects of the introduction of new technologies and equipment. Some authors cover the history of huge development projects, urbanization, the use of infrastructure and how it changes mobility patterns, whereas others provide fine-grained case studies of locally generated infrastructural systems. The chapters dealing with large

scale infrastructures (Davydov; Povorznyuk & Schweitzer; Zamyatina; Saxinger et al., this volume) reflect on how people adapt to infrastructure development or the meanings these developments have for their lives. The chapters that focus on grassroots infrastructure (Kapustina; Rakhmanova; Vasilieva; and Agapov, this volume) illustrate the ways that people come together to form infrastructure even where formal infrastructure exists in one form or another. This is reminiscent of informal distribution strategies that developed alongside market reforms following the collapse of the Soviet Union in Siberia (Ziker, 2006).

How do local people deal with the development of large infrastructure projects and how does it affect their mobility? Davydov starts off this section of the book with a case study in changing autonomies of Evenki hunters and reindeer herders. Autonomy regimes have changed over time due to a complex interaction between different infrastructures, new ways of organizing and timing human activities on the landscape, and interactions with the state. Reminiscent of chapters in the section on co-creation, this chapter delves deeper into what changing mobility strategies means for Evenki autonomy. Utilizing the concept of temporality Davydov shows how the use of certain key locations for reindeer herding and hunting have intensified over time.

Infrastructure development provides opportunities and constraints on local populations and thus becomes an agent of change. Taking a combined historical and ethnographic approach, Povorznyuk and Schweitzer explore the social, demographic, and ecological effects of the construction of the Baikal-Amur-Mainline (BAM) railroad that passes through north of Lake Baikal, a region traditionally inhabited by semi-nomadic Evenki reindeer herders and hunters. The authors ask crucial questions about what difference a railroad makes in the lives of the local population. While the social costs and benefits are difficult to ascertain, one thing for certain is that the world as people there know it today would not exist without the BAM.

Kapustina develops the concept of translocal infrastructure with a case study of the grassroots infrastructure of Caucasian migrants to Western Siberian oil towns. Migrants from southwestern Russia's Republic of Dagestan, have established an extensive system for transportation of resources and persons. The chapter focuses on food, covering both the supply of specialty food items from originating communities as well as the establishment of cafes and stores in the destination that have become integrated into the wider lifeways of these oil towns. Translocal infrastructure helps to break down stereotypes of Caucasian peoples as militants and recipients of social welfare and establishes Dagestan as a source of healthy and environmentally-friendly food options.

How do urban infrastructures rise and fall in Siberia? And what are the conditions under which a transition from services focused mainly on resource extraction to new kinds of services prevent the fall of an urban development? Zamyatina's chapter describes the development cycles of Siberian urban centers with different resource exploitation histories. She examines the potential for a "Jack London effect" in development cycles in four different regions of oil and gas extraction (Khanty-Mansiyskii autonomous okrug "Ugra," the Yamal Peninsula, the northern reaches of the Yenisei, and Dickson on the northern coast). Zamyatina reveals how they are transitioning away from resource extraction to new services, such as new technology development.

Verkhnemarkovo is a small Siberian town located on an oil field in Russia's Irkutskaiia oblast' that has long been plagued by bad roads and limited mobility. The chapter by Saxinger, Krasnoshtanova, and Illmeier describes how this community is stuck in between promises made by the oil companies and promises from the state. While the oil company should be making investments under the banner of corporate social responsibility as in other regions, the authors find that the degree to which they do is highly dependent on oblast'-level expectations and relationships. The result is that the community of Verkhnemarkovo has neither investment from the oil company or the state, and their transportation infrastructure is decrepit. The authors introduce the concept of "infrastructural violence" to describe the living conditions there.

We next move explorations of grassroots infrastructure and the varying kinds of quotidian interactions that locals have with these structures and processes. Examining what happens when things go wrong in an illegal fishing community, Rakhmanova describes how fishermen attract luck and enter into a partnership with it through rather counterintuitive means. Like Davydov, she employs concepts of temporality to discuss how these fishers on the Ob River anticipate the future, and essentially live "in the past of their future" through their planning for possible failures in their activities. In the process the fishermen create an infrastructure consisting of hierarchies of places and acceptable actions and practices that are employed in order to anticipate failure and maximize success at the same time. Rakhmanova's chapter is also a reflection on the role of the researcher and how they may also contribute to events of success—or failure—in the course of their fieldwork, and how that may lead to unexpected insights.

Vasilyeva develops the concept of "infrastructure brokers" in the context of the wild winter roads of the Taimyr region. She reveals how these "wild winter roads"—informally maintained ice-roads used for transportation in winter time—are a prime example of grassroots infrastructure that stand in contrast to official winter roads that are maintained by the state or private sector. Wild winter road drivers have a background for this kind of work, have mastered the technique of driving and maintaining an automobile, have wayfinding skills, and also have the social connections necessary to support the stable functioning of the infrastructure. Thus, these drivers are brokers of this informally organized infrastructure that facilitates mobility across the tundra.

Finally Agapov discusses another case of grassroots infrastructure, this time in northwestern Siberia's Yamal region with a look at the transport infrastructure on floating shops and winter roads. Agapov focuses on the role of the landscape in organizing channels for the flows of goods, money, and raw materials, and finds that the mobile commercial infrastructure is highly adaptive to the local environment.

In our next section, we move from physical infrastructures to a more metaphorical one—that of religion and worldview. In those chapters, we examine how religious revival intersects with broader sociopolitical concerns as well as the precarities of everyday life, creating another kind of "infrastructure" for living.

RELIGIOUS MOSAICS IN SIBERIA

The post-Soviet era in Siberia within diverse religious domains has been one of revival, recreation, and transformation; these chapters examine continuity and

change within different religious faiths, and the intersections of the macro (social and political forces and concerns) with the micro (everyday practices and activities) spheres of life in the region. While often strongly discouraged from public observance under Soviet rule, many practitioners and adherents maintained their various spiritual practices in private settings—despite threats of exile or even death in the case of many shamanic practitioners, for example. Contemporary religious revitalization often involves the public acknowledgement or performance of rituals and practices related to Indigenous Siberian shamanic or animistic belief systems, in which they are adapted under conditions of urbanization, or after years of dormancy (Sidorova; Bulgakova; Lykkegård). We also see the results of contact between faiths, both from the historic period (between Siberian Indigenous religions and Russian Orthodoxy or Tibetan Buddhism, the latter in Znamenski's and Beliaeva-Sachuk's chapters) as well as the contemporary era, which evinces the increasing contact with global religious movements (such as Evangelical or Pentecostal Christianity, as in Vallikivi's chapter).

To begin the section, Sidorova investigates a new generation of shamanic practitioners in the city of Yakutsk, in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia), focusing on the way that many new (often youthful) ritual specialists incorporate varying attributes from historic Sakha shamanic traditions. Using five brief case studies of the practitioners, Sidorova examines the impacts of both urbanization and globalized influences on the public and private practices within contemporary shamanism in a growing Siberian city. In all cases, even the innovative and “imported” aspects of the traditions all seek to reconnect urban Sakha with what is conceptualized as their spiritual roots, including features such as the connection to (home)land, to ancestors, and to an animate and ever-transforming world.

Znamenski's chapter focuses on the historical development of Altai nationalism in the early part of the 20th century where an ethnic self-awareness emerged. Located in the Mountain Altai region (an area nestled at the point where the Russian, Mongolian, and Chinese borders meet in southwestern Siberia), Indigenous Altaians wove together the narratives and identities of their “Oïrot” past. Three strands were integrated: the activities of the local intelligentsia who worked to record folklore and other ethnographic material; the emergence of a prophetic, proto-nationalist religious movement (Ak-Jang or Burkhanism); and the development of Indigenous socialist forms (Bolshevism) combined with local iterations of nationalism.

Vallikivi then examines the encounters of Nenets reindeer herders with Christian missionaries along the Arctic coast. Examining the past and present transformations in language and faith brought by Evangelical and Pentecostal missionaries, this chapter looks at how ideas and ideologies about language, personhood, and relations with the state shift among Nenets who convert to these forms of Christianity.

Bulgakova has been conducting ethnographic research among the Nanai peoples in Khabarovskii Krai in the Russian Far East for 35 years. Complementing Sidorova's chapter by focusing on another regional context, she presents an overview of what Nanai shamans say about the changes that have occurred in their practices over the past few decades in a discussion of post-Soviet Nanai shamanism. Many modern Nanai shamans strongly object to being called “neo-shamans”—a term appearing in Russia in the post-Soviet period. Based on Bulgakova's rich ethnographic materials, the relevant contrast is revealed to be not one that contrasts “traditional shamans” and “neo-shamans,” but between the “real, true” shamans and “fake” ones.

Lykkegård also presents rich ethnographic material, in this case on human-reindeer-ancestor relations among Siberian Chukchi communities. She focuses here on feeding *gi'rgir*—the spirit owners of the reindeer herd and ancestors—in the *kilvei* ritual. As with many traditional belief systems, sacrificial acts among the Chukchi have the goal of directing action in a desired way. The Chukchi she worked with are concerned with sustaining themselves and their reindeer, and Lykkegård skillfully demonstrates how the *gi'rgir* play a necessary role in the cultural and economic regeneration of the Chukchi.

Contemporary religious and secular festivals in Siberia originated in diverse Indigenous religious practices, institutionalized religion, and the secularized rituals of Soviet times. Public festivals, such as the Sakha *yhyakh* (see also Peers, this volume) and the ubiquitous Day of the Reindeer Herder serve as displays of ethnic identity. Feasting also includes intimate, local ritual practices sacrificial rituals, such as described by Lykkegård, or the widespread Siberian reference of the bear are part and parcel of celebrating and negotiating relations with supernatural, non-human agents. Dudeck shows how Siberian feasts and ritual practices represent, perform, and transform social relations in local communities and society at large.

To finish the section, Beliaeva-Sachuk delivers an ethnographic case study of Okinskii raion (Oka), Republic of Buryatia—one of the most remote and hard-to-reach regions of Buryatia, located southwest of Lake Baikal on the border with Mongolia. Domestic and wild animals play important roles in Oka religious practices which are a syncretic mix of Buryat and Soiot shamanic cults with Tibetan Buddhism. Domestic animals serve as ethnic markers, and Beliaeva-Sachuk argues that the treatment of domestic and wild animals and their place in the socio-cultural space of people is a reflection of the culture and social structure of Oka Buryats and Soiets.

The post-Soviet era has seen the revival of many social and spiritual practices and rituals that had been suppressed or secularized during the Communist period, as well as the continuing observation or reinvention of new holidays that arose during the time of the U.S.S.R. as replacements for religious festivals. These celebrations may be expressions of spiritual transformation and religious renewal or resilience and community solidarity; however, many displays of sociality also serve to reinscribe and reiterate distinct ethnic identities in multicultural spaces. Increasing access to the internet even in the more territorially remote regions of Siberia has meant that displays of social, political, linguistic, national, and ethnic belonging may be expressed multimodally in new ways, and Siberians may now perform these identities through new media across space and time for very different audiences across Russia and beyond.

CONCEPTIONS OF HISTORY

Previously well-known English-language works on the history of Siberia include James Forsyth's *A History of the Peoples of Siberia: Russia's North Asian Colony 1581–1990* (1994), which comprehensively portrays 400 years of history in the region, and Yuri Slezkine's popular book entitled *Arctic Mirrors: Russia and the Small Peoples of the North* (1994), which is a historical account that sheds light on the contacts and interactions between the Russian state and Indigenous peoples

of Siberia and the North. While a comprehensive and illuminating history of these relationships, these authors do not engage with contemporary ethnographic material; therefore, in this volume, we stayed away from trying to replicate Forsyth's and Slezkine's histories comprehensive focus, and have instead honed in on more specific elements.

In this final section, we highlight scholars working on thematic issues in Siberia's history including environment, economics, art, and Indigenous social relations. Each chapter deals with interpretations of Siberian history or prehistory, and reinterpretations based on new information or new theoretical lenses. Contemporary approaches to history in Siberia are also shifting to incorporate both international perspectives and Indigenous voices. At the same time, historical work is moving from coverage of historical periods to an approach based on themes recurring across history. Sirina provides a comprehensive and updated history of ethnography in Siberia, while in the chapters by Sasaki and Qu, we see the reinterpretation of previous assumptions about hunter-gatherer and herder lifeways and religion, focusing on trade in the former case and religious practitioners in the latter. Lbova and Rostyazhenko reveal the deep roots of prestige economies in Siberia through material culture, while Abbe and Jones, focusing on seasonality, and Brandišauskas, on rock art, use these frames as lenses to explore trends in environmental history and historical trends in Siberian ethnography, respectively.

We begin this section with Sasaki's reexamination of the *santan* trade in the Amur River basin in the 18th and 19th centuries. Sasaki demonstrates that ancestors of the Indigenous people of this region benefited from trading goods originating in China and ending up in the Japanese-controlled Sakhalin. Some of these traders were quite well-off in fact, and Sasaki thus challenges Russia's image of the Far Eastern Indigenous peoples as "primitive" hunter-gatherers.

Lbova and Rostyazhenko take us into much earlier human history in the region with their examination of paleolithic objects from Siberia. They argue that a growing prestige economy was characteristic of egalitarian societies at that time. More than a mere system of signs, certain ritualistic artifacts reflected a growing power differentiation in ancient Siberian communities. This finding is similar to Sasaki's although with a much deeper time-frame.

Qu then looks at how the archaeological record can be used to trace the origins of shamanism in Siberia. Much of the literature debates various prehistoric elements that can be used to define shamanism, but rather than focusing on these definitional debates Qu takes the perspective of animist ontology. He argues that artifacts reflect the animist ontology of the population in general and hunters in particular, rather than the existence of shamanic religious leaders specifically.

Brandišauskas's chapter reviews the history of ideas, perceptions, and interpretations linked to ancient rock art in East Siberia. His chapter describes how Siberian rock art inspired generations of scholars who made inferences about the peoples that created these sites. Various analytical schemes fed into differing interpretations about the history of the region and activities of past inhabitants. Brandišauskas shows that these sites are continuing a source of ritual and cosmological inspiration for Siberian Indigenous people.

Sirina's chapter dives into the history of Siberian ethnography from the 18th through 20th centuries. Sirina discusses the influence of prominent ethnographic

expeditions, methodological and ethical considerations, and various theoretical and political influences on Siberian research. Sirina concludes by pointing out the enrichment of ideas that have occurred through international collaboration and exchange in the realm of Siberian studies.

To conclude this section, Abbe and Jones use the metaphor of the seasons to review the environmental history of Siberia. Their chapter examines climatic fluctuations alongside disruptive human events. Indigenous Siberian and imperial Russian colonization are viewed as mutual shapers of the region's environmental history being involved in the introduction of new animal species, infectious diseases, and decimation of fur-bearing animal populations. Abbe and Jones also look at how energy-intensive technologies including urban housing and central heating influence perception of the Siberian environment and how some people are looking to the Siberian past to reengineer the ecology.

CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

Relating to the environment

A number of chapters including those by Rakhmanova, Laptander, and Mamontova, Thornton, and Klyachko, demonstrate the importance of perceptions of the environment as relational meaning systems that incorporate unseen forces. Ecologists and conservationists tend to view human action on the landscape as a separate system that interacts with and obtains benefits from the environment (Mace, 2014). Ingold (2002) argues that this separation is characteristic of a Western “Cartesian” perspective which is also at the root of humanity's contemporary environmental dilemmas. Our case studies emphasize the social relationships expressed through language of place (cf. Krupnik et al. 2004). Elaboration of such Indigenous viewpoints is important to understanding the sustainability and flexibility of Indigenous Siberian socio-ecological systems.

Often described in binaries of “traditional” or “authentic” versus “modern,” several chapters deal with ecological knowledge or traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) in more nuanced ways, including those by Crate, Laptander, Lykkegård, Mertens, Novikova, and Oehler. These chapters reveal more complex approaches to the ways that resources are accessed and how such practices are re-negotiated in contemporary communities. These chapters connect the themes of perception of the environment, traditional ecological knowledge, kinship, cosmology, and social control.

A recent meta-analysis (FAO & FILAC, 2021) shows that real environmental outcomes, such as forest cover, for example, are better in Indigenous protected areas. The 2022 IPCC report states, “cooperation, and inclusive decision making, with local communities and Indigenous Peoples, as well as recognition of inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples, is integral to successful forest adaptation in many areas.” A US Forest Service report (Vinyeta & Lin, 2013) recommends incorporating Indigenous TEK into climate change adaptation planning, albeit with concerns for protecting sensitive or proprietary information and existing cultural preservation efforts. Excluding people from areas to protect wilderness is problematic almost everywhere, especially where Indigenous people have lived in interaction with the land for millennia (Fletcher, Hamilton, Dressler, & Palmer, 2021).

Looking more closely at the component concepts of TEK, the first, a tradition, is something learned and copied from ancestors. It's handed down. Ecological refers to relationships between living organisms and their environment, from ancient Greek οἶκος house, dwelling. It's the earlier meaning—dwelling—that inspired Tim Ingold's (2002) dwelling perspective that has had a lot of influence in the field as evidenced by many chapters in this volume, including those by Agapov, Davydova, Novikova, Peers, and Rakhmanova. Finally, the earliest uses of the term knowledge refer to acknowledging or owning something, confessing something, and sometimes recognizing a person's position or title. These now-obsolete meanings emphasize relationships—an important aspect of knowledge that modern usage often overlooks but that is especially important in the context of tradition and ecology. Combining these three definitions helps to generate a hypothesis for Indigenous TEK: deference for ancestral ways of dwelling (Ziker, 2022). As a way of promoting deference in communities, TEK is operationalized as a discourse, not an insurance policy for sustainability. People discuss the connections between dwelling in a place and their behavior and the behavior of the people they are connected to. While careful and insightful observations of the environment are necessary, more than that TEK helps define and promote virtuous behavior relative to that environment (Ziker, 2015).

These and other aspects of life in the North depend on an environmental ethic founded on TEK, specifically, the idea that the real owners of the resources (i.e., spirits and deceased ancestors) are watching and reacting to the behaviors of the living (Steadman & Palmer, 2008). These spirit owners both punish and reward. These ideas are expressed by elders and leaders within maxims, aphorisms, and discourse about events and others' behaviors. Examples can be found in chapters by Laptander, Bulgakova, Brandišauskas, Dudeck, Lykkegård, Sidorova, Novikova, and Oehler in this volume, as well as in Anderson (2000), Ziker (2002), Wiget and Balalaeva (2011). Such discourses commend virtuous and prosocial behavior while connecting negative outcomes with selfishness. The ability of the real owners to take action makes sense because of the invisible connections that people maintain with everything they touch. These connections can be traced in the spirit world. This ties together concepts of kinship, social relationships, religion, and environment. Inter-related concepts like these are not isolated to Siberia. Much work has been done examining the parallels between ancestral systems of deference in Siberia, Amazonia, North America, and other regions inhabited by Indigenous people (Brightman, Grotti, & Ulturgasheva, 2012).

Mobility and connection

Geographically it is not surprising that issues of mobility and movement are at the forefront of thematic focus when it comes to a region like Siberia; the vastness of the region combined with the challenging terrains and a history of nomadic lifestyles among many of the Indigenous peoples of the region make it a central theme that many researchers have tackled in recent years. The routes and paths of reindeer herders and their approaches to wayfinding in various parts of the region have long been an object of inquiry (see Dudeck, 2012; Istomin, 2020; Istomin & Dwyer, 2008, 2009; Leete, 1997; Safonova & Sántha, 2011; among others); rivers as connective routes too have been a focus as we will also see in chapters by Agapov,

Mamontova et al., and Vasilyeva in this volume. Work by Argounova-Low on the state of roads and roadlessness (in Russian—*bezdorozh'e*) in Sakha-Yakutia has covered their intersections with narratives (2012a) and driving (2012b, 2021), as well as the “autobiographies” of roads (Argounova-Low & Prisyazhnyi, 2016). Roads, as Siegelbaum (2008) has discussed in examining infrastructure construction in the Stalin era, are also an inherently political project; the inability to travel on roads, too, may provide locals with both frustration and a powerful sense of connection, as Orlova (2021) notes in her discussions of “affective infrastructure” (see also Knox, 2017).

These themes are most overt in the section on infrastructure and mobility, and an in-depth overview is provided above. Davydov’s chapter as well as that by Povoroznyuk and Schweitzer explore the impacts of new infrastructural projects on local communities’ existing patterns of mobility, and their everyday lives and abilities to be mobile in ways that they choose; reindeer herders (and their reindeer), for instance, may have very different requirements and preferences for mobility than a town dweller or oil and gas worker. It is also worth highlighting, again, the connections of mobility and politics; Saxinger et al.’s chapter reveals how “infrastructural violence” through the lack of attention from both politicians and corporations, impacts both physical and metaphorical kinds of mobility for the inhabitants of a small Siberian town; the inability to move—or have agency over one’s mobility—has profound impacts on quality of life. Winter travel is much different than that in summer, as Agapov’s chapter shows how the same river is both a winter ice-road and a venue for floating shops in summer; the ice-road phenomenon is a key focus for Vasilyeva who also reveals the dynamics of “infrastructural brokering” and access to these spaces.

Themes of connection—both in terms of literal connections created over vast distances, as well as more abstract senses of connection and belonging—also weave their way through many of the chapters that ask questions about what it is that brings people together. For instance, food as a source of connection arises in Davydova’s work—the convivial aspects of food are nearly always imbued with some amount of memory or nostalgia (Holtzman, 2006), and remembrances of how food “used to be” versus how it is now bring people together. In Kapustina’s chapter, foods “migrate” along with people from Dagestan as they arrive in Western Siberian oil towns, and lead to changes in the local food culture as well.

Language is perhaps the most fundamental domain of connection, being that it is literally the medium through which we can communicate our connections to others. Language revitalization projects, such as those discussed in Degai et al.’s chapter on Itelmen revitalization gatherings, create spaces in which participants work on central goals together: not only to revive but to reclaim language, and through these spaces often recreate and reify senses of cultural, ethnic or community belonging. In Grenoble et al.’s and Kantarovich’s chapters, language as a source of both individual and community well-being and connection is highlighted, even as language changes through the process of revitalization and reclamation. Language as vehicle of connection to the other-than-human world is revealed in Laptander’s work on women’s communication with fire in Nenets communities, and what language and naming tells us about the connection to land and water comes through in Mamontova et al.’s chapter discussing of hydronyms and movement on rivers in Evenki communities.

Religious practices connect people to each other, as well as to other beings and forces in the universe. Work on animist ontologies and the ways in which people and spirits interact in Siberia has been a central theoretical area of focus (see, among others, Brandišauskas, 2017; Vitebsky, 2005; Willerslev, 2007). Extensive work on Siberian shamanic traditions in particular has been conducted since the earliest ethnographers arrived in the region; some English-language volumes from the last 30 years that provide some overview include Balzer (1997), and Znamenski (2003). This volume engages with a multiplicity of kinds of connection with the spiritual world. Immediate connections between humans, and other-than-humans, as produced through rites, rituals and festivals are illuminated in the chapters by Dudeck on a variety of Siberian rituals and celebrations and Lykkegård on a rite in the Chukchi context; the strategies and methods for spiritual revival and connection—to ancestors, places, and spirits—emerge in the chapter by Sidorova on urban Sakha practices. The role of spirituality both ideologically and practically in creating a sense of national or ethnic connection and belonging emerges in Peers’ and Znamenski’s chapters as well (see also Balzer, 2012), linking as well to themes of change and adaptation that are explored in the following section.

Adaptation and change

Colonization first under the Russian Empire and then the Soviet Union (continuing through its successor state, the Russian Federation) has had immeasurable impacts on the lives of Indigenous peoples in Siberia, in every possible way: from language and religion, to political, legal and economic systems and subsistence strategies. It is the ability to adapt to changing conditions—be they environmental, political, or cultural—that helps ensure both community and individual survival; themes of adaptation are found in nearly all of the chapters, to a greater or lesser degree. Many of the pieces also engage with the efforts of many communities to revitalize cultural traditions that have been lost (or pushed underground) over the Soviet period (or earlier), revealing the dynamism and intentional action present in across the region to reclaim and reconfigure these elements to better serve their communities into a future that may often appear uncertain.

However, in the face of change, we also often find that there are also tensions that surface between desires to “return” to a past versus engage in cultural transformation; there is always a complex relationship between sameness and difference, the old and the new within cultural domains. This arises even in cultural forms like language where dynamism and change are also acknowledged as normal, characteristic processes; however, linguistic ideological debates are always present among speakers. We see this, for instance, in Kantarovich’s examination of the use of Modern Chukchi in contemporary use; concerted efforts to revitalize the language, combined with contact-induced change via Russian, have led to a new form of the language becoming prevalent. As noted in other linguistic ethnographies in Siberia—e.g., Ferguson (2019) on Sakha, Graber (2020) on Buryat—new, “mixed” varieties sometimes may be officially critiqued for their changes and departures from older, “more authentic” forms. Nevertheless these new varieties or registers of a language are vital to continued use of the language. Grenoble et al.’s and Degai et al.’s also engage with themes of change more indirectly as they focus on the importance of revitalization

movements to cultural continuity and community well-being, themes also echoed in King's (2011) ethnography of Koryak negotiations of language and cultural revitalization in Kamchatka.

Many of these facets related to change arise within the section on Religious Mosaics. Contributing to Siberia-focused literature on religious dynamism, conversions, revitalization and change in the post-Soviet era in English (see also Balzer, 2012, 2022a; Bulgakova, 2009, 2013; Halemba, 2006, 2008, 2014; Peers, 2015, 2016; Peers & Kolodeznikova, 2015; Vagramenko, 2017, 2018a, 2018b; Vallikivi, 2009, 2014; among many others) are those chapters by Brandišauskas, Bulgakova, Peers, Qu, Sidorova, and Vallikivi. One key theme that recurs in cultural revitalization generally (not only in spiritual movements) is the attempt to capture what is “authentic” about the past practice and imbue that authenticity into the current and future iterations; while not always a central question, it often hovers around many such attempts. Bulgakova too addresses the tensions in the changing shamanic practices in a Nanai community, showing that it is less of a contrast between the “neo” and the “traditional,” but between those considered “real” and “fake,” thus complicating the expected dichotomies of the “new” being less authentic. Religious change also has ripples in other societal spheres; Vallikivi's chapter on Nenets conversions to Evangelical Christianity shows how changes in spirituality do not only involve religious practices, but can also transform interlinking cultural practices like language and political relations with a state.

Sidorova's and Peers' chapters both bring us case studies from Sakha religious revitalization movements, revealing different aspects of the intersections between spiritual revival and post-Soviet politics as well. And, like Balzer, who has written on various spiritual and political movements in Buryatia, Sakha-Yakutia, and Tyva, Peers' examination of the Sakha Yhyakh festival weaves together the dynamics of revitalization of national identity via the reclamation and reinvention of spiritual and cultural practices. Updating Humphrey's (1999) work on Buryatia with a case study from another region, Sidorova's ethnographic piece profiles how several citizens of Yakutsk, the capital of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia) are bringing diverse spiritual practices to other urbanites as they strive to reinvigorate and interpret the shamanic practices of rural ancestors.

Two other chapters also provide more “archaeological” approaches to spiritual persistence and changes over time; Brandišauskas's paper on changing interpretations of ancient rock reveal how ostensibly spiritual objects created hundreds or thousands of years ago remain cosmologically and ritually relevant (even if their original purposes may remain speculative). In examining the archaeological materials for elements of shamanism, Qu argues that despite centuries of change, much stays the same—we can find traces of animist ontologies existing in Siberia throughout the archaeological record.

Moving into the domain of ecology and cultural change, Abbe and Jones, Crate, Davydova, Oehler, Takakura, Terekhina and Volkovitskiy, and Ventsel all examine aspects of change and adaptation in light of how humans relate to their environments, in ways that range from environmental histories to ethnographic case studies. In two of the chapters, we have a long-view and a more compressed-view of Sakha herding for comparison; Takakura reveals a view of ecological adaptation through the migrations and adaptations of Sakha people over centuries, while Crate examines more rapid

changes due to increasing urbanization in the post-Soviet years. Flexibility has been a key survival strategy for communities in Siberia throughout history. As Takakura reveals, Sakha pastoralism shifted from being horse-dominant to cow-dominant as Sakha moved into their current locations and became more settled (as opposed to nomadic); another comparison can be viewed in Oehler's ethnographic work, which reveals similar adaptations among Soiot communities, who herd different animals depending on terrain and altitude. Abbe and Jones provide a broad environmental history of changes due to both climate shifts and sociopolitical events and policies, while Ventsel looks at intersections of economics and subsistence hunting within an ethnographic case study, looking at shifts to how changes to big-game hunting legislation have led to fewer hunters and more fishing in a Dolgan-Evenki community. Related to subsistence methods are the food practices of Davydova's chapter, as she details the food nostalgia as well as food transformations in a Chukotka community.

As we have noted in the section above detailing the chapters in the section Land, Law and Ecology, numerous parts of Siberia are experiencing an acceleration of climatic changes connected with the melting of permafrost and its impacts on the atmosphere. This has led many communities to reconsider the ways in which they engage with the environment, whether through hunting, fishing, gathering, and/or herding, and work to both anticipate and mitigate the kinds of drastic changes that they are experiencing. Terekhina and Volkovitskiy highlight how discourses around climate change also shape how Nenets herders describe their experiences with environments and landscapes, and how their comments reveal differing ideological explanations for the changes—this is an important contribution to worldwide Indigenous-focused research on climate change and ideology (see also Marino and Schweitzer, 2015, and Marino, 2015 for work in Alaska), and how connections to place may influence how climate change is viewed and discussed (cf. Devine-Wright et al., 2015 on Australian attitudes).

THE FUTURE OF SIBERIAN STUDIES (SIBERIAN ETHNOGRAPHY)

Ethnographic studies in Siberia are shifting to incorporate multiple perspectives and Indigenous voices following trends across the field of Anthropology. Incorporating Indigenous voices is the entry level for knowledge co-production. More authentic and deeper knowledge collaborations in which Indigenous peoples are involved in the design, data collection, and dissemination of findings are on the horizon. At least one of the contributions to this volume (Mamontova et al.) demonstrates a relatively high level of co-production of knowledge. Degai et al.'s chapter (this volume) on Itelmen community language planning in Kamchatka also shows similar integration. The lead author, Degai, is a community member and works with fellow members as well as linguists and anthropologists from multiple institutions on such projects. Knowledge co-production is enriching and necessary for scholarly disciplines as it allows for more relevant application of methods and theory to problems faced by local populations, especially as they face climate change and industrial development. There is demand for applied anthropological work in Russia already. Russian ethnographers are often hired to produce "ethnographic expertise" studies that are required alongside proposals for industrial development projects that provide assessments of impacts on local cultures and ways of life. Knowledge co-production can help in

efforts to sustain and revitalize Indigenous and other small-scale cultures across the Siberian World.

Another trend we identified is that scholarship in Siberia is moving away from periods to themes across periods. Ethnography in Russia developed as a subdiscipline of History, and the legacy of that has been a focus on practices in the past. Now, scholars in Russia are moving to integrate ethnography with anthropology, sociology and history with a focus on thematic issues such as infrastructure and mobility, social networks, language revitalization, interactions with the state.

Anthropological and ethnographic studies of Siberia are currently undergoing significant disciplinary transformations (Vakhtin, 2020: 60). Modern science requires new methods of research, as well as ways of making the results public and publishing the data obtained given human subjects considerations. Ethnography itself, which used to be associated more with the past, is becoming more and more clearly the science of the future (Golovnev, 2021). At present, the visualization and popularization of knowledge has great importance. Contemporary projects devoted to the study of heritage of the Indigenous peoples of Siberia are increasingly “revisiting” classical forms, such as atlases and encyclopedias (Davydov & Yarzutkina, 2021). These platforms are being made in an interactive way, designed to interact with audiences and consumers of these products. Key to the success of such interactive projects is the reaction of representatives of the Siberian Indigenous communities and the integration of their vision into the process of production and publication of knowledge about the studied groups. An example is the recent project launched in 2021 to create an interactive atlas of Indigenous peoples of Siberia, which is supposed to be a multi-level database on their life and culture (Rector of the Russian State University for the Humanities, 2021). Atlases and encyclopedias played a significant place in the history of Siberian studies (see Levin & Potapov, 1956, 1961, 1964). However, encyclopedic works, dictionaries, and generalizing publications require new forms. Anthropological science itself is very adaptive, and due to social, technological, and methodological shifts, it is regularly updated within the framework of different concepts and schools (Golovnev, 2021). Contemporary projects concentrate more on a dynamic, not static perspective.

In terms of specific themes, further work on interaction between Indigenous and minority groups and the state will continue to be relevant as policies change at the national level. For instance, regarding Indigenous and regional minority languages, policy changes recently occurred at the constitutional level that impacted the ability to include mandatory language classes in languages other than Russian. Building on already declining federal support for linguistic diversity in education (Zamyatin, 2012), the Federal Law No. FZ-273 “On Education in the Russian Federation” reduced the number of hours the languages are taught in schools, and forbid Republics from making minority language courses mandatory even if they are co-official languages; they must remain “voluntary.” This makes it very easy to eliminate these courses altogether. Concern arose in many of the Republics of the Federation, with many feeling that this restriction on minority language instruction was merely a first step in further cultural assimilation of non-Russian ethnic groups after a period of relatively greater self-determination (see Zamyatin, 2018).

The increasing prevalence of federal ethnonationalism (see Kolstø, 2016) permeating the discursive sphere in Russia’s current political situation brings up questions on

the status of Indigenous and minority peoples that is highly relevant to the Siberian context. Concerns about expressing self-determination and critiquing federal power have surfaced more and more often in recent years. Many scholars are troubled with the current political situation in Russia and openly criticize the actions of Russia in the Ukraine. Questions about working in Siberia for international scholars, even those with ongoing projects, remain open for the near future. Balzer (2022b) (also see Arakchaa to appear) has pointed to the repression of protesters, like the Sakha “warrior-shaman” Alexander Gabyshev. A major challenge for the future development of the Siberian studies would be the lack of collaboration between Russian and Western scholars, as well as the lack of international public events in Russia leading to politicization of science and a split within the academic community. In this context, the research of social networks and web-ethnography will be one of the possible options.

As discussed in chapters in this volume (Fondahl et al.; Novikova), customary laws and culturally-specific social norms—often termed “legal orders” by Canadian Cree Indigenous scholar Val Napoleon (2007)—continue to be important in the sustainable livelihoods in Siberia. Formal laws continue to be negotiated and invoked to protect traditional lands and activities but in some contexts they are used in a different way. More research is needed on how customary laws can be worked into existing formal laws at the local, regional, and federal levels, and how the Russian legal system is open to these key changes. Further to this, work on decision making within communities who seek opportunities for industrial development is also crucial, and likely to be increasingly relevant, alongside assessments of changing patterns in demographics and modes of sustenance as Siberians respond to the ongoing challenges both in rural and urban settings. Change to sustenance and livelihoods are of course intertwined with climate change, and must be assessed holistically and in light of unprecedented and unpredictable environmental impacts and changes.

In terms of everyday life and livelihoods, continued research on this ever-changing sphere will be relevant as infrastructure develops and new technologies are introduced that shift the kinds of mobility and connections Siberians have access to. Zuev and Habeck (2019: 80) note that access to many kinds of transport as well as technological infrastructure is not equally available across Siberia, and of course not comparable between larger regional centers and small villages in any given region: “These disparities not only affect the daily running of people’s lives, but also strongly influence the ways in which communities and individuals frame their past, their current existence, and their aspirations.” Many of the themes in this volume, noted in previous sections, will need further longitudinal study. For instance, informal social relations and economic ties are going to continue to be important for Indigenous peoples living in remote settings as well as their relatives and friends living in urban areas. How does an increased ability to travel physically—as well as community by mobile phone or online—shape these relationships and ties? How do these ties operate both between locations in Siberia, as well as beyond to other parts of Russia and the world, as more and more migration happens to industrialized areas of this region (as Kapustina’s chapter in this volume reveals)? Alongside increased mobility and connection there is the development of tourism in Siberia, both geared toward Siberians themselves traveling as well as outsiders from other parts of Russia coming to explore for themselves; the role of leisure and travel in contemporary Siberia is a productive space for further work, building on discussions such as those by Broz

and Habeck (2019) and Zuev (2012, 2013), the latter of whom looks at online-based networks and practices such as Couchsurfing.

Another theme for further exploration is the role of local and national museums, archives, and private collections. Beginning in the 18th century, Siberian collections became an integral part of national museum collections, such as the *Kunstkamera* and The Russian Museum of Ethnography in St. Petersburg. Numerous explorers of Siberia brought valuable notes, maps, drawings, photographs to Russian cities, and these later became partly redistributed back to central and local museums and archives. In addition, village-level and regional museums had their own programs of museification of traditional Siberian cultures (Stammmler, 2005; Turin, 2011). There is a rich opportunity for future scholarship on the way different kinds of Siberian materials were collected, redistributed and represented in museums and archives at different administrative levels. These collections also played a role in the elaboration of the scientific concepts for Siberian ethnography and anthropology as well as government programs (Anderson, 2011; Anderson et al., 2013). These materials are being integrated into a process of Indigenous representation and revitalization today. In this sense, future investigations could examine the process by which material objects and documents, brought from Siberia, became the main source for building ideas and discourses.

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