

Humans and animals on northern Yamal: uncovering unknown patterns of movement and settlement

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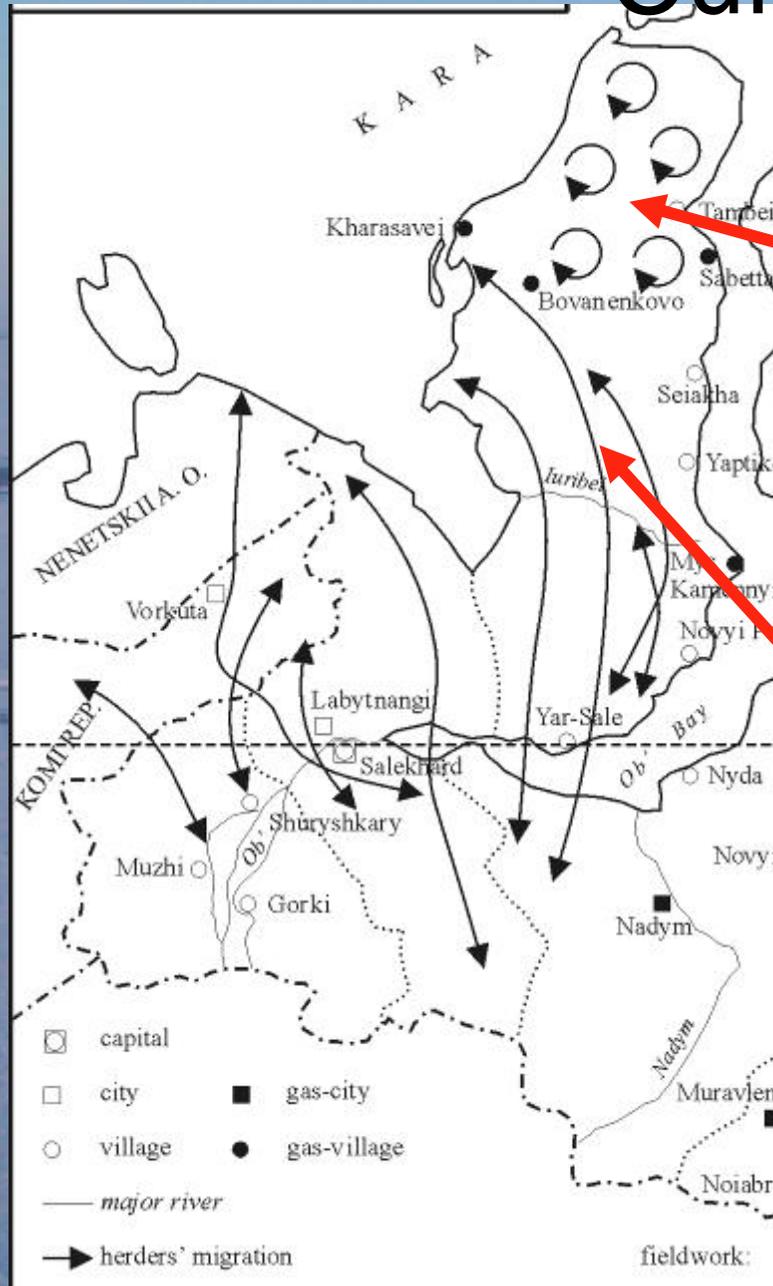
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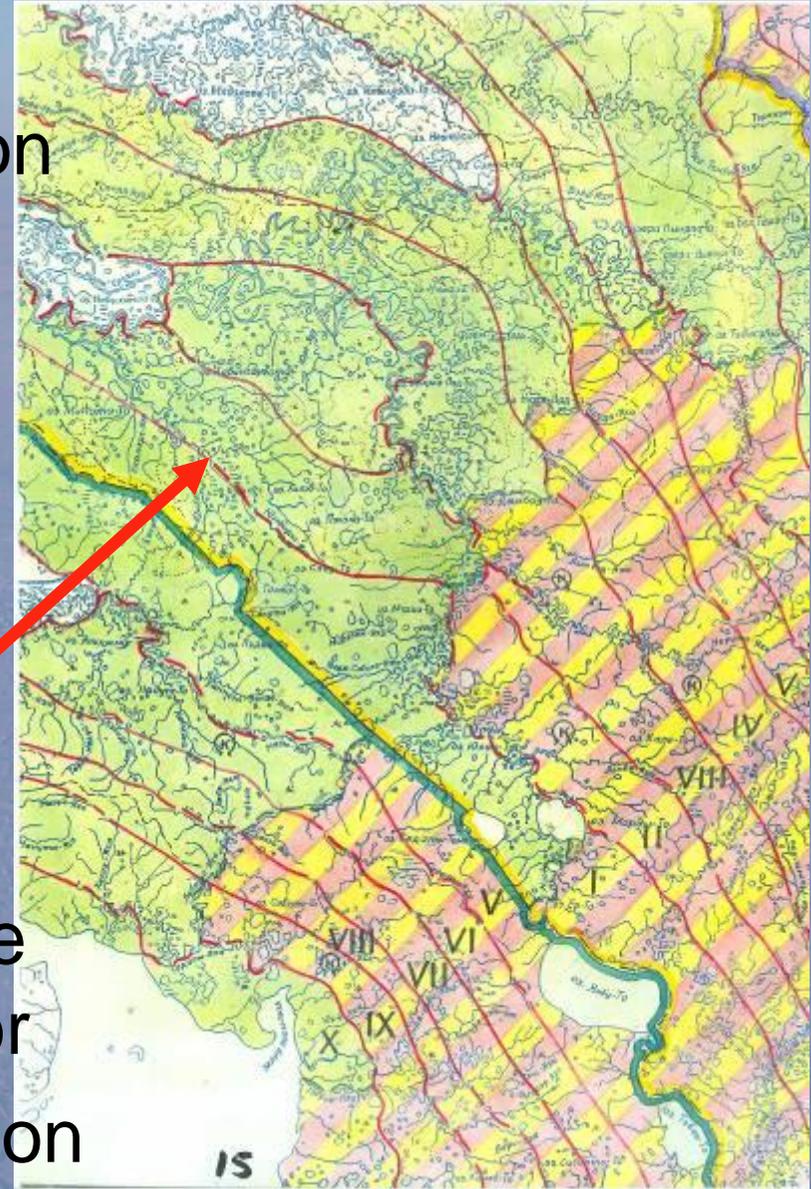
Abstract

Our knowledge of human interaction with the environment on Yamal has significantly improved over the last 10 years, which brings us in a better position to assess consequences of ongoing industrial development on the peninsula. However, too much focus has been on the region around the biggest gas deposits (Bovanenkovo, Kharasavei), and on those reindeer herders with long migration corridors leading from the forest to the shore of the Kara Sea and back. In the northernmost half of the Yamal Peninsula, a different pattern of movement prevails, which has been surprisingly robust since the beginning of the 20th century. This presentation gives an overview of recent changes in the regions between White island in the North and the Se-Yakha river. In recent years, this northernmost part of the Peninsula has seen the bankruptcy and re-establishment of a state enterprise, the demise of the hunting economy and the re-organisation of private reindeer herding units, but also spiritual perturbations such as US-financed missionary activities. Recent fieldwork allows us to assess tundra-dwellers' views of such changes and relate this material to future industrial development plans in the area.

Current land use patterns



Local
migration
North
Yamal



North-
south
pasture
corridor
migration

North Yamal Peninsula

- Formerly known as territory of “sovkhoz Yamal’skii”
- Mainly private herding units (even in Soviet Union). Herding brigades occupy minor part of overall territory
- 100 private herder families, 8 brigades, total ~50000 reindeer



Northern Yamal Livelihood

- Migrating with reindeer but not that time-intensive, distance ~100 km /year
- Fishing, hunting, sea-mammal hunting with a long and continuing tradition
- Living with multiple animals:
 - bird hunting: geese, seagulls, ptarmigan.
 - Hunting: wild reindeer, polar fox, snow-hare.
 - Fishing: Omul, Koriushka, (Muksun, Nel'ma).
 - Sea mammals: Nerpa, morskoi zaets.
 - Living with: reindeer, dogs, polar bear, ahma



Historical developments:

“Yamal is 20 years behind Yar-Sale”

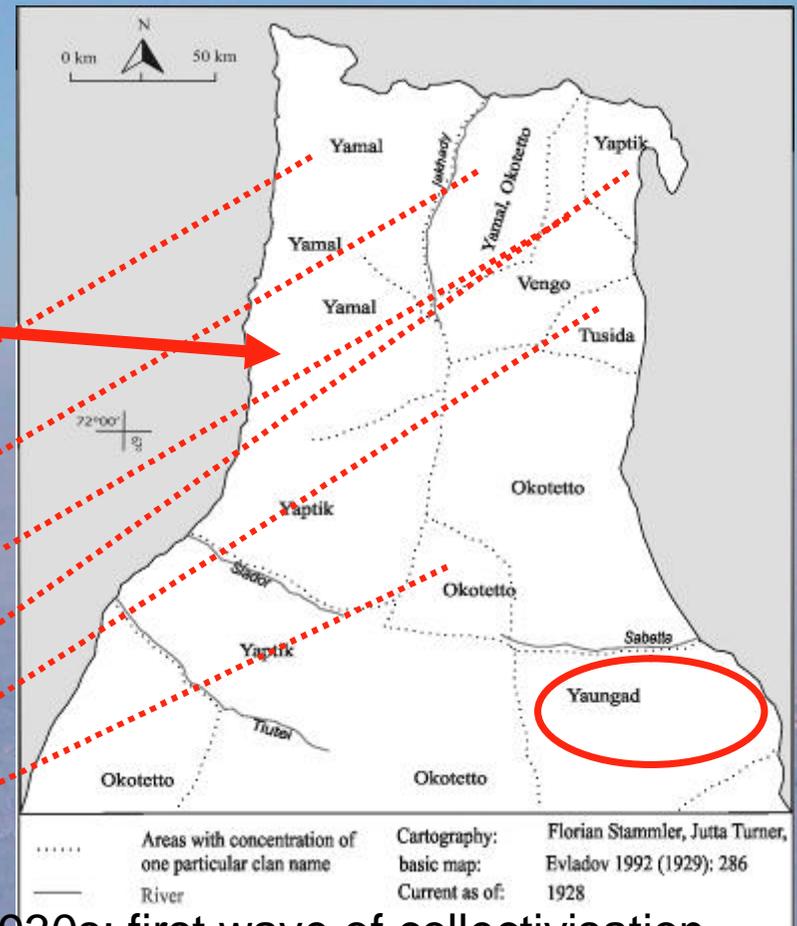
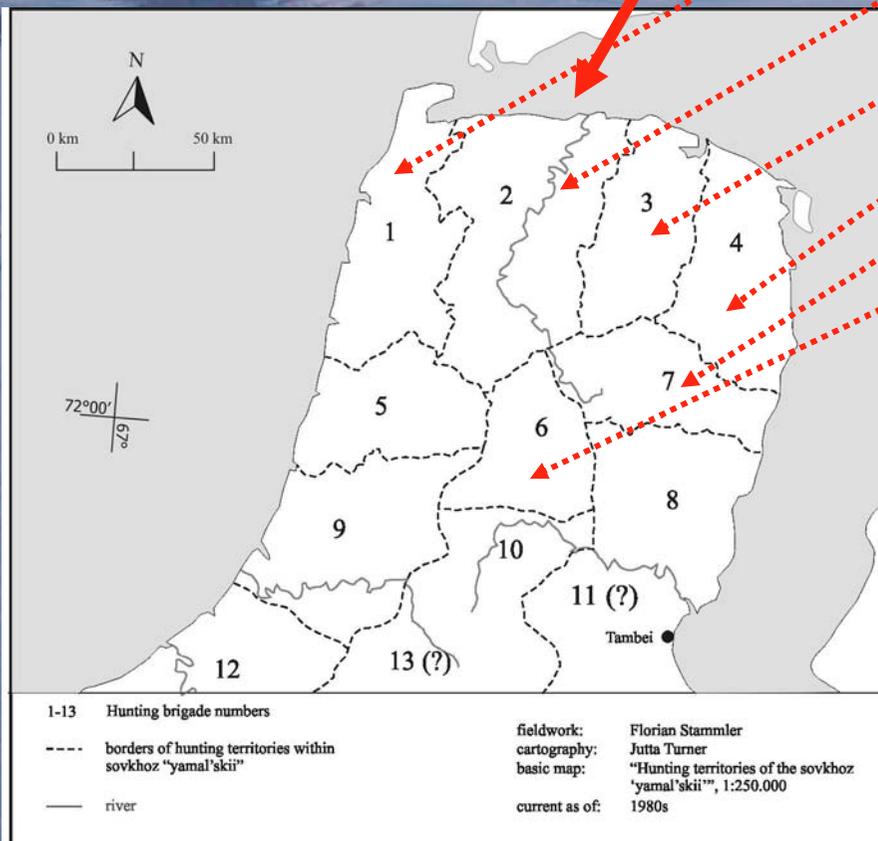
- Land use – continuity!
- Organisations – from private to cooperative to sovkhos and back!
- Livelihood – from hunters to herders & virtual & unemployed hunters
- Technological – from seal boots to satphone
- Political – from Tsarism to SU to corporate statehood
- Religious – from Shamanism to Orthodoxy, atheism, baptism or all of those



North Yamal: 1929 – 1980s

Distribution of North Yamal Clans, Evladov 1929:286

Soviet hunting brigades of sovkhos Yamal'skii, as of 1980s



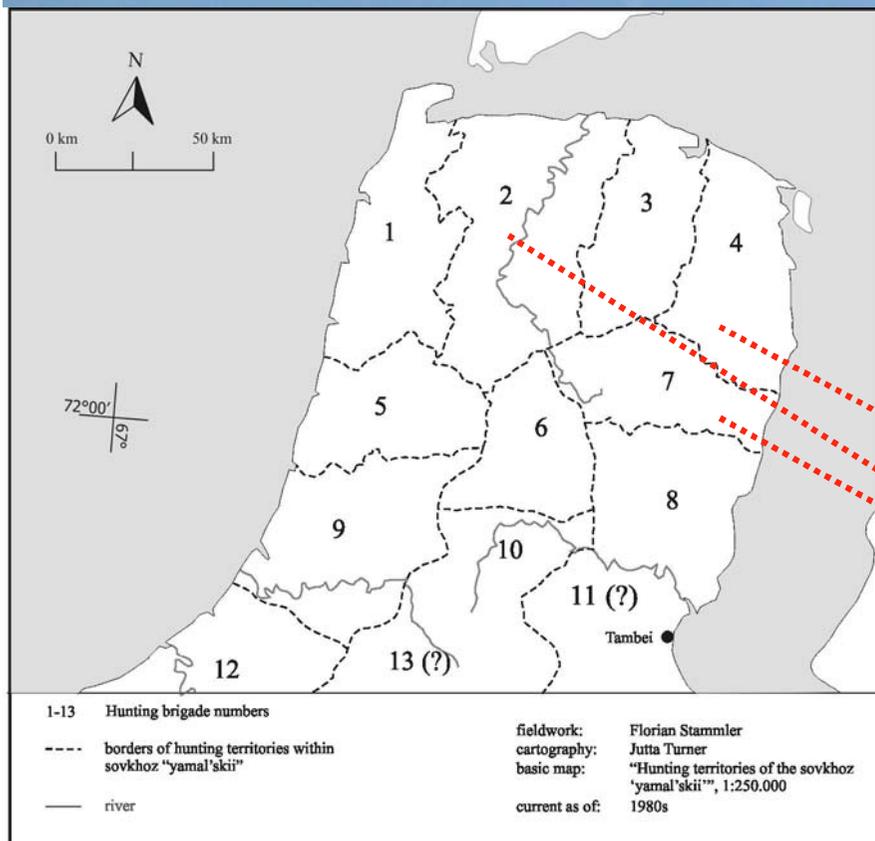
Early 1930s: first wave of collectivisation

1961: all collective farms became soviet state farms (sovkhos), border of North Yamal closed.

Note the parallels:

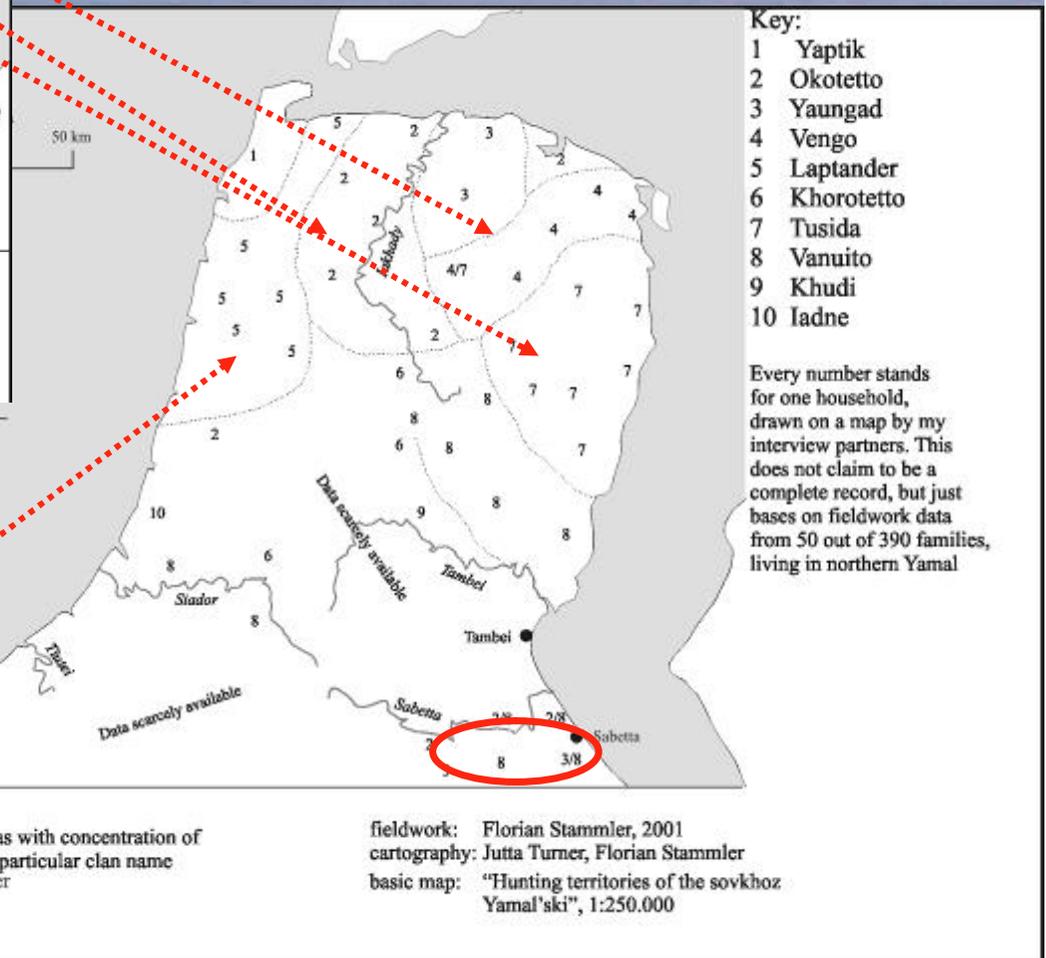
1 – Yamal, 2 – Yamal/Okotetto, 3 – Vengo
 4 – Yaptik/Vengo, 6 – Okotetto, 7 - Tusida

North Yamal, 1980 - 2001



Own fieldwork, 2001: land use pattern very similar. Clan continuity, e.g. Okotetto / Yamal, Tusida, Vengo.

Change: presence of Laptander (no 5). Immigrated from Europe



© Angarskoe zemleustroitel'noe predpriatie
2009

Land use, 2009

MOP still the only official land user

Factual users:

1. MOP Yamal'skii
2. Sokh Yamal Ltd
3. Valama Ltd
4. Obshina Ilebts
5. Obshina Tusida
6. Private herders/fishermen



Organisations:

- Pre-Soviet: all private
 - Early Soviet: 'artel' – temporary cooperatives
 - Kolkhoz: 3-4 different ones, Tambei as municipal centre, Drovyanoi important trading and military post.
 - Sovkhoz: unified umbrella, border enforced – conflict potential around Nei-to lakes
 - Late 1990s: first private herding companies (sokh, nesei)
 - 2001: first obshina (Nesei-successor, Stammner 2005b)
 - 2006 sovkhos bankrupt, thoughts about 'obshinisation' like Sakha example
 - 2009 Kometos slaughterhouse as branch of Yar-Sale municipal company
 - & re-established sovkhos as municipal company (same format as Yar-Sale)
 - 2010 Significant number of reindeer herders still not under any institutional umbrella
- **from private to cooperative to sovkhos and back**

Livelihood up to 2010



- Pre-Nenets Sikhirtia: underground housing, coastal sea mammal hunters
- First-Nenets hunters and fishermen with domestic reindeer
- 20 th century: Large scale reindeer herders, hunting brigades
2001: hardly functioning sovkhos herding, 'virtual hunters' (de-facto fishermen with proper herds), antler business
- 2010: basic municipal herding, large scale private herding & fishermen. 'Virtual hunters' now unemployed de-facto fishermen-herders-hunters

Wild/domestic deer coexistence

- ~ 3000 wild reindeer, white island, population slightly increasing
- Now reaching south down to approx. Sabetta, migration in spring (northwards) & autumn
- Mixing with domestic deer – white, sprinkled deer appeared
- No systematic planned hunting, but subsistence, separating
- No deer loss to wolves – too many imported snowmobiles!
- Every tundra person has experience with both variations of rangifer tarandus (some with training!)
- So far no perception of resource competition between domestic and wild - coexistence possible



Technological innovations

- Early 20th century: cerosine lamp, stove
- After WWII: rubber boots
- End 1960s: radio-connection
- Late 1970s: snow mobile (soviet)
- Mid 1990s: imported snow mobile, electricity TV in tundra,
- Early 21st cent.: GPS, satphone, mob phone
- 2010: DVD, Satellite Dishes, washing machine, diesel stove



ORHELIA

(ORal History of Empire by ELders In the Arctic)

- History told through the biographies of elders
- Focusing on events relevant for tundra dwellers
- Describing the coming and the going of one of the world's mightiest Empires
- Multiple local expressions



Religious change

- From animism to baptism
- Prosecution of shamans
- State atheism
- ‘dynamic syncretism’
- Baptist missionaries (US, France, Germany financed)



How could North Yamal look like in 2030?



- Tundra densely populated
- Nomads organised in obshiny
- 1/4 of tundra population baptists
- Exporting meat to the West and for gas workers (instead eating imported food)
- Heating with gas stoves in winter, driving snowmobiles for herding
- Reindeer clothing, chum, and transport in summer prevail

- Gas & condensate deposits developed
- Incomer population at Drovynoi, Sabetta, Kharasavei, Bovanenkovo
- Elevated pipelines, LNG plant, tanker traffic disturbing fish

Mainly intra-national marriage patterns