

Abstract

Based on research in Chukotka, Russian Far East, this thesis focuses on the contemporary predicaments of native sports, public festivals, language practices, and marine mammal subsistence in the communities of Sireniki and Lorino. Through a social-historical contextualization of ethnographic data, it explores possible reasons for the differences found to exist between those villages. In the years of the post-Soviet transition, Lorino emerged as a vivacious community where successful sea-mammal hunters formed the core of its social and cultural hearth. At the time the research was conducted, this characterization appeared in a striking contrast to Sireniki, known to have been a model community in the late Soviet era.

This work attempts to explain how Lorino and Sireniki got to where they are today. The insights gained from ethnographic fieldwork and library materials points to the legacy of the Soviet state-induced relocations, post-Soviet reorganization of sea mammal hunting, cultural history, and local leadership patterns. Examined in a comparative light, this constellation of factors helps understand how differently Lorino and Sireniki have developed since the end of the Soviet Union.