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Analysing Non-Existent and Existing Tourisms in Eastern Siberia among the Evenki, Even, Koryak and Itelmen

Analyse du tourisme inexistant et existant en Sibérie orientale chez les Evenki, Even, Koryak et Itelmen

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- 1 Siberia has fascinated people for centuries, but it is difficult to access due to the lack of transport, language barriers, the absence of many services or comforts westerners are used to, visa issues, etc.
- 2 Native Siberian villagers, hunters, fishermen, horse breeders and reindeer herders have often struggled to find enough income for basic food and goods after the collapse of the Soviet Union. From Lavrillier's fieldwork in 1994, natives designated tourism (which still does not exist there) as a desired source of income. She was contacted by tourist agencies in France to develop tourism in the 1990s, but as a classical anthropologist, she perceived tourism as a threat to local cultures and values. Moreover, as an anthropologist, one feels how important a burden is for nomads to deal with only one foreigner in this dangerous world. So, how can they cope with groups of tourists?
- 3 In Eastern Siberia, traditional hospitality is often exploited by "wild tourists" (a local expression for *backpackers*) or research groups arriving without food. Siberians usually enjoy all meetings with foreigners, hoping that westerners discover them in reality rather than relying on stereotypes.
- 4 The *Russian Federation's Official Plan for Economic Development to 2030* (RFOPED) includes the growth of tourism, with the opening of special taskforces in local ministries and administrations, like in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) [Totonova 2016]. So, various

types of tourism are under development or are likely to be developed soon in Siberia¹. This raises recurrent questions in the anthropology of tourism: will the development of ethno-/eco-tourism(s) in Siberia be a real plus for indigenous peoples? What level of control will the natives wield? What will the socio-economic and cultural impacts on these local communities be? What forms of tourism would be beneficial for natives? What perceptions do Siberian natives have of tourism? This paper will exclusively take the point of view of natives, and not that of tourists.

- 5 Despite its huge size, there is currently little tourism in Siberia. These experiences are unevenly distributed between regions without tourism (like southern Yakutia and the northern Amur region) and regions already experiencing intensive ethno/eco-tourism, some based on Soviet foundations (Kamchatka, Baikal) and recent initiatives (like Yamal).
- 6 This paper compares non-existent and existing tourisms. It first analyses non-existent tourism – tourism as it is imagined or desired in Yakutia and the Amur region (Yakutia and Amur) by townspeople, villagers or nomads. Then, it investigates case studies of existing tourism involving natives in Kamchatka and the socio-economic, cultural and religious effects. We then share the results of our collective comparison of existing and non-existent tourisms on the socio-economic, cultural and administrative levels.
- 7 This paper is based mostly on field materials gathered thanks to two methods. The first consists of participatory fieldwork led in the winter and summer by native co-researchers (authors 2 to 4) and an anthropologist (author 1) through 38 semi-structured/open interviews of both settled and nomadic men/women (25-75 years old, all socio-economic categories) (mostly Evenki) in southern Yakutia and Amur (2012, 2015, 2016). On this basis, we collectively generated hypotheses. The second consists of classical anthropology participant observation and 32 semi-structured interviews of both settled and nomadic men/women (15-75 years old, all socio-economic categories). These were partly conducted in Even, which we transcribed and translated with native speakers, notably author 5, in southern Kamchatka in summer 2010 (author 1), along with additional information (author 5).

Co-analysing non-existent tourism

- 8 The Evenki of Yakutia and Amur are reindeer herders and hunters, who from 1935 were divided by a regional frontier and regional policies. To assess Evenki views about tourism, we worked with nomads, villagers and townspeople. Thinking about the feasibility of tourism development, we chose groups living along the Baikal-Amur Railway (BAM) in Subarctic Siberia, within the continuous permafrost zone with <-40°C winters (Map I).
- 9 In Yakutia and Amur, we worked in villages that vary in terms of their proximity to main towns and their relationship with nomads. We asked interviewees about their perception of tourism and how they would (not) implement it at home.

Map 1: Locations of the case studies

Locations of the case studies in *Analysing Non-Existent and Existing Tourisms in Eastern Siberia among the Evenki, Even, Koryak and Itelmen* (Lavrillier A., S. Gabyshev, L. Egorova, G. Makarova, M. Lomovtseva-Adunakov)



The map is intentionally non-specific and lacking in detail in order to respect the justified concerns of the indigenous authors and communities, who to do not want “wild” tourists and other foreign visitors to come without making a prior agreement.

Towns

- 10 Nerungri (Yakutia), founded in the 1970s on the best Evenki reindeer pastures in the middle of the forest, is a main stop on the BAM [Lavrillier, 2005]. Today, it has 57,791 inhabitants, a university, a professional school, a leisure park, a ski slope, a museum and several schools, including one for indigenous youngsters (Pic. 1). There is a giant open coal pit and many gold mines. In the 2010s, the mega-projects of the Eastern Siberia-Pacific Ocean oil pipeline and the Power of Siberia gas pipeline (the largest gas transmission system in Russia’s east) scarred the landscape. The majority of the population are Russian/Slavic individuals: a Yakut population appeared in the 2000s, and there are few Evenki newcomers.
- 11 In the neighbouring Amur, surrounded by the taiga, Tynda has 33,450 inhabitants. It is the “main town on the BAM”, constructed in the 1970s. The railway and many gold and titanium mines support the town’s economy. There is a museum, a leisure park, schools, kindergartens, a university, a technical school and a ski slope. The majority of the population are Russians/Slavic peoples, with a very small Evenki intelligentsia.
- 12 The interviewed Evenki townspeople (teachers, engineers, workers with nomadic experience) are sceptical about tourism development: nonetheless, they recognize that there would be a lot to show to “extreme tourists” (their expression) (alpinism, fishing, hunting). All argue that Evenki villages lack attractions, even the groups of traditional dancers. Some emphasize natural heritage (mountains, forests, berries, mushrooms, animals). Most believe that nomadic culture cannot attract tourists, while a few think that this lifestyle and nature definitely could bring tourists. They all stress the absence of the investment, infrastructure and services expected by tourists, and exclude

Russian tourists (mostly attracted by leisure/health tourism in warm countries) as potential clients.

Picture 1: the town of Neryungri.



© A. Lavrillier, 2015

Villages

- 13 We identified three types from Evenki villages we visited in relation to the challenge of developing tourism.
- 14 1) Villages on the edge of a big town that no longer practice the traditional lifestyle: Pervomaiskoe. Historically Evenki (in terms of native population and reindeer herding/hunting), due to the BAM railway (1970s), it now has 701 inhabitants, including only 197 Evenki. Ten km from Tynda, there is a school-kindergarten, a house of culture (Pic. 2) two shops, wooden houses and a leisure area for children. A coal-fired plant provides heating; all the houses have tap water. The school includes a space for a traditional sewing shop and other handicrafts. Around 20 minutes from the village, there is a tourist centre in the forest called the “Evenki Village”, administrated by Tynda’s municipality (Pic. 3). This base was built in 2010-2011 with 27 million rubles from the RFOPED. It was designed to support the development of leisure and tourism: close to a river, there is a sauna, wooden houses, traditional Evenki edifices, a conference room, and a small ethnic museum. A nomad herded some reindeer there (a central animal in the Evenki worldview and very attractive to local tourists), but they were unable to survive without proper pastures. Although some Evenki were paid to set up traditional edifices, all the employees are Russians.
- 15 The opinion of native villagers (educators, the unemployed) about this state-established centre varies. Some consider it is good for tourism development, but badly

managed; others see it as unattractive for tourists (almost none come), but very good for Evenki meetings (neo-rituals, handicrafts), notably between the Evenki of China and Russia. It is also believed that spirits fill this place.

- 16 Most Evenki think that tourism cannot be developed in Pervomaiskoe, because there is “nothing to attract tourists, neither Evenki culture nor beautiful wild nature. We have lost our culture and language, along with interest in them.” We suggest that these Evenki do not believe in tourism since they have lost hope in economic development in general.

Picture 2: Pervomaiskoe – the house of culture



© S. Gabyshev, 2015

Pictures 3: “The Evenki Village” traditional tent with ritual offerings.



© A. Lavrillier 2015

- 17 2) Villages relatively close to a big town that still practice the traditional lifestyle: Iengra. With 855 Evenki from a total population of 1,047 inhabitants, it is closely tied to

reindeer herding and the nearby town of Nerungri. The village has a modern ethno-cultural centre with a museum, a music school, a large boarding school complex and an outdoor space for children. A coal-fired plant provides heating: all houses have tap water. Many gold mines surround the village and the nomadic camps.

- 18 All the interviewees (administrative workers, former nomads, firemen, teachers, geologists, veterinarians, the unemployed) are enthusiastic about the idea of tourism development. For them, the village and nomadic camps could interest tourists, providing activities like fishing, hunting, gathering, camping, observation of the flora and fauna, reindeer herding culture, nomadic stories, reindeer riding, handicrafts and rituals. It would not require special structures because the camps are close to the village. To them, tourism could benefit native society through the economy and cultural conservation. Dances and rituals performed for tourists by the youth could strengthen the latter's interest in native culture and identity. Van den Berghe [1994] observed such consequences in Mexico. However, to the Evenki a program should be developed for showing only the pleasant aspects of their society and to train youth in tourism and foreign languages.
- 19 3) Villages far from big towns that maintain the traditional lifestyle. Urkima (305 inhabitants) has 216 Evenki, including a few nomads. Over the last five years, several mines have been extracting gold around the village. Ust-Njukzha, (647 inhabitants) has 418 Evenki, most of whom are nomadic herders/hunters. These villages, amid forested mountains and large rivers, are four to seven hours by train, car or boat from the main town. Individual wood-burning stoves provide heating to wooden houses. A tanker distributes water. There are schools with small museums, kindergartens, outdoor spaces for children and a dancing hall. Far away in the forest, there are reindeer herding camps and strong preserved traditional economies.
- 20 Most villagers see tourism as beneficial. With 60-80% unemployment, survival is based on vegetable gardens, berry and mushroom gathering and familial solidarity. Most see tourism only in the village, while a few would organise it in the nomadic camps. Those interviewed (the unemployed, weather forecasters, railway workers, doctor, teachers) identify activities. All argue EU tourists are target clients "*for whom 'exoticism' would be sufficient!*" In contrast to the other types of villages, inhabitants perceive their villages as being of interest to tourists due to water/snow skiing, river trips, horse riding, fishing, meeting the elders, skin work, sewing and souvenirs. "*We have a lot of skilled people here!*", they say. Most think that it would be possible to start without any specific preparation, sometimes joining Evenki and Russian efforts, although a few stress the absolute necessity of first establishing a business plan, finding sponsors and building a comfortable base (Pics. 4 & 5).
- 21 Villagers and townspeople have a negative image of Siberian villages: they see the wooden houses and lack of asphalt as archaic, uncomfortable and a sign of poverty, while new metallic or plastic construction materials are highly rated. Only remote villages inhabitants consider their locations as attractive to tourists.

Pictures 4 & 5: the river by which one can reach the village; elders during skin treatment in their garden.



Picture 4 (S. Gabyshev 2015) A large river by which one can reach the village



Picture 5 (© A. Lavrillier): elders during reindeer and elk skin treatment in their garden.

© S. Gabyshev; A. Lavrillier 2015

The “Nomadic Forest” (*Egdan*)

- 22 In Yakutia and Amur, traditional reindeer herding with hunting/fishing as a subsistence economy is very well safeguarded; most camps consist of couples rather than just men, as in other regions. The Evenki language is relatively well practiced. Families nomadise very often and almost always by reindeer. They use snowmobiles for purchasing food and goods in the village.
- 23 The nomads felt ready to start tourism right now as a seasonal activity and immediately thought up activities for EU or Chinese tourists (bringing reindeer close to village, visiting hunting cabins/saunas, sharing nomadic life/work, tasting reindeer milk/meat, gathering berries). The herders struggle with money (small salaries in Yakutia or low income from hunting or family cooperatives (Russian: *rodovye obshchiny*) in the Amur) and need additional income. They stress that tourist income must be equally shared. They consider their life can bring tourists almost as it is, without any additional infrastructure. Only a few underline the need for external help in business organisation and finding tourists. All of them want to control tourism and deal with as few intermediary agencies as possible (Pict. 6).

Picture 6: Herders come close to the village to purchase goods and food



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- 24 To conclude, the interviewees attribute to each tourist nationality a type of tourism: Russian tourists, attracted by leisure tourism, are not interested in Siberian cultures; European and Asian tourists are attracted by “extreme” or “cultural” tourism. These images are surprising because there are almost no foreigners in this area, and most informants have never left their village/forest or have no entrepreneurship experience. There are very few “wild tourists” travelling randomly from the BAM without language knowledge or funding, thus relying on hospitality. Local authorities and inhabitants dislike them: they pose a security risk, do not benefit the local economy and exploit locals. Agopian [2004, pp. 75-76] also noted this perception in Kamchatka.
- 25 In some villages, the municipality answered calls for federal and regional proposals for funding tourism development, but with no success. In our non-existent tourism case studies, all nomads believe that tourism should develop in their area, but they aim to control it. All Evenki see more advantages from tourism than threats. What about Siberian tourism in reality?

Analysing existing tourism

- 26 Southern Kamchatka is ideal for studying tourism thanks to diverse cases studies. It is an unusual sight for Siberia, where westerners are usually very rare, to see groups of tourists walking in the village, high-standard hotels, an ethno-museum adapted to westerners with souvenir shops and flyers for tourist routes (Pics. 7 & 8), and a cash dispenser from an EU bank. There is a local joke: “From the 1990s, this has been the Siberian Switzerland” (see also Gernet [1998]) (Map 1).

Pictures 7 & 8: The ethno-museum of the municipality of Esso (entry and guided visit).



Pictures 7 & 8 (© A. Lavrillier 2010): The ethno-museum of the municipality of Esso (entry and guided visit).



(© A. Lavrillier 2010)

- 27 Although local informants stated that tourism was in decline in 2010 in comparison with the 1990s, and that the services were insufficient, tourist activity is central. A reason for this exceptional development is the presence of the Bystrinskii Natural Park, created by the Kamchatkan municipality in 1995: it was nominated as part of World Cultural and Natural Heritage by UNESCO and developed by a German NGO². This area offers volcanoes, bears, indigenous fishing and reindeer herding camps, Russian salmon fisheries and thermal waters. After being a closed military area, most of Kamchatka was opened to foreigners in the 1990s [Agopian, 2004, p. 22]. The first local tourist agency (a branch of *Intourist*) opened in 1964 and the first tour to the geysers in 1975; from 1986, the local agency *Kamchat Tourist* had a monopoly on tourism, expeditions, including hunting, “social tourism”³ and alpinist clubs [Berton-Hogge 1982; Agopian 2004]. It is relatively accessible: there are direct flights from Moscow to Petropavlovsk-Kamchatkii and then a 10-hour bus ride to the village of Esso.
- 28 Esso, created in 1932, and the 25-km-distant Anavgai gather indigenous minorities (Table 1) with intermixed cultures [Gernet 1998, p. 199]. In 2010, Esso had three reindeer herding groups, while Anavgai counted only one. Anavgai predominantly relies on *salmonidae* fishing.

Table 1. Population of Esso and Anavgai in 2020

POPULATION	NATIVE					NON NATIVE
	EVEN	KORYAK	ITELMEN	KAMCHADAL	CHUKCHI	OTHERS Including Russians and Slavic
ESSO / 2,980	668	69	65	17	8	2 153
ANAVGAI / 608	347	138	7	22	4	90

Table 1. *Source:* from Information from the municipalities collected by M. Lomovtseva-Adukanova, 2020.

- 29 To the Even, the national park is like an autonomous world, separate from them except for an office in Esso that sometimes introduces nomads to tourists who are not satisfied by the park and want to visit native camps (Lavrillier's field notes (LFN) 2010).
- 30 The Kamchatkan municipality and Moscow financially support tourism development in Esso and Anavgai, including the natural park that was also funded by foreign sponsors in the 2010s until the law on "foreign agents" was passed.⁴ The municipality also finances the ethno-museum (opened in 1983 with a mostly native workforce) and the development of the villages. In 2010, tourists were attracted by private enterprises that outsourced activities to indigenous tourist centres and small enterprises, as well as to municipal institutions (museum, natural park). We will focus on activities related to or engaging the natives.
- 31 Esso and Anavgai offer tourist activities, a centre, enterprises and services belonging to two kinds of tourism that natives experience differently and that have dissimilar impacts.

1) Spaces and times created by natives for tourists

- 32 Successful Even tourism occurs in a delimited space and time created especially for tourists by the natives, with indigenous-controlled tourist activities. Hinch and Butler [1996, p. 10] defined indigenous tourism as an activity in which natives or cultures are directly involved, through direct indigenous control or where their culture serves as the focal point of the attraction, as shown in our Kamchatkan case studies.

Table 2. Indigenous control of ethno-tourisms

INDIGENOUS THEME	INDIGENOUS CONTROL	
	<u>LOW DEGREE OF CONTROL</u>	<u>HIGH DEGREE OF CONTROL</u>
Indigenous Theme Present	Culture Dispossessed	Culture Controlled
Indigenous Theme Absent	Non-Indigenous Tourism	Diversified Indigenous

Table 2. *Source:* Hinch and Butler 1996, p.10.

- 33 Furthermore, Zeppel [1998] has listed a number of limitations that can help natives to manage the development of tourism and defined spatial, activity, temporal and cultural types of control (Table 3). This qualification shows that tourism should always be

delimited in terms of time, the number of tourists and places where only natives have access in order for it to develop sustainably.

Table 3. Limitations for a sustainable ethno-tourism

CONTROLS	CONTROL EXAMPLES
Spatial limitation	Hosts sets limits to entry to homelands and sacred sites
Activity limitation	Hosts establish preferred or permitted tourist activities
Temporal limitation	Hosts indicate appropriate times for tourist access and use
Cultural limitation	Hosts set limits on access to cultural knowledge and rituals

Table 3. Source: Zeppel 1998, p. 73

34 Thus, we focus now on cases studies of indigenous-controlled tourism.

The Menediek centre

35 With 11 Even official workers, the Menediek centre is a municipal institution created with the dual aims of tourism and education in 2004 by natives (directors of the traditional group dances). It was helped by skills learned at the Centre for Support for Indigenous Peoples of the North/Russian Indigenous Training Centre (Moscow) and a Canadian grant (LFN 2010). Due to the “foreign agents” law, it would be very complicated to obtain such funding today. As a familial enterprise, the grandmother, elders, daughters, sons, spouses and grandchildren built the edifices of the tourism centre: yurts, a storage house on pillars (*udan*), a trap for fish (*katep*), an ethno-museum, a stage for concerts and ritual arcs for purification in a delimited space close to the village. In the summer, they daily receive buses with 30-80 tourists each, mostly from USA and the EU⁵: they are sent by agencies in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii or Moscow. In winter, they receive around one group per month and also take part in the International Trans-Bering Strait Dogsled Race that crosses Kamchatka⁶. We note here a commercial strategy to use other pre-existing tourist sites (the dogsled race, volcanoes, thermal waters and the park).

36 All the Menediek workers take turns accompanying tourist groups. Roles are distributed according to skills: hunters/fishermen for eco-tourist tours, elders for rituals, woman for explaining worldviews, children and youth for dances. The circuit starts with a welcome speech in front of the centre, followed by a purification ritual, a phase presented as necessary to enter the “sacred Menediek space”. The tourists listen to a discourse about the centre’s fruitful inputs for youth education: after, the children come out from a yurt and present an Even dance. The visitors then watch a concert of traditional dances and eat a traditional meal of salmon caught in the morning by the grandmother in her traditional fishing camp a few kilometres away. Usually the circuit ends here, but tourists can benefit from an Even ecological tour, a tour of museum items in the storage house or training in handicrafts (pearls, birch bark plaiting (Table 4).

Table 4. The Menediek tourism complex



Pictures 9, 10, 11 (© A. Lavrillier 2010): The Menediek tourism complex:

1/ The billboard at the entrance says "Welcome to the Even camp Menediek!" while also indicating that the United Nations Development Program and Canada are sponsors;

2/ A guided tour of the small open-air ethno-museum conducted by the Even grandmother O. N. Indanova;

3/ Purchase of souvenirs.



Tourist yurts

- 37 Several natives, some of them from family cooperatives, have placed small tourist yurts on the edge of the villages, like the Koryak and Itelmen "Chauchiv". They have set up a yurt with a storage house and platform and keep a few horses. The tourists can join them by foot from their hotel and for a fee, enjoy the services (traditional *phytochai* tea, salmon soup, an ethno-visit of the site, a 2-3 hour horse ride, the sale of dried berries and souvenirs). The initiator is a former nurse. With her scientist friend, she obtained Canadian funding (CIDA) and a device from Italy to dry berries and plants. This type of space, exclusively devoted to tourism and controlled by natives, is very well perceived by the Even, Itelmen and Koryak (Pic. 9).

Picture 9: The *Chauchiv* tourist territory.

© A. Lavrillier 2010

Individual nomads create temporary space-time for tourists

- 38 Some Even hunter-fishermen and horse breeders choose to be independently involved in tourism several times a year, especially in the summer. Relying mostly on hunting and fishing, they gain substantial additional income from tourism. They have family cooperatives with allotted territories and some support from the Association of the Indigenous Minorities of the North (transport, radios, snowmobiles). They guide around 4-6 tourists or scientists over 3-4 days to the nomadic camps, volcanoes or thermal waters in their territory. They are very skilled negotiators, as well being the holders of traditional knowledge and the values of sustainable use of nature. This contradicts the statement of Groom et al. [1991] that tourism triggers changes in the values attached to nature. There is a real market in tourist transport to the nomadic reindeer herders camps, led by native horse breeders and native/non-natives renting horses (LFN 2010).
- 39 In between these two kinds of tourism, there are events/sites that are not created for tourists but that are partially used as tourist attractions.
- 40 Tourists come to the neo-rituals of the Even, Itelmen and Koryak. Soviet policies forbade shamanic rituals from the 1930s. In the 1990s, the intelligentsia of most Siberian peoples established neo-rituals (i.e. revivalist rituals) in order to “reconnect with spirits and ancestors” (their expression), combining elements from ethnographies, elders’ memories and Soviet or current “cultural institutions” (red billboards, folkloric ensembles, stage representations of rituals) [Hugh Jones’ concept, 1997]. Even though they are cultural reconstructions, these performances today play an important role in ethnic identity [Koester, 2002]. Moreover, most native participants think that the spirits are present in these rituals and that such rituals ensure a good year [Alekseev, 1993; Lavrillier, 2003; 2005]. This is the case of the Even Nurgenek or the Even, Koryak

and Itelmen “Feast of the First Fish”. While the Nurgenek neo-ritual was revitalised 30 years ago by the Even before the appearance of tourism, today these festivals are partially used for tourism. They are occasions for Even, Koriak, Itelmen and Russian workers at the national park to sell souvenirs (LFN 2010).

- 41 According to Agopian [2004, p. 106], foreign tourists prefer the concerts during indigenous festivals to the ones in the tourism centre because the former are seen as more “authentic”. However, the concerts are the same (LFN 2010). Sometimes, the tourists’ search for “authenticity” is so strong that they can sponsor the realisation of a “real” ritual, like the *kho-lo-lo* feast [Kasten, 2004, p. 20].
- 42 The fact that tourists come to neo-rituals does not seem to spoil their meaning for the natives, even if they prefer it when there are no/few tourists. This contradicts the analysis of Greenwood (1977) about the loss of symbolic and cultural meaning for locals if a festival is opened to tourists and the market (Pic. 10).

Picture 10: First day of the Nurgenek neo-ritual.



© A. Lavrillier 2010

2) Tourism imposed on the natives

Tourism imposed on reindeer herders by the herding enterprise

- 43 At the end of the 1980s, the first tourists were guided to nomad camps. In the 2000s, with the intensification of tourism, the reindeer herders were no longer paid for receiving tourists or scientists; the herding enterprise (still called “sovkhov”), which owns most of the reindeer, receives 15,000 rubles per tourist. Sometimes, villagers join the camp to show tourists the traditional dances and shamanic rituals. Russian and foreign agencies occasionally bring helicopters with dozens of tourists per day: the herders must feed the group and show them how they lasso, work with the herd, slaughter reindeer and ritually drink blood. If they expect a helicopter, the herders

must postpone their nomadisation to take care of the tourists. Nomadising every 3-4 days is crucial for protecting the herd from the many bears and offering it fresh pasture. Such tourism poses a real threat to reindeer, creates serious tensions and produces a feeling of humiliation among the herders. “*We do not have enough time for reindeer; tourism for us is a source of moral and physical tiredness*” they say.

- 44 Even less bearable is when private guides (mostly non-natives) bring tourists to the herd by horse without permission: the reindeer herders are not paid in this case (LFN 2010). This practice has increased over the last decade: tourists frighten the reindeer and the horses destroy reindeer pastures, both of which worsen herder-tourist relations.
- 45 The notion of “illegal tourists” (*nelegalnye turisty* in Russian) appears in this framework, designating tourists who do not arrive through an agency or “sovkhos”. It is omnipresent in discourse: it reflects concerns about a “contraband of tourists”. Tourists are a commercialised commodity traded between non-native locals and native villagers/horse breeders, while reindeer herders are a product to trade with tourists.

Does existing tourism destroy social organisation, values and tradition?

- 46 According to Adams [1997, p. 310], “a tourist-hosting society undergoes economic and cultural changes through its intensifying contact with outsiders”. Ethnic tourism thus supposedly causes changes in the system of values: it can also change the behaviour, lifestyle and ritual gestures of individuals.
- 47 However, in the case of Menediek, tourism does not seem to destroy social organisation or tradition because it is enclosed in a delimited space and time. Moreover, the organisation of work is patterned on that in a traditional fishing camp. After the last tourist has departed, the Even leave and go back to their usual activities. Lavrillier noticed relief among the natives, just like after a theatrical/scientific presentation. Everybody took off the traditional costumes, dressed in T-shirts and put down their baskets: the youth put their earphones again. The latter followed the grandmother and their parents to the fishing camp; this place is never visited by tourists. There, they take fish from the nets and traps, cut up and prepare fish, cook for the group in the yurt, pick berries and survey the horses. The grandmother said that she much prefers life in the fishing camp, surrounded by her family, preparing fish for people and dogs⁷ for the winter or just drinking tea and having a talk.
- 48 This creates an interesting contrast often met in ethno-tourism, when external signs of tradition (as perceived by westerners) are worn or used to show off for tourists, while “real” traditional life is experienced without external signs of tradition and with the use of modern technologies [Evens-Pritchard, 1989, among others].

What is the native understanding of the tourist gaze?

- 49 The field shows a perception of the “Other” (a non-local/non-native individual) seen as a singular entity, that of “tourist” (encompassing tourists, travellers, journalists, scientists, including anthropologists): this entity takes time/leisure or makes money from the natives. In southern Kamchatka, the natives perceive themselves as less rich than the “tourists” (seen as naïve seekers of sensations) for whom they provide the expected romanticised image of themselves (their expression). They first negotiate prices, attempting to obtain a large payment. This sharply contrasts with places in

Siberia untouched by tourism, where natives were offended when scientists offered money for their hospitality. Authors 2 to 5 argue that such a feeling does not exist anymore, and that the local economic crisis, rather than tourism, has increased money-based relationships with the “Other” (see below).

- 50 In the space that Even devote to tourism, they highlight some features of their “real” culture, with a strong emphasis on reindeer herding (as it was before the 1950s), even though this was already a minority activity in 2010. They describe brave women who nomadise alone with long caravans; the huge collapsible yurt transported by reindeer; a central animal in their worldview; and a mix of economics merging reindeer herding with salmon fishing, dogsleds and hunting. The grandmother is represented as the guarantor of authenticity: the initiator of a native dance group 37 years ago, the guardian of tradition and still dancing despite her age. She is the pride of this native community.
- 51 In places where tourism is imposed on natives, the difficulties of the “tourist-native” relationship in reindeer herding camps makes photography a very sensitive issue, even with regards to anthropologists. Many herders completely refuse to be pictured. They are so aggrieved by the behaviour of some tourists that simply seeing a camera infuriates them: *“If I am only an image to you, you should pay for that!”*; *“This is your fault!”*. Herders understand the ideal that the “tourist-journalist-photographer-scientist” wants to find in the camp: *“a people who safeguard traditions from an ancient time”* (an ideal that some anthropologists also looked for [Fabian, 1983]) or *“a people with ideal sustainable relationships with the environment, disconnected from the modern world”*. A herder said: *“Tourists expect an idealised representation that does not correspond to us. They are not interested in who we are in reality, they want to receive the ideal picture they imagined about us”* (LFN 2010).
- 52 Nonetheless, such tourism enhances indigenous self-confidence, as Lavrillier noted: these natives of Kamchatka more easily express a high opinion about their own culture than in other parts of eastern Siberia, influenced by misunderstanding/racism from the non-native population.
- 53 The tourist is seen as a provider of income and a guest with whom one hopes to communicate with reciprocity. The herders depict with humour their vision of “tourists”: awkward, unable to do anything without herders, difficult to handle and with strange manners. Nonetheless, they enjoy a real exchange with tourists. The Even savour both when tourists are interested in their culture and asking tourists about their lifestyles. The tourists’ answers are later spread in the villages or camps. Even also classify tourists: the best are the French (joyful, asking questions, buying things and paying easily), followed by other European countries. The worst are Americans (lacking interest, reluctant to buy souvenirs and services).

Twisting one’s own culture for tourists to a certain extent

- 54 For several decades, anthropology has increasingly discussed processes of cultural construction and invention [Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983; Fabian, 1983; Clifford, 1988; Wagner, 1975, Bendix, 1989, Leong, 1989; for the Koryak of Kamchatka, see King, 2011]. In tourism, like in Menediek, most of the discourses and gestures fit the descriptions by ethnography or elders, but the Lavrillier noted that the Even play with their culture to satisfy tourists by twisting some gestures or adding alien ritual or discourse elements.

They have fun doing so, observing how tourists react: it helps them to adapt changes to satisfy the tourists, just like market analysis. As per Stronza [2001, p. 272], the anthropology of tourism insufficiently highlights the role of locals in determining what happens in their relationships with tourists. In contrast, Silverman [2001] and Adams [1995] show how the Iatmul (Papua New Guinea) and the Torajans (Indonesia) act with an intentional strategy and creativity in their encounters with tourists. Thus, one can see romanticizations or inventions in Kamchatka: a woman goes out from the tent and salutes the sun in an Asian/New-Age way (joined hands on the chest), then enters the tent and bows in front of the fire. These are definitely not Even gestures, but rather the “orientalist mysticism” the tourists are supposedly looking for. These Evens also invent ritual acts absent from elders’ memories or the ethnography, like a rope between two figures said to be the “bird-father” and the “bird-mother”, linking the world of the living and the world of the dead. Mythic statements are delivered among tourists, such as by pledging that hanging a piece of coloured fabric from a tree in this (tourist) sacred space will inevitably grant their wishes (AFN 2010). Evans-Pritchard [1989], among others, argues that locals are an “active agent” who determine what “traditions” they want to invent for tourists and what traditions are their own, which they do as an enterprising behaviour and to gain enjoyment from toying with tourists.

- 55 The Nurgenek neo-ritual looks like a tourist event because of the tourists and the souvenirs on sale. Sometimes, the invented rituals even contradict traditional prohibitions, but are practiced because the tourists like them (Pict 11): jumping over a campfire as purification is strongly prohibited in ancient or nomadic Even tradition (LFN 2010). Menediek workers explain that they borrowed this gesture from a film about St John jumping over fire. Nonetheless, the natives themselves try not to transgress this taboo and discretely bypass the campfire. Thus, natives only twist their culture for tourism to a certain extent.

Picture 11: The Nurgenek neo-ritual.



Tourists jump over a campfire, which is reminiscent of celebrations for the feast of St John: it is associated with the Even ritual of purification with juniper smoke.

A. Lavrillier 2010

- 56 Only a few isolated persons in villages have permanently changed themselves to fit the requirements of tourists: fake shamans and the non-native craftsman of native handicrafts or sacred items. Due to their falsity, they are disliked. This creates tensions within society (LFN 2010).
- 57 Gabyshev considers the Evenki of China's ethno-tourism model to be an unbearable taboo: an elder nomad sat in her yurt and was observed like an animal in a cage by hundreds of Chinese tourists per day to photograph her as the oldest member of a "disappearing native minority". This was imposed by the huge tourist park with which the elder's daughter had a contract [LFN 2014; Dumont, 2016].
- 58 Souvenir production exemplifies the interrelations between the tourism market and the torsion of traditions. In 2010, most souvenirs in the villages did not come from a factory, but from individual Even, Koriak, Itelmen and Russians masters. The Menediek workers (from the grandchildren to the grandmother) make souvenirs, as do many villagers. Local production was insufficient, and a large part of the souvenirs come from poor northern Kamchatkan regions, where there is almost no tourism. The souvenir design is mostly from the northern Koryak and Itelmen, using the symbols of ravens, seals and walruses: these differs a lot from the symbols of southern Kamchatka. Although they sell them intensively, the Even deplore the discrepancy between the souvenirs and their own symbolism (centred on reindeer and salmon), as well as the over-representation of bears (a stereotype exacerbated by the natural park or Russian symbolism) (Pic. 11). These souvenirs are sold in the museum, the office of the park, the tourist centres, shops and workshops.

Merchant tourist behaviours and values of sharing

- 59 Lavrillier's question was: "Does the exceptional tourism development provoke a market-economy mindset in interrelations within the native community?" Traditionally, most Siberian societies rely on non-market exchange based on "generalised reciprocity" or "balanced reciprocity" (Sahlin's typology [1972, pp. 193-195]). Usually in Siberia, native societies continue non-market exchange within their communities, while they develop market relationships with the "Others" (non-native peoples, enterprises), (Gudeman's typology [2001]) [LFN 1994-2019; Lavrillier, 2005].
- 60 Most Even believe they are not affected by a market mentality, as they continue sharing hunting/fishing and herding products between themselves. Nonetheless, they notice that the solidarity among the natives is declining, as is the size of the group within which sharing is performed (see above). Ford et al. [2006] noticed the same phenomenon but due to climate change. A few Even described their society and its values as having been spoiled by tourism.
- 61 Most of Menediek's workers stated that they take part in tourism only for money. The elders and workers are paid in cash by a member of their native community for the fish, meat, berries and services, including rituals, they provide for tourists. Thus, we have here market relationships within the native community and even within the same kinship group. In the past, mercantile interrelationships were very rare, and almost never paid in money. One may identify here a threat caused by tourism to traditional reciprocity and solidarity. However, we can analyse this differently: the tourist groups give one lump sum, which is then divided between the community/family proportionally to the work done – could this be considered "sharing income", just as an animal's meat is shared? Thus, Lavrillier analysed the uses of the money gained from tourism. Within the community/family budget, tourism income is used to collectively fund the fishing camp, horse herd, the Menediek centre and solidarity (for education, clothing, medical treatment of the extended family or people in need). In 2010, there was no or little individual accumulation of money. The most altruistic were the elders, who redistributed most of their income: "*we want to support our family and needy people,*" they said. To Lomovtseva-Adukanova, in 2020, tourism still has not spoiled relationships within native communities, although she acknowledges that tourism initially triggered strong controversies, unfair competition and the profit motive within Even society: "*solidarity must be developed between indigenous tourist enterprises. If cupidity has the upper hand with regard to our traditional values of sharing and solidarity, the spirits of the environment will get revenge on us*" (LFN 2010). So, respect for values is related to the benevolence of the spirits of nature, just as in the sharing of hunting products.
- 62 We noticed gender differentiation in the perception of tourism. Reindeer herders regularly receiving tourists perceive tourism as a threat to the reindeer, but village or nomadic women see tourism as valuable income. Is this because, among Siberian natives (and many Russians), family income is handled by women?

Tourism as an additional economic activity

- 63 If we compare the poor economic situation of Esso and Anavgai in 1997 [Gernet, 1998] and/or the current situation in the other villages under study with the economic situation observed in 2010, Kamchatkan tourism does provide a better standard of living. But, tourism is only an additional source of income, even if it is significant. Natives still mainly rely on products from fishing, hunting, summer vegetable gardens, salaries from main professions, and pensions. Having an additional economy is not new: in the 19th and 20th centuries, Siberian peoples conducted traditional economies alongside occasional additional activities (trading fur and antlers, working in mines, preparing wood fire and hay for mine horses) [Lavrillier 2005]. It is also very frequent in worldwide ethno-/eco-tourism, as noted in 2004 [Agopian, 2004, p. 91].
- 64 To strengthen tourism, southern Kamchatkan natives attempted to create a multi-ethnic tourism centre in Esso, gathering indigenous bases into a network for orientating visitors directly from the Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii airport and limiting the number of intermediaries (LFN 2010).

Between the dreams and reality: administrative and juridical constraints

- 65 Some informants argue that tourism, perceived as another “natural resource”, benefits Kamchatka region or Moscow rather than the natives (LFN 2010).
- 66 In 2010, the family cooperatives that conducted tourism in Kamchatka had to stop this activity because of a change in the federal law⁸: this withdrew tourism from the activities allowed without special agreement from the Russian Federation’s tax office. This forced such cooperatives to ask for permission from the Ministry of Justice. The management of taxes is extremely complex even for a professional accountant, with the threat of multiple fines for non-specialists. Thus, a significant part of tourism income is paid in taxes. This restrains small enterprises from developing tourism. This is also noted by tourism agencies in other parts of Kamchatka [Agopian, 2004] and Yamal (YNAO) [Gorbuntsova et al., 2019, p. 77].
- 67 This contradicts the RFOPED, which recommends tourism development as a new economic strength for federal/local economies. So, while tourism state structures are supported with funding (as per the “Evenki Village”), local individual initiatives are heavily taxed and “*cut down at the root by the government*” (their information) (LFN 2010).
- 68 Totonova [2016] provides a detailed description and model of tourist initiatives and their development by the state in Northern Yakutia. Another contradiction between the federal plan and the local government appeared in Yamal when the latter announced support for tourism development, although in practice there were no investments in tourism or government-local stakeholder project planning. The macro-economy of oil and gas development, producing quick and substantial income for the state/local government, is privileged over the micro-economic development of tourism, which provides steady, small incomes to locals [Gorbuntsova et al., 2019, pp. 69, 75-77].

Conclusion

- 69 The recent changes in the laws on family cooperatives and “foreign agents”, aimed at strengthening the centralisation of the economy, disincentivise native-driven tourism development, even though they want to develop small-scale ethno-/eco-tourism. The Kamchatkan examples of Menediek and Chauchiv demonstrate that successful and sustainable tourism results from joint efforts between the natives themselves, local government and foreign/NGO funding.
- 70 Existing and non-existent tourism are motivated by the need for additional income in the context of the post-Soviet deconstruction of rural economies. In existing and non-existent tourism, intermediaries are seen as substantially reducing the income of natives. The natives wish to control the entirety of ethno-tourism, but the government and the current market offer them few chances to do so. They consider it difficult to bypass all intermediaries. Kamchatka’s international reputation (UNESCO, German NGO), eco-tourism, leisure tourism, health tourism and ethno-tourism guarantee the market, which is not the case in Yakutia and Amur.
- 71 In existing and non-existent tourism, native values are mostly not perceived as endangered. In Kamchatka, despite their market relationship with tourists, the natives maintain the sustainable use of the environment and their principal values (“sharing”, “solidarity”), adopting the attitude: “a market with the Others - sharing with ourselves” (LFN 2010). The Nenets also do not see tourism as threatening their culture or values [Gorbuntsova et al. 2019, p. 75].
- 72 Despite small shifts in some rituals for tourists and in the symbolism of souvenir design, tourism among these Even does not transform culture. Tourism is seen as a “natural resource” that is sustainable for the environment and the natives if it is not too substantial and if it is controlled by the Even/Evenki (a position also shared by the Inuit [Antomarchi 2009, p. 57-58]). In our study, the natives contrast (potential) tourism (seen as benevolent) with increasing industrial development (seen as malevolent): this is an opposition also employed by the Nenets [Gorbuntsova et al., 2019] and Russel and Stabile [2003].
- 73 Our analysis of imagined and practiced tourism presents only limited instances of tourism imposed on indigenous communities as passive and powerless peoples. We also did not meet mass tourism [Antomarchi, 2009, p. 57, among others] triggering tensions and negative impacts, as happens in small Arctic communities.

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NOTES

1.

Tourism is today a major share of international trade, accounting for 10% of world GDP according to the World Tourism Organization (WTO). It is the main source of foreign exchange for 46 to 49 middle-advanced countries, according to the UNWTO [2004] [The WTO <https://www.unwto.org/global/publication/UNWTO-Tourism-definitions>. Consult on 20/11/19.

2.

The United Nations Development Programme, the World Wildlife Fund) and the Canadian International Development Agency funded projects for improving the socio-economic and cultural life of Bystrinski Park inhabitants [Agopian, 2004, p. 102].

3. “Social tourism” was a form of Soviet tourism, organised for workers and partly offered by syndicates proposing tourist tours or recreational stays [Berton-Hogge, 1982].
4. The “Russian Federation Law 121 on Foreign Agents” of July 2012 aims to control the foreign funding of Russian NGOs. It complicated many foreign NGO activities, and in some cases ended them (LFN 2012-2019).
5. If foreigners represent the majority of tourists in this ethno-tourism, for the entirety of southern Kamchatka, (local) Russian tourists are the majority (in 2002: 7,785 foreign tourists for 23,781 Russian tourists) [Agopian, 2004, pp. 55-56, 62].
6. The first Beringia occurred in 1990 and crosses more than 1,000 kilometres (<https://kamchatkaland.com/note/beringia>).
7. The family also catches fish for the racing dogs participating in the Beringia race.
8. Federal Law of the 20.07.2000 N 104-ФЗ(27.06.2018) « On the general principles for organising the family cooperatives of the indigenous minorities of the North, Siberia, and the Far East of Russia ».

RÉSUMÉS

Depuis l'effondrement de l'Union soviétique, les villageois et les nomades autochtones sibériens ont souvent eu du mal à subvenir à leurs besoins. Certains natifs pensent que l'ethno-tourisme peut être une source de revenus, mais il y a actuellement peu de tourisme en Sibérie. Dans l'Arctique circumpolaire, le tourisme est présenté comme une source de croissance économique. Le *Plan Officiel de Développement Economique de la Fédération de Russie à l'Horizon 2030* vise également le développement du tourisme et, à cette fin, la Russie mobilise des équipes spécialisées. Quelles seront les conséquences économiques, sociales et culturelles pour les communautés autochtones? Quelles formes de tourisme leur seraient bénéfiques? Quelles perceptions les autochtones de Sibérie ont-ils du tourisme?

Cet article transdisciplinaire compare le tourisme inexistant, tel qu'il est imaginé, souhaité ou déploré par les citadins, les villageois, les éleveurs nomades autochtones de la République Sakha-Yakoutie et de la région de l'Amour, avec diverses expériences d'ethno-tourisme existants au Kamtchatka. Basé sur des données ethnographiques recueillies entre 1994 et 2016, l'article a utilisé les méthodes de terrains participatifs et de l'anthropologie classique, et des mises en hypothèses effectuées par des co-chercheurs autochtones et un anthropologue. Il analyse les aspects économiques, sociaux, culturels et administratifs des tourisms existants et non existants.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Siberian indigenous villagers and nomads have often struggled to find enough income to sustain themselves. Some natives think that ethno-tourism can be a source of income, but there is currently little tourism in Siberia. In the circumpolar Arctic, tourism is presented as a source of economic development. The *Russian Federation's Official Plan for Economic Development to 2030* also includes the growth of tourism; to this end, Russia has mobilised specialised taskforces. What will be the economic, social and cultural consequences for native communities? What forms of tourism will be beneficial for them? What perceptions do

Siberian natives have of tourism? This transdisciplinary paper compares non-existent tourism, as it is imagined, desired, or deplored by native townspeople, villagers, and nomadic herders of the Sakha-Yakutia Republic and Amur region, with existing ethno-tourism experiences in Kamchatka. Based on ethnographic material collected from 1994 to 2016, the paper used participatory fieldwork, hypothesising performed by indigenous co-researchers and an anthropologist, and classical anthropology. It analyses existing and non-existent tourisms on the economic, social, cultural, and administrative levels.

INDEX

Mots-clés : Russie, Sibérie, communautés autochtones, changement culturel, invention de la tradition, nomades, Evenk, Even, tourisme, Koriak, Itelmen

Keywords : Russia, Siberia, indigenous communities, tourism, cultural changes, invention of tradition, nomads, Evenki, Even, Koryak, Itelmen

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