

LAKE PEIPSI PROJECT

COMMON BORDER, SHARED PROBLEMS

Tartu 1997

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COMMON BORDER, SHARED PROBLEMS

RESEARCH REPORTS

Edited by Eiki Berg

Tartu 1997

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Contents

| | |
|--|-----|
| Introduction | 5 |
| Methodology of Social and Environmental Studies in the Lake Peipsi Region, 1995-96 <i>Sergei Kuldin, Russel Langworthy, Gulnara Roll</i> | 7 |
| Eastern Periphery: An Economic Approach <i>Eiki Berg, Garri Raagma</i> | 10 |
| Cultural Perspectives of the Lake Peipsi Region <i>Eiki Berg</i> | 21 |
| Social Relations in Transboundary Context <i>Elena Nikiforova</i> | 31 |
| Environmental Perceptions of Inhabitants in the Lake Peipsi Region <i>Anna-Liisa R  ppo</i> | 38 |
| Ethnic Identity in the Bordering Areas <i>Pille Runnel, Indrek J   ts</i> | 50 |
| Identity Options. Setu People in Russia <i>Tatiana Maximova</i> | 59 |
| Political Culture in Periphery <i>Piret Paljak, Piret Ehin</i> | 69 |
| Cultural and Economic Aspects in the Administrative Changes of Alaj  e Municipality <i>Kadi Kerge, Marko Veisson</i> | 85 |
| About Contributors | 101 |

Introduction

The current edition “*Common Border, Shared Problems*” is based on the results of social and environmental studies organised in 1995-96 by a regional NGO (non-governmental organisation) “Lake Peipsi Project” (LPP). It is a collection of articles written by Estonian and Russian researchers who conducted studies of environmental problems as well as social and cultural development of the communities in the Lake Peipsi area¹ - the transboundary region of Estonia and Russia. It is the first attempt to assess the extent of the rapid political and social transformation of the 1990s in the communities around Lake Peipsi.

Radical political transformation in the region was connected with the reconstruction of the border regime between the two countries. First of all it affected the people living in this border region. The establishment of the visa regime between the states created difficulties for families who lived or had property on different sides of the border². Secondly, it affected border minorities (Setus, indigenous Russians in Alajõe and Illuka municipalities) which turned out to be separated from each other or larger entity. Thirdly, high import tax on the Russian side cut Estonian farmers away from St. Petersburg market where they used to sell their agricultural products during the Soviet time. As a consequence of transition, many areas around Lake Peipsi suffered social instability and income cuts.

Today nobody denies the importance of the border. But the location of the border may be of major importance to the states involved and of minor importance to the people and places located in the immediate vicinity of it. Generally speaking, the rapid political and economic changes did not pay off socially. However, neither the positive processes of the democratic development nor the rise in the living standard have improved the living conditions of the majority of the population especially in this peripheral region between Estonia and Russia. Here household economy is playing a major role in people’s survival. This type of economy is difficult to control by special means of state regulations and hardly benefits national economic interests. On the other hand the economic co-operation between the border areas is largely non-existent.

The region was complicated to study regarding its ethnic and religious composition: Lutherans, Russian Orthodox and Old Believers coexisted with Estonians and

¹ The Russian name for the lake is Pskovsko-Chudskoe.

² The border dispute between Estonia and Russia still remains. This means that officially Estonia does not recognize the present demarcation of the border line between Estonia and Russia. Russia adopted the law on borders and unilaterally delineated the border along the line which had divided Russia and Estonia during the Soviet time (the Estonian “control line”).

Russians, indigenous and newly arrived groups in the region. The study of religious differences showed that the way of thinking (that concerns also environmental issues) and problem resolution is specific to the culture and differs from what is proposed to them by the central governments on either side of the border. In the near future, the development of stable economic growth in the region will depend to a great extent on how the area will be viewed by Estonian and Russian officials. Future laws and regulations governing this region will be based directly on the information that is available about the region. I believe that the social and environmental studies of the Lake Peipsi Project help better inform our government leaders about the region so that they could use this information in their decision-making. Participation and partnership are essential for giving a wide legitimacy to such goals. To achieve this, the LPP should serve all people in the lake region by providing acceptable and understandable information.

The social and environmental studies of the LPP started in 1995 under the direction of Dr. Russell Langworthy, professor of anthropology at Yale University, USA. He led the research activities at Lake Peipsi in the summer of 1995, organised the preparatory stage of the project design and also the training of the project participants. Sociologists and educational institutions of Estonia and Russia were of great help in organising the fieldwork. During the last two years more than thirty students of Tartu University, Narva Teachers Training Centre, St. Petersburg State University and Pskov Independent University participated in the above-mentioned studies. In 1995 the studies were co-ordinated by Dr. Anatoli Snissarenko from St. Petersburg Sociological Centre and Toomas Gross, lecturer of Tartu University. In 1996, Eiki Berg, lecturer of Tartu University became research co-ordinator.

This edition reflects the viewpoints of both Russian and Estonian researchers who managed to find a common ground despite the political polarisation in Estonian-Russian intergovernmental relations. The findings of the LPP studies have not only scientific value but also practical implications. The study results will be used to design the projects in the communities of the Lake Peipsi region in order to promote their sustainable development. In this way the local history, culture and environment are taken into account.

The studies of 1995 and the publication of the book became possible due to the support of the LPP grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. The sociological studies of 1996 were funded by the grant of the United Nations Development Program.

Gulnara Roll, director of the LPP

Methodology of Social and Environmental Studies in the Lake Peipsi Region, 1995-96

Sergei Kuldin, Russell Langworthy, Gulnara Roll

To design and implement community-based projects in the region, the NGO “Lake Peipsi Project” had to assess the major problems and needs of the population in the region. At the same time the LPP participants faced an obvious lack of information on the social and economic situation in the region. The available regional statistics was rather general and did not reflect all the existing geographical, economic and cultural differences between the settlements. In addition, any data became quickly outdated and useless in the course of the rapid political and social transformation processes in that particular border region. The power decentralisation tendencies in Estonia made it difficult to collect data from the central government statistical agencies and to depict the social and environmental conditions of the lake and its surrounding area. In order to assess the social and economic situation in the region, the students of Peace Research Department of St. Petersburg State University conducted interviews with the representatives of regional and local authorities in Russia (Pskov and Pechory) and in Estonia (Tartu and Võru) in 1993-94.

A large-scale sociological and anthropological study was organised by the LPP in summer, 1995 in collaboration with the professors and students of the School of Social Sciences of Tartu University in Estonia, and Pskov Independent University in Russia. This study was organised in twenty rural communities around the lake and was aimed at getting a more general picture of the local developments in the region as well as finding out differences between microregions in the area. The research work began simultaneously both on the Russian and Estonian sides. The methods of collecting data were formal questionnaires and informal in-depth interviews. For these purposes ten researchers from either side were chosen. Each of them stayed in settlements around the lake for a period of three weeks. The villages and towns were chosen so that they were situated either on the coast of the lake or not far from it, also both big and small villages formed a selection. Thus villages and towns under study included Jaama, Iisaku, Torma, Mustvee, Kallaste, Kasepää, Mehikoorma, Räpina, Mikitamäe, and Veriora from Estonia and Krup, Kusva, Zalit, Belov, Meshokol, Zakhody, Samolva, Kobilye Gorodishche, Ostrovcy and Kolokolovo from Russia (Fig. 1).

The methodology of this study was quite different from the methodologies of other social studies conducted earlier in the region. While the main objective of most public opinion polls conducted there has been to collect information concerning public opinion on social and political problems, the LPP study was based on the method of “participant observation”. The leaders of the study believed that it was essential to conduct the study in as objective way as possible. The goal of the study was to delve into the real life of villages and small towns of this region in order to see directly how people live and how they lead their lives. A traditional anthropological method was therefore chosen - living among the people and extended observation.

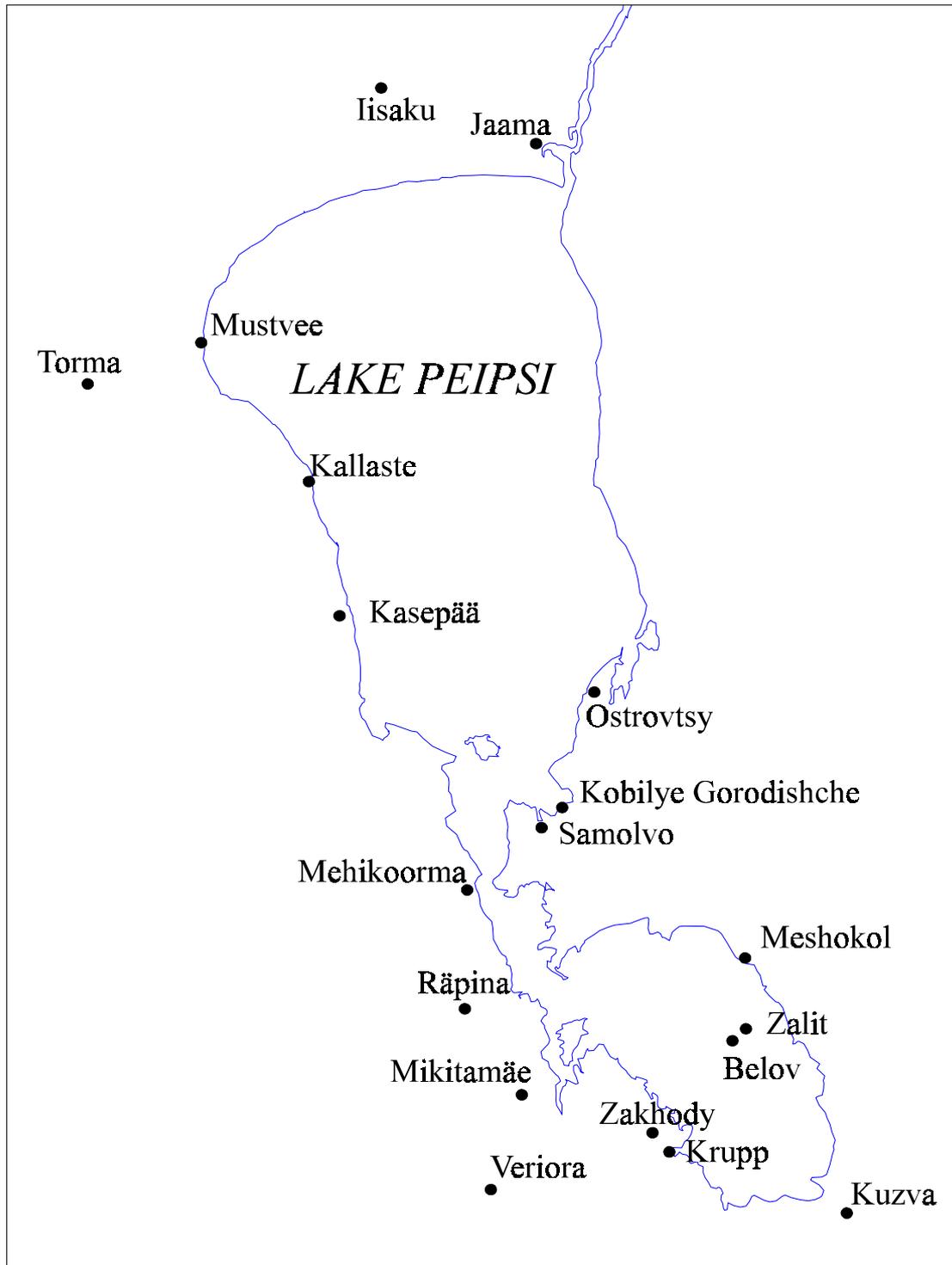


Figure 1. The villages and towns under study in 1995

Young investigators were engaged in this work. Yet the results of the study were not merely limited to a city-dweller's view of the villagers problems, although such apprehensions existed. Special training and preparation as well as seminars were conducted before the fieldwork began. Prof. Russell Langworthy organised the training. Prof. Marju Lauristin, Asser Murutar, Jüri Ginter, and other well-known sociologists taught students how to write proper diaries, conduct interviews, and use

cameras and tape recorders to best advantage. This preparation permitted the young investigators to go into the field equipped with the techniques of modern scholarly study. For this reason we believe that the collected material can serve as a reliable basis for the analysis of the contemporary social situation in this region.

The questions to local inhabitants were divided into a number of sections:

- ecological problems and people's attitude towards surrounding environment in the traditional place of residence;
- economic situation;
- ethnic identity and religious traditions.

The research was directed not so much towards the facts about the local development and environment but more to the ideas which local inhabitants had, which incorporated their past experiences and the way they were reflected in the present social behaviour. We believe that this approach enabled us to see the underlying reasons for the social contradictions in the region.

The 1995 social and environmental study was important as a pilot project. Similar studies have been conducted by community development programs including such directions as ecotourism and environmental education. Such projects are aimed at discerning the priorities of local communities, sharing information with them on possible problem resolutions they face, and supporting their own initiatives in resolving those problems as much as possible. Without a doubt, the local social and economic problems of the region are extremely difficult, having rapid political and economic transformation imprints whose recovery process will be a long and painful one. Such obstacles cannot be overcome quickly, or by relying solely on small local projects conducted by one or even several organisations.

The above-mentioned social and environmental study was followed by three separate surveys in 1996. They carried an idea to go further in depth with the existing problems. The aim was to examine local political culture before the local elections in Estonia (Oct.20, 1996); study the disputed territory (Setumaa) and the divided ethnic group (Setus); and propose administrative changes on the northern coast of the lake in order to make management more effective and economically beneficial.

The LPP continues to organise small projects, conferences as well as issue publications with the aim to attract the attention of governmental authorities and international organisations so that they might participate in conceptualising new programs and helping the local communities to resolve their problems.

Eastern Periphery: An Economic Approach

Eiki Berg, Garri Raagma

Introduction

Within the European Economic Community, the term 'regional problem' came into geographical usage in the 1960/70s to describe the noticeable differences in regional living standards and well-being prevalent in many economies (Bamford, Robinson 1983). Many agreed that the emergence of the regional problem - a persistent and deep-rooted imbalance in prosperity between regions at the state level - was due to the fact that their economic base lacks modern industrial and service activities or they were geographically poorly placed to serve major markets. What is still disputed are the possible policies, strategies or simply the tools to be used as a treatment for "regional illness". Even the expected results - full regional development as one extreme *contra* rather pessimistic view that the regional policy could only soften the regional imbalance, are today equally in force. Thus for example, regional political thinking varies from growth pole strategy to recognition of informal economic activities. The latter is in certain cases the only optimal solution if the decision-makers in the centre do not wish to face the booming emigration of job-seekers from the periphery. In reality, regions are in many ways different, and top-down policies quite often fail to take into account such peculiarities. Peripheral regions, in their own attempt to catch up economically with the core regions have also followed economic models constructed for industrial society in its prime without questioning their suitability in different circumstances, and have thus damaged the very resources needed for their own economic development. Finally, one could hardly imagine large-scale investments coming into remote areas, far from attractive markets and main transport routes even when the government decides to give tax advantages, redistribute funds to improve infrastructure or call for national mission.

The Lake Peipsi area (Eastern Estonia) reflects many characteristics of a typical problem area. With its peripheral location, demographically ageing population, traditional means of subsistence like farming, horticulture, fishing and forestry, it does not differ so much from other similar regions in Europe - regions that are distinguished by constantly high unemployment and emigration rates. Gaeltacht (Western Ireland), the Scottish Highlands, Friesland (Northern Netherlands) or Bretagne (Northwestern France) are but a few examples in the European Union which benefit from the redistribution of financial aid in accordance with the principles of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). However, the regional differences in Italy (North - South axis) are as great as they were in the 1950s. Such a regional policy hardly justifies itself.

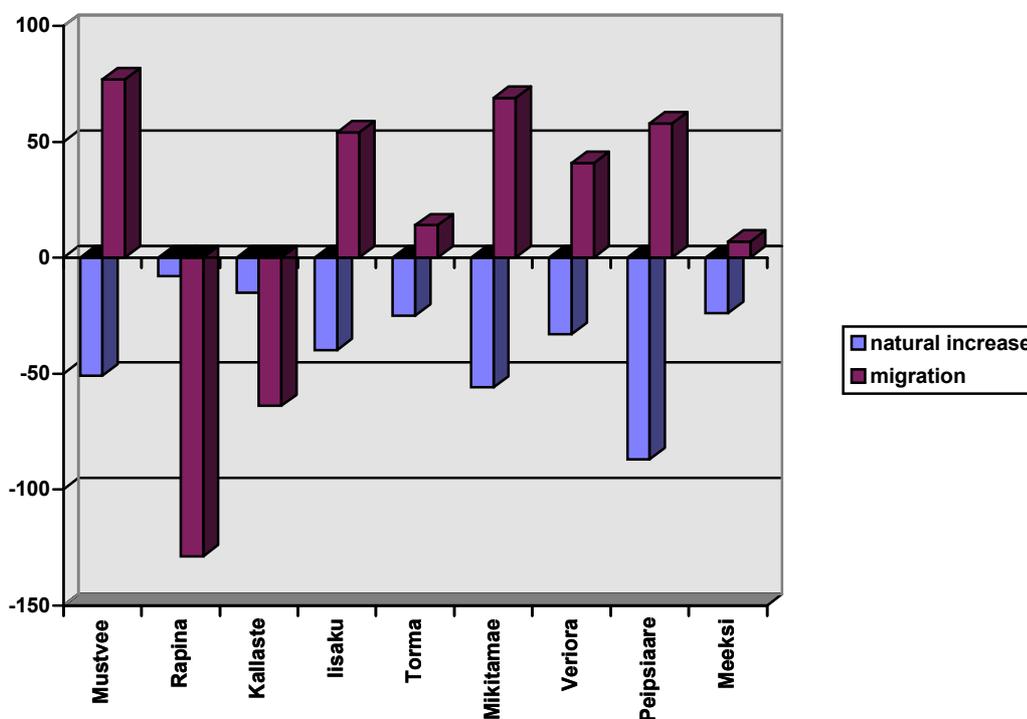
Estonia is not a member of the European Union and therefore has not been experiencing the ERDF redistribution benefits yet. However, 50 years of economic planning and directions from Moscow have had practically the same effect. Present-day Estonia resembles one of the most liberal economies in Europe where the state's

role has been reduced to a minimum. In fact this also means that regional policy is largely non-existent. Ideas like ‘self help’ or ‘the state helping those who show initiative’ are in nature liberal and do nothing to ease the economic conditions in Eastern Estonia.

Labour market

The current economic unrest has had unfavourable demographical consequences. The Estonian eastern periphery suffers a constant population decrease because of a high mortality rate (negative natural increase) and gains a little with migration.

Figure 1. Natural increase and net migration in Lake Peipsi area 1992-94



Source: Rahvastikustatistika teatmik 3/95. Eesti Statistikaamet. Tln. 1996

Only such figures in Kallaste and R apina were both negative while the other municipalities showed net immigration inflows (?) (Fig. 1). It is a general rule that unemployment and the absence of opportunity for realising one’s potential are the main reasons for emigration. It has a disastrous influence on a region’s capacity for development in the longrun. This is all true, with the exception that Estonian eastern periphery has seen a small but steady immigration in recent years. Nevertheless, newly arrived people turned out to be more elderly people and fewer of working age, having a minimal influence to improve an already bad demographical situation. Neither they rise the birth rate nor ”cultivate” changes, personal initiative and innovative mind.

The share of pensioners is remarkably high, above the average Estonian figure (21.8% in 1994). At the same time, those aged 25-44 are underrepresented everywhere in the region (Tab. 1). How can we expect rapid changes and hope that things will get better in the near future if the share of working-aged people from the total population is far below the Estonian average (55.8%).

If we try to analyse the employment structure, then most of the economically active population are engaged in the public sector or work as farmers while private entrepreneurs are insignificant employers. On the contrary, Mustvee/Raja and Peipsiääre inhabitants earn their main living from household activities. In fact it is statistically proved only in Raja (44% of working-age people), leaving a question mark in a case of Peipsiääre municipality. We may simply suggest that if the share of economically inactive people is 57.2% of the total number of working age people then neither all of them are unemployed, disabled nor mothers with small children at home (Eesti valdade...1995). Thus an important part of working age people are supposed to practise informal economy.

Table 1. Socio-economic situation of municipalities around Lake Peipsi 1994/95

| town/ municipal. | Population 01.01.95 | unemploy. (%) May '95 | age16-60/55 of total (%) Jan '94 | %of inactive in working- age pop. | age 25-44 of total (%) Jan '94 | pensioners of total (%) Jan '94 |
|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|--|---|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Iisaku | 1655 | 5.4 | 49.7 | 34.3 | 24.2 | 27.4 |
| Mustvee | 2003 | 6.8 | 54.1 | ... | 26.8 | 26.2 |
| Torma | 3182 | 1.6 | 49.7 | 26.5 | 25.4 | 25.7 |
| Räpina | 3351 | 2.0 | 56.8 | ... | 27.7 | 21.4 |
| Mikitam. | 1378 | 4.8 | 43.0 | 44.2 | 21.5 | 45.3 |
| Veriora | 1856 | 5.8 | 48.0 | 24.9 | 23.8 | 30.8 |
| Kallaste | 1258 | 1.9 | 52.5 | ... | 26.3 | 27.4 |
| Meeksi | 949 | 4.1 | 44.2 | 48.5 | 22.2 | 33.5 |
| Peipsiääre | 938 | 7.0 | 45.5 | 57.2 | 18.0 | 42.6 |
| Alajõe | 280 | 1.1 | 35.4 | 36.4 | 14.1 | 60.1 |
| Estonia | 1 491 583 | 2.0 | 55.8 | ... | 28.4 | 21.8 |

Source: Estonian Human Development Report 1996. Tln. 1996; Eesti valdade rahvastik. Riigi Statistikaamet. Tln. 1995

Actually the official regional unemployment rate fluctuates between 1.1% and 7.0% and those who work somewhere else (nearby municipalities, bigger towns, etc.) constitute about 10-15% of the labour force in the Lake Peipsi area. Among the unemployed there are more females than males, mainly because women use the status of long-term unemployed to stay at home with their children under the age of seven. Generally speaking there are jobs available for educated people who accordingly have always had better chances compared with those possessing fewer skills and a poorer educational background in the labour market. Among the unemployed there are mostly people aged 30-35, few young adults of the age 16-24 and almost no one over 50. In many places young specialists are needed but the potential jobs are occupied by middle-aged or older people. This is so in the fields of education, culture and industry. In the opinion of many local authorities, only administration leaders can find a good

occupation. Furthermore, new people in the area are more likely to face the influence of kinship ties and role of local atmosphere which make the job seeking even more difficult. The situation is rather complicated also for those who are not able to speak the Estonian language at the required level.

Estonian labour market policy and its effects to the local development in peripheral regions

A passive labour market policy prevails in Estonia. It offers unemployment allowances, retraining scholarships, and financial support for the start up of new businesses. The official unemployment rate has decreased significantly during the last years. However, this has resulted because of those who are after 180 days excluded from register and official statistics (so-called long term unemployed). These people are usually characterised as very apathetic and often do not try to find a new job. This social group has a low educational level and lacks professional skills, comprising a high share of the socially dysfunctional.

The share of long-term unemployed in rural areas is about 5-10% (Eamets 1992). However, this number exceeds 10% level in peripheral communities at Lake Peipsi. In the easternmost remote municipalities, particularly where weaker collective farms collapsed first, the unemployment rate started to grow already in 1992. Countryside people and youngsters formed a risk group with almost no job opportunities in small decaying communities. They either moved to cities or commute daily or weekly to cities.

Low unemployment allowances (monthly 180 EEK) do not motivate people to give up looking for a job and register as unemployed. But it is somehow different in rural areas. Incomes in the countryside are considerably lower than in the cities. Thus, the economic benefits and guarantees of social security for the unemployed play a far more important role in the countryside than in the cities.

Welfare grants, health insurance, housing benefits, subsidies paid for children, etc. has become an important alternative "income" for many. The most important fact here is the people's attitude that the state should support them and they seem to be waiting for it. Notably, more and more people prefer to stay at home or retain the status of unemployed. Unemployment allowances combined with various social support lesser incentives to look for a job as income may be reduced if one is found. For many families this has led to procreation in order to live on support payments from offspring.

Primary activities - agriculture and fishing

Primary activities are still of major importance in this particular area. Especially traditional means of subsistence are worth of mentioning. The area is poor in natural resources. Sandy soils have not favoured farming; small annual yields and low productivity of dairy cattle has become a rule. In some communities at the lake there has never been farming and, instead, residents have made their living from fishing.

In the 1930s there were less than 140,000 farms in Estonia. Most of them were relatively small with 10 ha of arable land as an average size (Kant, 1935). Bigger farms produced mainly for export and used new agricultural technologies and machinery. At the same time less than 2 ha per household was the norm in the Lake Peipsi area.

Before the independence in 1991, Estonia had 181 collective farms and 136 state farms - 317 in all. By 1994, 52 state farms, 509 joint farms, 25 trust companies, 2 general partnerships, 1218 stock companies, 760 co-operative societies, 211 other enterprises and some 13,000 private farms were formed from the earlier large farms. Some of them may grow bigger, but disintegration and bankruptcies will be acute in the next three years too.

Agriculture has suffered the most during the transition from a planned economy to free market conditions. Rural workers received higher salaries than those who worked in industry or the service sector during Soviet times (the average wages in manufacturing were 268 roubles, in transportation 271.6 roubles and in agriculture 274 roubles³). Now it is the other way around. Local people in the Lake Peipsi area often use past tenses when talking about farming. The former collective farms were broken into separate co-operatives and today only some of them are operating normally. In this context, "operating normally" means people receive their salary every month and have some work to do. The subjective reasons that the farms are doing so poorly are the high production costs, competition and difficulties in becoming accustomed to new market conditions. There is also an underlying lack of flexibility and all-important initiative. Additionally, high costs for machinery, low sales prices for agricultural products and relatively high interest rates do not make farming an attractive and profitable activity.

Employment in agriculture has slightly dropped in Estonia, though not as much as could be concluded from the official statistics. In 1989, more than one fifth of working-age people were engaged in agriculture. This figure also included personnel in service units (workshops, canteens, etc.). According to the census, the actual employment was 12%. By the beginning of 1993, agricultural employment had fallen to about 10% and was evidently still falling during 1993 and 1994 (Estonian... 1996). So far there are no reliable facts to indicate the extent of the fall but it should not have dropped below 7%.

³ We should also consider the fact that agricultural workers had the best opportunities to get additional income from informal activities.

Privatisation was designed in Estonia with the widest restoration ring of relatives. Today there are more than 200,000 applications from people who want to get back their parents' or grandparents' land. Next to co-operatives there exist some private farms and even more people are simply land-owners who are motivated only by short-term profits and do not farm at all. These plots are even smaller than in the 1930's. They make their income by selling timber abroad.

Agricultural reform eliminated collective farms, with the hope of replacing this production system with private farms. The majority of private farms were founded in the beginning of 1990's. It is estimated only a small part of them can earn their total income from traditional farming. At the moment there are not more than 2000 profitable private farms adequately supplied with machinery and equipment. Another 10,000 private farms produce for their own needs and sell almost nothing (except milk). Very often, these farmers are retired people using children and relatives as workers. That means that private farms are not a solution to the unemployment problem in the countryside. What makes the Lake Peipsi area problematic is that some of the lake communities are largely dependent on agriculture - an activity which is not profitable and which supplies jobs to only a small part of the population.

Fishing has always been a very important activity and has become the prevailing economic activity in Mustvee, Kallaste and, to a lesser extent also in Meeksi and Peipsiääre municipalities. The first settlements that came into being on the western coast of Lake Peipsi were fishing villages. Fishing has never been more profitable activity than now. Fish are highly valued in foreign markets, making fishermen's salaries about 10 times large than average regional incomes. According to unverified information, the net income of the best fishermen on the shore of Lake Peipsi was 30-50,000 EEK a month in 1994. At the same time, this money - fairly large sums under current circumstances - is not used for reinvestment. At best it is invested in building a new house or buying a better car.

Forestry and other industries

Forestry and the processing of timber is a rapidly developing sector in the Estonian economy. In 1992, the export of timber and timber products grew quickly and in 1994 amounted to 8-9% of total exports. The Estonian timber market is dominated by Finnish and Swedish affiliate firms that buy up most of the felling sold at auctions and export the timber that is relatively cheap for them but too expensive for local builders. Logging and timber processing has become a noteworthy alternative for those who lost their jobs in agriculture, especially in regions far from cities and market towns.

During Soviet times, bigger enterprises attracted smaller employers in small towns all over Estonia. For example there might have been a bakery, a knitting-department and a plant of plastic products in Kallaste which have been all closed down. All three primarily employed women. Mustvee Marat Ltd. closed down quite recently. The biggest employer in Mustvee town provided 200-250 jobs, most of them to females. Although salaries paid by "Marat" were not very big, the close-down of that enterprise caused a social catastrophe for the town. Small entrepreneurship has developed to

some extent in the region: several private shops have been established, and trade is gradually concentrating in private hands.

These are only some examples that go hand in hand with economic: the transition to free market principles, the demise of agriculture and certain industry paralleled with the rise in the service sector. However, under conditions where only some fishermen are able to consume, the local private service sector has few prospects for development.

Informal activities

Finding a process which favours exploitation of individual regions - or their contribution to an obscure "national good" - is a major obstacle for regional development. If there is to be a revival of the informal economy which reflects a widespread change of attitudes rather than a desperate reaction to unpleasant circumstances, new regional policies would be required to accommodate this trend (Kockel 1993).

Fiscal (in terms of tax evasion) and welfare economic definitions (in terms of unrecorded activity) normally cover only the hidden economy that differ from established institutions in that they avoid taxation. Household economy (DIY - 'do it yourself' activities) is a complement of formal economic organisation in that it provides for the reproduction of labour power, and helps to satisfy needs and wants which are otherwise lacking. Social economy denotes a type of economy where actors explicitly organise their activities in a mutually beneficial way. Alternative economy denotes all those activities which are deliberately intended to break with established institutions, and explore new forms of economic organisation and transaction in a more individualistic fashion (Kockel 1993). All these forms of informal economic activity are represented in the Lake Peipsi area, of which DIY activities are the most important.

During Soviet times collective farm members had up to 0.6 ha and state farm workers up to 0.25 ha of "kitchen garden" at their disposal. It is hard to believe, but people often received several times more income from their small plots than from the collective farm lands. Despite the development and higher incomes in the Estonian agricultural sector, this kind of sustainability created an extremely wide hidden sector (Raig 1987; Gabor 1991) in primary activities. We may state that an absolute majority of the Estonian population was engaged in the relatively inefficient agricultural sector.

The most important branch of the household economy in this region became horticulture with the main crop being cucumbers and tomatoes, but also potatoes and onions for the St.Petersburg (then Leningrad) and Pskov large markets. It became "a profession" for several people. However, this activity was characterised by extremely low specialisation and technological level. There were no co-operative links between neighbours (official private-public co-operation was impossible at that time). One can imagine how people used their private cars with small trailers for transporting

vegetables to the St. Petersburg market. Even at the end of the 1980s, when different types of new enterprise came into being, economic links did not emerge.

Today vegetable growing for family needs is very common in Kallaste, Mustvee and Peipsiääre municipalities. Many grow them for sale, too, but this is becoming less profitable and finding a market is becoming more problematic. Old people were accustomed to the system where somebody always came and bought up their production. This no longer occurs. The local market is very small indeed, only some of the inhabitants of the large apartment houses do not have any allotment. Thus a few private firms that happen to come to buy up vegetables can keep the prices low. The markets in bigger towns that are overflowing with imported cheap products and a high risk due to the “mafia” in some market places in eastern Estonia and Tallinn, leave little hope for local producers. But to sell produce in St. Petersburg or Pskov is even more difficult because of Russia’s double tariff barriers on Estonian foodstuffs making competition with local production unfair. Therefore it has become common that cucumbers, tomatoes, onions, and smoked fish are sold simply on the Tartu-Jõhvi highway (especially in Raja municipality, but to a lesser extent in Mustvee, too). Ordinary people dream of western tariff barriers on imported foodstuffs being removed and the re-establishment of the ties with the St. Petersburg and Pskov markets. They think that the situation could be solved in part by conventions between the Estonian and Russian governments giving gardeners a chance to make contracts with the municipality of St. Petersburg and Pskov for the wholesale trade of vegetables.

Culture as a resource?

Over the past decade, tourism has been heralded as the fastest growing “industry” in Estonia, and consequently a suitable panacea for peripheral regions with little potential for growth in manufacturing or other economic activities. Tourism is labour-intensive, generates varied employment and stimulates economic exchange. Promoting the service sector, and tourism in particular, has been identified as a suitable alternative strategy for endogenous growth⁴. However, in many cases this has led to the gradual destruction of the two most important local resources, scenery and culture, as the emphasis of development projects has been placed on quantity rather than quality. Recent years have also seen an unprecedented growth in the number of local museums and so-called heritage centres which support the latter tendencies in many ways. Furthermore, in cultural tourism development where the people themselves are *quasi* the main tourist attractions of a region or locality, it is for them to decide how much of their culture they wish to share with the tourist (Kockel 1994). Cultural tourism is a type of special interest tourism. As such, it attracts a higher proportion of independent travellers and thereby necessitates target marketing in order to attract an audience (Munro 1994). Cultural tourism is environmentally and

⁴ Endogenous means that a region should develop under its own control, in its own direction and by its own responsibility. The theorists of endogenous development postulate region-specific policy strategies of ‘grass-roots’ development, assuming that general welfare follows from individual welfare, rather than the reverse.

economically sustainable. The product will be developed so that environmental quality is preserved. Development initiatives will concentrate on developing viable tourism enterprises. This means reducing barriers to growth, such as seasonality, profitability, access transport, limited product range and capacity constraints.

An indirect result of cultural tourism can be the generation of mutual respect between host and guest. Where the guest genuinely acquires an appreciation for the host community culture, and that culture becomes enriched through a greater level of understanding. The cultural identity of a region is not just a strength, but is its only possession, is unique, and must therefore be treated carefully. Although the local culture is an area's major feature and attraction, the cultures of the tourists, their lifestyles and the way they spend their holidays will be imposed on this and may conflict with or be contrary to the values of the local population (Terpstra 1994). But there is also the idea that tourists bring reassurance and approval to remote communities; injecting a positive spirit into an atmosphere of general decline. Despite an indisputable air of depression, in many communities there is also a keen understanding of the development context, and of the initiative required, to "turn the tide". Tourism in general tends to create work for local women. This would be exactly what is needed for Lake Peipsi area with its rich heritage. What impact will this have on the local culture? Will it affect their environment? May this "ill-defined interest of indigenous heritage" lead to a hatred of strangers?

Ullrich Kockel (1994) describes a project which is seen as offering high quality jobs. This is the Heritage Centre, a postmodern version of the local museum which demonstrates aspects of local, regional or even national archeology, history and culture. Whereas in the museum the focus has been on cultural objects of the past, in the Heritage Centre it is more on the dynamics of the display facilitated by present-day technology and know-how. From the planners' point of view, Heritage Centres offer a range of advantages over other forms of development: heritage is an omnipresent resource - everybody everywhere has some of it; unlike natural resources, it is not depleted by exploitation; its exploitation, rather than taking something from the local community, may convey status and other conveniently inexpensive benefits to its members; as a postmodern product it is flexible and can be easily adapted to changing market requirements; marketing tourist facilities are cheaper, per unit of revenue, than courting industrial investment which may turn out to be rather transitory once grants and concessions expire; and, after all, if things fail to work out as planned, a Heritage Centre which proves to be non-viable still looks better and less depressing, than an empty factory.

Some of the local leaders in Lake Peipsi municipalities have started to think about small scale specific tourism with cultural tourism included. Promotion of cultural heritage (Old Believers, Setu) goes hand in hand with the establishment of local heritage centres in Mustvee and Värskä.

Conclusions

In the functional as well as in the territorial sense, Eastern Estonia is generally regarded as a national periphery. The Estonian eastern periphery is a structurally weak rural area, where natural conditions combined with historically evolved land use and settlement structures, compounded by seemingly unfavourable demographic changes, make development as conventionally perceived - by means of providing a viable infrastructure within which manufacturing can be encouraged - rather difficult if serious disruptions of social and ecological structures are to be avoided. Although small-scale industry on the basis of local resources (vegetables, fish and timber) should still be developed.

At the same time the departure of productive residents and the arrival of unproductive ones lowers local development potential and reduces receptiveness for reforms. The local potential for development has decreased in the Estonian eastern periphery to a level which no longer permits development based on local political and economic initiative. It is even hard to find people and offer them free consultation (through such organisations as the American Peace Corps, or NGO's) in order to set up small entrepreneurship.

We may agree with the recent Estonian Human Development Report (1996) that states that the development potential and current situation of the border areas, gives no hope for spontaneous development. Special development programmes financed from the state budget (in consultation with local governments) should be developed in order to keep the population there and to reduce social welfare expenses. Eastern Estonia requires a special status in national policy design which also enables it to preserve its historically rich cultural potential.

This all has a security aspect too. It is not reasonable to isolate border areas and their problems or not to show an interest in those who have decided to stay or even emigrate there. Unemployment and social unrest may cause ethnic tensions or in the worst case - irredentist movements among Russians. This is of course black scenario but important to mention as well.

The numerous volunteer associations (e.g NGOs) can actively participate in research and planning activities or help to train local leaders in order to build up a civil society.

The informal economy remains an inseparable part of local life in the near future. It is difficult to get under control but guarantees extra income for locals. Policy-makers should take this into account while proposing development schemes for Eastern Estonia.

A distinctive culture and heritage, and the absence of mass tourism are the key ideas of cultural tourism. Within this planning framework, the promotion of "heritage" as a fundamental basis of culture resource management has become a key concern.

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Cultural Perspectives of the Lake Peipsi Region

Eiki Berg

Introduction

Present-day Estonia is far from being a pure “nation-state”. Its population structure is completely different in comparison with the pre-war situation. The largest minority group speaks the Russian language. However, not all of them are ethnically Russians but with different identities and cultural backgrounds. Most of them have come here after WW II and settled down in the capital city and north-eastern “oil-shale towns”. Today they form the major part of non-citizens and those who most oppose the national level integration. They represent rather unsatisfied people who create social instability as well. What is usually unknown is the Peipsi region with its unique cultural plurality and coexistence of different ethnic identities. On the contrary, in such a particular region one can face another set of problems. The question, how to preserve these already integrated minority cultures, is steadily on the agenda.

Multicultural Peipsi Region

In the course of history the mixed Estonian-Russian population on the western coast of Lake Peipsi has managed to create and also preserve to the present day a distinct multicultural environment. This settlement is a peculiar example of coexistence between different cultures and faiths through the centuries. The compact Estonian and Russian settlements are located intermittently, for example the Orthodox community of Alajõe, or the Old Believers in Raja, Peipsiääre and Piirissaare municipalities. Inbetween lie Estonian-speaking areas with Lutheran population (Fig. 1). Mustvee with 2000 inhabitants represents such a plurality of cultures fairly well. It is a bilingual town with four different congregations - Old Believers, Orthodox, Lutherans and Baptists. Mustvee, Kallaste and Kasepää are traditional settlements of Russian Old Believers at Lake Peipsi. They all have a history of more than 250 years. In many ways they are different in terms of ethnic composition, settlement type and locational peculiarities. But they still differ greatly from the other areas around Lake Peipsi in cultural content.

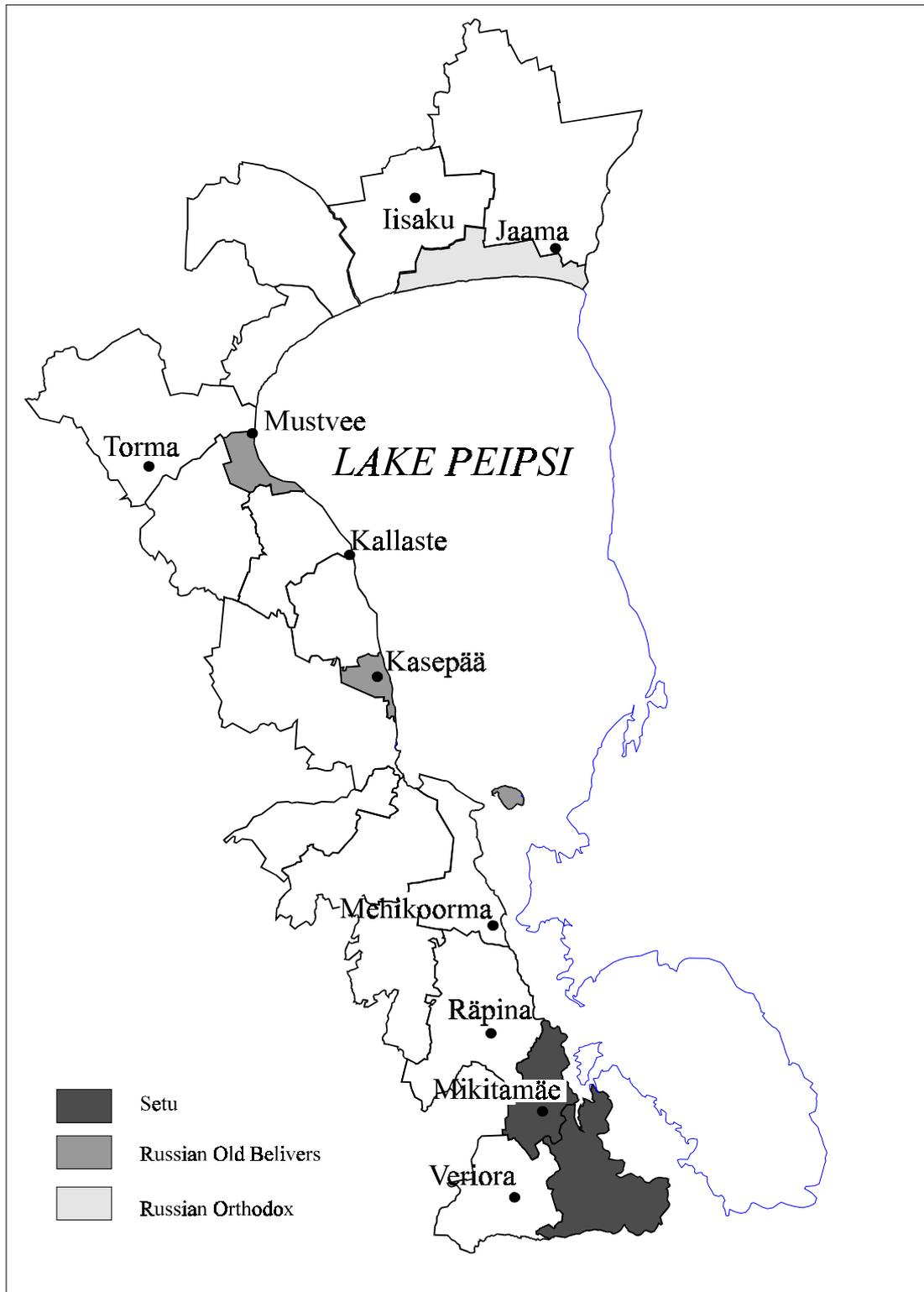


Figure 1. Multicultural Peipsi region

The south-eastern municipalities (e.g. Mikitamäe) of Lake Peipsi form a part of the historical Setumaa district. As a cultural shatterbelt it has had Russian influences like the Orthodox religion and several features in material culture but the people have preserved their own language, Setu - one of the dialects of Estonian. Thus they

remained in the midst of these two cultures, having much in common both with Estonians and Russians but never totally assimilating into either of them. At the same time a kind of unawareness is characteristic of Mikitamäe people: while other Estonians consider these villagers Setus, 'pure Setus' (mainly from Russia) on the contrary, call them "mõtsik" (strangers). Also it is interesting to note that elderly people consider Setu identity an important issue even though they tend not to be 'originals', while the young people do not care so much at all about Setu identity. Is this all because the historical Setumaa is administratively divided between Estonia and Russia at the moment? If we talk about the united Setumaa, then under which political conditions could it maintain the cultural distinctness the most easily? It is the question of cultural similarities and dissimilarities, or directly, of assimilation and preservation conditions.

However, the real problems facing the Peipsi region and these unique cultures are not so much concerned with the threat of possible assimilation into the Estonian majority culture. In the past their existence on the coast of Lake Peipsi was favoured by the combination of peripheral location, traditional means of subsistence (alternative economy) and a lack of governmental interests in the region. Now, however, these factors seem to favour the opposite tendencies. These include an outflow of young people and negative natural increase. Steady economic decline is also a major threat to the cultural plurality at the moment.

It may be hard to believe, but the Estonian population as a majority group also suffers due to the loss of traditions and ethical convictions. Usually people cannot tell you the story of the village, or legends that are connected with certain places and events. They have forgotten the tradition, the circumstance that was extremely important 'once upon a time', something they could have been proud of, that also made them different from "the others". At every step you take you face modernity and urban mentality hand in hand with the backwardness and out-of-date attitudes. Village youth looks aimless, without proper activities. Are these people going to lose their roots? If this is an identity crisis, then what could be done to cross the divide?

'Local Russians' at Peipsi

The Alutaguse area, where the Jaama village is situated, has been one of the less populated areas of Estonia since time immemorial. These remote and rather inaccessible villages were originally inhabited by Orthodox Russians on the western bank of the Narva River. They preserved their ethnic ties during history, and notwithstanding the political border (the Narva River) people communicated with each other across the river according to their old habits and needs. Once there were complaints that people from these villages crossed the Narva River, attended the Russian Orthodox church and priests from the other side came for mission as well. The idea to send Russian-speaking Lutheran clergymen to these villages was never followed and the people at the Narva River remained under the influence of the Orthodox religion and Russian culture.

Nowadays the situation is very much the same. The few people living now in Jaama village are predominantly Russians, but they are Estonian citizens. There are also

some 'fresh people' who could probably be called locals too. For instance, the priest and his big family added six new people to the village. Besides the locals there are often also the relatives of the village people, and 'datshniks' (so-called 'seasonals') who spend most of their summertime in Jaama. This way the population of Jaama grows from 60 in winter to some hundreds in summer. However, the village people are generally retired couples who host their children and grandchildren in summer.

Due to its peripheral location - far from the main transport routes, separated by harsh environmental conditions like dense forests and impassable wetlands, Jaama village remains a tiny unobtainable sleepy spot on the Earth where the authorities find hardly anything exciting to do. This abandoned place still survives and lives its own life without any disturbance. One can hardly notice any changes, indeed. All signs are written in Russian (either they are not aware of the Language Law or they simply ignore it), the post-office was closed because of the lack of Estonian-speaking applicants... Only the Estonian border guard reminds you that somewhere here (!) rests the edge of Estonian legislation. Most likely Jaama will remain a distinct Russian village even when there are no more locals left and it resembles more a summer colony of 'seasonals'.

A completely different example of a local Russian settlement is Mehikoorma. Today Mehikoorma can be considered almost an Estonian village; however, Russians were the first settlers here. These Russians were mainly construction workers who came from Võõpsu and Värskä, but also from the other side of the lake. Most of them, however, melted into Estonian culture and speak (or at least understand) Estonian fairly well. There are also Estonians who returned from the Russian side of the lake during World War II. If we take additionally the postwar immigrants from the East and the rest of Estonia, we will get a more diffused mixture, whose identity is all the more unclear.

During the Soviet times there was a Russian elementary school in Mehikoorma together with an Estonian one. At present there are only three forms at the Russian school. This is because there are not enough children to attend the school. Many Russian parents simply send their children into the Estonian school to secure their future. There have never been problems or conflicts between the inhabitants of the village because of ethnicity. This is mostly thanks to the history of the village.

About half of the village people are ethnic Russians. Yet quite many of them are 'Estonians according to their mind and language'. In some families people can hardly define their home language, or there are 'Russians' who are not able to speak a word of Russian. A comparatively high rate of mixed marriages between Estonians and Russians makes self-identification even more complicated. In the case of mixed families the home language is more often Russian or both languages are used equally. The acculturation process seems to be quite active. It is a natural result of open relations and intercultural communication. Thus local Russians can be different - integrated Mehikoorma *contra* segregated Jaama.

Who are Old Believers?

Two dimensions can be identified in the religion: a system of orders and prohibitions that one has to follow for common understanding among members, and a strong perception of community with the desire to preserve the already-created opposition towards strangers, or those from "the outside". Yet if we try to analyse the spiritual side of the Old Orthodox religion on the western coast of Lake Peipsi, we may find some discrepancies. What has preserved from the former vital belief? Some 30-40 elderly people (mostly women) who attend the ordinary Sunday service, live their lives under the commandments in true love and holiness in every Old Believers' village. The fact that the total number of those belonging to the church may amount to 150-300 people in each, and the number of those residing at Peipsi, who more or less regard themselves as the descendants of Old Believers, is about 3500 still, leaves a little hope. There is a general view that the young will come at least when there is a great feast or baptism or funeral...

The Soviet time with its universal secularisation left its mark on the religiousness of the younger generation. During the Soviet period the children of Old Believers were pressed between the two powerful institutions at odds with each other - the school and the church. The school could punish them for attending church, the church could assign punishment to a young Old Believer if he did not behave correctly, for example, for singing and dancing at school parties, etc. As the school system represented a more powerful channel of social mobility and made accessible a more modern lifestyle, many children quickly lost their ties with the religion. However, one can also notice the rising interest in religion among the young in recent times. Many traditions have been kept alive in most of the families but sometimes without the real meaning. In the worst cases they have simply disappeared. For instance, there is an icon in almost every house and sometimes in a new apartment or even in a bar... It is becoming a symbol of status and prestige while losing its real meaning step by step. Local community leaders have made attempts to open Sunday schools or introduce the classes of the Old Orthodox religion in several places around Lake Peipsi. They also worry about the fact that various ethical convictions are losing their relevance. When people steal and sell icons, smoke or drink excessively and live immoral lives, these are serious violations of ancient canons.

Even more important than the restoration of ethical convictions, however, is the education of new leaders. The Raja church, for example has not been able to find a successor to the present "teacher" (or batushka), a woman aged 82. The position, of course, ought to be filled by the most educated man in the community, but even this is not possible. The situation is much the same in Kallaste where their batushka died last autumn and another one has to come from Kolkja to replace him during the most important events. Now an old woman is also running the service occasionally in Kallaste, but the community has not still found a person with the necessary skills and knowledge of Old Church Slavonic and religious practices. If there are no people, one can hardly imagine a glorious future and long-time existence. Religious introduction at school may be a solution for a while, but even in their own villages not all the people are Old Believers, nor are they interested in having only one world outlook. Furthermore, Old Orthodoxy is very conservative and difficult to match with present-day values. At the end of the 20th century Old Believers resemble in many ways the

'last Mohicans' despite their own wishes or our desire to help them in need. It is only a question of time before the chapels close down because of the lack of believers.

Conservatism was embedded deeply in the Old Believers' religion to serve the maintenance of its archaic features. Religion has been and still continues to be the main source of identity for the Russian Old Believers. Religion has also been moulding ethnic identity both directly and indirectly. For instance, marriage partners had to be of the same religion in earlier times. There also existed a strong perception of community among the followers. But then, are Old Believers only those who regularly attend church and serve 'their God'?

If we try to analyse the communal side of religion, it appears that people who have nothing to do with the Old Orthodox religion are in spite of that Old Believers, too. Why? Because family relations and kinship ties determine their belonging to the group. People's earlier life in isolation and their marriages only amongst themselves have led to a situation where most of the people living in the area are in one way or another relatives. The closer one is to another, the more frequently they communicate. This in turn strengthens the sense of belonging together, unitedness, and also makes the process of identifying oneself easier. Nowadays the role of religion in the development of their world outlook has been diminishing continuously. Thus Old Believers who are the followers of the actual old rite, are to a large extent elderly people, particularly retired women, while Old Believers who are the members of the broader community, are more likely to be the relatives of these elderly people.

Maybe now it is the right time to ask what is more important - to be an Old Believer or a Russian? Before WW II Old Believers living at Lake Peipsi regarded themselves as being more Christians than Russians. Today things are different. Now they are Russians whose mother tongue and the language spoken at home is Russian. They read Russian periodicals, watch the TV channels coming from the East, and their parents and spouses are predominantly Russians. However, things are even more complicated when some old people (although very few) find difficulties in deciding whether they are Russians or Estonians! These people regard themselves as Estonians because they have lived all their life in Estonia, speak fluent Estonian and are Estonian citizens. The latter is the most important fact here because the majority of Estonian non-citizens are Russians.

Another quite an interesting phenomenon that can be found in the region is the separation of "ours" from "the others". Not only do Estonians turn out to be strangers for most Old Believers, but also Orthodox Russians and Soviet-era immigrants to Estonia (the so-called 'Rusmans') are kept at a distance. Strangely enough, this kind of distinguishing is mutual. Old Believers, who several years ago quite often visited the Leningrad markets, were always known as 'chukhnas' (Russian slang for Estonians). This was because of their origin and peculiar way of speaking Russian.

Analysis and concluding remarks

The project questionnaire about ethnic relations and religion echoed many tendencies typical to the lake area. Most of the respondents were born in Estonia (86%) while only 11% of them came from Russia (Fig. 2).

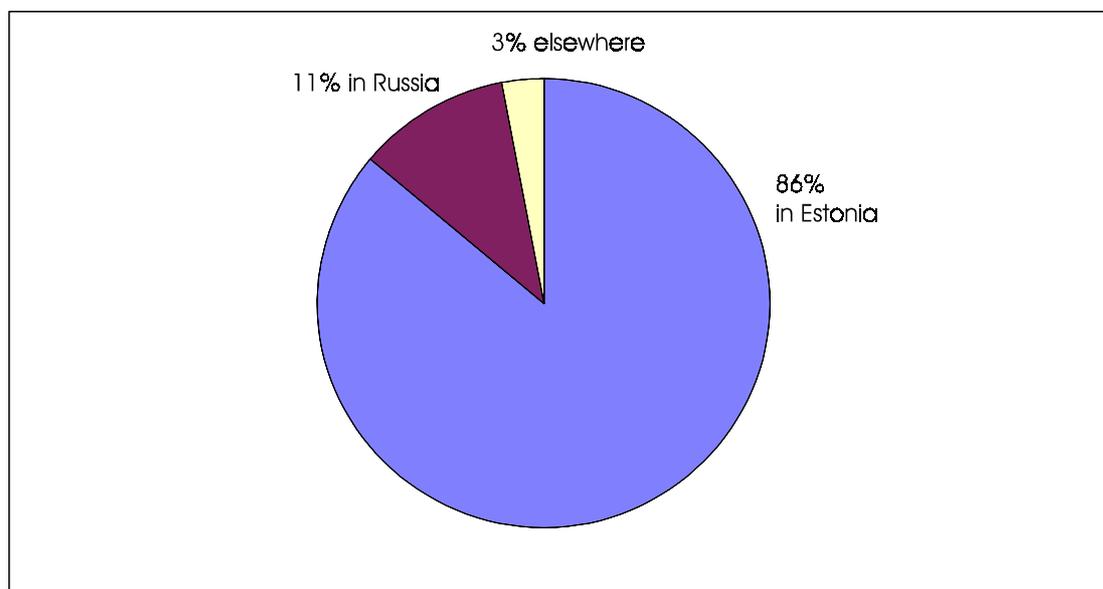


Figure 2. “Where were you born?”

The population of the Peipsi region is without any noticeable foreign influences. Most of the postwar immigrants went to the industrial areas of North-East Estonia and thus left the Peipsi region untouched. The two ethnic groups were almost equally represented: Estonians formed 56% and Russians 34% of the total.

The importance of belonging to these groups turned out to be rather different (Fig. 3). Mehikoorma, for example, represents a mixed ethnic entity and forms one extreme that values ethnic belonging very highly (70%). In Jaama ethnic belonging was not really important (47%). This is understandable in case all the village people belong to the same group. Kallaste people either did not understand the question or religious identification was considerably more important. (The numbers 1-4 reflect Kallaste, Jaama, Veriora and Mehikoorma respectively).

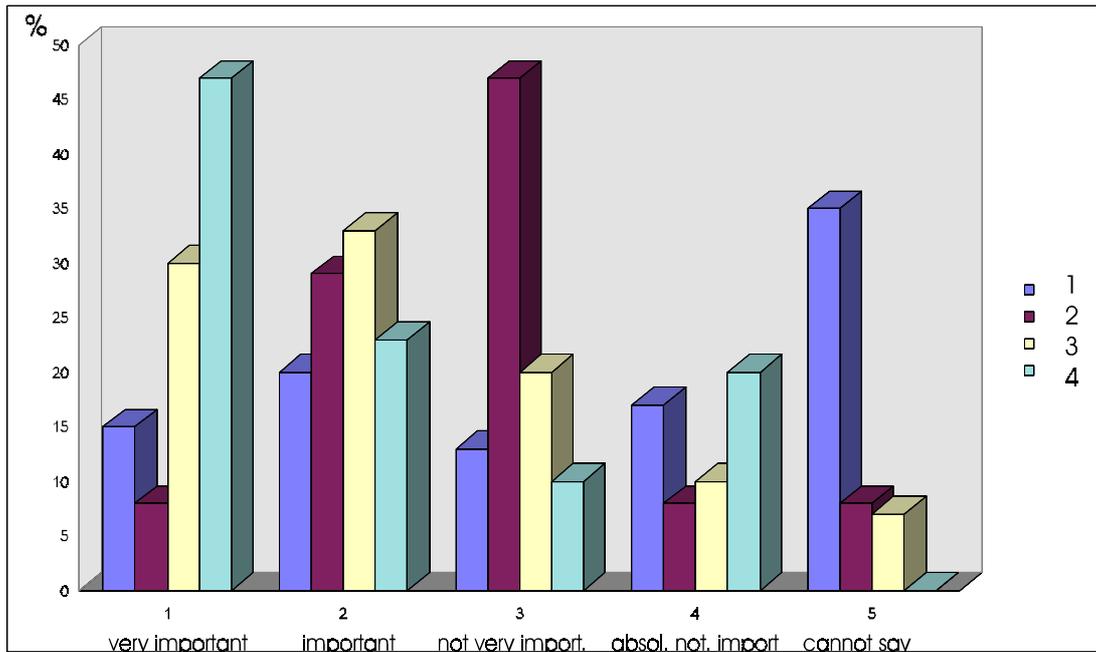


Figure 3. “Is it important for you to belong to the named ethnic group?”

The situation is much the same with the general attitudes towards mixed marriages with the difference that Mehikoorma people who already are mixed cannot deny their ignorance in that issue. But it is important among the Estonians. A significant part of Veriora people (40%) declared homogenous marriages essential while that was absolutely not the point for Kallaste people (43%) (Fig. 4).

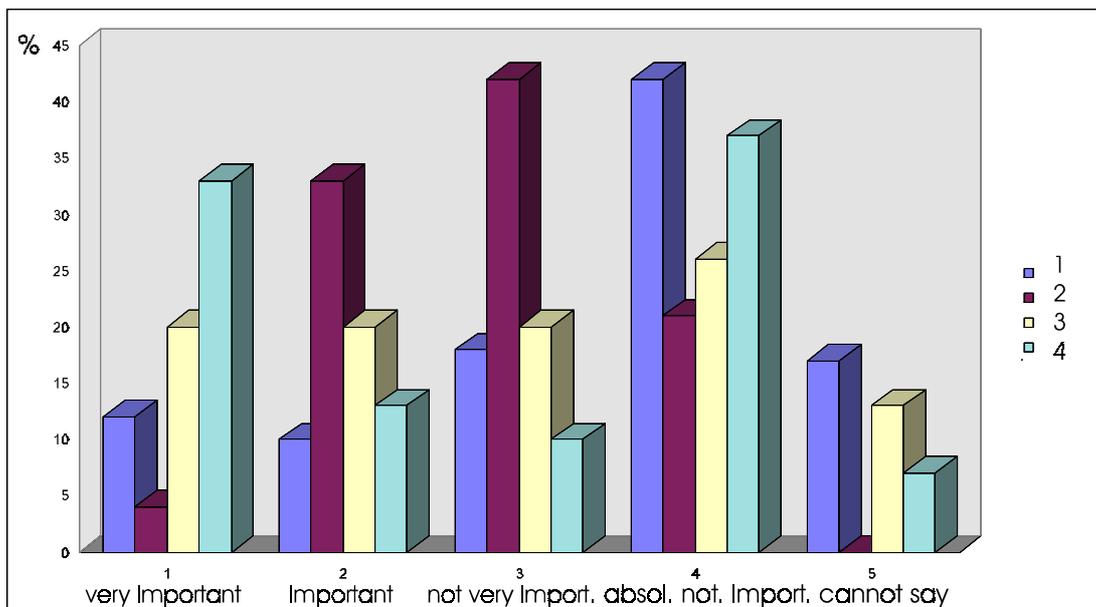


Figure 4. “How important is it for you that your spouse belongs to the same ethnic group as you?”

Kallaste also surprised with the attitudes towards religion (Fig. 5). Those who considered it important (40%) were less in number than those in Jaama (63%) and the same as in Veriora.

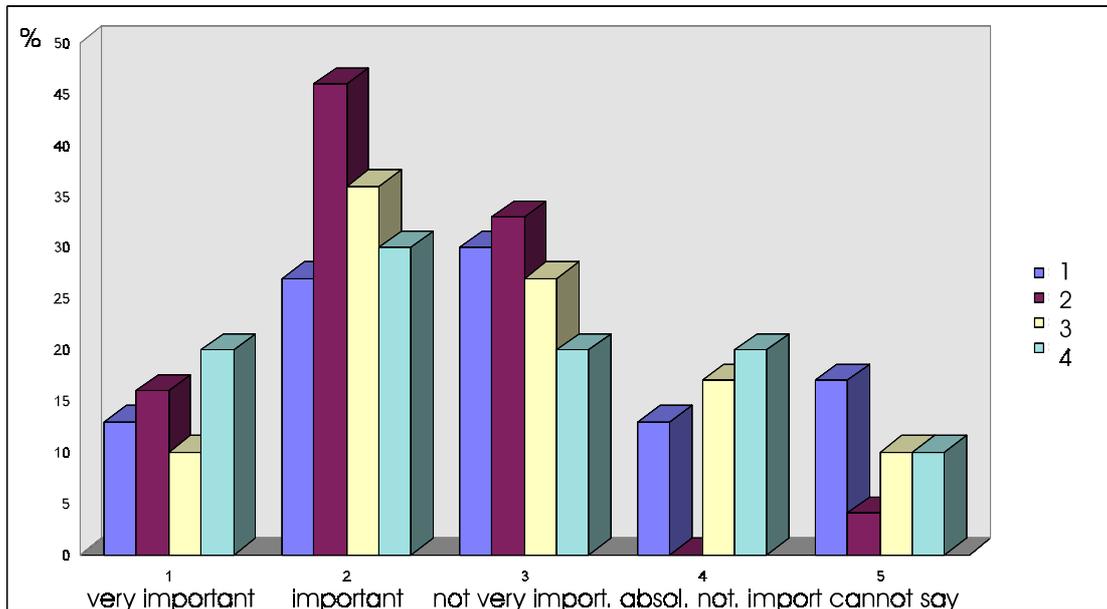


Figure 5. "Is religion important for you?"

It is difficult to explain this figure and compare "religious" Kallaste as a traditional Old Believers' settlement with the traditionally "non-religious" Lutheran Veriora. If we know the relative importance of retired people in the total population and accept the fact that they mostly adhere to religious creed, such percentage is self-evident. According to statistics retired people constitute 75% of the population in Jaama and 30% in Kallaste.

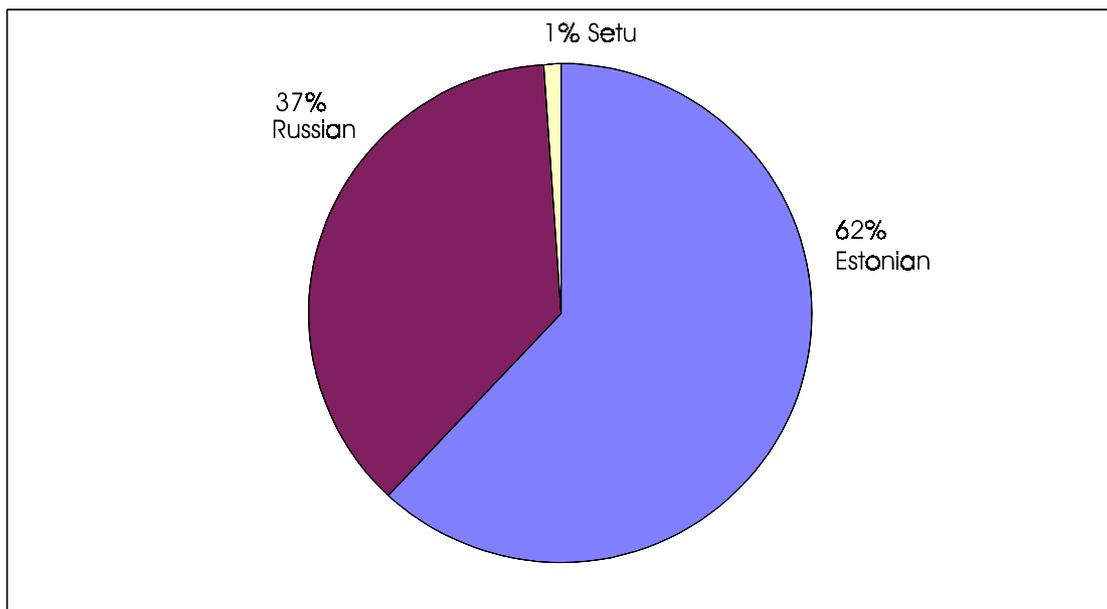


Figure 6. "What language do you speak at home?"

Not all the people who speak Estonian at home (62%) are Estonians (56%), nor do they all belong to the Lutheran church (26%) (Fig. 6, 7).

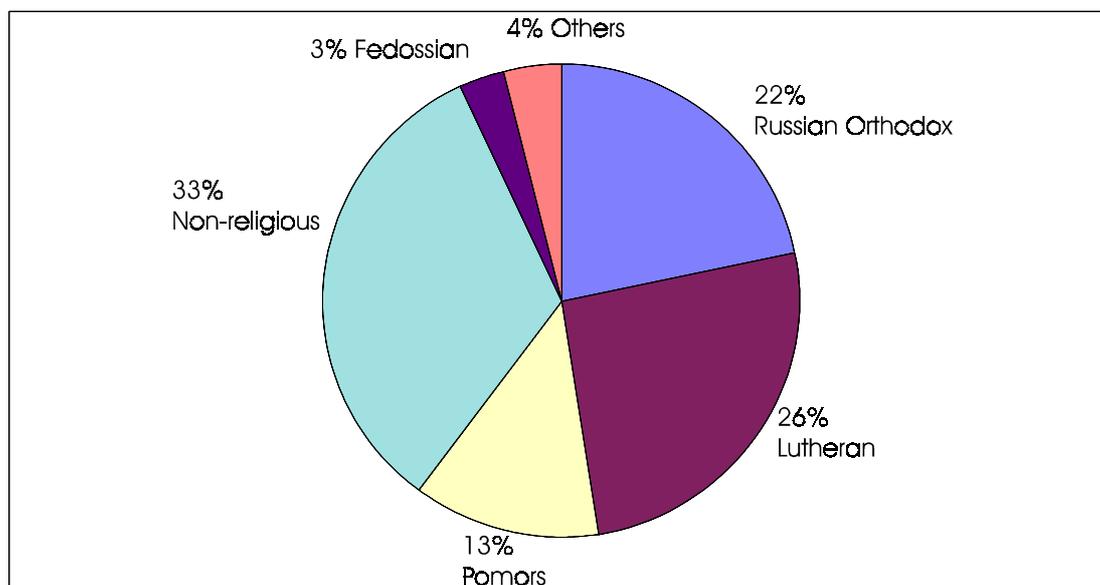


Figure 7. “What is your religion?”

There are also Russians and Setus whose home language is Estonian, or some Estonians who attend Russian Orthodox church. The correlation between the ethnicity, religion and language is better seen among Russians at Peipsi. 34% of respondents were ethnic Russians, belonged to Russian Orthodox church (22%) or Old Believers’ sects (16%) and spoke Russian at home (37%). Last but not least, the dominant group, in fact, was composed of non-religious people (33%).

What kind of conclusions could we draw from the abovementioned facts? First, local Russians will continue their separate development in Jaama and Mehikoorma. There are neither signs about the cultural integration in Jaama, nor the threat of assimilation into the majority culture. But unfortunately they may simply become extinct very soon. Mehikoorma Russians form a more or less assimilated group that faces difficulties in clearing up its identity. Finally it can be assumed that in case the present development continues, the distinctness of Old Believers will disappear and the difference between them and the rest of the Russian-speaking population in Estonia will become negligible; or, Old Believers (in a purely religious sense) will disappear and the identity based on religion will transform into something else. This might be another possible prospect.

The reasons why these tendencies prevail are partly inevitable in nature and partly results of the dissatisfactory social and economic conditions. Local cultures are weakening mainly because people leave the region or die. Their future depends on the regional policy pursued in Tallinn and carried out by local governments. Maybe this region needs the special recognition and attention of authorities. Even the acceptance of widespread informal economy in the Culture Reserve Area of a special status could prolong the real life expectancy more than concrete regional planning.

Social Relations in a Transboundary Context

Elena Nikiforova

The issues of village and peasantry had not been discussed in Russia since the collectivisation campaign. Hence the problems of rural life have aroused noteworthy interest today. Recent social and political changes in Russia have influenced rural society, too. The eastern and southern coasts of Lake Peipsi (Pskovsko-Chudskoe) face certain specific problems which result from the proximity of the state border between Estonia and Russia. In fact, this transboundary region has been economically, culturally and religiously closely tied. With the establishment of a closed border, the customary cultural and socio-economic ties were torn apart.

This paper is an attempt to examine the influences of the Estonian-Russian border on rural life. It is based on the data collected during the sociological study of villages in the region of Lake Peipsi between Estonia and Russia in August 1995. The villages which were part of the research project on the Russian side included Kolokolovo, Zakhody, Samolva, Kobyle Gorodishche, Meshokol, Ostrovcy, Kusva, the islands of Zalit and Belov, and Krupp. The main method was a participant observation that enabled us to get a picture of social relations in communities, to become aware of the problems that are really acute for villagers. In addition, the field researchers (students of Pskov and St. Petersburg Universities) kept diaries about everyday life in the villages, made several in-depth interviews and collected material for standardised questionnaires.

Intermediate borderland

We can divide our study area into three geographical zones in which the dependence on the border varies from strong to weak. Most of the villages where the observation took place were situated in the intermediate borderland.

Villages like Samolva, Meshokol, Kolokolovo, Ostrovcy, and the islands of Belov and Zalit can feel the influence of border, but its intensity varies from moderate to weak. ...*"No, the border does not disturb me. It did not improve anything... What can the border improve? Well, some restrictions appeared ... Generally speaking nothing has changed - the life here continues in the same way as earlier."* (from an interview in Samolva). The existence of border does not determine everyday life in that particular area. However, in some important spheres of life the recently stable situation has considerably changed. For example, it has touched fishing that was the main source of income and the prevailing activity for Samolva people as well as on the islands. Due to the border the fishing area diminished and fishermen needed permits for fishing. Moreover, we met people who found some advantages in the new border conditions in the intermediate borderland. These were representatives of different authorities and the administrative board. In this case the border and all border "accessories" served an orderly purpose: *"The border - it is even better for me because of my work. For*

instance if I need to keep people at a distance, I just say it, and the borderguards will not allow them to pass.” (from an interview with a forestguard).

A quite remarkable example of the intermediate borderland is the village of Kolokolovo. Before the establishment of the border there was an active communication between the local Russians and their neighbours from the western coast of Lake Peipsi. It was profitable for Estonians to trade there - the Estonian sellers came to Kolokolovo by boats in summertime and across the ice in winter. The Russians visited Estonia, too, but mainly for shopping. The migration from Kolokolovo began in the mid-1950s. Young people left to study, or to work in other regions, and settled in towns. Tartu and Narva as the nearest cultural and industrial centers were the most attractive places for the youth. Nowadays the new political conditions are represented in Kolokolovo by a military unit, which has become the main employer for the locals. The village population has rotated. Only 25% of the respondents have lived here since their birth. 20% of the respondents have lived here only for several years. They are mainly the officials of the former Soviet troops that were withdrawn from the Baltic states.

Outer borderland

In the outer borderland the border influences are weak. People feel the effects of the border only under specific circumstances. In our research such a place was Kusva. It is situated near Pskov, quite far from the border. Only a few families live in this village permanently. Many locals have left for Pskov or for big villages nearby. Most of the houses are completely deserted in winter but many people return to Kusva or come to visit their parents and grandparents in summer. To compare with the other regions we did not hear anything about the previous migration to Estonia from the outer borderland - people usually left for Russian towns (Pskov and St. Petersburg).

Inner borderland: the case of Krupp

In our study only one village could be considered as a case within the inner borderland. Due to its location, Krupp and the surrounding area feels the political changes stronger than any other village in the Pskov region.

Since times immemorial Lake Peipsi has been a good natural frontier between Estonian lands and the territory of Russia. The history of borders to the north and to the south of the lake is rather complicated and goes back to the distant past. From the 14th century until the present this boundary has been altered several times. This territory was populated only in the 15th - 16th centuries when the peasants from the central regions of Russia escaped from the oppression of landowners and settled here. In the middle of the 17th century the rural population of the Pskov guberniya increased. Among the new settlers there were also Estonians who found Russia's soils more fertile and more land to cultivate.

Krupp is a relatively young village. It was difficult to find out the data of its foundation. According to the interviews there were only three houses in the village in the middle of the 1920s.

“... Earlier we did not know how to cultivate land but now we do... . I remember a great famine at that time... And then my father began to sell fish. Probably I was a little girl then - 10 years old or even younger... . Here I am sitting on a cart... . Oh... ! We went south to Pechory. Only Estonians lived there... . Then we gave them fish and got peas or beans in return... . It was such an exchange... . Sometimes they also gave us apples, for nothing... . Normally we loaded the fish in the evening and left at night... . We were in Pechory already in the morning when people were still asleep... .” (from an interview in Krupp)

Demographic situation in the borderland

At first glance it is difficult to define the general features of the demographic change in the villages - the number of inhabitants varies from 19 (Meshokol) to 300 and even more in Krupp and Samolva. The village of Meshokol is a typical example of a remote inland village in Russia - lack of infrastructure, one phone for the whole village and the nearest hospital is about 30 km away. A van shop comes only once a week. The local residents hold that everything can be bought. (“Everything” is bread, salt, matches, cigarettes and vodka.). Most of the people drink because “there is nothing else to do”. The villagers dream of the bus connection once a week. The question is about the survival of this village. “Bus once a week” could soften the situation providing connection with “the outer world”. Also children could visit their old parents who need help - 18 out of the 19 residents are retired. The case of Meshokol is not an exception, but the rule. Most of the villages are deserted because of the peripheral geographical location. The isolation from markets, bad demographic situation, unemployment, weak social infrastructure and hopelessness with respect to future characterize this area the best.

A somewhat better situation exists only in the villages with a labor market (Krupp and Samolva). There is a collective farm “A. Nevskii” in Samolva (306 people) and a fish processing plant “Druzhba” with a holiday campus for Pskov factories in Krupp (406 people). However, half of the whole population of Samolva are retired (older than 60).

A similar demographic situation is characteristic of both small and big villages. People emigrated to Pskov, Leningrad region and before 1991 also to Estonia. To leave for Estonia meant “to move abroad”. We were especially interested in that particular point of view because it proved the existence of a symbolic border already in the Soviet times. Long interviews enabled us to restore the history and geography of migration routes as well as the causes for migration.

During WW II, refugees from the Pskov region left their houses that were destroyed and sought shelter in the nearest Estonian villages and farms. After the war some of them moved on to the towns of Tallinn, Tartu and Vxru. A more intensive process of migration took place in the post-war years. Urbanisation enticed people from the villages to towns in search of better life. Parents encouraged their children to stay in

towns after finishing studies. *“It is better to be an ordinary worker somewhere in town than spend all the life at the lake!”* (from an interview). The “transparency” of borders within the Soviet Union, the proximity to Tartu and Tallinn, and the relatively high standard of living contributed to a mass migration to Estonia from the Russian borderland. It was not a problem for the newcomers to visit their relatives in Russia because of a regular bus and rail connection. Sometimes the whole big family followed the first settler. According to the research data, there were 4 related groups of families that left for Vxru from the Pskov region. The number of people in these families varied from 8 to 16. Just to name but a few, improving the financial situation and obtaining a dwelling place, were good reasons to start living in Estonia.

A: *“ I have many relatives in Estonia. It would have been better to stay there on the Estonian side... Butter, chocolate - once we carried everything from Estonia... Maybe I’m wrong but the service...!”*Q: *“And what was the difference between Estonians and Russians?”*A: *“Oh, I have just said. Even the service. I can say because I know that... Although they did not love us and were not always polite, but instead of that...”* (from an interview in Samolva)

The newcomers did not meet serious difficulties in being hired. Since the early fifties the Soviet government had developed industry in Estonia and provided many working places in factories. The population was partly “redistributed” - in the same way like Pskov, Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) and Estonia enticed people from the countryside, so did large collective farms and administrative centres attract inhabitants of small villages nearby. Although insignificant, this trend continues even today. It is largely due to the dwelling policy of the collective farms. About ten years ago collective farms started an intensive building campaign in Samolva and Krupp which became a reason for young families to remove from the islands and small villages.

Hardships in obtaining the Estonian citizenship, a high probability of losing their job, as well as weak social guarantees, have caused the remigration of the Russians to their motherland. However, this has not been so extensive in nature. The majority of those who have moved to the cities in Estonia and Russia do not plan to return. Obviously their children will be city dwellers who will not return either.

During the recent years, the military has appeared as a factor that influences the demographic situation in the district to a significant extent. It is connected with the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from the Baltic states and their dislocation there, on the new state border. The demarcation of the border provided vacant jobs for the locals and restrained people’s flows.

Economy

The economic activities have remained almost unchanged until the present day. Nowadays the main employer is the fish processing plant “Druzhba”. Fishing is undoubtedly a traditional activity in the region. The number of people increased in the village due to the developing fish industry in the 1940s. It is difficult to say, whether today fishing is the main source of subsistence or not. Only 26% of respondents got their main income from fishing. Horticulture was the most important means of subsistence for 68% of respondents. Several years ago markets were located from Leningrad to Tartu. Today these routes are closed for villagers because of high travel expenses and the closed border. Horticulture is losing its position due to the difficulties in sale. Traditionally the villagers sold strawberries and cucumbers right in Krupp - the state farm bought them up. Now they have to show their own initiative.

Despite the fact that Estonia and Russia were both unified into the former USSR, a symbolic boundary has always existed between them. Although the distance between Krupp and Saatse is only about three kilometres, it is enough to feel the economic differences. Services and products were cheaper and more attractive on the Estonian side and the local Russians took advantage of price and tax differentials.

“... Everybody went to Zacherenie (Russian place-name for Saatse). We lived at the expense of Zacherenie, because everything was freely available, everything was cheaper, but we did not have anything in our shops except macaroni.” (from an interview)

The Krupp people benefited from the sales of vegetables and berries in Saatse because of higher prices in Estonia. This was an additional income for many people in the summertime. Even now people would pick berries and gather mushrooms in the Krupp area if they can sell them in Saatse which is on the other side of the border. Thus in Krupp the social network is shaped by the border, it depends on the latter, and has no other options than to continually adapt itself to its vagaries.

Ethnicity and ethnic relations in the borderland

The Russian side of the lake is more homogenous than the Estonian one - it is largely populated by ethnic Russians. Most of the respondents (94%) were Russians and Orthodox by faith. Only the surrounding area of Krupp represented a cultural mixture of Setu people and Russians living together. It resembled a friendly coexistence based on Orthodox religion. The local Russians call the Setus “half-believers” (poluvertsy). The origin of this name is difficult to explain, but probably it is because of the same faith but the differences in languages. Scientists have another version according to which the Setus adopted Orthodoxy later than the Russians and kept their pagan habits for a long time.

There is a mixed Setu-Russian Orthodox Church with the cemetery in Saatse which has always been holding services for the whole area, including some of the villages now in Russia. *“We lived well. We went to dances to Zacherenie and they did the*

same... . Half believers and Russians? We attend the same church, our graves and their graves are side by side in the cemetery. Those who are older can speak with them in their language and they can speak Russian as well... .” (from an interview). There were often mixed marriages between the Setus and the Russians in the transboundary region, which shows mutual respect.

Due to the closed border the parish is divided into two parts. The people from Krupp cannot attend church daily or on Sundays. It is possible only at great religious feasts when the list of inhabitants made by the local authorities opens the border for the locals. In this way the interests of the three different power levels - state, regional and local - are in conflict.

Religion does not play such an important role in people’s life as before. *“If I can go to the church whenever I want, then I usually go often. But now there is a border and it is most unlikely that the borderguards would let us pass... .”* (from an interview in Krupp). On the Estonian side religious belonging is the most important criterion of identity; however, the situation is not the same in Russian villages. There is no such opposition as “ours” and “the others” on religious basis. Everyone is Orthodox, his neighbour is Orthodox too, and all the people in the village are Orthodox, if not non-religious, of course. It creates the opinion that all the members of the village community are Orthodox and Orthodoxy is a norm.

The ethnic belonging can not be considered merely as a basis for identity. Everywhere people had many difficulties in answering the questions about the importance of ethnicity to them. “Soviet people” were a product of the Soviet nation-building. “Russification” is a wrong term for that process. Russian culture suffered under the pressure of sovietisation not less than the others. Urbanisation and migration to cities easily replaced Russian identity by the Soviet one. Village entity, which is more religious and conservative than people in towns, preserved old Russian traditions and also developed new customs. Many of our respondents celebrated former Soviet holidays together with the traditional religious feasts.

Nevertheless, each member of the village community has one rather strong identity. An individual is primarily identified by his local identity. The division of “ours” and “the others” often means “the people from our village” or “the people from another village”. *“Village life is tribal life. We usually call them “our person”. If there are no more air tickets to Samolva, tickets for the “ours” are always available... .”* (from an interview in Kobylie Gorodishche.)

The majority of our respondents demonstrated their positive attitude towards the Estonians. Only 9% of the respondents gave the answer “very important” to the question “How important is it for you that your spouse belongs to the same ethnic group as you?” A typical answer was something like that: *“It does not matter whether somebody is Russian or Estonian... . What is the difference?”* (from an interview in Samolva) *“I have never thought of who my husband could be: a Russian or an Estonian... . And what is the difference? My elder sister’s spouse is a Finn, they have a big family, my younger sister married a Russian, a local guy... . An Estonian wanted to marry me, but it was already too late. If I had thought about it earlier - of course, I*

would have preferred to live in Estonia with great pleasure. I like it more there, very cultural people, this treatment..., this tidiness...”(from an interview in Krupp)

It is noteworthy that the ethnic belonging of the spouse is more important for the villagers in the intermediate borderland than for the inner borderland inhabitants. In Krupp there were no answers like “very important” at all, contrary to Samolva where 30% of the respondents answered in this way.

The specific border reality together with the ethnic attitudes is well characterised by the following: *“Recently my son and Vitja (he is from Gdov) got lost on the lake and reached Estonia. I raised such an alarm in the village...! Everybody went to look for them... . Listen, they found themselves in Krasnye Gory (Kallaste) or something like that... . And an Estonian helped them! He gave them something to drink and eat, dried their clothes, gave a compass and lead to the neutral territory. He showed them the way where there were no borderguards... . You see what the Estonians are like...! But ours, the Russians - would they help...? (from an interview in Kolokolovo)*

Conclusions

State borders, which appeared on the map as political constructs, reflect the images of politicians and intellectuals. It is difficult to predict what the practical consequences of the new border will be. Politicians representing the state interests do not take into account the concerns of borderland inhabitants. The border often destroys the traditional social network, breaks stable structures and changes everyday life of the natives. We can see this situation today in the region of Lake Peipsi.

People are getting used to the new reality with great difficulty. A manifesting piece of paper which I saw on the frontier post illustrates this situation fairly well: *“... These are my places. I have always been there and I will continue to go there!”* (from a poster made by a villager who gathered mushrooms on the border line).

The future of the Lake Peipsi region depends on the political and scientific co-operation of the two neighbouring countries. The strengthening of economical, cultural, and personal links could be a result of such collaboration.

Environmental Perceptions of the Inhabitants in the Lake Peipsi Region

Anna-Liisa Rääpo

Introduction

So far the research projects carried out in Estonia in the field of environmental sociology have been quite small in number. This research conducted in the framework of the LPP social and environmental studies intends to give a brief survey of people's assessments of the environmental situation in their everyday surroundings and discuss factors which could shape the environmental perceptions in the given region.

Information is acquired selectively by the individuals: people most likely notice things that are significant to them. The meaning attached to an event derives from both the goals, values and earlier experiences of an individual, and the sociocultural influence - experiences, norms and customs - of the group this individual belongs to. Among the factors reported to influence environmental attitudes are age, gender, education, social and economic status, but also the degree of direct contacts with pollution (Fisher, Bell, Baum 1978; Veitch, Arkkelin 1995).

An achievement of Estonian scholars in the field of environmental sociology is an empirical typology of ecological paradigms or statements developed as a result of the Russian-Hungarian-Estonian joint project "Mass Communication and Environmental Protection" (Lauristin, Firsov 1987). This was a large-scale project with the Estonian sample representing the whole population, methodologically designed for integral levels of data analysis. A repetition study was conducted in 1994 (Peterson 1994).

In comparison, the LPP 1995 study was a regional level one aimed to explore people's attitudes towards their immediate environment in the area surrounding Lake Peipsi. According to their size, all the ten towns and villages investigated belong to the smallest type of settlements distinguished in the study "Mass Communication and Environmental Protection" (Lauristin, Firsov 1987). In July 1995, a random sample of 313 persons over 18 years old were interviewed with the help of a standardised questionnaire. The questionnaire included indices of environmental perception and its possible shaping factors. In addition to answering structured questions, the respondents were asked to name concrete ecological problems in their home region. The research material was analysed with the help of descriptive statistical methods (frequency tables, crosstabulation tables) and nonparametric statistics (correlations, Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA by ranks). Additionally, long interviews and participant observation enabled to go more in depth and make data interpretation easier.

Results of the sociological survey

Public environmental assessments

On a five-point scale, 48% of the respondents evaluated the quality of natural environment in their home region as satisfactory; 26% - good, 14% - bad; 6% - excellent and 2% - very bad. Generally speaking, positive assessments prevailed but evaluations differed significantly in the settlements (Fig.1).

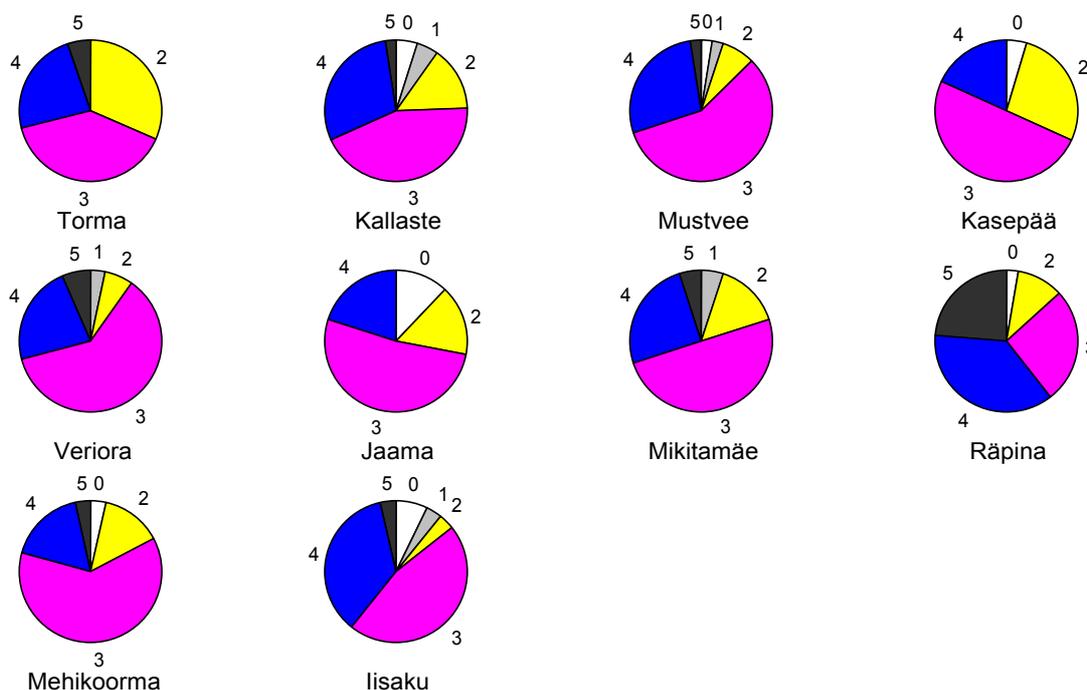


Fig 1 People's judgements of the state of environment in different villages
0 cannot say; 1 very bad; 2 bad; 3 satisfactory; 4 good; 5 very good

Inhabitants of the coastal settlements viewed their environment as of considerably lower quality than inland inhabitants (Fig. 2). The highest value was set on environmental conditions in Rápina, Iisaku and Mustvee; the lowest in Kasepää, Jaama and Torma.

This result corresponds with the frequency of naming concrete environmental problems in response to an open question: environmental situation was estimated to be worse in villages where more problems were named, e.g. Kasepää and Torma.

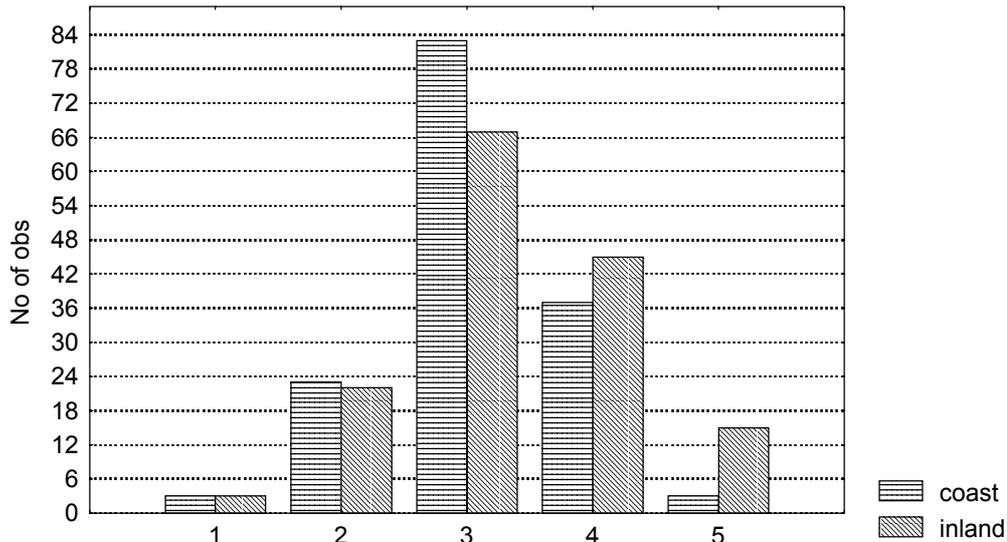


Fig 2 People's judgements of the state of environment in coastal and inland settlements

1 very bad; 2 bad; 3 satisfactory; 4 good; 5 very good

According to the study lead by Lauristin and Firsov (1987), environmental perceptions depend in addition to the degree of environmental pollution also on the degree of urbanization and on the settlement size, being lower in bigger settlements. In our sample (inside the smallest settlement type) the environmental conditions were of lower quality in smaller villages (Kasepää, Jaama, Torma, Mehikoorma, Mikitamäe; Fig. 3).

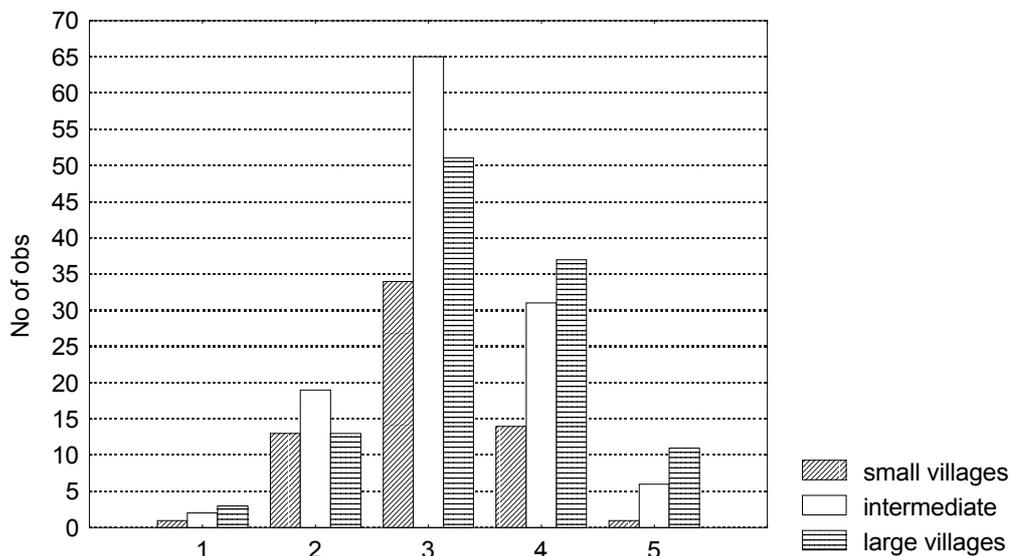


Fig 3 People's judgements of the state of environment according to village size

1 very bad; 2 bad; 3 satisfactory; 4 good; 5 very good

Changes of environmental conditions

41% of the respondents thought that conditions of natural environment in their surroundings had become worse in recent years. About 39% of the respondents could not detect any changes in the environment quality of their home region and 15% of them thought that things had improved. The reports of improvement were more frequent in Rāpina, Veriora and Torma. Major complaints about the deterioration of the environment came from Mikitamäe where neglected farmlands were the most frequently mentioned problem, Kasepää-Kallaste-Jaama (a set of problems connected with water pollution and decline in the quality and quantity of fish was brought out there), and Iisaku. At Iisaku the main concern was ruinous felling of forests; the latter was also mentioned as one of the few environmental problems in Veriora where the tendency of environmental deterioration was not reported in general (actually, both Veriora and Iisaku are big timber-producing centres in Estonia). Here again we can see the aforementioned tendencies that in small villages and coastal settlements complaints about the bad environmental conditions prevail, while there is a considerable number of respondents to mark improvement of the situation in bigger villages and inland towns. In fact, several other significant tendencies became evident as well. Scepticism about the present is more widespread among older generations and those born in the given locality. Local people are also much more reserved when asked about the effects of nature conservation activities in the area. They usually answered "do not know", compared to the newcomers' predominantly neutral or positive answers. Russian people who think that environmental conditions are getting worse, outnumber Estonians.

Causes of problems

Among the factors causing environmental problems in one's home area the strongest impact was attributed to general human activity (Table 1) followed by agriculture and the activity of regional authorities.

The latter factor together with the legislation and fishing problems has caused a confusion among the interviewees. Tourism and industry(!) were most often considered not to cause problems for the local environment. The localities differ significantly from each other by the particular causes used to explain the local environmental problems, depending on the main fields of activity there.

| Table 1. People's assessments of the impact of various factors on the local environment | | | | |
|---|-----------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| | Cannot say | Not this | This as well | For sure |
| Agriculture | 13 (4.7%) | 116 (41.7%) | 86 (30.9%) | 63 (22.7%) |
| Fishing | 25 (9.0%) | 153 (55.0%) | 65 (23.4%) | 35 (12.6%) |
| Industry | 13 (4.7%) | 181 (65.1%) | 61 (21.9%) | 23 (8.3%) |
| Tourism | 10 (3.6%) | 240 (86.3%) | 21 (7.6%) | 7 (2.5%) |
| Legislation | 39 (14.0%) | 141 (50.7%) | 74 (26.6%) | 24 (8.6%) |
| Local authorities | 25 (9.0%) | 114 (41.0%) | 107 (38.5%) | 32 (11.5%) |
| Gener. activity | human 18 (6.0%) | 58 (19.3%) | 120 (39.9%) | 105 (34.9%) |

In Mikitamäe and Mehikoorma the main culprit is agriculture. Industry was mentioned more often in Röpina (local small industries) and Kallaste (mainly the untreated sewage reaching Lake Peipsi from Tartu). Fishing predominantly occurred as influential in the responses of the native residents of Kasepää, Kallaste, Mustvee, Jaama and Mikitamäe, and considerably less in the responses of newcomers. Forestry was additionally brought out as a source of problems in Jaama and Veriora. Local governments are first of all considered responsible for dealing with the environmental problems in the region. Both the state government and local people themselves were attributed secondary importance in finding solutions. Russian people tended to have more doubts about the ability of local people to improve the situation.

Getting information

The bulk of information about the natural conditions is obtained by people's own observations and/or from other local people, neighbours, friends, etc. (88% of the respondents). Newspapers proved to be the most efficient mass medium for environmental issues (only 35.5% of respondents had never obtained information about the (local) state of nature from newspapers, compared to 64.5% and 60% for TV and radio). Ethnic background did not cause any differences here.

Supported by the facts that 63% of the respondents cultivate or produce the majority of the garden and farm products for their own needs and 26.5% of the families are engaged in fishing (fishing is the main source of income for 8.5%, farming for 16% and gardening for 23% of the respondents), it can be stated that the way of obtaining

information about the environment is still predominantly immediate in case of the given population, compared to the dominance of mediated information in urban societies described by Lauristin and Firsov.

Comments

The examined data is supplementary to the conclusions drawn in "Mass communication and..." (Lauristin and Firsov, 1987). Environmental assessments depend above all on the objective environmental conditions and settlement size.

The most significant factor determining the awareness of environmental problems is observability of the indicators of environmental problems. The problems mentioned by people tend to be those directly observable or perceivable by them in their nearest surroundings. Thus one-fourth of the respondents mentioned dirtiness of the surroundings as an environmental problem of their home region. The pollution of waterbodies was mentioned by 24% of the respondents and also the general assessments of environment were lower in the settlements located on the coast. The tendency to assess the state of waterbodies lower than that of the other parts of environment has also been noted in the work cited above. The explanation was that while the pollution of a river or lake is relatively easy to notice for laymen, it has also been quite a frequent topic in mass media (Lauristin, Firsov, op.cit). Anyway, the pollution of Lake Peipsi cannot be denied. What people could see and tell the interviewers about was the skin rash their children got from swimming in the lake, the reed proliferating at the shore, the oil floating on the water surface; the fact that the fish they caught were suffering from diseases and were small in number (the latter also resulting from the re-established border cutting fishermen away from their fishing places which for these people is a serious environmental change as well).

People's knowledge of the causes of the problems was more vague compared to their opinions about the problems themselves. Again face to face contacts with certain phenomena seem to play a decisive role in mediated learning. With a couple of exceptions, agriculture was mentioned as an agent causing local environmental problems inland. According to the answers in the structured part of interviews, the impact of industry on the local natural conditions was virtually non-existent. Torma people complained about the dung-water coming from an old collective farmhouse polluting their ponds and even reaching Peipsi via streams but only few of them could mention the accompanied pollution of the ground water.

According to the results of an extensive survey in the 1980s (Lauristin, Firsov, op. cit.) environmental conditions were assessed to be better in smaller and worse in larger settlements, reflecting the objective situation. In our example, the inhabitants of the smallest villages were the ones to select negative responses more often. There are two possible explanations to this. The bigger the settlement, the fewer become its inhabitants' actual contacts with the surrounding natural environment, and probably, as the educational or mediated knowledge background does not change considerably, the attention towards environment fades, resulting in an illusion of purity. The objective situation does not change; still a traceable source of pollution may more easily cause

the worsening of environmental assessments in small communities with strong intercommunication habits. But the explanation can be even simpler. People in smaller and more peripherally located settlements are the ones who have evidently suffered the most from the rapid economic and social changes in Estonia. Thus, they might be inclined to negativistic responses regardless of the actual question put to them.

Environmental attitudes and reality: a case study

Due to their primary sources of subsistence (fishing and vegetable growing) the Kallaste people are in very close interaction with nature. The income of the whole community depends on the natural conditions to a great extent. The Russians of Kallaste provide themselves with wild berries, mushrooms and herbs. The knowledge of herbal medicine seems to spread orally from person to person. I saw huge bunches of Saint-John's-wort (*Hypericum* sp., zverboi) hung up to dry in the houses. At the same time it was quite hard to identify peoples' attitudes towards nature.

The level of knowledge about environmental issues varied greatly. Many notions seemed to have different meanings for me and them. For example the word "ecology" in the context of the ecological situation was unfamiliar to many - but not all. This is not very surprising. The term I used to explain it was "the state of nature". Here even streets could be included but seldom the state of the lake or drinking water, which had to be asked separately. One hint about how people's ideas depend on their interests was given to me by an elderly lady whom I asked whether she knew about any plans for the protection of nature or natural resources in Kallaste. Her reply was: "*The weather is good, so what is there to protect?*". She raised her hand and did some gardening. As a remark we may suggest that deeper awareness and concern for environmental issues can be expected from better-off and higher educated people. Many people simply seemed not to be aware of the problems. Maybe they are not used to abstract talking or thinking about these issues? For instance, in structured interviews the choices "fishing", "industry", "agriculture" were rarely chosen in Kallaste in reply to the question about the factors influencing the local natural conditions. However, afterwards during an informal talk the same person may have reported about the oil tanks left on the ice after winter fishing or the damage caused to the lake bank because the stones that protected it from waves had been taken away to build a new harbour.

Yet another issue is the disability to distinguish between the reason and consequence. According to Petr Korolev, our researcher in Kasepää, the people had concluded from the proliferation of reed in the lake that this was the cause of water pollution, because in earlier times there had been no reed there and the water had been clean. This is a popular misunderstanding in the coastal communities.

I was told that at least before the war people got water for tea from the lake: "*The water is not the same any more. We used to take water for tea from the lake. Everything has changed during the last fifty years.*". Another respondent said that he had drunk unboiled water from the lake ten years ago while fishing. Some younger

families with children had experienced the dirtiness of the lake even more directly. Not only would the water look dirty sometimes, depending on the direction of the wind, but the children had caught a skin rash due to swimming. It was also assured by the local doctor, while for an Estonian biologist who has been active in the biomonitoring of the lake, this was quite surprising news.

Health problems typical to the inhabitants of the Peipsi region and commonly referred to by themselves are various joint diseases which are spread both among men (dragging nets from the cold water) and women (working on their knees in the gardens in cold weather). People often point to the frequency of cancer in those villages. The doctor in Kallaste agreed that there were many favouring factors for this such as eating smoked fish (really seemed to be the main food in summer), alcoholism and smoking, but she could not prove that there were more people ill with cancer than on average in Estonia. Her explanation was the age structure of the population with a high percentage of old people.

As members of a fishing community, everyone had some ideas about fish and catches. A common presumption was that there was less fish in the lake today. Explanations varied from the pollution caused by Tartu wastewaters or the fire in the “Estonia” oil-shale mines to the re-establishment of the border regime which has denied access to fish. Ruinous or illegal fishing, which actually is the most serious problem, happened to be mentioned occasionally. The natural fluctuations in the fish stock of the lake were also familiar to fishermen. The following words said by a fisherman sound quite promising: *“Our duty now is not to damage the lake. It has become easier today. There were firms that used to stand on the shore, and fertilisers were dispersed upon the lake from planes - this does not happen any more, so that we have a chance to keep the lake clean.”*

Waste economy seemed somewhat problematic in Kallaste. Complaints about the dirtiness of the town in recent years have been common. Not everyone is willing to pay for the sanitation service and so I heard accusations of “others” dumping wastes in nearby forests or on the beach, or throwing it into the beds of small streams which have water only in spring and which then carry their contents into the lake.

Drinking water is another great problem. The tap-water from the communal artesian well comes from a horizon just above in direct contact with the Devon sandstone and is therefore rich in iron oxides. It is reddish in colour and tastes of metal. Experts have suggested cleaning of the water (instead of trying to get it from a new horizon as Kallaste is situated in a geologically complicated area), which until today has financially stayed out of reach for the little town. Most people use water from draw-wells for drinking and cooking but the quality of water is not good in all of these, either. People lack the data of water-analysis. Some years ago the results of the water analysis could be obtained from the municipality, but nowadays there is no data available any more. Several of my informants were interested in getting information about the state of environment and did not know where to find it.

Conclusions

The smaller the settlement, the more natural the community's way of life is. As many of the motives of people's behaviour towards nature are implicit, they are also getting in difficulties when answering the interviewer's abstract questions. What people know or say to the interviewer derives more from their own observations and experiences than from special issues in mass media, which no wonder results from vague understanding of causes and consequences in environmental processes. The field experience of the author suggests that this is only partly due to lack of interest - there is also huge lack of understandable information. In addition, there is a gap between pro-environmental attitudes and the factual readiness to act. The attempts to overcome this gap should always start from the local traditions and practices for ethical reasons just as well as for bigger efficiency. Maybe it would be easier to start changing attitudes from changing behaviour - to start from the small and local instead of too abstract ideas which count very little for those whose first and foremost concern is their survival today like in those regions just studied.

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Ethnic Identity in the Bordering Areas

Pille Runnel, Indrek Jääts

Introduction

In our era, emerging territorial claims between the neighbouring states do not receive a favourable reception because it does not correspond with the view of rational policy-making. Neither historical claims - like: the land belongs to those who came first or who cultivated it first - nor the idea which refers to the past violations of international law and justice, solve the existing problems. Even the territorial claims based on common ethnic belonging may be artificial and the identity not scientifically proved. Anssi Paasi (1995) argues that the formation of the borders and the process by which this takes place will differ markedly in significance, depending on whether it is examined from the viewpoint of an individual inhabitant of the border area or that of the political history of the territorial entity in question. The role of the border and possible disputes over it may be viewed differently at the national and local level. The location of a border may be of major importance to the states involved but of minor importance to the people and places located in the immediate vicinity of it. Typically it is thought that borders have much more symbolic value for states than for local communities. It is sometimes felt that boundaries are barriers for the local communities and they exist only for the sake of geographical centres. If they ruin the already existing settlement system and disturb regular needs like social contacts or religious ties, it is hard to talk about rational policy-making.

Language and its expressions are often employed to depict identities. Ethnic identity emerges from tradition as well as collective memory, which always have a link with the community. The discussion regarding the construction of ethnic identity will lead us to the evaluation of the role of language and traditions, and a discourse in the social construction of spatial demarcations and boundaries: how the ideas regarding 'us' and 'them' or the 'other' are created, signified and represented.

One of the dark sides in the Estonian-Russian relationship is the location of the present-day borderline between these two countries. The Estonian government has been justifying its territorial claims by the historical and legal points of view. The disputed territories were part of Estonia during the inter-war period 1920-40 and, according to the Tartu Peace Treaty (1920) officially recognised by Soviet Russia (Jääts 1995). Russia's argument on the contrary, is purely ethnic: these border areas are populated only by Russians and thus form a part of the Russian nation.

Unfortunately, this battleground is a native homeland of a distinct group called the Setu people, whose ethnic origin is disputed and self-identification might be somewhat confusing. They are more similar to Estonians and even their language is considered as one of the south-eastern dialects of Estonian. However, they have been deeply influenced by Russian culture and Orthodox religion. Today they live on both sides of the border and probably suffer the most from the abnormal administrative

division. Their cultural contacts as well as using the daily services are remarkably hampered in some places.

In the early 1990s the Setus' self-identification became stronger due to the cultural movement run by a group of intellectuals of Setu origin. In October 1993 the Seto Congress took place in Värskä. The Congress issued a program for developing the Setu language and culture. The main slogan was: "We are Estonians, but we also want to remain Setus!" For several years "the Day of the Setu Kingdom" has been organised. On one day in August "the independent Setu Kingdom" with its own officials, laws and symbols is proclaimed.

Survey of ethnic identity in the border zone

The NGO Lake Peipsi Project in co-operation with Tartu University and St. Petersburg University conducted a survey to examine the ethnic identity in correlation with the existing borderline in the summer of 1996. The aim of this study was to clarify the ethnic belonging of the Setus. How strong or weak was such an identity? Which components of culture had the utmost importance, and which were secondary from the standpoint of their self-consciousness? The relationship between Setu and Estonian identity in the Estonian and Russian territory was of interest as well. Were these phenomena existing side by side in one's mind or were they able to exclude one another in some cases? What was primary and could this primariness vary in different situations? What role did the separation play in their self-identification? Were the Setus living in Russia somehow different from those residing in Estonia?

The second set of questions dealt with the border. They were largely concerned with the ethnic identification and tried to evaluate the role of such a barrier in people's everyday needs and communication. Thus the attitudes and outlooks of the people in bordering areas were studied. How could be the overall practical policy-making in a case of disputed area was the most important question that required a quick and detailed answer.

The main hypotheses were:

- The Setus are characterised by a two-level identity, they are both Setus and Estonians.
- The ethnic identity of the Setus was influenced by changes in the administrative division after Estonia had regained independence. The new borderline divided the territory of the Setus between Estonia and Russia, and stopped the functioning of the area as a cultural and economical unit.
- The ethnic identity of the Setus is based on the following features:
 - 1) the Setu dialect;
 - 2) relatives, descent;
 - 3) the cultural tradition mainly carried by the elderly population;
 - 4) belonging to the Russian Orthodox Church and following its customs (also more typical for elderly people);

5) ‘social surroundings’, that is the attitudes of the neighbouring population towards the Setus.

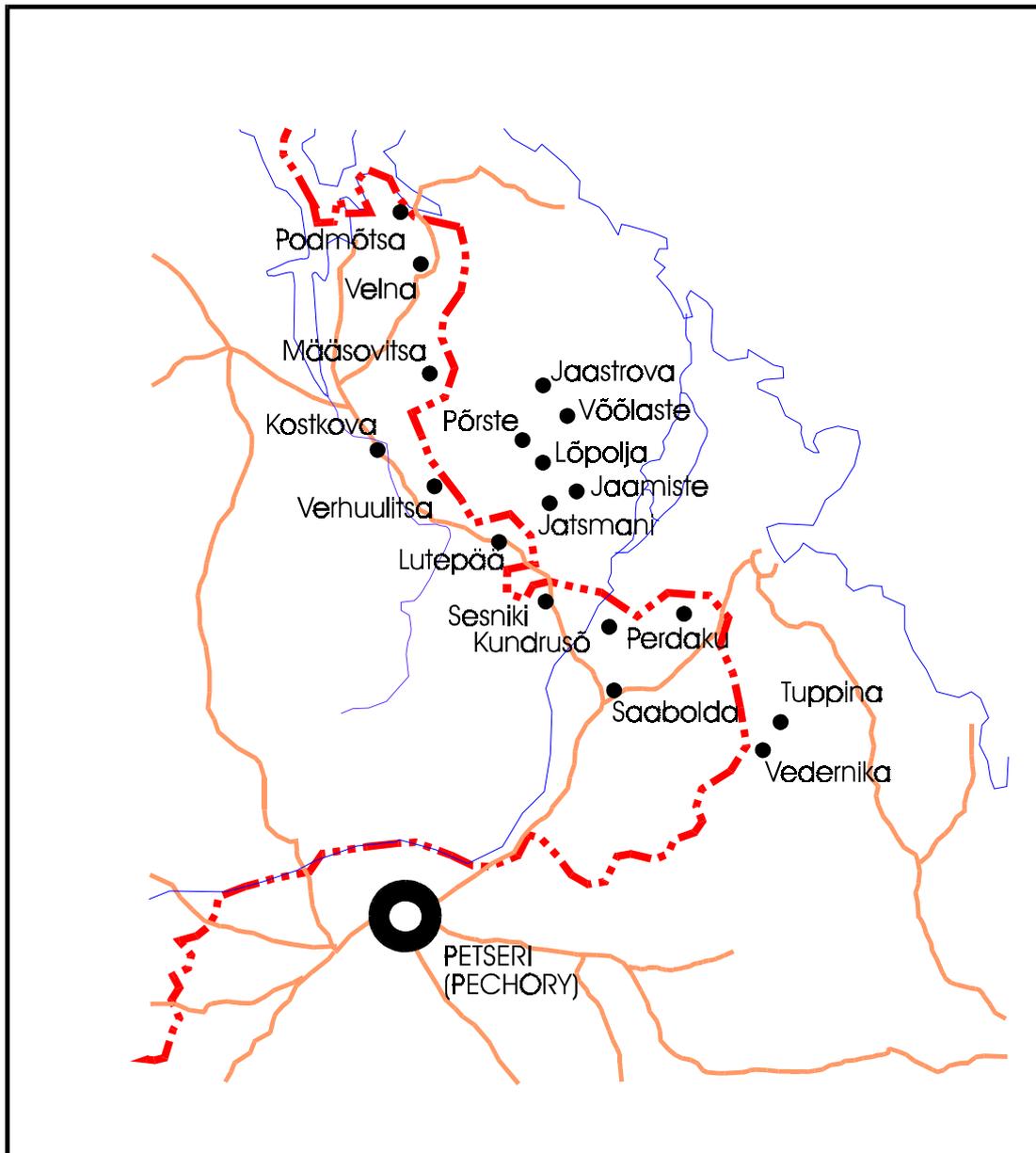


Figure 1. Sample group of Setu villages in Estonia and Russia

We chose the Setu villages which were located near to each other (along the borderline and less than 10 km from the Setu villages in Russia) (Fig. 1). Forty residents of Lutepää (3), Määsovitsa (5), Perdaku (4), Podmõtsa (3), Saabolda (5), Kundrusõ (3), Sesniki (4), Verhuulitsa (5), Velna (4), Saarepää (2) and Kostkova (2) villages formed the sample group in Estonia. In the course of the study, at least 18-year-old residents on both sides of the current Estonian-Russian border were interviewed. People were selected randomly and asked multiple choice questions. Standard questionnaires were numbered and during data processing only the numbers were used. Filling in the questionnaires was voluntary. In some cases long interviews with selected respondents were conducted to ensure the quality of the survey and

make the feedback interpretation easier. An important part of the research was participant observation. For this purpose diaries were kept to fix the everyday life of the villagers and the language situation as well as the future perspectives of the region. There were two researchers from Estonia and another two from Russia to make interviews and analyse the data.

General characteristics

Setumaa in the south-east of Estonia differs from the other areas of the republic because of its extreme backwardness and some specific elements of the agrarian society. It is characterised by a rather important role of religion (Orthodox) and pre-Christian rudiments.

Neither economical activities nor the labour division is well developed. The Setus have not found ways to develop their economic infrastructure. After the collapse of collective farms, economy has continuously been based on the traditional ways of living - farming, cattle-breeding and horticulture for merely personal purposes. Agriculture does not yield any profit, but many locals grow vegetables in the hope that people from towns will come and buy their products in autumn. The development of local infrastructure has been quite slow - some villages still belong to another era, lacking proper communication means and having out-of-date facilities. For example, there still exist some households without electricity and some of these villages were "wired" only in this summer. Only the municipal centre Värskä is developing. The local mineral water distilling factory and tourism create new jobs at the moment.

The number of Setus has constantly been diminishing. In historical Setumaa their number was once estimated to be about 18 500 (Buck 1909). By 1974 their number had decreased almost three times comparing with the former figure (according to Richter, 6780 Setus lived in Setumaa). The population is ageing. There are more jobs available for men and therefore many young women tend to leave the villages. Most of them leave for local centers or bigger towns and possibly also marry there. The villages die out leaving no hope for the future that somebody will come, settle down and live the same way as their ancestors did. Today only one or two pupils finish the primary school of Saatse every year. Locals characterised the situation: "*Only old women and young men live here*".

47.5% of the respondents were female and 52.5% male. Most of them were born before WW II (65%), mainly in the 1920s and 1930s. The data showed that 40% of the interviewees had finished only primary school and 5% or two people out of 40 had higher education. About half of the respondents had no profession at all, others were engaged in commerce or were unskilled workers. Most of them did not work - they were either retired (55%) or unemployed (25%).

Ethnic identity

During the interviews it became evident that 35 people out of 40 declared themselves to be Setus. The identity analysis showed that the respondents were divided into three parts - those with weak, medium or strong identity. This selection was made on the basis of 15 questions. According to that 25.7% of the respondents had strong, 51.4% medium and 22.9% weak Setu identity. Most evidently 64.7% of women had strong identity or weak identity (11.8%) whereas 33.3% of men had medium identity. To which age groups did they belong? The research proved the assumption that both strong and medium identity could be associated with the population born before WW II (77.5% and 66.6% respectively). The younger generation (born after the war) had rather weak than strong Setu identity.

In some cases people had difficulties with self-identification. For example, an old man from Podmotsa village who had been earning his living mostly as a peddler outside Setumaa, spoke perfect Setu dialect and told about many Setu traditions and beliefs during the interview. In pre-war times such peddlers were mainly associated with Setus. Nevertheless he denied his Setu origin and considered himself an Estonian. The term 'Setu' seemed to have very strong pejorative meaning and formed a set of very clear notions (poor, foolish, hatred, etc.) for him.

Setu identity is strongly related to a certain life-style characteristic of old people. The younger generation was aware of their origin but it was difficult to notice the distinct culture traits in their milieu and lifestyle. It was more a cognitive than a behaviouristic approach to culture.

Double or parallel Setu-Estonian identity appeared frequently: while 37.5% of the respondents defined themselves as Setus, 47.5% declared mixed Setu-Estonian identity. This phenomenon can be explained in different ways. First, double identity was partly connected with the evaluative meaning of the word 'Setu' (mostly pejorative). One wished to be an Estonian, but at the same time slightly different from the others. This feeling was strengthened when differences become visible during the early socialisation at schools, spread of education and the general mobility in Setumaa. For example, pupils had to speak official Estonian at school, but at home they mostly used the local dialect. Second, it may be explained by the fact that everybody had to define their nationality in their passports during the Soviet times. On most occasions the Setus preferred to identify themselves as Estonians according to the note in their Soviet passports.

The respondents had to explain their self-identification in different contexts: in Setumaa (both in Estonia and in Russia), in Russia and Estonia; and in other countries. Six people preferred to give different answers in different situations - they would probably define themselves as Estonians while staying abroad or in the other parts of Estonia and Russia. One of the respondents explained the inefficiency of that kind of declarations as nobody knew Setus and their culture abroad. Setu is sometimes considered to be a territorial notion. While talking about her family, one respondent said: *"I am the only Setu here, others have left this region to become Estonians"*.

Language

The Setu dialect is one of the typical features of Setu identity. There were questions to estimate the use of the Setu dialect in the area - how many of them use it at home, how they estimate their knowledge of the Setu dialect and whether the language situation has changed to a certain extent.

The data from formal questionnaires showed the intensive (67.5%), frequent (25.7%) and rare (8.6%) use of their own dialect. In their everyday life Setus mostly used their own dialect. (When we asked them to estimate their knowledge of the Setu dialect, 60% of the respondents considered their Setu dialect to be fluent, 22.5% of them said it to be satisfactory and 5% poor.)

Participant observation helped to determine people's everyday use of language. Bus-drivers on local roads preferred to speak the local dialect with people, although they usually came from the surrounding areas. Once a driver on Tallinn-Saatse route used the Setu dialect when driving the last 20 km from Värskä to Saatse. Travellers spoke the Setu dialect as well, even with children, or when they met each other on their way back home. In shops saleswomen spoke the dialect with local people, but when strangers entered, they served them in standard Estonian.

The data showed that 78.3% of the interviewees who intensively used their own dialect were born before the war and 21.7% after the war. The respondents whose knowledge of the dialect was poor, comprised 2/3 of men and 1/3 of women. This could be explained partly with the fact that men have been more mobile while women have spent most of their time at home and communicated mainly with their family and neighbours. Out of 11 people born after WW II, 45.4% had intensive and 54.5% frequent use of the Setu dialect. It shows that the younger generation has not stopped speaking the Setu dialect. The difference would possibly have revealed itself, if we had also included the children (less than 18 years old) in this study.

Those with strong identity were quite strongly related to the Setu dialect, whereas those with weak identity had rather poor use of the dialect (Table 1.).

Table 1. Identity and use of dialect

| Use of dialect: | Good | Satisfactory | Poor |
|------------------------------|-------------|---------------------|-------------|
| Strength of identity: | | | |
| `Strong | 88.9% | 11.1% | 0 |
| `Medium | 66.6% | 22.2% | 11.2% |
| Weak | 37.5% | 50.0% | 12.5% |

To examine the language situation at home, we asked whether any changes have taken place. In thirteen cases the use of the Setu dialect had lost its importance - these people tried to speak mostly standard Estonian with their children and grandchildren. Older people felt the necessity to practice Estonian with them in order to avoid

difficulties later on at school. The comments also proved that there was no need for dialect courses. The Setu dialect was supposed to be learnt automatically at home.

One of the important issues today is to create a literary language on the basis of the local dialect. Years ago attempts were made to write the Setu language. The Setu epic “Peko”, published in 1995, was an attempt to strengthen the local identity. On the other hand, it seems that the locals have not become used to written texts easily. We also tried to find out the attitudes of Setus towards this phenomenon. There were people (67.5%) who had read something, mostly from the local newspaper, which sometimes publishes some articles or stories in the Setu dialect. Four people said that they had read “Peko”. The comments also showed that most of them thought the written texts to be very difficult to understand.

It became evident that local people were also interested in the durability of the dialect as an oral tradition. This was connected with the issue of the Setu radio station and the Setu dialect as a general media language in that particular area. (In fact this has been quite an important issue in recent years.) Most of them simply wished to listen to the Setu songs over the radio. 17% of the respondents remained indifferent and 22.9% found it of no importance.

Relatives and kinship ties

The Setus are considered to be a group for which kinship ties are supposedly more important than for other Estonians. There was also a block dealing with this topic in our questionnaire. The collected data showed that for 67.6% of the respondents the family ties had great importance and 20.6% of them evaluated them moderately. Only a few (11.8%) did not consider this aspect worth emphasising.

Table 2. Identity and kinship ties

| Kinship ties: | Strong | Medium | Weak |
|------------------------------|--------|--------|-------|
| Strength of identity: | | | |
| Strong | 88.9% | 0% | 11.1% |
| Medium | 61.1% | 22.2% | 16.7% |
| Weak | 37.5% | 37.5% | 25.0% |

We may state that strong links exist between kinship ties and identity. For those who had strong identity, kinship ties were important, too, and vice versa. The evaluation of the kinship ties has generally wider echo than ethnic self-identification.

Surprisingly enough, the group of mixed couples (31.4% of respondents) had stronger Setu identity than the average. The danger to lose ones cultural traits has enforced people in mixed families to evaluate their ethnic background more than in usual situations. While the majority of the respondents’ parents were both of Setu origin,

mixed marriages became more common after WW II. 52.5% of the respondents denied the importance of the spouse being of the same ethnic group. Only 5% of them declared it to be very important. Relatives and kinship ties seemed to be important although there was no evidence of a former “closed circle”.

Today the majority of the Setu people live in Tallinn and Tartu and not in historical Setumaa. They do not form a very compact group any more. We asked the respondents to name the places where they had some relatives. Most often they mentioned Tallinn (26 cases), Tartu (26 cases), Pärnu (13 cases), Võru (7 cases), Valga and Viljandi. When did the relatives use to meet one another?. The church holidays, when people from all over Estonia came together and met one another in church or later on graves were mentioned most frequently (25 times). At the same time such events as birthdays, jubilees and marriages were mentioned seldom (15 times), and funerals 5 times. Some other reasons to get together were not noteworthy.

Religion

The Setus are mostly Orthodox. One of the purposes was to check the role of religion in people’s everyday life. How often do people attend church or visit their ancestors’ graves? Do they have a sacred corner in their household (which used to be common to all the Setus until the Soviet times)? How has religion shaped the Setu identity?

Religion turned out to be important for 80% of the respondents, whereas 20% of them remained indifferent. The former group contained mostly old women (90%) while the latter group was formed by men (86%). More than half of those who were almost non-believers were born after WW II.

It appeared that those who were very deeply influenced by religion did not have strong Setu identity. However, the religious influence on identity was visible. It became evident that the Setus as an ethnic group was moderately associated with Orthodox religion. Neither did people who were very religious take their ethnic belonging as a primary factor, nor were those with weak links with the church ethnically clearly defined.

Table 3. Religion and identity

| Importance of religion: Strength of identity: | Strong | Medium | Weak |
|--|--------|--------|-------|
| Strong | 22.2% | 66.6% | 11.2% |
| Medium | 44.4% | 44.4% | 11.2% |
| Weak | 0% | 50.0% | 50.0% |

Folk traditions

Traditions have served as the social memory of the population, but at the same time their carriers have not always been conscious about it. Therefore it was rather difficult to study the influence of the traditions with a standardised questionnaire. How often do Setus have traditional food? Do they wear folk costumes, know folk songs, etc.?

We asked the respondents to tell us, how important it was for them to preserve Setu folk traditions. More than 1/4 of them rated it highly or not at all, the rest were indifferent. Those who wanted to preserve folk traditions were again predominantly old women, leaving the ignorant role to men.

Table 4. Folk traditions and identity

| Strength of traditions: | Strong | Medium | Weak |
|--------------------------------|--------|--------|-------|
| Strength of identity: | | | |
| Strong | 33.3% | 33.3% | 33.4% |
| Medium | 33.3% | 61.1% | 5.6% |
| Weak | 12.5% | 37.5% | 50.0% |

These figures show that the followers of the Setu traditions were rather people with medium identity. The culture components from the past were used by some groups of Setus as a material for building a new identity.

41.2% of the respondents had Setu folk costumes. Usually people had no reason to wear them. Women could wear them during common festivities - *kirmask* - or at other parties. More often folk costumes were worn by Setu singers during performances. Folk costumes have almost disappeared from everyday use. During the field work, we met an over-90-year-old woman, who wore typical Setu clothes every day. But her daughter, over 70, already wore ordinary clothes.

Folklore seems to be considerably more alive than in most of the other parts of Estonia. This is proved by the fact that 60% of the respondents claimed to know Setu folk songs or stories. Actually the research did not show whether all these people were able to perform, or whether they were simply familiar to them.

Social environment

73.5% of the respondents said that it was possible to make a difference between a stranger and a Setu. The main criterion for recognition was the Setu dialect (76%). It was more difficult in the case of younger people, because they spoke more Estonian or literary language. People were conscious about the local differences within the Setu dialect, particularly those who lived in the Russian side of Setumaa. Their vocabulary

included more Russian influences and archaic words. People mentioned religion (8%) and Setu folk costumes (16%) as other specific features for recognition.

Treatment by the others was another topic to characterise the social environment. 76.5% of the respondents had never experienced other people's negative attitude, 20.6% of them admitted it had occurred sometimes and only one person had felt it quite often. It is possible that they did not give straight answers to this personal question.

We asked people to estimate if the Setus' situation had changed in the last ten years. 57.1% thought it was better 10 years ago, 14.3% held it was worse than now. The reasons given were mostly economic: eight mentioned the Leningrad markets where they sold the agricultural products (mostly cucumbers and onions). Five people thought that the general situation of agriculture was much better. Four respondents answered that people were wealthier and had more jobs. Only one of them said that there was no border and the population in the villages was bigger. Those who favoured the present situation, stressed that the Setus were not treated badly any more.

Border

The role of the border was a separate item in the questionnaire. How does it influence everyday life? How did it influence life before? What is the attitude towards the disputed territories in Russia (part of historical Setumaa) where some Setus still live? People have claimed that the state border has cut through the functional roots of their community life. Our research showed that this question was very complicated. One third of the respondents said that the border strongly disturbed them, but still more (40%) were of the opinion that it did not influence their life.

Table 5. Border and identity

| Border as a problem: ` | Acute | Moderate | Low |
|-------------------------------|-------|----------|-------|
| Strength | | | |
| of identity: | | | |
| Strong | 33.3% | 22.2% | 44.4% |
| Medium | 33.3% | 33.3% | 33.3% |
| Weak | 37.5% | 12.5% | 50.0% |

People with strong and weak identity did not emphasise the border problem as much as those with medium identity (50% of the respondents). The further existence of the Setus and the political question of state borders has been joined together in the mass media by the activists of the Setu movement. But this issue was not similarly acute in the minds of the local villagers.

For old people, 'the political arena' was mostly their own village or even their own household. They did not move from place to place and even the chance to cross the

border would not give a remarkable effect. They did not have enough strength for it. For example there was a woman from Verhuulitsa village who had not been to Väraska for several years although she lived just two kilometres from it.

Closing of the borders probably touches the most those Setus who have moved to towns. They are interested in the preservation of their 'childhood playground' as a whole territorial unit. Their identity may be connected with this territory as a set of imaginations. The previous research did not resolve this question because the Setus living outside were not included. Most likely the border has become an ideological concept for these people. For the locals, on the other hand, it is a source of everyday troubles. For example, the inhabitants of Podmotsa used to go shopping in the Russian village Kulje, now they are supplied with the primary commodities twice a week or make a shopping trip to Väraska (7 km). The latter route was without regular bus connection.

There were 15 cases where the respondent or respondents' parents or spouse were born on the Russian side. All these 15 were Setus. The border did not disturb them more than the others. The border was a big problem for those 22 Setus who used to cross it more than once a week or once a month in the past. Now they usually did not cross the border at all or did it seldom.

A separate group is formed by the villagers of Lutepää and Sesniki. These villages are located side by side near the road, at a distance of one kilometer from each other. Unfortunately, this territory belongs to Russia. We found out that they felt considerably more disturbed than the others residing along the border: five out of seven respondents felt strongly disturbed and no one said that it was not a problem for them. This used to be a regional village group, which once had close ties with the villages on the Russian side (Jaamiste and Gorodishche). The inhabitants of Lutepää used to go to Sesniki to see the doctor or do the shopping, but now they were able to do it merely by bus or by car. It was not allowed to cycle through the Russian-controlled territory or go by foot, either. In addition, there was an interesting example from Perdaku village, where one household or forests belonging to another farmstead were located in Russia. 75% of the respondents felt seriously disturbed because of the current border line.

In general, there were several reasons to cross the border before 1991. People mostly did the shopping in Petseri, Krupp, Gorodishche and Kulje. These were bigger settlements with a choice of better and more varied goods. Shopping was mentioned 18 times. The second reason was visiting the market in Petseri. This has been diminishing during the past years. Before the war the market and fairs in Petseri were the most important occasions to sell the products of Setu and Russian households.

The church and monastery were in Petseri and some villages (Podmotsa, Velna) had close religious links with the church of Kulje. The respondents mentioned different business operations like bringing fuel and different goods from Russia at the end of the 1980s and at the beginning of the 1990s, when the prices in Estonia and Russia were different. The goods were mostly bought in Petseri and Pskov. It was mentioned several times that people used to buy fish from Krupp, Kulje and Lisje. This reflects the traditional labour division in the area - the Russians used to go fishing and they

exchanged fish with the Setus who were largely farmers. This region comprising both sides of the border was more or less economically connected, but rather on an individual level and without important organisational links. By now crossing of the border has changed mostly in frequency: shopping was mentioned two times, church attendance three times, graveyard visits three times, family relations two times, mushroom gathering or fishing two times.

In former times only 10% did not cross the border, 67.5% did it at least once a month or even more than once a week. At present 72.5% of the respondents do not cross the border, 20% do it less than once a month (one or two times per year). Today more than 2/3 of those who regularly visited Russia, have given up the idea of crossing the border and only 1/3 has recently been to Russia once or twice.

Was their private property left on the Russian side of the border? 35% or fourteen people had some property in Russia. These were mostly meadows, but also forestlands. One person had even a farmstead on the other side. Ten people out of fourteen felt that the border had an acute meaning for them, whereas four said, that it did not disturb them strongly and no one accepted the present-day border line.

The majority of the respondents wanted the entire pre-war Petseri county or at least part of it (45.5% and 37.5% respectively) to be reunited with Estonia. Only 7.5 % were satisfied with the present situation.

Conclusions

Ethnicity is primarily a sense of belonging to a particular ancestry and having a certain origin as well as sharing a specific religion or language. Ethnic identity can be maintained by minor differences. For example on the linguistic level it tends to be coexisting and not apart from regional identity. It requires boundaries - both psychological and territorial. The border did not strengthen the Setu identity. On the contrary, it may be of primary importance in the identity shift. Borders resemble barriers to separate "ours" from the "others". But if "our territory" is divided then "we" are torn apart. Setus residing in Estonia become Estonians and those living in Russia probably experience a similar fate.

There still exists distinct ethnic consciousness in Setumaa, carried out mostly by elderly people, but also by a part of younger generation. Most of the Setus are Estonians as well - there exists a parallel Setu-Estonian identity. Even those with a very strong Setu identity do not oppose themselves to Estonians. The most important component of the Setu identity is the specific dialect which people still actively practice in the region. This is also one of the Setus' main characteristics. The second important factor is the origin, the relatives and kinship ties. The third factor turns out to be Orthodox religion, which shapes the Setus' everyday life. Folk traditions are worth mentioning as well. Folklore was also used when creating the literary language (publishing of the epic "Peko") and it has been an important "tool" for the Setu movement. On the other hand, the influence of the Setu movement (Setu Congress,

etc.) was weak. It seems that their aim is to influence the Estonian public opinion rather than work for the community.

It seems to us that Estonian image on the international arena tends to be more important for the governing elite than regional economic issues or territorial claims to Russia. The goals of Estonian nation-building are defended borders and cultural unification. The preservation of regional culture differences has been left out of the agenda at the moment. Local people expect to find support but they do not know who or which power levels are able to solve the problems. Rational policy-making in our context should link the “state idea” with local issues.

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Identity Options. Setu People in Russia

Tatiana Maximova

Comparing the results of fieldwork in 1996 on the Russian and Estonian side of Setumaa it can be said that they are contradictory on different sides of the border. The situation on the Russian side of Setumaa differs so radically from the Estonian one that they can be treated as separate perspectives of Setu development.

The fieldwork was done in the Pskov province, Pechory (*Petseri*) district. The inhabitants of Setu villages - Jaamiste (*Yamishche*), Jatsmani (*Yachmenevo*), Lõpolja (*Zlypole*), Põrste, Jaastrova (*Yastrebe*), Läädina (*Ladinki*) and Vedernika (*Vedernikovo*) were questioned. Although Tuppina (*Stupino*) and Võõllaste (*Vylazovo*) villages were under research as well, they were left aside as there were no inhabitants in these villages. The selection of people for the study was relatively small - for the analysis 33 Setus in Russia were questioned.

Ethnic identity of the Setus in Russia

Their Russian neighbours called them *poluverniki* and *setuki*. Earlier also the ethnonym 'setukezy' was used and their territory was called respectively 'Setukezija' but these words are not in use any longer. The terms 'Seto' and 'poluvernik' (most often used by Russians) have several explanations. The respondents explained such ethnonyms as follows:

- **poluvernik** - they are Orthodox but almost similar to the Estonians and therefore only half-believers;
- **poluvernik** - while this ethnic group accepted Orthodoxy, they did not speak the Russian language in which divine services were held and they accepted only external attributes, it means half of the faith;
- **setu** - comes from the Estonian word "sega" which means "mixed", etc.

In the Soviet period when all the inhabitants of the presently independent states had the internal passports of the USSR, the Setus preferred to define themselves as "Estonian". "*There did not exist such a nationality as the Setus,*" said the respondents.

Later on during the interview the majority of respondents (75.8%) answered the question of ethnicity stating that they were Setus and only 9.1% claimed to share the double Estonian-Setu identity. Three respondents thought that they were only the Estonians, regardless of the fact that their parents had identified themselves as Setus. For example, one of them had lived most of his life in Estonia, in the town of Kohtla-Järve, where he had distinguished himself as an Estonian from the Russian majority of the town.

The differences between the self-identification of the Russian and Estonian Setus are considerable. Only 37.5% of the respondents in Estonia said that they were only Setus and 20% said that they were above all Setus and only then Estonians. It seems that the self-identification takes place on the basis of belonging to some social context and not so much on the identification of a person's parents. In fact, the neighbours of the Russian Setus - the Russians are more different from the Setus than the Estonians. This makes the divide bigger and self-identification easier.

All these figures are not clear if we do not specify how the Setus define their contacts with the Estonians. About half of the respondents (both on the Estonian and Russian side) identified themselves as one part of the Estonians. Only 12-15 % of the respondents thought that the Setus were a separate group. Very often when an interviewer asked them if the respondent was a Setu or an Estonian, they stammered and answered, "*It is the same, we are Estonians but Setus.*"

So we can find two levels of the Setus' self-definition - the main status of an Estonian and the lower level of a Setu according to habitation. Both the Russian and Estonian Setus are Setus but the priority and strength of such identification is different.

This two-level identification confirms answers to the question, "How would you answer the question about your nationality in Estonian Setumaa, in Russian Setumaa and in some other place in Estonia/Russia?". The number of people who defined

themselves as Setus decreased significantly further away from Setumaa, where many respondents called themselves the Estonians. *“Nobody knows who the Setus are, but everybody knows who the Estonians are,”* they said.

These facts confirm the insufficiency of quantitative methods. Direct questions on identity in the questionnaire did not measure the strength of ethnic self-identification adequately. One respondent, an active participant in Setu actions and very interested in all Setu problems, answered that she was above all an Estonian and only then a Setu.

A fact that confirms the Setus' essence of strong identification and the differentiation of themselves as an ethnic group from the multinational surroundings, is that the Setus know the borders of Setumaa, particularly the nearest ones. The Russian village of Krupp is only 7 km from them. Although it is not a long distance and the Russians together with the Setus from the nearby villages attend the same church in Saatse, the Setus have not married the inhabitants of Krupp, but the Setus in the neighbourhood of Pechory where the other part of Setumaa is situated.

The far-away borders of historical Setumaa (on the Estonian side) were not known so well. Some respondents said that it was difficult to specify the belonging of some Estonian and Setu villages. Most of the inhabitants of Setumaa could not recall all Setu villages.

We may state that the Setus are the Estonians with some Russian features. In their life and mind the Russian and Estonian culture traits have merged. *“No matter how much a person has studied and worked somewhere else, something inherent confirms that he is a Setu. He speaks with a Setu accent, local people do not notice it since they do not have anyone for comparison. The Setus are more communicative than the Estonians and it is the influence of Russian blood, Slav society. My home is Setumaa.”* (from an interview).

Language

Language is one of the main factors of ethnic identification. All the inhabitants of the Setu villages spoke the Setu dialect among themselves and the greater part of them (60%) confirmed that they used that language also for communication with their relatives living outside Setumaa. The Setu dialect was the mother tongue of all Setus they had mastered at home. Considerable changes were taking place at the moment: many families spoke Estonian in everyday life, particularly the Estonian Setus but also these Russian Setus who came to Setumaa only for holidays seasons and lived the rest of the time in Estonia. (Less than two thirds of the Estonian Setus confirmed that they could speak the Setu dialect fluently. It can be concluded that the Setu dialect has better survived in Russia.)

Many Setus think that the Setu dialect is their mother tongue but the Estonian language is their official and literary language. *“Setu - this is the village language, we speak it when we live in villages,”* a respondent said.

65% of respondents in Russia thought that Setu is one dialect of Estonian. According to linguistic studies the Setus speak southern Estonian (Võru) dialect. Many Setus think that the Setu dialect is more similar to Finnish than to the Estonian language.

Almost all respondents on the Russian side speak Estonian fluently. The majority of the respondents have learned the Estonian language at school. Nearly all older and middle-aged Setus have finished elementary school in Jatsmani. Russian is certainly the third actively spoken language in this area. Three fourths of the inhabitants spoke it fluently. They have learned Russian being in touch with the neighbouring villages, as well as at work and at parties. Some Setus have finished Russian schools, men learned Russian in the Soviet Army. The ways of learning the Russian language were different but the Russian Setus knew it slightly better than the Estonian Setus. Only some Setu people in Russia could not speak the Russian language but it did not hinder them from communicating with summer residents from St. Petersburg living in these villages. To sum it up, the Russian Setus could speak the three local languages much better than the Estonian Setus.

The usage of the Setu dialect is steadily decreasing. Only a fourth of the people thought that the Setu dialect should be learned at schools at present and books and newspapers could be published in the Setu dialect. The respondents thought that their language was very difficult to write and preferred to read and write in Estonian. Some people answered the question if they had read some publications in the Setu language, that they remembered something like that from their childhood. But the majority of them quickly mentioned the epic poem "Peko" published in Finland in 1995.

Half of the respondents said that radio broadcasts in the Setu dialect were important for them. There really exist such broadcasts but one respondent explained that they were transmitted by the Western FM but the majority of the local people had mostly old Soviet radio sets which did not have this frequency scale. Therefore broadcasting does not reach its potential listeners.

General characteristics

The number of people is decreasing steadily and Setumaa is dying out gradually. We found the documents where the heads of families of the Võõllaste village were counted. There were 19 people on this list. Today mainly Cossacks and summer residents from St. Petersburg stay in Võõllaste. At present only one family from the above-mentioned list can be found.

The study brought to light an interesting demographic structure in this region. First, the population of these villages consists of two parts. There are permanent inhabitants who live there throughout the year and those who live in Estonia (Tallinn or Tartu) during the winter but own a house in one of these villages. Half of the respondents do not live there in winter. In addition, there are two age groups - old widowed women born before 1935 and single or divorced men born in the 1950s.

The data showed that most of the Setus had secondary education. It can be misleading as not all the respondents lived permanently in the area. Actually local people had very low education with even illiterates among them. All the people with primary education have gone away to continue studies. They, especially women have not returned to their home village. An exception is only this 'young generation' who studied in Pskov Technical School. Today they have become unemployed and live together with their parents. Almost nobody has a profession, except these "tractor drivers". All people are qualified housekeepers and gardeners since they have been engaged in this field all the time after finishing school. There are no employers in this region except the state farm "Novoizborsk" which is dying out slowly. There is only one man who has a job but he is not a Setu, he is an immigrant. He breeds horses for the Pskov hippodrome and some local people sometimes work for him.

Although the majority of the Setus (70%) answered that they had never met disparaging attitude towards the Setus, many written sources characterised this ethnic group as very poor and in a difficult economic situation, adding that only the Soviet system could free them from constantly serving the Germans and Estonians. In some sources the word "setu" is observed as a synonym of the word "hick"- a man who wears leather peasant shoes and drinks diluted ether. Some younger respondents told us that usually they called themselves the Estonians because it was shameful to call themselves Setus. It is also a position for identification - people confirm their belonging to a national group but at the same time, they want to hide it.

Religion

Orthodoxy has played the main role in the historical formation of the Setu ethnic group. The forefathers of the present Setus preserved their linguistic and cultural characteristics of Finno-Ugric peoples but accepted the religion of the Slavs living in this region.

Some churches have divine services both in Estonian and Russian. The Russians think that the Setus are Orthodox Estonians. They are convinced that *poluvernik* (and *Setu*) is an ethnonym of an Orthodox Estonian. There are indeed Estonians whom we can call Orthodox but "Setu" and "Orthodox Estonian" are not synonyms.

It is rather difficult to measure the depth of their faith by external means. At present old people regularly attend church and visit the cemetery every holiday. There was certainly an icon in every house and summer residents said they also had it in their town apartments. Especially in a situation where the border separates the villages from the church, the desire to go to church as often as possible can also be an expression of protest. But religious traditions are still very strong in this region.

The division into different congregations can easily be observed. Krupp belongs to Saatse congregation; people from Gorodishche, Jaamiste and Lõpolja are the members of Saatse and Väraska congregations, while Põrste villagers go to Väraska church. It could also be mentioned that the people of all these villages have burial plots in Väraska or Saatse cemeteries.

An interesting phenomenon in the religious life of the Setus is small chapels in villages which are worshipped by local people. In the villages under study there were two chapels of this kind - in Lõpolja and in Jaastrova (dedicated to St. Thomas and St. Nicholas). Every year the Setus celebrate the holidays of these saints in these chapels. Such chapels also exist in Estonian Setumaa and people respect them in the same way everywhere. It can be a rudiment of folk belief - people do not worship the great church but a small chapel in the forest.

Setu culture

The Setus are interesting for researchers since they have retained some elements of traditional culture. Small villages are almost an ideal field for research. Local people are used to it and researchers do not astonish them any more. They already recognise the nationality of their visitors. And even if they do not understand their language (they said there had been Russian, Finnish, English and Japanese guests), they gesticulate, demonstrate “pictures” (photographs), handicraft, honour certificates and gifts from previous visitors. But these visitors with cameras leave quickly and do not observe the local life. They only present the Setus small attractive gifts.

The well-known Setu choir from Põrste is very exciting for such visitors. Although the Estonians like singing and have varied singing culture, Setu singing culture differs much from it. The Setu “visiting-card” is a part-song with a soloist who prompts the words, sometimes chanting them, and a soprano who initiates the melody. All women and some men take part in such singing not depending on their vocal abilities, since weak voices can sing in a choir as well. The respondents said that in old days this kind of singing took place at village parties on Thursdays and Saturdays. Now a choir gets together only at parties where they are wearing very festive folk costumes. The choir culture persists and is passed on from generation to generation if there is any new generation .

The Setu folk costume has also preserved. All respondents (women) had a full folk costume or some elements of it: ornaments, headwear, etc. Many people had brought it to town to keep it for their children but many people also wore it on great holidays. Very old costumes which today’s Setus are wearing are an inheritance from their mothers. We can see in ornaments that costumes have been steadily updated since the necklaces are made of the Soviet kopecks instead of tsarist coins. There is different headgear for girls and women in the Setu costume and it reveals some marriage traditions.

The big silver clasp (“sõlg”) worn on the breast of the women’s costume is the main feature that distinguishes the Setu costume from the other Estonian ones. This clasp is the symbol of the sun and it can be considered as a rudiment of folk belief.

As in all societies, there are some active people who lead social life in Setumaa. In these villages there are many people who do not only work in their garden but also take part in social life, particularly in comparison with the Russian villages. Setu

culture and the activeness which has survived in this secluded world, can exist only until its carriers live. Not the origin but belonging to this culture is a strong reason to be a Setu. Regular Setu parties where they get together remind oneself of belonging to this culture.

We can see many Estonian and Russian influences in the Setus' everyday life. The farmsteads resemble the Russian ones and the set-up of the buildings is also more Russian than Estonian-like. Cooking and eating traditions as well as table manners are similar to those in Estonia. The Setus have no typical cuisine and the respondents had difficulties in answering questions about cooking traditional food at home.

Border

This region became more interesting after the border was established. The border phenomena reflect certain interpretations and studying them is the second purpose of the present survey.

Today's border line is very winding and follows a strange route. There are many examples of this. The Värskä-Saatse highway crosses a kilometre-wide strip of the Russian territory and the Russian village Dubki on the coast of Lake Peipsi is surrounded by the Estonian territory from all sides.

The Estonian village Lutepää is situated half a kilometer from Jatsmani. Earlier these villages functioned as one organism like Jatsmani, Jaamiste and Lõpolja do now. Today one has to pass 23 km in order to reach Lutepää. It is easy to manage it with a local registration but without one, it takes an all-day journey through Pechory. The road running next to the border (not seen on a map, it goes from Krupp through Gorodishche to Kirshino) has been built in recent years. Earlier all lines of communication ran perpendicularly.

All social contacts in this region depend on roads since the territory is very swampy here. People were asked the question if they had relatives on the other side of Setumaa. All respondents had relatives in Estonia and the majority of them lived not far in Estonian Setumaa. The Estonian and Russian sides of Setumaa have always functioned as one organism, but are now split by the border. It happens now that the children and grandchildren of the inhabitants of Russian Setumaa cannot visit their parents, cannot use the empty houses which are their property in Russia and which cannot be sold, as no buyers can be found. Only the people who are working at the frontier guard come to this region. The formerly big and viable villages become deserted.

The border zone also complicates the life of congregations whose churches are situated in the territory of Estonia. The only real possibility for the majority of people in the border zone to cross the border on great holidays is according to the lists made in the village community. On the other hand, it is an enormous restriction which violates the rights of the believers. The majority of them do not use the lists since

most of them have visas. But in this case we again face the problem of roads as the passage at the border checkpoint in Krupp makes the way to church noticeably longer.

Local people followed the church conflict of Estonian Orthodox church between Moscow and Constantinople patriarchs and were disturbed. Unlike the Estonian Setus, 57.5% of them answered that they preferred Constantinople, only a fourth of the Russian Setus answered this question. Most of them knew about this conflict but very few expressed their opinion.

This example shows very well that in comparison with other regions any social factor can be different in the border region. Unlike Russian inhabitants of the nearest villages, the Setus have a possibility to cross the border with a visa and not with church lists. No matter to whom they pray, they believe that there is only one faith and it does not depend on who the head of the church is. These inhabitants of the border region who do not have a possibility to cross the border freely appreciate mass journeys to the church. Not only the Setus but also the Russians of the border region villages had many contacts on the Estonian side but now they can keep them only at the time of church-going. These people (interviews were made in Krupp) are afraid that if the congregation does not belong to Constantinople any longer, they will lose the possibility to attend church in Estonia and the last contacts with Estonia will cease.

In Krupp there is a site for a new cemetery, which deepens the suspicion that one day the border will be closed and people cannot go to the graves of their forefathers, have no possibility to get together in the cemetery and take part in funeral processions together with their relatives in Estonia. Not only the Setus but also the Russians living here have relatives in Estonia.

It has been mentioned for many times already that the Setus can cross the border more easily than the local Russian people. According to the Estonian Citizenship Law the successors of the local people could get Estonian citizenship as this territory belonged to Estonia during the interwar period. In Setu villages many generations have lived in the same place and very few people have come there from other places. The Republic of Estonia does not recognise double citizenship. The possession of both Estonian and Russian passports at same time is very risky. There are local people who have a Russian passport to get a visa to visit Estonia on the Russian border and an Estonian passport for showing it on the Estonian border. It is well known to officials. The respondents admitted in interviews that they often mixed up their three passports (two Russian passports - inland and foreign) and gave all the three to the frontier guard. People were afraid that if it became widely known, their blue passports would be taken away and they could not cross the border that freely any more.

It is noteworthy that the Setus who lived there permanently thought they were Russian citizens but the blue passport was as a permit for them to cross the border. The Russian presidential elections took place in the period of the study and all local people who had the blue passport went to vote. In Estonia the majority ignored elections.

A very interesting fact is that Estonian Setus have a totally different relation to the border. As all Russian Setus had a visa or problems with crossing the border, the border even did not exist for Estonian Setus. Russian Setus crossed the border

regularly, only 15% of the respondents said that they had not crossed the border that year. Only a fourth of the Estonian Setus had been abroad this year and only two of them crossed the border more often than once a month. Only one respondent said that she had a visa.

When the border was open, the majority of Russian respondents (85%) came to Estonia at least once a week and the reasons for coming were shopping and visiting church and relatives. Estonian respondents formerly went to Russia more seldom than Russians came to Estonia but more often than now. 42.5 % of the respondents crossed the border at least once a week, the main reason being shopping.

The establishment of the border was much more painful for the Russian side of Setumaa than for the Estonian side. It shows that the social contacts broken off by the border now have been one-directional and have proceeded from Russia to Estonia. It is quite a common phenomenon because social contacts are usually directed towards the centre and in this case they have moved to the main point of Setu culture - to the centre of Setumaa which is situated in the Estonian territory.

New surrounding structures

The establishment of new structures always brings about the appearance of new agents from these surroundings. In this case it is connected with the establishment of the border and enacting of the border zone.

The border zone of Gverston did not bring about any difficulties in the life of these villages because there were very few people who wanted to go there from Russia in comparison with those who wanted to come here from Estonia. Relatives who wanted to enter normally got a permission.

There were more problems with frontier guards. They went to houses and asked for foodstuffs. There had also been cases of marauding to empty and abandoned houses. In recent times local people have complained that frontier guards go to houses and take foodstuffs and money from old women. A group of immigrants which is untypical of local culture - the Cossacks - appeared with establishing the border. The Cossacks started to live in the deserted Setu villages. They also had a strip of border to guard, and had to become permanent residents in this territory and integrate somehow into local society. This integration has not taken place as local people feel reluctance for them. They had doubts as to whether the Cossacks were legal inhabitants there.

There was a question in the questionnaire about the respondents' opinion concerning the best political status for these territories - either the Estonian territory as it was before World War II should be given back to Estonia, or the Setu regions should be isolated from Estonia, or they would prefer some other possibilities. The majority of the respondents said that neither the colour of the passport nor the name of the president - Boris or Lennart - is important. They would even agree to the fact that the border went a kilometre farther from their houses, if only it would be possible to cross it freely like earlier. They believed that it could be possible. But the Estonian

government will hardly make a move like that, particularly in connection with the declaration of the Nordic countries about closing the eastern border for entry to the Nordic countries without a visa.

Conclusions

It could be said that the Setu identity has many levels - they identify themselves as Setus and Estonians. Socialisation plays a more important role than origin. The Setus are considered as a subgroup of Estonians and not as an independent group. The Setu dialect is actively used in Setumaa but it exists on an equal level with other languages. Its practising is decreasing nowadays and it will become extinct together with the older generation. We may also conclude that religion plays an important role in Setu everyday life. It has been one of the most important factors in the formation of ethnic identity.

Borders are usually of essential importance. First, it is the national interests of the two countries whom the border divides that play the most important role, and not the interests of local society. Russian Setus are not optimistic about their future and they worry about their destiny. In their opinion Russian Setus will die out soon and Estonian Setus will become Estonians. Unlike Estonian Setus, it is very important for them that their descendants would call themselves Setus and preserve their culture traditions. But they do not believe that it will become true.

Political Culture in Periphery

Piret Paljak, Piret Ehin

Introduction

With its peripheral location, demographically ageing population and economic backwardness, the Peipsi Russians' settlement comprises the characteristics of a typical problem area. In addition, it has a distinct ethnic environment - coexistence of Estonians and Russians, different cultures and religious practices through centuries. Mustvee and Raja are good examples of this area.

In June 1996 a survey "Political Culture in Periphery" was conducted at Mustvee and Raja in Estonia. It was carried out by Piret Ehin and Piret Paljak, students of the Department of Political Science of Tartu University. The aim of the survey was to examine local political culture in correlation with the economic situation and ethnic background: how much ethnic background influences political behaviour; what is the impact of the economic situation on political preferences; could a culturally marginal and economically backward region create political tensions? The survey examined the role of local authorities and their willingness to represent people's political, economic, and other interests. One of the key issues was whether the local people felt they could influence the decision-making process in their own favour.

The hypotheses we wanted to test in the survey were the following:

- The local people are politically active (most likely participate in elections), but their political awareness is poor (ideological self-identification, party preferences, etc.). Therefore, they can easily be manipulated.
- In the region, the biggest problems are the economic ones like unemployment and low living-standard. The situation in this field has become especially bad after worsening the possibilities to market vegetables.
- The local people think the problems in the region can be solved only at the central level of the government, and local authorities have been set aside.
- There are no ethnic problems in the region now, but social dissatisfaction can cause problems in this field as well.
- In case of discontent, Russian parties in Estonia will represent the interests of the Russians in Mustvee and Raja. This can either favour the integration of local Russians into Estonian society or, on the contrary, make it more difficult.

The methodology of the study was based on a structural interview. The interviewees were selected randomly and they were asked mainly multiple choice questions. Filling in the questionnaire was voluntary. In addition to that, some expert interviews were made with the members of the local governments and leaders of the community.

Information about the sample

THE RESPONDENT AND THE POTENTIAL ELECTOR

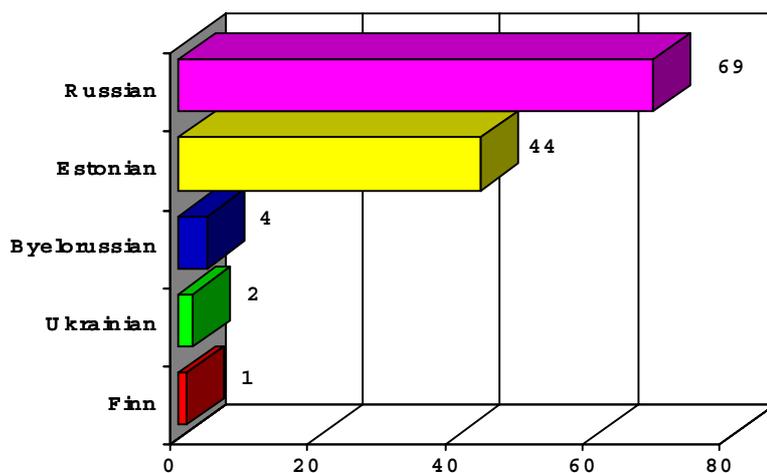
During this survey 120 people were interviewed in Mustvee and Raja by the principle of random sample - in Mustvee 72 people (60% of total) and in Raja 48 people (40%). The basic characteristics of the sample were as follows:

AGE. All the respondents were at the electoral age, 18 years or older. The youngest was 18 and the oldest 85 years old. The average - 51 years - is quite high because the number of elderly people in the region is disproportionately high. Among the respondents only 15.8% were under 30 years old and 35.8% were over 60 years old.

GENDER. 65 % of the respondents (78) were women and 35 % (42) were men.

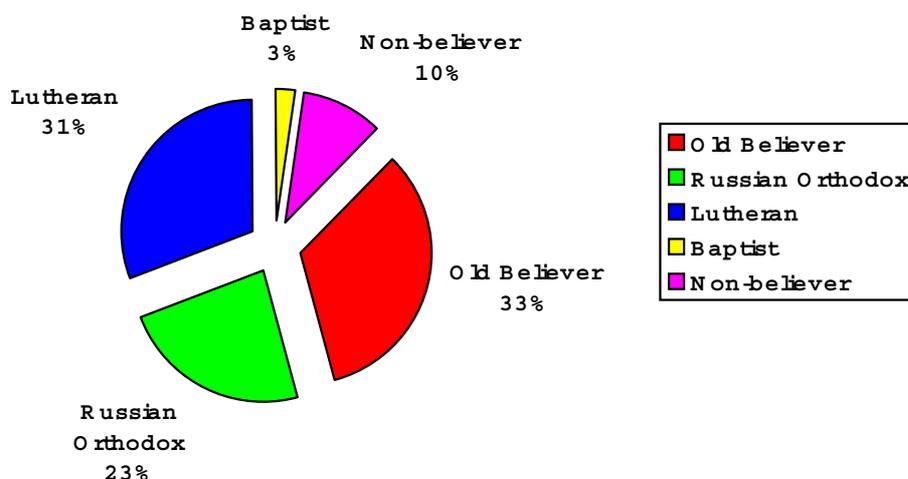
ETHNIC COMPOSITION. Five ethnic groups were represented: Estonians, Russians, Byelorussians, Ukrainians and Finns (Fig. 1). The main groups were Estonians (36.7% of total) and Russians (57.5 %). In the three other ethnic groups, there were only 7 people (5.8%) in all.

Figure 1. Respondents by nationality; number.



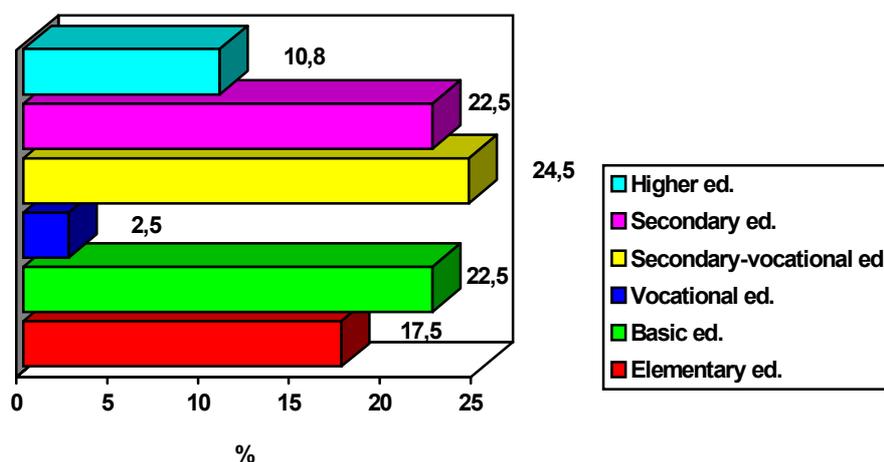
RELIGION. The religious self-identification of the respondents gives a good picture of the cultural diversity in this community: 33% of the respondents were Old Believers, 31% Lutherans, 23% Russian Orthodox and 2.5% Baptists (Fig. 2). Religious identity in this region is much stronger than in Estonia in general - only 10.5% of the respondents said they were non-believers.

Figure 2. Respondents by religion (%).



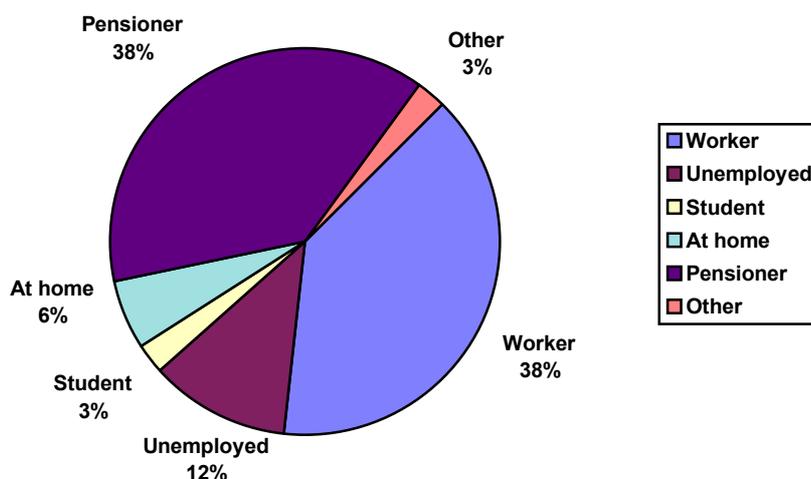
EDUCATION. The biggest group of the respondents had secondary vocational education (24.2%), followed by those with secondary or basic education (both 22.5% of total) (Fig. 3).

Figure 3. Respondents by education (%).



SOCIAL STATUS. The major social categories are employees (39.2%) and pensioners (38.3%). The unemployed rank the third place (11.7%). Thus, only a little more than one third of the potential electors are employed (Fig. 4).

Figure 4. Respondents by social status (%).



SOURCE OF INCOME. 43.3% of the respondents said that the main sources of their family income are benefits and/or pensions, 33.3% earned their income primarily in a public/state sector, 17.5% in private enterprises and 5.8% got it from other sources. Partly, this kind of division of income sources is caused by the age structure of the population (disproportionally many old people), partly by the economic problems of the region (high rate of unemployment).

MONTHLY INCOME. The average monthly income per person was approximately 800 EEK, varying from 80 EEK (minimum) to 4000 EEK (maximum).

DWELLING. 83.3% of the respondents lived in detached houses and 16.7% in apartments. 90.8% of the respondents (or their family members) were the owners of the dwelling and 9.2% were tenants.

CITIZENSHIP. Citizenship is the characteristic that distinguishes the Russians of Mustvee and Raja region from the post-war urban Russian immigrants. 91.7% of the respondents were Estonian citizens. Only 4 out of 120 respondents (3.3%) had Russian citizenship and 6 (5%) did not have any citizenship at all. Out of 69 Russians, only 8 were not Estonian citizens. The picture is largely different from the nationwide situation because there are many Russians in Peipsi area who have Estonian citizenship.

IDENTITY. In general, both Estonian and Russian respondents identify themselves primarily by nationality. 72.7% of Estonian respondents considered themselves above all Estonians. Russian respondents, however, often combined national identity with regional identity: thus, 30% of Russian respondents identified themselves primarily as Russians, and then as Peipsi-Russians (23.2%). The second important identity category for both Estonians and Russians was being an Estonian citizen.

TERM OF RESIDENCY IN TOWN/MUNICIPALITY. Most of the respondents have lived at Mustvee/Raja or in the close neighbourhood for the whole life or most of it. Only one respondent had lived in the region for less than five years.

Differences between Russian and Estonian respondents

The uniqueness of the Mustvee-Raja region is largely based on the centuries-long coexistence of the Estonian and Russian population. According to the basic information gained from the aforementioned respondents, important differences between the two main ethnic groups, Estonians and Russians, can be distinguished. Most significant differences occur along the lines of religion and identity.

RELIGION. There is strong correlation between religious and ethnic identity. All those identifying themselves as Old Believers were Russians (with the exception of one Byelorussian) and those who defined themselves as Lutherans, were Estonians (one Finn was an exception). The Russian Orthodox group was mainly Russian, too, including only two Estonians. Among Baptists and those who considered themselves “non-believers”, there were no ethnic differences.

IDENTITY. Respondents were asked to identify themselves with two groups or categories, (such as Estonian, Russian, Orthodox, etc.), below referred to as primary and secondary identity, according to the importance attributed to it by the respondent. While both ethnic groups perceive cultural traits to be the core of their identity, the significance Estonians attribute to it seems to be greater. 72.7% of Estonians perceive themselves, above all, as Estonians, compared to 53.6% of Russians who identify themselves as Russians or Peipsi-Russians (the latter, evidently, trying to emphasise their distinctiveness from the new immigrants). None of Estonians defined the identity, above all, in terms of religion. In contrast, 18.8% of Russians identified themselves, in the first place, as Old Believers or Orthodox. Only one Russian respondent mentioned Russian citizenship as his first identity.

The first identities of Estonian and Russian respondents were as follows:

| | |
|------------|---|
| Estonians: | 72.7% Estonian |
| | 22.7% Estonian citizen |
| | 2.3% inhabitant of my town/municipality |
| | 2.3% Orthodox |
| Russians: | 30.4% Russian |
| | 23.1% Peipsi Russian |
| | 14.5% Estonian citizen |
| | 13.0% Old Believer |

The secondary identity of Estonian respondents is based on religion and citizenship (31.8% Lutheran; 31.8% Estonian citizen). Similarly, one third of Russian respondents mention Estonian citizenship as their secondary identity.

Interestingly enough, one ethnic Estonian identified himself above all as "Estonian" and secondarily as "Russian". Similarly, one Russian respondent considered himself above all "Estonian" (probably identifying citizenship with nationality) and another Russian marked "Estonian" as his secondary identity. The existence of vague or mixed ethnic identities, once again, illustrates the intertwining of cultures in the region. A significant part of the population (especially older people) speak both Estonian and Russian fluently, but they are unable to tell, which language they use more. Also, this is the case with indigenous Russians whose relatives live in Estonia and who have, over time, got adjusted to the mainstream culture of the country, being sometimes unable to tell whether they are Russians or Estonians. For many people in the area, being an "Estonian" citizen means being a part of the Estonian nation, too.

Evaluations of economic situation

Economically, Mustvee and Raja belong to the periphery of Estonia. This area is economically backward with a high rate of unemployment and little industry, which makes living standard rather low.

After the political changes and economic restructuring of the late 1980s the living standard has been declining, since the traditional ways of earning one's living were altered. The gap between the Peipsi region and the towns is large, if not widening, since the latter benefited from the economic transition and seem to prosper under the new capitalist system.

For many respondents the general economic situation in Estonia has become worse during the last ten years (50.8%). In fact, many respondents evidently lacked information to judge the overall situation in Estonia (elderly people hardly travel) and therefore based their answers on the change in their own well-being or on the economic situation in the region. However, these answers gave us a clear hint that the inhabitants of the region do not share the enthusiasm about Estonia's economic progress toward capitalism. Regarding the economic changes in the Lake Peipsi region over the last ten years, pessimism about the reforms is even bigger - 66.7% of the respondents reported that the situation has become worse and only 8.3% claimed that the situation is better now than it was ten years ago. Answers to this question are more reliable, since respondents were generally well informed about local problems. Basically, the evaluation of the economic situation is not related to the respondent's ethnic background. Estonians, however, seem to be a little bit more pessimistic about the changes than Russians: only 4.5% of Estonians and 10.1% of Russians claimed that things had become better.

In addition, the respondents were asked to give their opinion about the more specific aspects of economy. The possibilities to market fish and run a private business were the only economic aspects that people thought had become rather better than worse during the last ten years. Fish is highly demanded in western markets and liberal economic policy favours business initiatives in all the possible ways. However many respondents (37.5%) did not have their own opinion about the current 'business

environment', mainly because they just thought it to be something "very far" from them without any important links.

Growing vegetables for sale was also seen as one form of private business. But here most of the interviewees agreed that the options to market garden products have worsened during the last 10 years and only 5 out of 120 said they have improved. During the Soviet times, growing vegetables (mainly cucumbers and onions) was one of the main sources of income in this area. They sold their products mainly in St. Petersburg (then Leningrad) market. A new political situation, the closing of the border between Estonia and Russia and high tariff barriers almost finished this profitable business.

In spite of pessimistic views, 60% of them still said that the transition to the market economy was in principle a right step. However, they did not like the way it had been implemented (it should have happened more gradually, etc.). Many respondents paid attention to the liquidation of the collective farms and its sad consequences as an example of wrong implementation.

Unemployment is really the biggest problem for the people - 39.2% of the interviewees said that most of all their well-being and safety are darkened by the fear to lose the job and become unemployed. People are even more afraid of unemployment than criminality. Thirdly there was the fear not to manage economically, which is connected with the threatening unemployment.

Unemployment was considered as the number one problem in that region by most of the respondents. Difficulties in marketing ranked as the second, being followed by the problem of young people leaving the area and insufficient attention paid to the region by the state. The main acting force who should deal with these problems and solve them is the central authority. 31.9% of those who said that unemployment was one of the three biggest problems in the region said that this problem should be in the competence of the Estonian Government, and 31.1% said that it was the local governments who should deal with it in the first place. In the case of difficulties with marketing, the balance between these two power levels was different: 68.8% said that, first of all, the central government of the state should deal with it, and only 15.6% said it should be in the competence of local authorities. Considering the economic peculiarity of this region, this kind of opinions are quite logical - the problems with the border between states and with tariff barriers are issues where local authorities are powerless and in these areas solutions should be found on the state level. As to the fourth problem - insufficient attention from the state to the region - 76.1% of those who mentioned it among the three most important problems said that the central government should improve the situation, but 10.9% held that local governments could help here most of all.

Almost all the respondents said that all the aforementioned problems can still be solved. Only 3 out of 120 respondents said that with some of them the situation was hopeless. There were also very few of those who thought that people themselves can and could improve the situation without the intervention of central or local authorities. The county level as a possible acting force dealing with economic problems in the region is completely in the background.

To develop Estonian economy, the inhabitants of Mustvee and Raja more often think it is more important to promote at first the economic relations with Russia and only then with the European Union than vice versa. Estonians prefer more collaboration with the EU (15.9% of Estonian respondents) than with Russia (9.1%). For Russians, the picture is just the opposite and much clearer: 4.3% prefer close relations with the EU and 27.5% with Russia. But more than half of all the respondents (57.5%) said that Estonia should promote relations both with the EU and Russia.

Ethnic relations

A special characteristic of Mustvee and Raja is the coexistence of two big ethnic groups - Estonians and Russians. These Russians have lived here for centuries and therefore tend to distinguish between themselves and the new immigrants who arrived during the Soviet times. There are not and have never been any ethnic conflicts and problems at Lake Peipsi. None of the interviewees said that there were strained relations between Estonians and Russians in Mustvee or Raja. 74.2% said that the relations were good and 25.8% evaluated them as satisfactory. Still, 33.3% of the respondents thought that ethnic relations in the whole Estonia had aggravated and 40% were of the opinion that they had not changed during the last ten years. Estonians were a little more optimistic about this problem than Russians.

Because of such an ethnic composition, Mustvee and Raja are bilingual. Now, after Estonia has become independent again, the Estonian language plays a more important role than it did before, especially in the service sector and public institutions. Still, the officials are usually obliging and use Russian if the addressee cannot manage in Estonian. That is why 62.3% of Russian respondents said that there had been no change in the use of their mother tongue in public institutions and only 20.3% said that the situation had deteriorated.

Most Russians - 56.5% - evaluate the current possibilities of getting education in the Russian language worse than they were ten years ago. But they do not refer only to the educational and minority policies of the Republic of Estonia, but also to the economic reasons that make the schooling of children more difficult now than it was before. The attitude towards sending their children to Estonian schools was hesitant among Russians: about one-third is in favour, another one third was against and the rest had no firm opinion about that. At the same time, 43.2% of Estonian respondents said it would be good and necessary if Russian children attended Estonian schools. The main argument against sending Russian children to Estonian schools was that they should not be forced to do that and it should depend on the concrete child and his or her fluency or proficiency in Estonian. The most common argument for that was that attending an Estonian school helps Russian children to learn the Estonian language. A few respondents stressed the cultural differences of Estonians and Russians and the important socializing role of school. At the same time most Russians (72.5%) were for sending Russian children to Estonian kindergartens, mainly for the purpose of language learning. Here Estonians had more hesitant attitudes - a little fewer people were against than for it.

Both Estonians and Russians (93.3% of all respondents) agreed that Russian-speaking people in Estonia should learn the Estonian language so that they could speak it. No one of the interviewed Russians objected it. The majority of the respondents (65.8%) did not think that the Russian-speaking people in Estonia should acquire Russian citizenship and only 6.7% thought they should do that. Russians objected it even more than Estonians. The main argument was usually that if they wanted to live here they had to have the citizenship of the country. Also, 75% of the respondents thought that the Russian-speaking population of Estonia should actively participate in the political life of Estonia because they live here and they should participate in the decision-making and governing the same way Estonians do. 10% of the interviewees were against it. The main arguments were, first, that it is still the Republic of Estonia where these Russian-speaking people live and here Estonians must be those who decide, and second, that many of these Russian-speaking people are not Estonian citizens. There is no statistically important correlation between the ethnic background of the respondent and his or her opinion about the participation. However, it is more important for Russians (82.6%) than for Estonians (63.6%) that Russian-speaking people should participate in the political life of Estonia. It is remarkable that about a quarter of Estonians and only one Russian were against their participation.

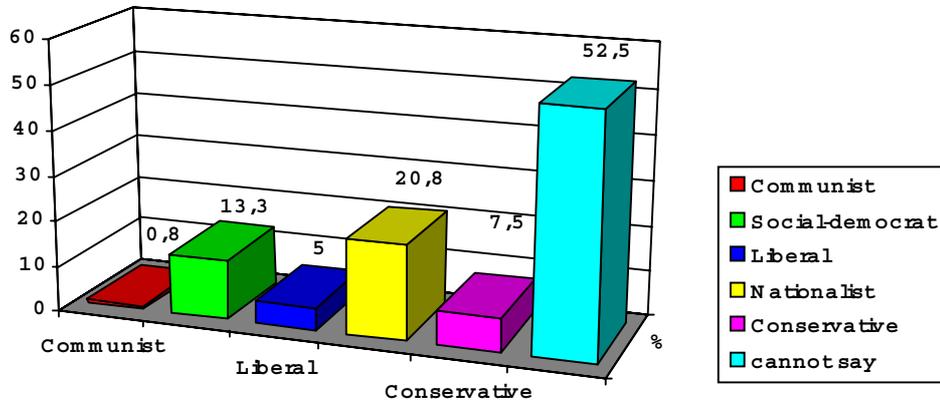
The Estonians' knowledge of Russian language was not considered to be very important, most of the respondents said that it was always good to know many languages. Still it was noticeable that most of those who said that Estonians need not know Russian, were Estonians. The attitude towards the independence of Estonia was mainly positive - 80% of the respondents said that it was in principle right that Estonia became independent and only 6.7% said that it should not have happened. Here a correlation with the ethnic background of the respondent can be noted: 24.5% of Russians and only 6.8% of Estonians said that Estonia should not have become independent.

The main acting forces who should deal with ethnic problems were again the Estonian Government and local governments. Compared with economic problems, the central government is of greater importance here. It is understandable because for the people of Mustvee and Raja the ethnic problems exist more on the state level than on the local one. County level as a possible problem solver in ethnic issues has again receded to the background. Compared with economic problems, here the respondents paid more attention to the individual initiative and considered it more important.

Ideological self-determination

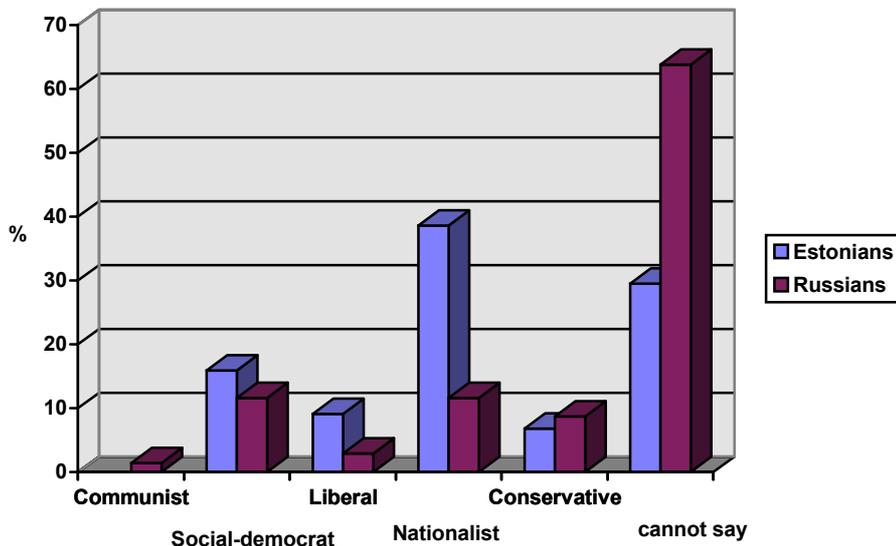
Most of the respondents had problems with determining their ideological preferences. Most of them had no firm point of view in this question or they did not know the meaning of ideological terms like, for example, "liberal" or "conservative". Sometimes even if the respondent said that he or she belonged to this or that category, it was not usually a firm conviction but they rather selected the most understandable and the most acceptable from the given choices. Only a few respondents had firmly formed political and ideological preferences (Fig. 5).

Figure 5. Respondents by their ideological identities (%).



The difference between Estonians and Russians on the level of their formed ideological preferences is remarkable (Fig. 6). Estonians are much more aware of the subject, only 29.5% of them could not define their ideological preferences (63.8% of Russians could not do that).

Figure 6. Ideological identities of the respondents by nationality (%).



It was quite common that the interviewees did not understand more extensively the processes and regularities that occur in the society. They simply look at things from the point of view of their own benefit. A good example here is that the majority of them were in favor of free medical care and education (88.3% of the respondents) as well as big allowances, benefits and other government supports (also 88.3%), but with

similar conviction (85%) they claimed that taxes should be low, not considering the fact that all these social benefits are financed by taxes. People living in Mustvee and Raja identified themselves in the first order as the ones who receive the benefits and pensions and only after that, if at all, as taxpayers.

The attitudes towards the role of the state in the society are conflicting. Only 35% of the respondents said the state should intervene in the life of individuals to a large extent (51.7% were against it), but at the same time they preferred free education and medical care very much, which are also examples of the state intervention in the life of individuals.

More than a half of the respondents (55.8%) supported the private ownership of land and means of production. The private ownership of land was considered especially important. However, more than a quarter said that the land and means of production should not be private property. The main reason for that is the fields that were privatised after the collapse of collective farms and which are lying fallow now. There were also some people who said it was not important who owned the land, only if country-people could use and cultivate it.

About a half of the respondents (46.7%) said that we should model the present scheme of the society according to the past, but there were also quite a few of those (38.3%) who were against it. In the arguments for and against it, people mentioned both the Soviet times and the former Estonian Republic as either good or bad model.

Economy and its development are of the main interest to the inhabitants of Mustvee and Raja. Knowing the main problems of the region, it is easy to understand the reasons. That is why it is quite surprising that almost a third of the respondents (29.2%), both Estonians and Russians, said that supporting the nation-building, mother tongue and culture is in principle more important than the economic development of the state. It is a little unexpected that quite strong nationalism emerges in the region which is known for the friendly coexistence of two big ethnic groups. Nationalism for them is more like patriotism or supporting national culture, something positive, conservative and not destructive.

As a conclusion, some generalisations can be made about the ideological standpoints on the basis of ethnic belonging. Estonians are more nation-centred and right-wing than Russians. 38.6% of Estonians identified themselves ideologically as nationalists (only 11.6% of Russians did that). Estonians were also more positive about the assertion that supporting the nation and culture is more important than the economic development of the state. The fact that Estonians are more right-wing is reflected, to some extent, already in the social-political standpoints. 91.3% of Russians (81.8% of Estonians) wanted pensions and benefits to be as big as possible; 89.9% of Russians (84.1% of Estonians) supported free medical care. But here the differences are small and the ageing population in the region is highly dependent on governmental social support, irrespective of ethnic belonging. The differences between Estonians and Russians became even more evident in the attitudes towards the different types of ownership - public or private - and the role of the state in the society in general. Among Russians, the viewpoint that the land and means of production should belong to the state is more popular - 36.2% of them expressed this opinion (15.9% of

Estonians). 42% of Russians (23% of Estonians) supported governmental intervention into the life of individuals.

Political awareness and attitudes towards political parties

People residing in Mustvee and Raja do not have a clear picture about political parties of Estonia. Usually they know only a few more important and bigger parties, and even then often only the name of the party and something about the main courses. Political leaders are more known, especially those who have already been in the public arena for a longer time.

Only very few of the respondents had firm party preferences. 74.2% of the interviewees could not say which one of the Estonian political parties they would support in the election. Only 14 out of 120 (11%) could name the party for which they would vote in the elections; *Keskerakond*, *Koonderakond*, *Reformierakond*, *Mõõdukad*, *Isamaa* and *Pensionäride & Perede Liit* were mentioned by these 14 people. Other respondents usually determined their preferences more indistinctly. For example, they said they supported farmers or Russian parties, or named the political leader they would vote for. Of political leaders, Arnold Rüütel was mentioned more often, but also Siim Kallas and others. But we should not make generalisations based on this information, because three quarters of the interviewees did not say anything about their party preferences.

Almost the same number of respondents, 76.7% could not name the political party they would not support in the elections for sure. The rest, less than a quarter of the interviewees, said at least something about what kind of parties they did not like in Estonia. Again, bigger parties of Estonia were named - *Koonderakond*, *Isamaa*, *Keskerakond*, *Reformierakond*. Thus, while other parties had about as many supporters as opponents (that is about 2-3), nobody opposed *Mõõdukad*, - the party had only some supporters; *Isamaa* had only two supporters, and five opponents. The respondents also mentioned communists (4 times, all of them were Russians), nationalists (7, all Russians) and Russian parties in Estonia (2, both Estonians) as political groups they would not support.

The difference between Estonian and Russian respondents emerges more evidently in the attitudes towards Russian political parties in Estonia - *Eestimaa Ühendatud Rahvapartei* and *Vene Erakond Eestis*. Neither of the parties is well-known. 16.7% of the respondents said they knew *Eestimaa Ühendatud Rahvapartei* and 21.7% - that they knew *Vene Erakond Eestis*. As anticipated, Russians know Russian parties better than Estonians. One possible reason why VEE is more known, is that the leader of the party, Nikolai Maspanov, comes from this region and stood for the parliament at the last general election in this region. In comparison: Sergei Zonov (also a political leader of Russians in Estonia) is much less known among the people of this area. 87.5% of the respondents said they did not know him at all (18.3% said they did not know Maspanov at all). These answers are not in correlation with the ethnic background of the respondent. More Estonians than Russians had some kind of firm opinion - either positive or negative - about the activity of the Russian parties (65.9%

of Estonians and 92.8% of Russians did not have that). But most of the interviewees (60%) could not evaluate their activities, because they just did not know about them. The reason for neutral attitude was often the same. Many people said they just did not care what the parties were doing or not doing. Russians were even less aware about the activities of the Russian parties in Estonia than Estonians, and in most cases they did not see these parties as potential representatives of their interests. One reason here is that the interests of the local native Russians differ widely from the interests of the Russians who live, for example, in Tallinn.

The majority of the respondents was not able to prefer one political party to the others. However, they knew which issues were of determinative importance for them. Doubtlessly, the most important are economic questions (48.3% said they were most important for them, 18.3% marked them as the second and 6.7% as the third). These are followed by social questions (17.5%, 40.8% and 10.8% respectively) and by safety (14.2%, 12.5% and 31.7% respectively). Relations with Russia are more important than the Russian question in Estonia. Presumably, this is due to the local situation - there are no ethnic tensions, but it could solve many problems in that particular region if they could get access to St. Petersburg market.

The majority of the respondents are well informed about the political life in the Republic of Estonia (in their own opinion). Estonians consider themselves to be well informed more often (65.9%) than Russians (53.6%). They mainly get information from Estonian TV channels whereas radio broadcasts and printed press occupy the second and third place, respectively (Estonian press for Estonians and Russian press for Russians). Russian TV channels stand extremely in the background. Only 4.5% (5 people out of 120) said that this was the most important source of information about Estonian political life for them.

Political activities and belonging to organisations

The main political activity of the people of Mustvee and Raja is voting in the elections. They participate in the elections very actively (both in local and general ones). 76.7% of the respondents participated in the last general election in the spring of 1995. 83.3% of them intended to participate in the local election in October, 1996 and 77.5% thought it was important or very important for them to vote.

But that is almost all about their political activities. During the last two years, only 4.5% of the interviewees had written to the newspapers, 9.2% had signed turningletters and only one out of 120 had participated in some kind of protest-action. For more complicated political activities, people do not have enough political literacy and they are just not interested in it. There are many fewer possibilities for protest actions in a rural area or little town compared with, for example, Tallinn or other bigger centres. Thus, it is not surprising that political activeness is quite low. It is so not only because of lack of interest among the local people. One reason for little participation in political activities and for little initiative from people is also the low degree of (political) organisation.

The majority of the people of Mustvee and Raja are not members of organisations. Only five respondents belong to some kind of professional organisation and seven to trade unions. None of the interviewees was a member of any political party. It would be wrong to claim that these numbers are too small (especially that none of the respondents was a member of a party). This is a general tendency all over Estonia as well.

From all this it could be inferred that the people of Mustvee and Raja are quite satisfied with their present situation or have just accepted it. Or even if they have not, they are not looking for possibilities to show it in an unconventional way. There are no rebellious tendencies in spite of several big (potential) problems the area is faced with (economic backwardness, unemployment, etc.).

Local governments

Local governments are of great importance for the population of Mustvee and Raja, because this is the level of power that is the closest to the people and therefore it can most directly deal with and solve the current problems people have. 45.8% of the interviewees said that the local government is the most important level of power for them. 36.7% said that the Central Government of the Republic of Estonia was the most important for them because everything began from there and it also determined the competency and functions of the local governments.

When the interviewees were asked to try to evaluate the importance of different levels of (state) authorities ten years ago, 33.3% said that at that time the local level (village council/executive committee of the town) was the most important for them. During these ten years, the importance of the central government has increased from 14.2% to 36.7%. The importance of the county-level has decreased significantly - from 16.7% ten years ago to 8.3% now. Behind these changes are the big changes in Estonian society, the most important of them doubtlessly being the separation of Estonia from the former Soviet Union.

The local government is the level of power that is closest to the people. At Mustvee and Raja people estimate their work in sum quite positively: about a quarter of the respondents have always got help from there and about one quarter have got help sometimes and only 7.5% said they had never got help in their problems from there. Of course, people have different problems and in spite of everything the local government cannot solve all the problems. A relatively big part of the interviewees (37.5%) had not asked for help from the local authorities in their problems. There are different reasons for that: some people always try to manage on their own and never ask for help from the government, some people do not believe local governments can help them and some people do not believe they want to help them.

In general, the opinion is quite widespread that local governments do not do anything or if they do, they work only in their own interests and for their own profit, hence the resultant unreliability and negative attitudes towards the local authorities. But quite

often the real reason for mistrust is that people just do not know what is going on there and what has been decided.

In recent times, the situation has become improved both in Mustvee and Raja thanks to the local newspapers that have been published since spring 1996. Both the newspaper of Mustvee ("*Mustvee Teataja*") and the newspaper of Raja ("*Raja Teataja*") come out once a month with the help of the Jõgeva county newspaper "*Vooremaa*" and the Lake Peipsi Foundation. The inhabitants of Mustvee/Raja get the newspaper for free. The newspapers reflect the most important events in the town/municipality and the activities of the local governments. These newspapers are specially meant for the local people and local people like them very much and are satisfied with them. Still, people would like to know more about what is going on in the local authorities. About half of the respondents said they do not have enough information about them. It seems that Raja people are more satisfied with the amount of information they have. Quite many people both in Mustvee and Raja said that they were not interested in what the local authority was doing.

Local elections

Over 80% of the respondents said that they would go to vote in the local election in October 1996. They thought it was important to do that although most of them knew or thought that their vote would not have enough impact on the results. Some very critical interviewees even said that "they (local authorities) elect themselves", hinting at the fact that many of the members of the local councils have already been re-elected for several times.

In the local election at Mustvee and Raja political parties with their own candidate lists will probably not participate. There will still be lists but these are composed on the basis of other factors, mainly personal contacts. Ethnic groups have no determining importance, but people still tend to group by nationalities so that Estonians are together and Russians are together. For example in the last local election at Mustvee, there were two candidate lists - "*The Lake*" comprising Estonians, and "*Mustvee*" made up mainly of Russians.

Although there are candidate lists, people usually do not take into consideration their electoral programs while deciding for whom to vote. In reality, people vote for persons. The local candidates - their personal characteristics, ideological preferences and their personal background - are usually well known to the local people. The most important factor that influences the choice between the candidates at local elections is the candidate's personal characteristics. For 32.5% of the respondents this factor ranked the first, for 25% - the second, and for 10% - the third. The second important factor was the popularity of the candidate and how he/she was known to people (10.8%, 20.8% and 14.2% respectively) and the third important factor was ideology (13.3%, 15.0% and 10% respectively). Electoral platforms were of relatively small importance.

The ethnic belonging of the candidate was not totally unimportant, either. 13.3% of the respondents claimed that it was the most important factor for them. But for most respondents, ethnic group was not important while choosing between candidates. 63.3% said it was not important whether the leader of the local authority was Estonian or Russian. What is very important for the people is that the mayor should be a local resident of the town - 91.7% of the respondents stated that.

As mentioned before, people mainly make their choice according to the candidates' personal characteristics. Most of all they value honesty - 70.0% of the interviewees said that the candidate must, above all, be honest. Some other important characteristics mentioned were the candidate's closeness to people (15.8% considered it the most important and 40.8% the second most important) as well as his competence and activeness. Of less importance was his/her readiness for compromises and "hardhandedness" (it was mentioned mostly by Russians).

Conclusions

In the Mustvee-Raja area there are no ethnic tensions. The local Russians have merged into the community. In everyday communication, local people do not distinguish themselves by ethnic belonging.

In political behaviour, there is no difference between Estonians and Russians. It would be wrong to say that Russians are more dissatisfied or that they are more eager to protest. Ethnicity does not cause problems in this area.

What does cause problems is economic situation. Because of unemployment and low income, local people are not very satisfied with the transition to the liberal market economy. They would like more the social-democratic system with more efficient social help from the government.

Closing the Estonian - Russian border and access to the western markets have not promoted the economic development of the Peipsi region. For this reason, the local people prefer to develop economic relations more with Russia than with the EU.

Although the economic situation is bad, there are no political tensions in the area. People are quite passive and do not show their dissatisfaction actively. The main way they show their political preferences is by voting at the elections, both local and general.

The local government is of big importance for the inhabitants of Mustvee and Raja. People put great trust in it. In general, they are quite satisfied with the present local governments, although many people think they do not do things they should do. Complaints are connected mainly with economy. In Mustvee, dissatisfaction with the local government is deeper than in Raja. People think the local government should be more interested in what their electors want and like, and act accordingly.

The hypothesis that local people are active electors, but their political awareness is poor and therefore they can easily be manipulated, is well-grounded. The study also corroborated the hypothesis that in this region the biggest problems are economical ones - unemployment and low living standard. After closing the border between Estonia and Russia, the situation has worsened considerably.

People do not think that the problems should be solved only by the central government. Local authorities are of big importance, as well.

There are no ethnic problems in the region, as it was assumed. Social dissatisfaction will not presumably cause political tensions and ethnic conflicts among the Russians and Estonians of Mustvee and Raja.

Local Russians do not distinguish themselves so sharply from local Estonians but from Russians who came here during the Soviet time. The hypothesis that in case of discontent, Russian political parties in Estonia will represent the interests of Mustvee and Raja Russians was proved to be wrong by the survey.

The Cultural and Economic Aspects in the Administrative Changes of Alajõe Municipality

Kadi Kerge, Marko Veisson

Introduction

This paper reflects the results of the research in the region north of Lake Peipsi as well as the ideas gathered in the process. The research was conducted during the two consecutive summers of 1995 and 1996, are the hypotheses narrowed in the course of work. While doing the research in Jaama, the idea of one cultural area of South-Eastern Alutaguse (the northern coast of Lake Peipsi and villages in the upper course of the Narva River) came up. It was assumed that these Russian Orthodox villages form one cultural entity which flourished for the last time before World War II.

This year one of our main interests was to see whether the Russian communities on the northern coast of Lake Peipsi and along the Narva River still constitute one cultural whole - the idea of the probability of such existence stemmed from the research conducted in the summer of 1995 in Jaama village. It was our hypothesis that the whole Alajõe municipality together with the villages from Illuka municipality (Jaama, Karoli, Permisküla, Kuningaküla) form a common North Peipsi Russian

culture area. The preservation of culture is in danger here because of the regional economic decline and the emigration of the young. The economic decline is caused by its peripheral location and poor administration. We presumed that the management might be more effective if villages from Illuka municipality (Jaama, Karoli, Permisküla, Kuningaküla) would be joined with Alajõe municipality. Our goals included finding alternative ways for preserving this unique entity through better understanding of the reasons for its degradation.



Figure 1. Russian villages of Alajõe and Illuka municipalities in Ida-Virumaa county

We included in our research most of the villages south of Kuningaküla and east of the centre of Alajõe municipality along the coast of Lake Peipsi and the Narva River: Alajõe, Karjamaa, Remniku, Smolnitsa, Vasknarva, Permisküla and Kuningaküla (Fig. 1). The working method mainly involved structured interviews with the members of the community and expert interviews with the leaders of the community. Depending on the size, five to ten interviews were conducted in the village to get a closer view on the economic and cultural aspects of the local communities. For the structured interviews we had prepared mainly multiple choice questions and strove to be ready for intriguing side-steps as well. The pre-determined choices proved to be too rigid in many cases, sometimes also giving more than one option for interpretation. This made us consider the results of data analysis carefully before drawing any conclusions. On the other hand, the direct contact with the respondents gave valuable information about the way local people were thinking, as well as their joys and

sorrows. The expert interviews proved to be useful in understanding the status quo. It was supposed to be a relatively simple way to collect general and reliable information on the region.

Method

For two weeks in June 1996 two sociology students lived in Alajõe on the northern coast of Lake Peipsi (south-east of Alutaguse) and conducted interviews with the local people. In seven villages from Alajõe to Kuningaküla up the Narva River 40 interviews were conducted altogether. The interviewees were chosen randomly from the local people of at least 18 years of age and they were asked mainly multiple choice questions. We considered as locals also people, who come here every summer and/or whose ancestors come from here, and therefore also define themselves as locals.

The questionnaire could be split into the following broader issues: local dynamics (how people perceive the change), factors which are perceived as influencing the life of the community, tourism, agricultural opportunities, relation to the authorities, identity, relation to church, relation to the border and yet other smaller sections. At the end of the field work we had to admit that not all questions had been "working". This was also partly due to the different interpretation of the purpose among the interviewers as well. Yet another part of the research formed through more specific and detailed interviews with experts, who gave valuable information and/or insights into local problem-solving management. Through daily note-making all information was processed once again to make a distinction between more and less important details.

Sample

According to the State Statistics there are 142 men, 138 women, 16 children under 15, 107 people between 16 and 60/55, and 157 retired people in the municipality in absolute figures. We made interviews with 26 women and 14 men. They were born in the interval of 1909-1978 with the median in 1930. 32% (this also includes the interviewees whose husband/wife came from this area) had come to the region and settled down permanently. The median year of coming was 1969. 82% of the respondents were Estonian citizens, 10% Russian citizens and 8% of them had not decided yet which citizenship to apply. The sample can be examined also in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondents' income.

| | Source of income |
|-----|-----------------------------|
| 24% | state-financed institutions |
| 8% | private enterprises |
| 68% | social benefits |

| Income (per family) | | Size of family | |
|---|-------------------------------------|----------------|----------|
| 3% | less than 500 EEK | 30% | 1 person |
| 25% | 500-1000 EEK | 45% | 2 people |
| 18% | 1000-1500 EEK | 13% | 3 people |
| 23% | 2000-3000 EEK | 10% | 4 people |
| 10% | 3000-5000 EEK | | 5 people |
| | 5000- EEK | 3% | 6 people |
| Evaluation of sufficiency of income for needs | | | |
| 52% | for daily needs | | |
| 15% | for buying new clothes and footwear | | |
| 10% | for buying household appliances | | |
| | for travelling | | |

Source: Data from the field.

For the expert interviews we considered it important to speak with people with different backgrounds. We ended up talking to the economic advisor at Alajõe local government and also with the chief magistrate. In Ida-Viru county government we spoke with the head of the Planning and Development Department. At the grass-roots level we gained an insight into the local branch of fish industry, local post office and local library.

Human resources

According to the State Statistics (January 1995) there were 190 households with permanent residents and 280 households without permanent residents in Alajõe municipality. There were neither farms nor private entrepreneurs in the municipality. At the same time there were 39 people - 32 men and 7 women (36.4%, 39% and 28% respectively) of working age who were neither working nor studying. Among them were 3 people on maternity leave, 12 handicapped people, 8 people listed as officially unemployed. The composition of the community in Alajõe municipality is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Resident population by gender and main age groups. (1994)

| | Total | % of total | men | % of men | women | % of women |
|---------------|-------|------------|-----|----------|-------|------------|
| Total | 280 | | 142 | | 138 | |
| 0-3 yrs. | 5 | | 2 | | 3 | |
| 4-6 yrs. | 5 | | 1 | | 4 | |
| 0-15 yrs. | 16 | 5.7% | 7 | 4.9% | 9 | 6.5% |
| 16-60/55 yrs. | 107 | 38.2% | 82 | 57.8% | 25 | 18.1% |
| > 56/61 | 157 | 56.1% | 53 | 37.3% | 104 | 75.4% |

Source: Eesti piirkondlik statistika. Eesti Statistikaamet. Tallinn 1995

Cultural aspects

History of the region

The Alutaguse region has been one of the sparsely populated districts of Estonia through history. In addition to natural conditions (dense forests and swamps) this region has also been exposed to wars due to its closeness to border.

In ancient times the Alutaguse region was the zone where east-located Russians and Votians and west-located Estonians met. The Narva River was quite blurred and symbolic border. The villages situated on the western bank of the Narva River were originally connected only with Russian and Votian settlement and this way did not belong directly to the Estonians. Although by the end of the 13th century the Narva River became a more distinct border between Novgorod and the Denmark-ruled part of Estonia, the influence of Danish priests did not reach as far as the southeast part of Alutaguse. By that time the population of those few villages on the banks of the Narva River had already been baptized by the Novgorod or Pskov priests. As they were baptized, they had to obey the Russian rulers. In spite of the political border, local inhabitants still communicated with one another across the river according to their old habits and needs.

Populating the southeastern part of Alutaguse with Baltic Finns becomes evident from the research into local names. In old historical sources Vasknarva figures under the name Wassa-Narva (the New Narva fortress, built by the Livonian Order near the beginning of the Narva River to fortify the eastern border of Livonia.) Double “s” in ‘Wassa’ (new) is common to west-Votian language. According to Wiedemann in South-Estonian dialects ‘vaskne’ is used together with more common ‘vastne’. ‘Vaskne’ is very similar to South-Vepsian word ‘vaskmäne’ (which also means “new”) (Moora 1964:40).

The villages near the Narva River belonged to Narva and later (from 1621) to Vaivara church. But these churches were located too far and, apart from taxation, had no links with those villages. In the 17th century there were complaints that people from these villages crossed the Narva River to visit Russian Orthodox church and some priests from the other side crossed the river as well. At these times suggestions were already made that a Russian-speaking Lutheran priest should be sent to Vasknarva. But this

suggestion was never followed and the villagers at the Narva River stayed under the influence of Orthodox religion and Russian culture (Moora 1964:49 refers to Liiv 1929:87,124). After the Livonian War these villages became even more intensively populated by Russian population, which was obvious from the growth of the number of Russian names among the population (Moora 1964:50).

In 1941 when the front line was nearing the Narva River, the villages suffered great losses. Only very few houses had remained when the villagers were able to come back home. But in 1944 the front line was once again at the Narva River and the houses that had been renovated were again bombed and ruined. After the war collective farms were founded in the area. Later the small collective farms formed the state farm "Kurtna". In the late 1970s this state farm was reformed and the villages were joined into the collective farm "Viru rand".

The role of the church

The region to the north of Lake Peipsi and especially near the Narva River is geographically more approachable from the eastern side of the Narva River, as Alutaguse swamps and forests separate this region from the other, mainly Lutheran regions of Estonia. Thus the inhabitants of the region have been Russian Orthodox since the medieval time. There are congregations in Alajõe, Vasknarva and Jaama (and before WW II also in Olginkrest) churches. The clerical center for these churches is the Kuremäe (Pühtitsa) nunnery. A procession headed by a cross with the miracle-working icon of the Virgin Mary passed the villages before World War II during the celebration of the Assumption Day on the 28th of August (old calendar!) every year. Historically, people from Alajõe to Narva and villagers from the eastern side of the Narva River took part in this huge gathering of Russian Orthodox Church.

During the research it turned out that 68% of the interviewees were the members of Orthodox church. Among them there were only six people who had been members of the congregation less than 50 years. It can be said that belonging into the Russian Orthodox congregation has been culturally prescribed. 37% of the interviewees claimed that they went to church on every religious holiday. This number could easily be higher if transport were better organized. Villagers from Gorodenko and Kuningaküla have to cover a 12-14 km long distance to reach the Jaama church. And as their historical tradition is to belong to the congregation of Olginkrest church, they really seldom take part in the services in Jaama. Some people said that they went to church mainly in the case of funerals.

56% of the interviewees thought that it was either very important or quite important for a person to be a member of the congregation. Only 18% of people answered that it was not important at all or of little importance. The evaluation of church in the south-eastern region of Alutaguse is, of course, closely connected with the Patriarchate of Moscow and Russia. The Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia Alexius has served for a long time in Kuremäe nunnery and held services in the surrounding churches as well. It was said that he also helped to rebuild the Jaama church at the beginning of the 1990s. Nevertheless, the percentage of the interviewees who thought that their congregation should belong to the Patriarchate of Moscow, was 33, while 43% of the

respondents said that it was of no importance, whether to belong under the Patriarch of Moscow or Constantinople.

Only 32% of the interviewed people admitted that they participated in church holidays in the neighbouring villages and most of these people took part only in Kuremäe celebration. Even those who claimed themselves taking part in the church holidays in some other village in the neighboring area, were the people living in smaller villages with no church anyway. (For example people from Karjamaa and Remniku attend Alajõe church.) These celebrations had two parts: the service in the church held in the morning, and a dancing party in the evening. In this way local church holidays played an important communication role. Elderly people still remember the dates when these church holidays should be held, but this tradition is more connected with their memories, not with the present.

Separated by the border

83% of the interviewees had Estonian citizenship, the ancestors of some of them have lived in Estonia for centuries. People living near the Estonian-Russian present border have suffered a lot after they were deprived of the possibility of crossing the river at the beginning of the 1990s. This problem is especially serious for the villagers of Permisküla, Kuningaküla and Gorodenko. Some elderly ladies from Kuningaküla told us how they had to make a 200 km long journey to visit the cemetery situated at a distance of a few kilometers from Kuningaküla, on the eastern side of the river. As the closest official border-crossing point is in Narva, the villagers have to take a bus via Jõhvi, Narva and Slantsõ, before reaching the Olginkrest cemetery. Nearly 50% of the respondents answered that the closing of the border had influenced their everyday life. The river, having historically always been an active communicating route, now has to play the role of a separator.

Local inhabitants versus newcomers

Local inhabitants tend to call themselves “korenõje” (natives). These are people whose parents have been living in this region for a long time already. Even people who have lived most of their life in city are called “korenõje”. Whether the newcomer assimilates into the village community or not, depends on one’s character, of course. But the most successful ones can just say, that they are “pochti svoi” (almost local). There are some people who remain outsiders for ever.

One important factor for this distinction seems to be the origin of one’s parents. It seems likely that if one comes from the area by one’s “roots”, he has more chance to call himself a local, even if currently living elsewhere, than people who have come and settled in the area (e.g., married into the area). The other main factor (besides the cultural heritage), separating “korenõje” and newcomers are the religious customs. Really, few newcomers attend Orthodox church.

The question of forming one cultural entity

In the course of the research, none of the interviewees were surprised that the villages from Alajõe to Kuningaküla are considered as one cultural area. However, it became evident soon that this was now only a formal entity connecting people with the same descent. Practically no more actual ties could be seen between the villages. 50% of the interviewees answered that they had relatives in the neighboring villages and 48% said that their relatives were buried in the neighboring cemeteries. Nevertheless, the custom of visiting neighboring villages during church holidays is dying out. The cultural entity is fading away, as communication between the villages is gradually decreasing. Poor transport network does not enable people to visit their relatives in the neighboring villages. There is also no social need for church holidays anymore, because there is no youth. The youth have to go to the city, to get a job and have possibilities for finding spouses.

Another factor ruining the unity of the cultural area is lack of specialization, common to all inhabitants. In the prewar Estonian Republic things were different. In the description of S. Dobermann from 1870 Jaama and Vasknarva were mentioned as the ones with the poorest agricultural lands. The inhabitants of these villages were said to be mostly craftsmen, tradesmen and workers (Moora 1964: 225,226). Men from the villages on the Narva River (Vasknarva, Jaama) as well as the building workers from Alajõe and from the villages on the western shore of Lake Peipsi were well known as masons and potters (Moora 1964:225). These skills were apparently mastered by their ancestors in Vitebsk guberniya and brought along in the 18th century when they resettled.

Another important job in Vasknarva and Jaama was leather tanning: at the end of the 19th century there were 7 leather tanning shops in Vasknarva and Jaama (Moora 1964:242 refers to Kröger 1893:180). At the beginning of this century there were many shoemakers in Vasknarva and Jaama who made Russian boots from light leather. They sold these boots everywhere: in the towns at Lake Peipsi, in Jõhvi and Rakvere and even in Tartu. "Wasknarva saabas" (Vasknarva boot) was a well known trade-mark at that time.

The collective farms ruined this structure and built up a new one. But after the liquidation of the collective farms no more common activity developed. There are many men working as fishermen, but it has not become a common job for local people.

Reproduction of common culture

At the time when the ties between the villages are dissolving and the vitality of this culture becomes more and more questionable, there is no institution where the youth would be taught and culturally educated. During the pre-war Republic there was a primary school in every village. In sharp contrast to that from the 1970s onward local children have not been able to attend school in their own municipality. Over time parents have got so used to sending children to faraway schools that the attempt of the local government to reopen the old schoolhouse was destined to fail - children were

continuously sent to Lohusuu, the closest Russian secondary school 30 km away. Estonian children were taken to Iisaku High School, 11 km away, by the same schoolbus. Even though schools and kindergartens are fairly unimportant questions at the moment - there are very few school-age children in the area - the absence of these institutions can become quite an obstacle for younger generations to stay in the area.

The dynamics of political and cultural orientation

Among the local Russian inhabitants there seem to be no tendencies to prefer some sort of Russian-orientated media can be noted: the leading newspaper in the region is "Severnoe Poberezhie" (Ida-Virumaa county newspaper) and 70% of the interviewees claimed that they were watching both Estonian and Russian TV-channels. As the most important holidays in the region are religious holidays, it is noteworthy that 42% of people claimed to celebrate the church holidays by both the new (Gregorian) and the old (Julian calendar, used by the Russian Orthodox Church) calendars. There is also no tendency to refuse to celebrate some Estonian red-letter days. (During the Soviet times Estonians often opposed the Soviet red-letter days to the red-letter days of the Estonian Republic.) There are some people who also celebrate some Soviet red-letter days, for instance, 9th May, but this has nothing to do with the protest against the Estonian Republic and its red-letter days.

Local inhabitants are poorly informed about the processes on the state administration level: there were 28 people who could not give an answer to the question how they evaluated the work of the county government, and 18 of the interviewees had no opinion about the work of the Estonian Government (14 people said that they evaluate it as satisfactory). The villagers identified themselves mostly as Orthodox (in 24 cases) and Estonian citizens (in 23 cases). Only 7 people said that they identified themselves as Russians. The cultural and political orientation differs from that of both Estonians and Russian post-war immigrants because of the different historical background and cultural traditions.

The migration at the time of the Soviet Union, and populating of the north-eastern part of Estonia with Russians set the villagers in the south-eastern part of Alutaguse in new circumstances. In the pre-war Estonian Republic the Russians on the northern coast of Lake Peipsi and near the Narva River could easily separate themselves culturally from their neighbours and have their own identity. But as the Russian population is now about one third of the total population of Estonia, the borders building up the group identity of the Russians near Lake Peipsi and the Narva River have been blurred.

Some of the main factors, which have formed the cultural area to the north of Lake Peipsi, are the geographical situation, language, religious traditions as well as social and economic environment. The originality and difference of these factors from those of the neighbouring areas helped the region on the northern coast of Lake Peipsi to survive as a cultural entity until World War II. After the country was occupied by the Soviet Union, the latter started to colonise Estonian north-eastern part with mainly Russian labour. As a result of this process, the geographical situation of the centuries-old Russian settlement on the northern coast of Lake Peipsi looks just like a natural southern border of the young Russian settlement in northeast Estonia. Language lost

its role as a separator and, quite the contrary, started to blur the local cultural identity, mixing local culture with the mentality of the post-war Russian settlers.

The beautiful sandy beach on the northern coast of the lake attracted many people from the whole Soviet Union. They started to spend their vacations there and local people rented rooms to them. The relations between the holiday-makers and their local hosts were not just formal, many villagers hosted the same family every summer. It is hard to say how much this communication influenced the local mentality, but a basis for that kind of speculations exists.

Urban Russian inhabitants in northeast Estonia had, as it was common for Soviet people, very weak contacts with religion. Among the local Russians on the northern coast of Lake Peipsi the importance of Orthodox religion preserved also in the Soviet period. But as the population in the area decreased during the post-war years and activities, connected with religious traditions were disliked by the Soviet system, the church lost its social role. On the other hand, the popularity of religion among the Russians has increased after the collapse of the Soviet Union. For instance, the congregation of Jaama has built reciprocal relationships with the congregation in Narva, which helps the Jaama church in supplying with service and church-equipment from Russia. But when the archbishop Kornelius visited Jaama in the summer of 1995, Jaama villagers prepared dinner also for the guests from Narva congregation.

During the conversation in Vasknarva parsonage, one of its inhabitants mentioned that 'datshniks' and holiday-makers in Vasknarva have become more serious, more open towards religion. Today the question is only in the importance of religion, but not anymore in the antagonism of religious and atheistic concepts.

The inhabitants on the northern coast of Lake Peipsi have found neither possibilities nor economic niches for continuing their traditional occupations. Neither can they use the land which belonged to the communities as this is not the object of returning in the process of privatising. And so the northern coast of Lake Peipsi does not differ in economic activities from the other peripheral rural areas in Ida-Virumaa. Thus, in most aspects the development during the last fifty years and the processes going on at present leave practically no possibilities for preserving some kind of cultural entity in this area. The future seems to be fusing into the community of the Soviet-time Russian immigrants. This theory finds support from the fact that 20 people among the interviewees admitted that their children lived in the urban areas of Ida-Virumaa and 24 interviewees said that they had other relatives living there. Of course, most of these city dwellers visit their parents quite often and as living in town is more expensive today, some of them are moving back to their home villages. But, even if called "korennõje", their ties with urban life blur the differences between local culture on the northern coast of Lake Peipsi and the mentality of Russian-Soviet immigrants. On the one hand, local people still distinguish themselves from the Russian migrants of the time of the Soviet occupation. The villagers emphasised having Estonian citizenship and "roots". For the Estonians, on the other hand, they are often just ordinary Russians, foreigners. For example, while having a discussion with an official from Ida-Viru county, he claimed: *"By the roots these people are mostly Russians... And why do we need young Russians near the border - it is totally unnecessary, it is*

absolutely unnecessary, as blood is thicker than water and loyalty remains loyalty until there is no other loyalty.”

Economic aspects

Tourism

During the Soviet era the beautiful sandy beaches of Lake Peipsi were heavily used by tourists and holiday-makers. Many households earned extra income through giving shelter to "datshniki", people from the city who were ready to pay for the opportunity to get away from the smoke into beautiful nature. Many big companies in the northeast of Estonia built vast holiday complexes here; there were fights for the chance to send children for a holiday to the camp in Remniku.

Today the picture is rather different. Most holiday-makers who can be met in the village actually come from the area and as is common for this young generation - visit their home in summer only. Many of them confess that it is likely that they will return when retiring. But at the moment they are like tourists in their own home. These people have learned to admire the nature of their home ground and through sharing it with other people they hope to draw more wealth to the municipality. Even though 80% of the interviewees agreed that today there are fewer tourists than there used to be, still over 40% of them believed that tourism has good perspectives in the municipality. Almost 80% of the people agreed, that more tourists would mean more income for the municipality. 65% of the people believed that more tourists would create new vacancies on the labour market. Only 15% thought that it would dramatically increase crime and 40% expressed fear for the damage caused to nature with the increase of tourists.

We got the impression that even though the minds of the local community were ready to receive tourists, the latter showed no wish to come. Many people who have got used to spending their holidays here have trouble crossing the border - in the old days many people came from St. Petersburg. The Estonian tourists seem not to have discovered the beauty of this corner and/or demand better service and more entertainment than the place is able to offer at the moment. We met an elderly lady, who in response to the tourism-theme in the questionnaire stood up, admired the view of the river banks and lake shore, breathed in fresh air and wondered why Estonians had abandoned the coast of Lake Peipsi as a touristic site. She also found an explanation which satisfied her mind - there are no attractions, other than nature, and there is too much peace and quiet there for an average holiday-maker.

It is also true that proper beaches so far exist only on plans. As a part of a larger general development plan, which was composed a few years ago, there also exists a remarkable plan of how all the beach on the northern coast of Lake Peipsi should be developed, which facilities built, etc., but so far the local government has no concrete ideas how to get the necessary finances for that. They have given the priority in the beach planning project to developing a proper parking lot, so that people would not have to make the choice between driving straight to the beach and ruining the forest

between the road and the lake on the one hand, and being worried about the condition of their car, on the other.

The two major problems they face are the questions of land-use/ownership and financing. To solve the latter, the local government has been trying to impose various local taxes which would be laid on the tourists' shoulders only, and not the local inhabitants'. One of the proposed taxes was a road tax, according to which all guests would have to buy a permit for either a weekend, month or the whole season. Unfortunately for the local government, it was sent back as one contradicting the rest of Estonian legislature.

So far neither working solutions have been found nor is there agreement about what should be the role of the local government in the process. There seem to be two sides within the local government as well: one thinking that the local government itself should approach the question creatively and attempt to solve it, another viewing the field of economic activity as something suitable for entrepreneurs only. As a result, nobody seems to have a clear-cut opinion of who should be the first to really change the situation: all reconstructions are expensive and would require the money that the hordes of tourists and holidaymakers might bring in one day. Still, there are some wonderful plans in the local government. Will they come true?

Agriculture

People still remembered that some sixty years ago all the land along the coast had been arable. *"It was never a rich corner, but we happily coped. Our childhood was full of work. Still, our fathers were able to build schoolhouses - there was a schoolhouse for primary school in most of these villages,"* said an elderly lady in Remniku village. Today this communal ownership causes them a lot of trouble, since such obscurely defined community tends not to be a subject of privatisation. At the time of organising collective farms many left for towns, because they refused to work there. There was a (Russian) lady who told us how the youth in her village had left the countryside at that time, because *"they could not stand the idea of working on these Russian collective farms instead of their fathers' farms."* The village population started to grow older and older.

Today most of the land lies fallow. Three fourths of the people considered farming not perspective. It is noteworthy that people in the villages, which are located along the Narva River, tended to consider farming more perspective than those living on the coast of Lake Peipsi. The explanation is rather simple - the soil is richer and demands fewer fertilisers, which are very expensive when compared to their (possible) income. A little more hope was expected from growing vegetables, since it demands less from the soil. Still there were only a couple of people who had taken up tillage or who expressed the wish to do so. On the other hand, we had an interview with a man who had built a large cellar for storing vegetables till spring and was wondering whether he should rebuild it into a home gym: he argued that it did not pay to grow even vegetables on this soil, given the conditions on the border and the local prices of production.

In spite of the poor soil, most people are still engaged in "armchair farming". In their big gardens they grow most of the fresh products they eat in summer and winter. A

few of them longed for tourists - it would give them a chance to sell the products on the spot. Among other obstacles for large-scale farming, such as high prices for the fertilisers, which the soil demands, is also people's high age. However, vegetables from their gardens have given them considerable support during harder times. On many occasions people proudly stated that almost all their everyday food came from their gardens. Many people buy only bread and milk at shops.

Fishing

Fishing possibilities on the lake are limited not only by physical means, but also by the net-using permits. So far the local government has officially preferred local people, but still there are two kinds of rumours spread. First, that fishermen earn about 10 000 EEK extra money a month. If this is the case, they certainly do not spend it in the municipality. Second, that one 40 metre net for a real fisherman is far too little. Many local people also seemed to be a little annoyed by the unemployed men who come from towns and rush onto the lake in winter.

Among the interviewees almost 90% were not engaged in fishing. However, 65% considered fishing a good perspective for the future. There was also a positive correlation between living on the coast of Lake Peipsi and considering fishing a good perspective; i.e., people who lived along the Narva River tended not to be so optimistic in this matter. In the local branch of the fishing company "Peipsi Trade" we met surprising indifference toward the decisions of the company concerning the future of the branch. People showed reluctance to get involved in the process, they rather agreed to the fate they were destined for from the centre - an attitude which does not bring about changes.

Employment

Since there were neither farms nor private entrepreneurs, people could find employment mainly in the local service sector or outside the municipality. In spite of the local government's requirement of 20% of local residents in the staff of rent-out structures, still a vast majority of the personnel in the camps is brought in. The fact that half of the local government staff live in the municipality only officially (the actual number is one) and others come from neighbouring municipalities, also reflects the skills and abilities of the people in the local community. At the same time the local government is willing to find employment for its residents and, for example, has recommended the owners of the camp a local pensioner (!) for the post of managing director.

In the opinion of the head of the Planning and Development Department in Ida-Viru county government the unemployment rate should even be higher since the Russians do not seem to want to work unless they are compelled to do so. Where the unemployment is higher, the competition is also higher. *"Today mainly less-educated people are unemployed. There is no competition among people with higher education. Quite a few not so bright people have taken leading positions. In the countryside there*

might be low unemployment rate among women, but there is always enough work for men,” his point of view could be summarised. In addition to alcoholism, the main problems seem to be lack of skills and education.

According to the local government the number of unemployed is about 10, but some of them will never take on a job. *“Some of them have been in jail, some are thieves, some have problems with alcohol. Some unemployed people hide their income or just go fishing for their own family. They receive benefits from the municipality, but have no impetus to look for employment,”* complained a member of the local administration. *“The problem is also with the alcoholics' families, who would spend all unemployment benefits on alcohol and cigarettes. This is the reason why we have decided to open accounts in shops so that they can only buy food for the benefit,”* concluded the municipality advisor.

In this light the fact that 50% of the interviewees think that the opportunities to get a job have changed for the worse, does not reflect only pessimism but also reality. Only 8% of the people believe that the income of families has changed for the better and 20% think it has remained the same. The general economic situation has changed for the worse in the opinion of 50% of the people. This quite an optimistic view is supported by the gardens providing food for them, and comparatively low rents/taxes in the area. Many people said that they were quite well off since they had got rid of their flat in town and did not have to pay high rent no more. High rents on the one hand and rising unemployment on the other have accelerated the process of moving to the countryside. During the recent years the number of working-age people has grown in the area. Unfortunately, this is not the case with jobs.

Communication

However, living conditions and the infrastructure are not determined by job opportunities solely. The communication systems which are old and have served for their lifetime in this part of the world also have an important part to play. In order to make a call outside the county, one must first order it from Jõhvi, the centre of Ida-Viru county, and then wait for the connection for at least half an hour. Yet, even to dial this call might take 15 minutes or more of continuous efforts, if the weather is lousy.

At the time when communication and information have assumed a more important, even vital position, the local people fear that they will be left without the Alajõe post office as well. There were people who refused to comment on the situation, because they feared to lose their stable income. At the same time people value the work of the post office highly, 30% of them think that it has changed for the better and 40% believe it has not changed as compared to the situation ten years ago.

Transport

Another very important factor for the image of a region is roads. There is a 50 km tarmac road from Alajõe to Jõhvi. This road constitutes the major part of tarmac roads in the municipality - there is only a small section of Alajõe-Vasknarva road in the Karjamaa village, which is not a gravel road. The local people in other villages complained that the local government would do nothing about the dust in their villages (i.e., does not build a better road).

Depending on the village, the coach connection was from zero to two buses every day in summer. People complained that since someone had removed the bus stop signs, new bus drivers did not know sometimes where they ought to stop and just skipped the bus stop. During the interviews we heard stories about how for many years during off-holiday season buses ran only twice a week from Jaama to Kuningaküla: on Fridays and Sundays. Therefore, Friday was the only day when the local people could go to town or to local government and come back by bus. Because of the flow of the holidaymakers one bus was added for the summer. More than 60% of the interviewees thought that the organisation of transport had changed for the worse. Not surprisingly there was a significant correlation between the distance of the village from the municipality centre and the interviewees' belief that the unsatisfactory condition of transport and communication means affects the possibilities of development in the municipality - they had felt the effects quite harshly.

How was the future perceived in the light of all this? Which were the obstacles that people could foresee in the development of their home region? There were people who saw mainly objective factors as causes influencing the development of their home region, such as distance from the centre, unsatisfactory transport and communication means, as well as the passivity of the local government. The second group comprised people who saw causes in the subjective factors, such as lack of young and active people sticking to the traditions, and people's conservatism in addition to their general passivity. These two factors could describe 57.8% of the original variables.

Conclusions

The hypotheses tested in the fieldwork in the summer of 1996 were formulated on the basis of the conducted research in Jaama village in the summer of 1995. The aim of the research was to determine the cultural identity of local inhabitants of the south-eastern part of Alutaguse and to see what kind of processes of cultural change are going on. A research for checking the hypotheses was carried out on three levels: local inhabitants, local government and county government.

One of the hypotheses was that the inhabitants of south-eastern Alutaguse form one cultural entity. This hypothesis found support from the fact that 68% of the interviewees were the members of Orthodox Church. Belonging to a congregation is culturally prescribed for the local Russian inhabitants. Really, only few newcomers attend Orthodox church. However, the custom of visiting the neighboring villages on their church holidays has practically died out. So the churches have lost their social role in connecting the villages. A supporter to the hypothesis about cultural entity is the existence of the expression used for identifying the people who come from the

region. They are called “korennõje” or natives. These people are Estonian citizens - another factor differentiating them from the Russians who came to Estonia during the Soviet times. But many aspects which used to act as cultural separators of the northern coast of lake Peipsi from its neighboring areas are losing this position today and the local Russian community is taking over the mentality of the Soviet time Russian immigrants.

Another hypothesis claimed that the preserving of Russian culture on the northern coast of Lake Peipsi is endangered by the economical decline which makes the youth leave the region. However, this has already happened as in some villages there are no younger people left. But during the last years the number of working-age people has even grown - a process which reflects the rising unemployment in the cities.

According to the third hypothesis, the economic decline is caused by the ineffective administration of the area and by the periphery situation. It was suggested that the cultural area of the Russians in the region of the northern coast of Lake Peipsi could have better conditions for surviving if it formed one administrative unit. The research on administrative levels showed that the county government was well informed about the economic and demographic situation in south-eastern Alutaguse, but much less about the cultural level. The Alajõe local government is conscious of the historical and cultural background of the “korennõje” people. However, there is only one local inhabitant working in the local government. Local people themselves discussed the problems of the administration of the area rather passively. One of the reasons for this is the lack of information, and another - that people do not need to assure their blurred cultural identity. The communication between villages is fading as well, the villages just do not share enough common interests for preserving their cultural entity.

During the research we came to the conclusion that in spite of the existence of a common culture area, the ties between the villages of Alajõe municipality and the Russian-inhabited villages of Illuka municipality are not strong enough to redraw the borders of the municipalities on the cultural basis. It would probably cause misapprehension among villagers. The idea of uniting Alajõe and Iisaku municipalities has quite strong economic ground, as the financial resources of Alajõe municipality are too small to afford a local body of administration. However, one cannot be sure, that the local government of Iisaku municipality would understand and respect the peculiarity of the local culture on the northern coast of Lake Peipsi.

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The NGO Lake Peipsi Project, conceived in the summer of 1993, is an initiative of Russian, Estonian and American researchers, officials, and representatives of non-governmental organisations who are concerned with the environmental and social problems of Lake Peipsi watershed.

The major direction of the work of the LPP is local sustainable development. The projects are aimed to study first the local problems and later promote local initiative in the resolution process. They include training components as well as infrastructure development for information exchange. The Lake Peipsi Project offers a valuable possibility to observe environmental and human resource management on the community level. The Lake Peipsi Project is unique because it studies the local development of communities which have been suffering due to political and economic transformations.



Goals of the LPP:

- **To contribute to the development of communications, the exchange of information and co-operation on issues of sustainable development and environmental protection in Lake Peipsi watershed;**
- **To maintain international standards of communications and organisation and to encourage innovative approaches to problem solving in the Lake Peipsi region;**
- **To promote public participation in decision-making through environmental education;**
- **To promote the preservation of cultural heritage and natural resources of the region.**