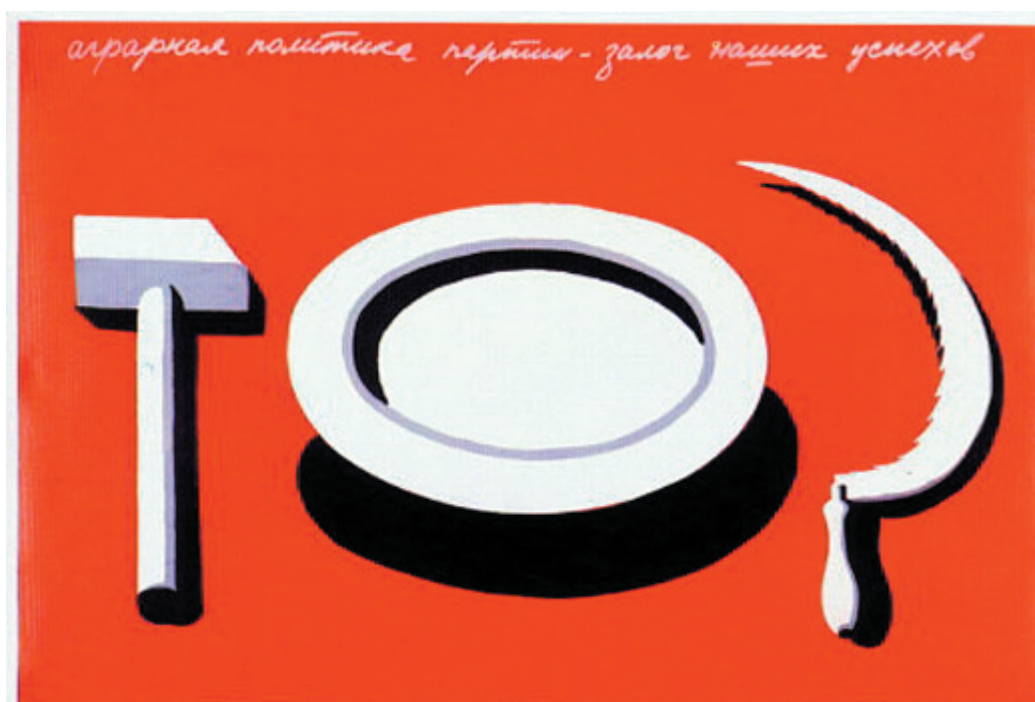


PRIVATIZATION FACE TO FACE



Support Networks and the Former State Enterprise in a Remote Russian Village

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Map of Kola Peninsula



Chapter 1 Introduction

Prologue

Getting to Krasnoshchel'ye

In the beginning of October 1999, I arrived at the airport in Murmansk on a flight from Tromsø. I had to fill the customs declaration in twice. Therefore, I was one of the last passengers to go through the pass-control. My invitation, however, did not have any original stamp. Although it had an original signature and was on official letterhead, I knew that it might be a problem, and it was a problem. The woman behind the desk sullenly went out and talked to her boss. The boss came to me. He interrogated me, and I told him everything as it was: that I got the invitation without the stamp and was worried and called the Russian consulate in Kirkenes, and they told me that since my invitation was on official letterhead with a signature, it would be all right.

I had to wait and wondered if something has changed in this country. Everything looked like the movies: the uniforms, the expressionless faces of the border controllers. The boss showed a little bit of sympathy for me; he said he didn't know what to do in order not to breach down trees ['chtoby ne lomat' dereva'], but afterwards I heard his voice behind the glass door: "She does not have any invitation. There is no way to let her in. I have to arrest her. I do not mind if there are new directions. Here, we have only the instruction from 1993."

Then his boss, a captain from the border police, came and interrogated me and the same – a little bit of sympathy but no way to let me in. They had to find the commander or Ivanov¹ to know what to do with me. The ground hostess came and asked me if I had Russian rubles to pay for a week stay in the hotel until there is a flight back to Tromsø. I told her that I had some small change in US Dollars and a VISA credit card. She concluded that I could not pay for a week stay at the hotel without getting out and to Murmansk (the airport lies 30 km from the town). There was no bank terminal, or exchange office at the airport. There was a possibility to change money at the pub, but the exchange rate was too bad... so it was not an option.

The airport was getting empty; the cleaner had cleaned and wanted to go. The ground hostess and the captain went home. A policewoman gave me a comforting wink. I was sitting alone in the hall and waited for some sort of decision about my fate. The customs controllers were impatient. They came to me, checked the customs declaration and said everything was all right.

¹ All names in the thesis are changed.

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Another hour went by and nothing happened. Then the policewoman who had given me the wink suddenly came and told me: "They'll let you in." Nevertheless, I had to wait for the official message. In half an hour the boss came to me, smiled, and said: "Tell your friends that the next time they should use the stamp!" Then he made an excuse for the inconvenience they had caused to me, but he couldn't overlook through the rules. I said I am sorry that I blindly trusted the consulate and came with an invitation without the stamp. We were almost friends at the end. The first barrier was crossed.

Several days later I was in Lovosero in order to take a flight to the village of Krasnoshchel'ye and go on with my fieldwork there. There was no planned flight to the village for the next few days. I did not know many people in Lovosero, and those who I knew were officials. In the municipality administration, I knew the person responsible for the remote villages, at the airport – I knew the director, Smirnov. Therefore, I chose to stay in the nearby town of Revda. There I had some friends at the local museum, and the museum was the only place in the municipality with Internet connection.

In Revda I did not unpack my luggage. Everything was in the bags because I waited for a helicopter to Krasnoshchelie and nobody knew when there would be one. My days in Revda were always the same. In the morning I went to the telegraph or to the museum and made phone calls: first to the administration and asked them if there will be a scheduled flight to Krasnoshchel'ye, then to the airport and asked if there will be any flight to Krasnoshchel'ye. I knew that it might be possible to take either a military, or fire brigade flight, or emergency flight or whatever flight. That's why I was so persistent. The answer was always negative. There was no other option to get to the village.

I had almost given up when Ivan, the director of the museum, told me to prepare my luggage. A helicopter was on the way, because the local police department had asked him to make video recordings on Ploskaia, a place where they once mined amazonite, a mineral used for decoration surfaces. One hour later we were at the airport in Lovosero.

At the airport I met Sasha, a boy from Krasnoshchel'ye I got to know during my previous stay. He had been in Lovosero to visit relatives and was waiting for a flight back. He told me he has been waiting for weeks, but... no flight. He came every day to the airport and waited there. He was not allowed on this flight either.

The helicopter was military and had two guns in the front. The flight was paid for by the local police department. It was loaded with two tons of diesel for the cooperative in Krasnoshchel'ye. Besides the team from the museum who should film, I was the only passenger allowed on board. I didn't pay anything for the trip. A scheduled flight with passengers came to the village of Krasnoshchel'ye six days later.

Being in Krasnoshchel'ye

Krasnoshchel'ye lies in the heart of the tundra on Kola Peninsula on the river Ponoï. It is surrounded by swamps, and the only possible way to get there by land is during the winter when the swamps are frozen. In the winter snowmobiles and all-terrain vehicles can drive on the 150 km long tractor track to Lovosero, the nearest village. By air it is accessible all the year round, but the arctic climate quite often challenges the flight routes with storms.

The village has around 100 wooden houses and 675 inhabitants. It is the largest remote¹ village in the municipality of Lovosero. There is a primary school, a kindergarten, a hospital, a library, and a grocery store and the headquarters of the reindeer herding cooperative "Olenevod".

In 1998-99 I spent 7 months there in connection with my fieldwork. Earlier I had been several times in the villages of Lovosero and Sosnovka as a research assistant. At both places I was told that Krasnoshchel'ye is "uncivilised", even that on the streets in the village one could see bears. Ivan from the museum in Revda laughed at this and said that the best is to go and see for myself. He suggested staying in the house of Mikhail (Misha) Kuznetsov, one of his local friends. There is no hotel or other public accommodation in the village. Mikhail was 40 years old and newly separated. He lived with his mother, Aunt Elizaveta. Through them I got to know the people in the village.

There were no bureaucratic hindrances in the village; everything went lightly and silently, ['po tikhonku'], as the villagers used to say. With the help of the network around my hosts, I got help and support everywhere until I had to leave.

At the end of my stay there were no helicopters for weeks, and I got a bit nervous about my departure. I tried to call to Murmansk or Lovosero, to ask if it was possible to charter a helicopter to the village, but there was no long distant call connection. Some of the villagers tried to convince me that there should be a helicopter before the New Year. There were two reasons for it: the bulletins for the elections in December 1999, and the vodka and the champagne for the New Year's Celebration. Others told me that there wouldn't be helicopter because the director of the cooperative couldn't sell the reindeer meat, and there was no money. Everyone made speculations about the pros and cons for a helicopter.

Getting out of Krasnoshchel'ye

However, my host and I kept on calling at the airport everyday. Several times they said that there should be a helicopter, but it didn't come. At the end they said, "It is coming!" We almost had to run to the airport. The airport was crowded. I tried to buy a ticket, but the woman at the

¹ In the administration they used the term "remote" ['otdalyenikh] for the villages that are not connected through the road system.

desk refused to sell me one. I was a foreigner, and therefore I had to pay the price for foreigners. But they never had issued a ticket for a foreigner in the village. True, foreigners come to the village, but they come with return tickets. That was not my case. And she couldn't help me – I couldn't leave the village with a regular ticket. Aunt Elizaveta was with me and tried to help - the woman at the desk was her niece. At the end she suggested: "You can just ask the pilots, maybe. Nothing can be done here"

The helicopter landed. They unloaded it and started to load the luggage of the passengers. While the woman from the airport was carefully following the passengers and the number of packs loaded in the helicopter, I went to the pilots and asked them if I could travel with them, explaining quickly the problem. They laughed and said "Just get in; we won't leave you here in the tundra..." I asked them about the price; they said I should talk to Smirnov, the director of the airport in Lovosero. When we came to Lovosero, the director said that the cash desk was closed and that it was not necessary to pay after all.

Two days later I was at the airport in Murmansk. There were the same inspectors as when I came. I have not registered with the police. I have tried to do it in Krasnoshchel'ye, but in the administration they said I should do it in the nearest police station, that is Lovosero or Revda. The inspectors smiled and joked that I have to be off my head to go there – in Krasnoshchel'ye. "It was somewhere in the tundra, isn't it?" They let me go, joking that the next time I have to follow the laws, otherwise they'll arrest me.

CONCERNS

The hurdles to overcome before getting to the village and getting out of the village, frame the focus of the present thesis: the detachment of Krasnoshchel'ye from the rest of the world and its "attachment" to the rigid rules of present and past bureaucratic systems.

The media image of New Russia as an almost anarchic state where money and corruption overrun the formalities did not correspond to my own experience. It seems that the bureaucratic system was still there, as if it was unchanged, and as if remained strongest in the innermost recesses of the tundra. If there was a slight chance for the border police in Murmansk to turn a blind eye to my papers, and thus neglect some instructions, it appeared that this idea never came across the head of the airport woman. The weighty bureaucratic regulations of the Russian airlines were strictly kept in the village and this fact caused an inconvenient and unexpected experience to me. I never thought that in Krasnoshchelie there could be cases when the bureaucratic system counted more than the personal acquaintances. Later, I became aware that I had observed many such examples. Therefore my attention turned to the reproduction and management of bureaucratic rules in the village – at present, without possibilities for control from outside and above. What makes such systems effective in small places like Krasnoshchelie?

The location of the village in the middle of the tundra is, to put it mildly, unfavourable in

any economic aspect. Until 1990, the infrastructure was totally supported by the Soviet state, since then the support has vanished slowly, but surely. Many similar Socialist projects were stifled by the legislative reforms towards market liberalisation, and on this account doomed to decline. Surprisingly, the village didn't follow this direction. On the contrary, people stayed in the village, living and coping with the reality, as if they overlooked this process. What forces kept the village alive after the cut-off of the state support and how? There was no immediate answer to any of these questions and I elaborated on them. In the thesis I give a possible answer. My interests on the Kola Peninsula have been mostly related to the reindeer herding as subsistence, and I had participated in several scientific projects. My main concern both in the previous research projects and in the beginning of my fieldwork was on the restructuring of the collective reindeer herding and if new forms of trust appeared in the old structures. However, in Krasnoshchel'ye I was prompted to see the restructuring of the reindeer herding only as a very small piece of the jigsaw-like relations I encountered on the field. The reindeer herding was an indispensable part of the cooperative in the village, and the cooperative was an indispensable part of the village. All the villagers were kin, friend, or neighbour and any institution as school, kindergarten, or ward was dependent on the others. The kindergarten, for instance, was paid for by the municipality, and as any state subsidised enterprise, got the payments with considerable delays. In the meantime it had to buy services, like heating, from the cooperative. Therefore the cooperative used to subtract from the salaries of its employees who had children in the kindergarten the sum they should pay to the kindergarten. The scope of my research widened, and I sought after all these interdependencies.

In the beginning I told the stories of my getting to and from the village as curiosities and anecdotes. Reading my field notes, looking at my video recordings, and trying to plan a trip to the village, I was prompted to realise that it was difficult not only for me to get there. It was difficult for anyone to get there, and the problem of distance and detachment was a subject of constant discussion. Krasnoshchel'ye was getting more and more difficult to access. People made constant remarks about the present difficulties with the transportation, and evoked good memories from the past when there were flights almost daily. In 1995, when I visited Lovosero for the first time, there was a flight to the remote villages every Wednesday, but in 1999, there was no trace of regularity in the air transport. The people were complaining about not being able to travel and visit friends and relatives, and not being able to buy basic things.

Supply with goods was becoming more and more problematic, and a theme in the local newspapers. In May 2002 "*Poliarnaia Pravda*", the regional Murmansk newspaper wrote in a small note about Krasnoshchel'ye that: "there was nothing in the store, no products - the money from the municipality administration had been used for buying diesel for the electricity generator in the village." Since both diesel and its transportation got market price, the electricity

¹ The village got a mobile diesel electricity generator in 1970 and has never been part of the power complex in Russia.

generator in the village had limited working capacity. In 1999, there was electricity only five-six hours a day¹.

Thus, for the people in Krasnoshchel'ye the implications of market liberalisation were limited possibilities to travel, loss of basic life qualities, restrained consumption, and limited social contacts. They didn't see any gains with the market reform. They rejected the possibilities for private herding or whatever entrepreneurship in accordance with the newly opened market possibilities. The effect of losing didn't end up in the villagers looking for new possibilities to gain what they were losing. The people of Krasnoshchel'ye did not show any anger either. Having seen the rage and anger in 1989 in Romania and the miners' strikes in Russia, having taken part in numerous demonstrations in my home town Sofia, I wondered why I never saw neither rage, nor anger, but everything was 'mute' [*po tikhonku*] as they used to say. "*What to do? Nothing can be changed. As it was, so it is now...*" [*Kak i by'lo tak i est*']. The villagers managed to make up for the deficiencies keeping the old structures intact. I believe that they managed to do this by using their social networks both as private persons and as employees at the cooperative. But if so, what is the individual interest to keep the monopoly of the cooperative as collectively owned enterprise in the village? Was it mere economic benefits or was it something else? In the first part of the thesis I focus on social networks as most important asset for the individuals to overcome the shortcomings caused by the withdrawal of the state. In the second part I focus on the work of the employees in the cooperative and how they cope with the process of privatisation. The management of the cooperative is no longer dictated from centralised authorities and political imperatives, and the state does not buy the production any longer. Thus the employees have to find their own way to manage the production and the sales. What resources do they employ? How does the cooperative become economically viable at present?

So far I have considered the remoteness of the village as an important factor of life in Krasnoshchel'ye; I have also suggested to look upon the cooperative not only as a vestige from the past, but as an active response to the market liberalisation. In the next chapter I sketch out how the cooperative as part of the state solved the problem of remoteness in the past, but then again as part of the state prompted changes in the life of the villagers.

Chapter 2 Background and starting point

The cooperative is of central importance to the village. It is not only the largest employer and the only provider of services such as electricity, housing, building services, carpentry and so on, but it is the reason for the existence of the village. In this chapter I outline the historical evolution of the village and the cooperative and focus on the role of the social networks as recompense for the shortcomings of the past and the present economic order.

Krasnoshchel'ye and the cooperative

Historical accounts show that the existence of Krasnoshchel'ye has been dependent on the existence of the cooperative, and the cooperative administered and controlled the lives of the villagers. The village appeared in 1921 when several Komi reindeer herding families moved from Lovosero with their herds. In 1926 a *Special Murmansk Commission of the Workers – Peasants Inspection* arrived in the area and concluded that the places around Krasnoshchel'ye were good for reindeer herding: lot of lichens, rivers, swamps, etc. By that time, it was almost impossible to reach the village without a local guide. The Commission concluded that the area was *backward* and “*collectivisation was the only way to develop it*”¹. Collectivisation was one of the greatest slogans of that time in Russia. It was the time of transition from agrarian to industrial society. Stalin said that the “*Soviet society should become a factory, controlled by the state, and everyone should be employed there*”. The agriculture should break up with small-scale family farming. Therefore, the authorities guided the establishment of collective farms (*kolkhozes*) based on the prototype of industrial enterprises. In the autumn of 1927, there were 14,800 collective farms in the Soviet Union; in 1932, they were 211,100. The number of households in the collective farms for the same period increased from 194,700 to 14,968,700 (Kislitsin, 1999: 389-395). The first *kolkhoz* with 18 reindeer herding families from Krasnoshchel'ye appeared in 1929. It had its headquarters in the village of Ivanovka. During the first year it was called ‘Reindeer Herder’ (*Olenevod*), the year after it was renamed to ‘Red Tundra’ (*Krasnaia tundra*). In 1931, the families from Krasnoshchel'ye built their own collective farm with headquarters in the village. They called it ‘*Krasnoshchel'ye*’.

In the early 1950s, the Soviet authorities decided to change the village structure in order to remedy the stagnation in the agriculture. They promoted the idea of *agrotowns*. The agricultural and the industrial production should be centralised and concentrated in larger production units. The settlements were defined as ‘with future’ (*perspektivnye*) and ‘with no-future’. Those ‘with no future’ were literally moved to those with a future. From the census in 1959 to the census in 1989, 141,137 villages disappeared from the map of the territory of Russia. (Kiselev and Shagin, 1998: 309). The neighbouring village of Ponoï, for instance, was defined one without future and its inhabitants had to move either to Krasnoshchel'ye or to Lovosero. Krasnoshchel'ye was

¹ Here, I use the original citation I found in a hand-written document called “Historical account of the sovkhov” at the office of the cooperative.

one “with future”. Nobody could tell why, and when I asked in the village – the answer was: “*Maybe some in the administration had friends among those who decided... but we always have been a good village*”.

In 1962 the authorities merged *kolkhoz* ‘Krasnoshchel’ye’ with the collective farm in Ivanovka. With the generous assistance of the authorities they got an ‘Engine and Tractor station’ (MTS)¹ [*mashino-traktornaia stantsia*] and developed other branches besides the reindeer herding: agriculture, dairy farm, etc. The MTS replaced the role of the reindeer as transportation of products to and from the village and modernised life in the village. Two hundred people from Ivanovka and Kanevka migrated to Krasnoshchel’ye. The new farm was named ‘In the name of Lenin’ (*Imeni Lenina*) and had its headquarters in Krasnoshchel’ye. The village of Ivanovka was also moved to the village of Krasnoshchel’ye. In 1971 with a Decision No. 40 of 28.10.1970 of Murmansk County Executive Committee *kolkhoz* ‘In the name of Lenin’ merged with the collective farms in the villages of Sosnovka and Ponoï and got a new name – “Memory of Lenin” [*Pamiat’ Lenina*]. ‘Memory of Lenin’ had its headquarters in Krasnoshchel’ye and opened offices in the villages of Kanevka and Sosnovka. In 1978 it was transformed in state-owned farm - *sovkhos*

The *sovkhos* built new houses; during the winters the tractors brought new furniture to the village. I was told many stories of how cupboards and sofas, armchairs, and buffets came in the houses. As I mentioned above, the authorities brought a mobile diesel electricity generator and the light was on all the time. Life in the village of Krasnoshchel’ye didn’t differ much from life in the other towns. In 1970 a regular flight route to Lovosero was established. The children were sent to secondary and vocational schools in Lovosero and encouraged to pursue higher education.

Informal relations under socialism

The Soviet state enterprise was governed by unified plans from the centralised authorities. These plans didn’t necessarily correspond to the needs of the population. The share of consumption in GNP in the Soviet Union was only one-third of the share of consumption in the GNPs of Western countries. The Soviet economy was a ‘*deficit*’ economy. It was difficult to obtain basic goods, especially in the peripheral rural areas. The main consequence was a growing informal economy. The enterprises and people began to accumulate reserves. Surplus production was kept in the enterprises, and the managers and those who had access to it could exchange it against needed or possibly needed goods and products.

The deficit economy was the stage where the ‘*blat*’¹ networks appeared. The everyday endeavours of the people were often directed towards accumulating available products and

¹ It was a state enterprise for technical and organisational support of the collective farms. They made contracts with the collective farms and got share of the production.

goods for the future, keeping and maintaining relations with people that might be important in solving the scarcity problems. My host, Aunt Elizaveta, was not an exception. She had a hoard of clothing, shoes, and so on. For instance, she had two absolute identical winter coats. The first one for everyday use, the second one was used on formal occasions. She told me she bought two because they were nice and didn't cost much; her sister Raisa had fixed it. "Good deal", she said. "*Now they cost so much that I never could afford it.*" When I was there she was wondering if she could find someone to exchange a pair of rubber boots with, or whether she had to give away all of hers that she had in reserve, because she developed a foot deformation and needed a larger pair.

With the deficit economy, the bureaucratic system granted the bureaucrats responsible for the allocation of products and supplies positions with almost unrestrained power, and they used these positions to accumulate reserves of goods and power. Therefore, the differentiation in the Soviet society was growing bigger. The first Soviet leader who decided to do something with this problem was Gorbachev. He introduced two slogans, which in practice were meant to mark the introduction of the market mechanism as a complementary element to the socialist economy ('*perestroika*') and the freedom to talk about the shortcomings ('*glasnost*'). However it didn't work, because there were no premises for market mechanism and the crisis deepened. When I asked the director of the cooperative in Krasnoshchel'ye who was to blame for the situation in Russia today, he was categorically clear: "*Gorbachev – he tried to put together market and socialism and this is impossible!*" Likewise the reindeer herders answered: "*Perestroika!*"

Further, the *glasnost* reform made it possible to articulate the shortages of the command economy and the deficits of the present situation. Thus, in the journals from this period and in the media appeared stories and examples of the irrational distribution of resources. In one journal, we could read about a brigade in the tundra, where they expected bread, but from the supply helicopter they got irons instead. What they could do with the irons in their tents remained unclear both for the journalist and the reader. The informal economy was growing bigger and bigger and under Gorbachev its share had been up to 1/3 of the formal economy.

The market reform of 1991

At the end of October 1991, Yeltsin declared a new economic reform: the transition to a real market economy. This would enable people to start up businesses, but the real orientation of the reform was to restructure the huge state enterprises. Profit should now replace the plan fulfilment as indicator of success, and the managers should answer to a board of directors and shareholders instead of the Party and local authorities. The state should no longer control prices or the production plans. Everything should be regulated through the market. The prediction was that after a period of destabilised economy the prices should settle down towards the end of 1992.

¹ *Blat* is the use of personal networks and informal contacts to obtain goods and services in short supply and to find a way around formal procedures (Ledeneva 1998:1).

The predicted growth of prices varied between 3-5 times and 8-10 times. In 1992, the average price for goods increased 36 times what it had been. Many enterprises lost their state subsidies and had to shut down, and unemployment increased. For the *sovkhos* in Krasnoshchel'ye the introduction of market economy was accompanied with the fact that the state suspended buying up its production of reindeer meat, the existing state infrastructure for export of meat from the village broke down, and the main source of income stopped. The market for meat shrunk considerably to the nearby towns in Murmansk county¹. New buyers had to be found. In few cases the cooperative made contracts with buyers in advance, but that was a bitter experience with the growing inflation. By the time they were supposed to get paid for the production, the money was half its original worth.

There were no plans to fulfil and the *sovkhos* found itself in a situation where they could produce more than they could realise at the market. In the past, exceeding production was delivered to the state in the name of various bonuses. Therefore the consumption of reindeer meat in the village was restricted. In the present, a large percent of the production of reindeer meat could remain in the village. This was a new situation. Once I asked my host Aunt Elizaveta if she could make meat dumplings (*pel'meny*). She said: "*No! How could I learn to make them – there was no meat. Now there is meat, but it is too late to teach myself to cook new things!*" Before they got veal, chicken and canned products. I was rather surprised that in the middle of the tundra there had been a scarcity of reindeer meat, but probably *lack amidst plenty* could also be a part of the definition of the Soviet economy.

In 1992 the *sovkhos* was transformed into a limited company (TOO) [*tovarishchestvo*]. The changes were initiated from above and in accordance with the administrative requirements. As the local paper "*Lovozer'skaia Pravda*" headed its leading article from March 29th, 1993 "*Besides the name nothing changed....*" In Krasnoshchel'ye, as the above headline shows, the restructuring process was rather of "superficial" degree². The management remained the same. In 1998, the limited company changed its status to an agricultural production cooperative (SKhPK) [*sel'skokhoziaistveno-proizvodstvenii kooperativ*]. Furthermore it changed its name from "*Memory of Lenin*" to "*Reindeer Herder*" [*Olenevod*].

For the people in the village the enterprise was always the same: the institution that gave most of them work, housing, electricity and basic goods and cared for them. They called it at random *kolkhoz*, *sovkhos*, *tovarishchestvo*, *cooperative*. In my fieldnotes, I also have used these names randomly. In the thesis I use, however, the word "cooperative" to refer to my direct observations. The other names occur either when I refer to the stages in its historical development or when I refer to histories told by my informants.

¹ When the state bought the reindeer meat, it distributed it not only in Murmansk county, but also to the Southern parts of Russia.

² I use the distinction between *substantial* and *superficial* degrees of restructuring the state enterprises. (see Perotta 2002)

Social networks in the present situation

Burawoy and Krotov defined the new economic regime in Russia as dominated by “merchant capital” (Burawoy and Krotov, 1993). That is to say, seeking profit was through trade and not transformation of the production. It applied to both newly started enterprises, engaged especially in petty trading and the old state enterprises that tried to survive in the new situation. Humphrey observes, that state money virtually was distributed to people working in key industries as power and communications and further appropriated from the petty traders who concentrated the money in the towns and invested them in enterprises for services of the New Russians (Humphrey 1999). The nearby towns of Revda and Lovosero were getting more and more affected by the changes: a large number of petty traders appeared and offered all possible goods at higher and higher prices. In the village of Krasnoshchel’ye there were no petty traders, and the local store was almost empty.

The villagers in Krasnoshchel’ye landed on the poverty side of this process, being unable to purchase locally such goods as clothing, utensils, cigarettes and alcohol, and they continually refuted the validity of the popular saying from before: “It’s better to have 100 friends than 100 rubles” [*“Ne imei sto rublei, no imei sto druzei”*]. It was no more important to have friends in order to obtain the needed goods. It was important to have money, because as many of them often added - in the village there were friends, relatives and good neighbours. When I asked the villagers what changed, many of them were preoccupied with telling me about the money they had on hand before, and the money they didn’t have now. Before they could buy everything but there was a scarcity of goods. Many of the goods were obtained “*by blat*” or with personal connections based on kinship, friendship, and friends of friends.

All the people I interviewed in the cooperative as employees and as private persons complained of constant lack of money. The real money, banknotes and coins had almost disappeared from the village. In fact, money in the village was used mainly to buy cigarettes and vodka from the local store or from private persons, but these were only a very small part of the transactions and in fact the supplies in the local store were symbolical. The bank office in the village had closed down long ago and in the village money circulated mainly as numbers on paper, in the accountancy of the *sovkhos*. Instead of paying monthly salaries to the employees who had to pay them back to the *sovkhos* as electricity bill, house rent and so on, these transactions happened only on paper with money as a medium, but as an absent one.

However the market economy brought not only money deficits to the Russian countryside. The consumption possibilities multiplied, and new systems of prestige appeared (see, for instance, Rausing 2002). Hence, to cope with money deficit meant not only to solve the problem of survival, but also to set aside for and get luxury articles. Many scholars have observed that for basic food, individuals rely most on domestic production, exchanges with relatives and forest gathering in Krasnoshchel’ye – fishing and hunting, while luxury goods are purchased on the

market, dominated by the international petty traders. Most important, therefore, for the villagers of Krasnoshchel'ye were their interdependencies with the relatives they had in the nearby towns. The total absence of a market in Krasnoshchel'ye as well as the increasing prices of basic food products on the market in town strengthened the interdependence between relatives and friends living in the near towns and the village. From the village, people sent potatoes (from the private plots around the houses) and reindeer meat, from the town they got all of the consumer goods they could not produce themselves and which were not available or affordable for the villagers. Although the value of what was exported from the village probably exceeded what they got from the relatives, the villagers tried to send something to their closest relatives in town every time they had a chance to do it.¹ They had to do it; otherwise, the people in the towns starved, and the villagers felt obliged to help them by sending food.

These new interdependencies I approach and define as support networks. In contrast to the *blat* networks where the transactions were guided by individual desire, the support networks were guided by altruistic concern for the closest kin. Further they differed from the *blat* networks in relation to their span – the support networks usually encompassed one's closest relatives and friends, and not the least in relation to the state enterprise, in my case - the cooperative. According to Ledeneva, there are two tendencies to observe: that *blat* relationships in the present become separated from the institution, but also contributed to the appearance of corporate interest that evolves within the state institution (Ledeneva, 1998: 210). What do we observe in Krasnoshchel'ye: separation or corporate interest?

At first sight, it is easy to conclude that the support networks are separated from the cooperative, but the individuals, both donors and recipients, in the networks, are also part of the cooperative. How do these informal relations coexist with the formal relations in the cooperative? Furthermore, the cooperative shows concern with a larger number of villagers than its employees. For example, the head accountant stated in the above-cited article from the local newspaper, that the Murmansk based company “*Rybko*” responsible for the supply of the local store in Krasnoshchel'ye, had sent such expensive butter that the cooperative decided to help the villagers and imported butter at a lower price. Why should an economic and profit oriented enterprise play a social protective role in the village? How is such collective interest maintained and defended in the cooperative at present? One of my main concerns in this thesis is how the cooperative as an institution and economic agent is affected by the support networks and in what direction. In Chapter One, I asked what keeps the village alive in the present situation and the shortest answer and the main argument of the thesis is the cooperative and the support networks. The monopoly of the cooperative over basic services has resulted in the fact

¹ This statement is based on my own observations and roughly estimations, based on the market price of reindeer meat in Revda. The Russian sociologist Shteinberg observes also that in the village where he did fieldwork the value of provisions sent from the village was 2 - 2,5 times more than what came in from town. (Shteinberg 1999 : 237)

that all people in the village are economically dependent on it, while at the same time they are dependent on their social networks. The relationship between these two dependencies is the focus of examination in the following chapters. Having the support networks as a starting point I will try to describe them and see what resources they utilise, but also what resources they mobilise and how they affect the cooperative.

The structure of the thesis is the following: in the next chapter I focus on the fieldwork, my own experience of becoming part of these support/ social networks and the analytical approach. In Chapters Four and Five I discuss some structural and normative characteristics of the support networks. In Chapter Six I focus on basic understandings of ‘work’ in the village, especially work as employment at the cooperative and outline the terms of production and management in the cooperative. In Chapters 7, 8 and 9, I present three individual examples of how different resources at the cooperative are utilised by the support networks, and how this utilisation becomes regulated. In chapter 10, I summarise my analysis and discuss the possibilities for the future of the village.

Chapter 3 Method and Approach

In this chapter I describe how I approached the field and found starting points for the analysis. A special feature of the method was the use of video recorder during my stay. This gave me an asset, and I became easily both object and subject of the circulation of goods and communication in the village. Thus exchange became my point of analytical departure.

Method

As I already mentioned, my preliminary intentions were to describe the reindeer herding as traditional subsistence affected by the current social processes and its role in shaping the future perspectives of the people engaged in it. I had chosen two settings in Krasnoshchel'ye: the first one was in the tundra camp of First Reindeer Herding brigade and the second one was the main office ('kantora'). I wrote field notes and tried to film everyday. Whenever I had the opportunity I tried to focus the conversation on relations between the individuals, in order to outline networks and practices, the reasoning around the activities, moral adjustments, and moral judgement (rules and ideas about acting). I shared my video-recordings with all who were interested, and I got immediate feedback. Often I shared my current interpretations with my informants, and in most cases I shared my frustrations. For example, I got three different answers from different herders to the question why the herders left the village three weeks later than planned. The herders told me that actually there were no inconsistencies in the different answers and that everyone was right. It was my task to tell them 'scientifically' why things were the way they were. The inconsistencies in their stories were intriguing, and given the chance, I explored them further: I asked provocative questions and deliberately told what the others had already told me. At the end I had many contradicting stories. My main aim was to strike the right balance between the stories I noted in the field and my own interpretation by finding out to what extent my presence affected these stories. This is a recurrent theme in the thesis, and I come later to it in this Chapter and in Chapter Seven.

Everyday fieldwork in Krasnoshchel'ye

In 1998-99, I spent seven months in Krasnoshchel'ye on three different stays. I got to know many people from the village. Having overcome the difficulties of getting to the village twice, I gained some trust, and it was easier to communicate with the villagers. It was easier to show interest and follow illnesses, educational choices and love affairs and remember stories from my previous stays. Therefore I consider the last time I was in Krasnoshchel'ye - the autumn of 1999 - was the most important for the sake of research. The reason is that, as they used to tell me: "Foreigners come, go, and then never come back".

During my fieldwork my hostess urged me every morning to go to the office and do my job there. My job in the office was considered from the local people research of the archives and the account books from the past years. I tried to suggest the idea of fieldwork and participant

observation as anthropological methods, but the villagers had an idea of what ethnographers do, referring to the practices of Russian ethnography. I was supposed to record songs and dances, and research papers and archives on the reindeer herding as traditional and “indigenous” subsistence. Looking at the papers in the office in the beginning, I was most interested in numbers related to the herds and herding in general, but gradually my interest moved towards the efforts to keep the accountancy in the cooperative. It looked as if every single thing was written down and kept in files, while at the same time people told me that things were beyond any control. However, I was given access to some of the documents, but not all of them. On top of that, the oldest archives had been moved to Kiosk, the newer to Murmansk. In the *sovkhos* there were only the papers from the past ten years, and I couldn’t compare and trace the whole historical development as it was on papers. As to the present, I was eager to understand the work of both economist and accountants, but they were reluctant to explain.

At lunch, I went home like anyone working in the office would and had lunch with Aunt Elizaveta. Afterwards she had forty winks, often interrupted by visits from her grandchildren. I used to read or write my field notes, fetch some water, or chop some firewood. Around three o’clock, when the electricity was switched on in the village, I went back to the office. In the evenings, we used to watch TV, or pay a visit to some of the villagers whom I knew. I used to discuss my observations with Aunt Elizaveta, and she commented on them. She told me about different people I asked about; she was sometimes very critical, sometimes very humble and taught me never to go for open confrontation or open judgements. She was a Christian and believed that one should accept everyone, even those with sins, and I could observe I got more tolerant in her presence.

Cameras in Krasnoshchel’ye

During my fieldwork I used to record with a video recorder. People felt in different ways about the camera, and I got different responses: there were people who didn’t allow me to film them; others said that they didn’t want to, but actually didn’t have anything against it. Interviews were the most difficult part; no one would say things directly to the camera. Everyone preferred to work or perform in front of the camera.

My videotaped recordings sometimes were distributed in the village. Almost all households in the village had video-players. Many women were interested in copying my recordings. The old women, whom I had filmed celebrating and singing songs, were very eager to discuss their performance watching the video: they could see who was singing how or who was out of tune.

Another aspect of the camera work and my fieldwork was that some people got the possibility to see things they never had seen before. The wives of the herders enjoyed seeing their husbands working in the tundra, also because some of them had never been there.

In addition, the women used my camera to send their husbands short greetings. In November,

when the herders hadn't been in the village for almost two months, the evening before I left for the tundra, I filmed most of the wives and the children or the relatives of the herders. They said some words to the camera: what was going on at home and in the family. The herders with pleasure saw the recordings in the small black-and-white viewfinder of the HI8 camcorder in the evening when I arrived at the tundra camp. They knew that I had a limited battery time so that they turned on the electricity generator in the camp so that they could use the camera, and I could charge the battery afterwards.

Fieldwork as dialogue and exchange

In the process of writing, the importance of my involvement in local relationships came to the surface and could be used as a chief source of data. In return for the above mentioned video recordings, I got chocolates in the village and 'sovkhos oranges' [*sovkhosnye apelsiny*] in the tundra (when I showed the herders the video recordings of their families). These oranges were sent as an added bonus from the management to the herders. I said that the herders needed C-vitamins probably more than me, but I had to take the oranges, peel them and then offer them back to the herders. Then they accepted them. After reflecting over this occurrence then and also in the time after the fieldwork, I became aware of these small examples of giving small gifts of rather symbolical value between the subjects of my research and me. I experienced very few times of feeling like a 'novice' in the field to whom everything had to be explained. Often people expressed respect for my research there, and my general knowledge. They asked me to explain how things were; at the same time they had to help me look into the local relations. In most cases I felt that I fitted in the image of a young and poor student, and I never experienced that they openly showed economic interest in me. There were many who did a lot for me for free, and I tried to give something in return. This was a form of invaluable psychological support.

During my stay there it was important to evoke sameness and shared experiences. They had to pose me within their framework and common categories. "Sameness" between them and me was evoked in the common experience of living in different parts of the former Soviet bloc. Some asked me if Bulgaria was part of the Soviet Union, because people from various republics came to the village before. Even then, there were two teachers from Tajikistan in the village, but they were in fact sent to work here. In the beginning for many of the villagers it was difficult to accept that I had come to Krasnoshchel'ye on my own will, but the last time they concluded that I used all my possibilities to travel, called me the 'frog-traveller' [*liagushka –puteshestvenitsa*], a figure from a Russian fairy-tale, and said that it was probably the main difference between me and them. They no longer had the possibility to travel. However, they seemed interested to hear about my recent trip to the Baltic states and discuss the present state of affairs there, and compare it with how it was ten years ago when they were there. My main surprise came from the fact that my everyday activities became known to everyone instantly. The village was too small to allow anonymity. If for me many villagers remained unknown, people I never had met

before knew what I was doing, where I was from, even what I had bought in the store.

To many of my informants I was a student in ethnography, which in the Russian context very much resembles history and folklore science. Thus many of them had ideas about what I was interested in and writing about and tried to help me by telling me stories from the past, especially about the reindeer herders in the village. I tried to explain what social anthropology and long-term fieldwork were about, but I could barely influence their ideas of what was of “ethnographic” interest and in the focus of my study. When I asked questions they considered neither ethnographic, nor everyday questions, but of sociological interest I often got partial and contradictory answers. This is a problem that many scholars working in Eastern Europe have encountered. The usual explanation of this problem points to past experiences. Under the socialist regime the sociologists and ethnographers were part of the dominant power science, which served the needs of the Party and the informants had to give ‘politically correct’ answers or they could be accused of treason and disloyalty to the Fatherland and Party and get punished by the repressive apparatus of the system. Therefore, I sometimes had the feeling that my informants often used an ‘official’ code in our conversations, and the answers were made up to fit into their ideas of how things should be according to the official discourse and didn’t mirror the present state of affairs. Over time, I learned somehow to ask questions that prompted more genuine answers; however, part of the uneasiness and the formality when they talked to me remained, especially when the camera was on.

I tried to follow the official prescriptions during my stay in the village, but I also had to rely on informal connections and services, for instance my arrival in the village with the cargo helicopter, chartered by the police, and I was rather open for it when my informants directed questions to me. The fact that I also was breaching some rules and prescriptions and the time I spent in the village, made me trustworthier and opened for new sources of information. Therefore in the present thesis I have relied on data with different degree of officiality.

Another source of data became *the unarticulated*. It encompassed the questions my informants didn’t talk about or didn’t want to talk about. The “unsaid” remained a part of the dynamics of the dialogue between my informants and me, and I later tried to elaborate on it, with the consciousness that I was touching upon and stepping into a minefield of ethical questions. To solve ethical dilemmas, I tried to share with the people as much as I could from my impressions and thoughts and get responses from them during my stay there. I was writing field-notes every day, and some of the younger reindeer herders tried to decipher them, but they had to admit that my handwriting was “not beautiful”. I often suggested interpretations, and they often denied them. This was also a part of our dialogue and it became data for me. Once they asked me right to the point: “*Why do you ask so much? You can write about us whatever you want – nobody comes and checks it here!*” I had no good answer – only that I wanted to write the ‘truth’ [*pravda*]. Then they laughed, and I had to laugh too, since in my broken Russian, it sounded like that I wanted to write in the newspaper called “Pravda”.

When I afterwards was analysing my empirical material, I became aware of how often I was recipient of small gestures, giving, services, etc. They further probably affected other relationships or were part of relationships and on that account were subordinated to some basic “rules” that affected some exchanges in the village. The fact that I lived in the house of Aunt Elizaveta made many of her children and grandchildren give us more than it was usual before. She used to say: “*They feed us up*”. When I came back I thought of how many of the gifts were induced by my presence there. I realised that my hostess got additional attention from her closest relatives. My presence there brought to her additional cash income, but also a new acquaintance that probably could be used in the future and not the least increased to some extent her status as a representative woman in the village.

Analytical concepts

Small gestures, like the fact that two of the wives of the herders came to me just to thank me with a box of chocolates because I recorded a tape for them with some of my video recordings, the fact that Aunt Albina came with a pair of wool socks every now and then, and I usually got the best piece of meat when we were eating at the tundra camp provided ground for reflection and in fact, influenced my general impression from the stay in the village and from the people there.

Back in town, in Murmansk, when I safe and sound was waiting for the flight back to Tromsø, I used some of my time and money to send packages to some of the people in Krasnoshchel’ye. I felt *obliged*, and I somehow knew that open requirements for reciprocity were never made, but expected. Most of the visible and methodologically accessible transactions in the village came under this category of exchange, in contrast with the other forms of exchange: centralised redistribution and market exchange (Polanyi 1957).

Gift giving as a form of exchange has been one of the most discussed in the anthropological writings. Gifts are ‘*total social facts*’ – they have not only economic aspects but also social value (Mauss 1925). They create obligations and lead to expectations for reciprocity. Reciprocity makes human relationships predictable and makes the social cohesion stronger. According to Sahlins’ model of reciprocity – gifts come under generalised reciprocity as long-term relationships, usually between kin in residential proximity, where, and more importantly, the act of giving is more important than the immediate return of profit. There are also a balanced and a negative form of reciprocity (Sahlins 1965). Typical examples of negative reciprocity are the various forms of thefts, but also the market exchange, where both seller and buyer are guided by private interest and calculation. Gifts are, on the contrary, spontaneous, but are they irrational, indeed? There have been many writings and theoretical approaches that aimed to close the gap between gift exchange and commodity exchange, between the irrational primitive man and the calculative modern man. One such theory is Bourdieu’s theory of practice (Bourdieu 1977). According to him and in line with Mauss, the act of giving a gift creates indebtedness and an

obligation to return the gesture over time. For any individual, at any point there is a sum of such relationships of outstanding indebtedness and gratitude, and these amounts to his or her social capital.

Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition -- or in other words, to membership in a group [11]--which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital, a “credential” which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word. These relationships may exist only in the practical state, in material and/or symbolic exchanges which help to maintain them.

(Bourdieu 1985:250)

Social capital, according to Bourdieu is a form of capital derived from economic forms of capital, but its economic or material nature is disguised behind practices of “euphemization”. Similar is the case with “cultural capital” as another form of capital. Cultural capital can be defined as a legitimate and scarce competence in a given society. Such competence, to become recognised as cultural capital is to be unevenly distributed in the society. Bourdieu further elaborates on this concept, studying the French middle class, but in his article “The Forms of Capital” he gives the example of being literate in a society where most individuals are illiterates as form of cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986: 245). The acquisition of cultural capital costs time and resources, that is to say - economic capital; and cultural capital might be also rewarded in monetary terms (as for instance – higher salary for higher educational qualifications). Thus, both social and cultural capital can be converted to economic capital at the same time as they can be derived from economic capital. There is also a fourth form of capital whose form cannot directly be derived from economic forms – the symbolical capital. This is the most invisible one and the one that encompasses the ideological production or the control of perceiving how things are (the gnoseological order). This form of capital is mediated through long-lasting institutions (e.g. the nation state), while the former forms can be revealed also through individual practices. However, symbolic capital might be derived from forms of cultural and social capital.

Important to note, however, is that for Bourdieu the forms of capital are not only dependent on the individuals. Capital is also dependent on the position individuals have in institutions and more durable structures in the society they live. For him the distribution of capital is thus defined by structural relations, but also by effective relations of exchange. The former operates in permanent and invisible ways and preconditions the latter; the latter is more visible and can be approached through exchanges and conversions between the species of capital.

In the previous chapter I sketched out the importance of the support networks and the cooperative in Krasnoshchel’ye. The support networks are manifestations of the social capital of the individuals. In the next two chapters I approach them, borrowing tools and concepts from network theory. In Chapter Four I explore some structural relations that shape the networks and can be seen as preconditions for the social capital. In Chapter Five, I explore some interactional

aspects of the networks as mechanisms for regulating the social capital of the individuals, and a particular stress is put on the role of showing “disinterestedness” in the networks.

Earlier I also pointed to the importance of the cooperative as granting basic citizenship rights in the village: from the right to work (as the most abstract) to the right to have electricity and gas in the households (as concrete goods), and stated that it still has full monopoly over these services. In this way the village still resembles a “mini model” of the Soviet society from the past and as such makes it possible to roam invisible, lasting, and mediated forms of domination. In Chapter Six I present the cooperative as a mini variant of the Soviet state, and how it governs different forms of capital.

In the last chapters I explore the structural predispositions for different forms of capital and how they shape the individual strategies. I concentrate on three different positions as granting different forms of capital and how the individuals taking in these positions claim, maintain and accumulate forms of capital. In Chapter Seven I look at the social capital granted to the reindeer herders as part of the work collective and how they dispose over it at present. In Chapter Eight, I sketch the position of the office employees in the cooperative as granting cultural capital; In Chapter Nine, I discuss the position of the director and the manifestations of symbolic capital in the village. Applying Bourdieu’s theory to analyse the local relations in a small tundra village is, at first sight, an ambitious project. I believe, however, that it still could be fruitful, because the power of the state under the Soviet regime was incontestable, and it reached even in the remotest recesses in the tundra. The case of Krasnoshchel’ye, thus, can be seen as an optimal situation, because it concentrates in a very limited space both structural and effective relations, and makes visible different forms of capital, their conversions and their dependency on the structure. This theoretical perspective is underlying the rest of the thesis, as I decided to evolve it implicitly in the empirical data and the ethnographic descriptions.

Chapter 4 Support networks: structure and norms

In this chapter I explore social capital by approaching the support networks in the village. The support networks work on perpetual circulation of small services, gifts and information, which confirm norms. In this chapter I approach the structural aspects of the networks and the role they play for reproducing norms. In this way I consider gender and family as the main factors for social capital.

Network as a concept has recently conquered much of the sociological and anthropological thinking within the so-called actor-network theory (Latour 1993), but I'm rather prone to lean back on the early anthropological usage of the term. E. Bott in the late 1950s built her work "*Family and Social Networks*" on Barnes definition and defines network (Barnes 1954), as a set of social relationships for which there is no common boundary. "*Each person is, as it were, in touch with a number of people, some of whom are directly in touch with each other and some of whom are not... I find it convenient to talk of a social field of this kind as **network***".

Networks imply the idea of linked "knots" and the particular with this concept is that what happens between two "knots" affects what happens in adjacent "knots" (egos, anchor persons). The idea was first suggested by Barnes (1954) and further developed by a number of scholars as Boissevain (1974), Bott (1971), Mitchell (1974), Whitten and Wolfe (1974). Initially the idea of network came as a theoretical reaction to the structural functionalism, which turned to be inapplicable to the loose connections in large scale societies. Its application, however, is not confined to large scale.

The linkages in a network might be approached from a morphological (shape and pattern of the linkages) and an interactional point of view. The morphological approach to networks is concerned with visual representations of connectedness and density, and their structural effects expressed in clusters, span, zones and stars. Interactional aspects of the linkages are content, frequency, intensity, directedness and durability (Mitchell 1969). Boissevain concentrates mostly on the content and defines three interactional elements in the networks: information, transactions and norms (Boissevain 1974). Further he distinguishes intimate, effective and extended zones, based on interaction in the networks. In the following I will try to outline some of the basic morphological and interactional characteristics of the networks. I'll use an example as a starting point for discussing structural and normative patterns in the support networks in Krasnoshchel'ye.

A model for the networks

Lubov Fedorova was a Saami woman, living in Krasnoshchel'ye, 46 years old, married, and with one grown daughter living in the municipality centre Lovosero. Her position in the cooperative was head (and the only employee) of the personnel department. At the same time she was also a radio operator. She led the daily radio connection with the reindeer herders and with the other

divisions of the cooperative in Kanevka and Sosnovka. She was married to the director of the airport in the village. With the flights' dropping off, his tasks got reduced, and he had time on his hands for fishing red fish (salmon). Lubov used to buy meat at the cooperative whenever possible. She didn't need to pay for it; the accountants deducted from her salary the sum. They did the same whenever she bought goods available at the cooperative or commanded services held by it.

Lubov was very concerned with her daughter. She used to talk to her every day if there was a phone connection in the village. Lubov used to send her meat, fish, and potatoes whenever she could. What was in excess, the daughter could sell to acquaintances in Lovosero and Revda. Lubov used also to knit woollen socks and ask her daughter in Lovosero to sell them, if she didn't want to use them. The daughter sent back different goods from town such as champagne for the New Year celebration, biscuits and cakes. Getting meat instead of salary in this way was a good deal for Lubov – through her daughter she could realise it and indirectly get the desired goods from the market.

Once I recorded the following conversation on the phone between Lubov (in Krasnoshchel'ye) and her daughter (in Lovosero) before Christmas and New Year 2000: *'Anya, send champagne and chocolates! We shall celebrate with your uncle! ...We shall send you meat and fish! Faina will travel soon... Red fish!...Anya, there is one more thing, Can you ask Leonid if he wants some fish?... How which ?.. Volkov. He asked about red fish last time I talked to him... I cannot call from here – you know how the connection is..'* At the end Anya agreed to ask him about the fish. Selling fish to Leonid Volkov was in fact not selling, but concern for a friend who might need a “luxurious” object for New Year celebration. When I later asked Lubov if they often used to sell, I understood at once that it was a wrong question. Lubov would never ask her daughter to sell on the market. It was not selling; it was just a making a favour.

Concern was also expressed in having contact regularly. I never met Leonid Volkov, but I knew who he was. His name was mentioned very often in relation to the culture house in the village. He was the founder of the Komi folklore ensemble “Afterglow” [*Vechernaia Zaria*] (*“Ryt Kiia”* in Komi language) but had moved to Lovosero. The members of the ensemble were women; most of them were pensioners (my landlady and her sisters were an active part of the ensemble), but there were several who were in their fifties. They used to participate in folklore events in the area, even planned to go in the future to the other side (The Komi Autonomous Republic) and many of them were producing souvenirs and traditional clothing and were selling them on the folklore festivals. Leonid Volkov was in charge of the folklore events and the cultural life in the area; that's why it was important to keep in touch with him.

Furs and crafts stand second to meat and fish in the “sent from the village” statistics. The fur products were usually given to children and sisters, and if they didn't have use for any of the given things they could sell them privately or give them to the Saami craft centre in Lovosero.

When I asked the women in the village why they use the Saami crafts centre, they answered: “*Saami, Komi, Nenets crafts*, they used to say, *they are from the same reindeer fur and are made in the same way, only the models are slightly different, but who bothers*”. The fur could be bought from the cooperative, but most of the women who sew, asked their friends and relatives who were reindeer herders to get some reindeer hides. Thus, to produce the fur clothing and shoes costs only time, and the products are sold at top prices to “tourists” and other aliens.

Lubov, in her capacity as radio operator in the cooperative, had a very good possibility to learn who intended to travel and where. Then she could ask if by the way the person in question could take a small package to Lovosero, to her daughter who works there, and needs food. It was difficult to repudiate such requests because anyone understood the parental concern of Lubov. As a radio operator, she also got access to the conversations between the reindeer herders and their families, and in this way she became updated with what anyone was up to. Lubov easily kept in contact with many people outside the village and with the branch offices in Kanevka and Sosnovka. She used to talk on the phone quite often and used to keep herself well informed. The only problem was that the phone connection in the village was bad. The phone cables were hanging on telegraph poles all the way from Lovosero and often were affected by any single change in the weather, and sometimes there was no connection for several weeks. It also happened that outside calls got mixed with the local radio network and private conversations could be heard on the radio. However, this was a minor problem because confidentiality in the village was of a relative degree. Information spread instantly, whether one wanted or not.

Information spreading has been the main data in the anthropological investigation of networks, especially in large-scale societies. In Krasnoshchel’ye it was just a question of time (usually hours) to get to know what happened around. This fact makes the village a very large network, but the exchange of goods and services reveal patterns I would like to outline below.

Lubov’s case was representative of the village, and I’ll use it to outline a model for the networks in the village. Lubov, her husband and her daughter in Lovosero help each other as much as they can. Lubov also has a large network of acquaintances in the village whom she can ask for services, and a small circle of acquaintances, (especially very important people who had resources to solve some problems outside the village to whom she shows concern). She also refers to a larger network of her daughters’ acquaintances. The main pillars of her intimate network were her husband and her daughter; her effective network included many in the village and usually “resourceful” people. Her extended network was outside the village.

These three spheres are reminiscent of Sahlins’ model of relation between reciprocity and kinship residential sectors. In this model of concentric circles the closest relatives are those who live nearest and among them the reciprocity tends to be *generalized* (Sahlins 1965). The kind of reciprocity changes according to the distance from the centre. In the outermost circles

reciprocity tends to be negative. In Lubov's case, it seems to me, the endeavours were directed to the well-being of her intimate network (especially daughter) and to set preconditions for her daughter to enlarge the effective network in Lovosero and in this way probably to indirectly extend Lubov's "extended" network. In the extended network the relations tend to balance reciprocity and "the social relations hinge on the material flow"(ibid. 195).

Negative reciprocity according to Sahlins is the unsociable extreme. It is the most impersonal way of exchange. The few examples I could observe of this kind reciprocity happened on the sale stands during folklore festivals. There were many visitors from abroad and the prices could be written up. Aunt Elizaveta told me that reindeer leg-boots that usually cost 150 rubles could be sold for 280 rubles. They had to keep the level of prices high together with the other traditional craftswomen, but the economic profit was not the most important. Being there, they got recognition for their concern with traditional culture.

The optimal, but also necessary pattern of the intimate network is to have a person active in the tundra, one active in the village and one - in town. These roles were also very gender specific: men are in the tundra; the women are in the village and in town. In the following I discuss gender as the main source of division of labour in the household. I consider the spatial dimension of the networks in relation to engendered factors as "geographical mobility" and "higher education". The intimate network is usually the nuclear family, consisting of parents – children, husband-wife (conjugal) relationships and siblings (consanguine) relations. Further, I discuss these kinship relations as the most important links in the networks, and I end the chapter with several examples of relationships between distant members of the community that are not reciprocal, but are still subordinated to the values in the networks and thus invest the donors with social capital.

Gender and household

In the anthropological literature family and household have been discussed as problematic concepts (Yanagisako 1979). The term "household" in the village was officially bound to the idea of co-residence – people who lived in the same house were considered household [*domakinstvo*]. Thus the information I got from the village administration was that there were around 225 households in the village. However there was a great variety in the structure of the households: besides the "nuclear families" there were single women living alone, a few single men living alone, mother-son families, or three generations as grandmother- mother- son; further there were houses where several single men lived together, but also there were cases of daughter-father households, and in many cases there were extended families.

There were also different solutions of the domestic activities or the "*activities connected to or related to food production and consumption as well as reproductive practices of child bearing and child rearing.*" (ibid.) For the first, there were houses where only men lived: they drank

together and went fishing together, but for food they were dependent on their mothers and/or ex-wives. In the same way their mothers and ex-wives were dependent on their sons and ex-husbands for catch and draught and hard manual labour. Mikhail, who lived on his own, used to give his catch both to his mother and his ex-wife, and he ate with both of them.

Most important is that nearly all domestic activities were gender determined in the village. Therefore, the household had a male domain and a female domain. Irrespective of the residence factor in the households, these complementary relations were always present. Traditional anthropological interpretations ascribe the label “public” to activities in the male domain, and “private” to those usually under control of women. In Krasnoshchel’ye, however, the process was the opposite – with the men in the tundra, it was the woman who became the “public face” of the household. Paradoxically, to be praised in the public domain the women in the village were up to build a “private space”, that is an own house. The private space was scarce in the village and it was a life-long project to apply and get permission to build a house. Once they got permission, the women had to urge their husbands to build the house. The cooperative offered housing in *sovkhos* houses, but the walls were so thin, that it was unavoidable to share intimate details with the neighbours. Some families remained living in their parents’ houses, but privacy there was out of question, since in many of the houses there were no doors between the rooms, only curtains. In 1999, it was difficult to build houses, the materials had to be transported to the village, and it was too expensive. Therefore the efforts to manage the public face of the household concentrated on keeping standards of consumption. In some aspects this process reminded me of competitive consumption. In 1998 there were no electric water boilers in the village. In 1999, in every house where a woman lived (and I visited), there was one. Thus the conclusion is that male to female domains were as production to consumption in Krasnoshchel’ye.

Speaking of the relationship between male and female domains I cannot help mentioning the reversal of the famous “**male : female as culture : nature**” (Ortner 1974). In Krasnoshchel’ye it was *male : female as nature : culture*. The male domain is the tundra and men’s bonds with nature were much stronger than their wives’ bond with nature. Women were better in school, spent more time on reading and watching TV, and were perceived as more “cultivated”.

Below I examine the two factors that reproduce these reverses: the traditional division of labour in the village and the geographical mobility of young women. The former favours the latter since the main premise for moving out is higher education and it has become a prerogative of the women. This further reinforces the traditional division of labour and creates strong clusters of male networking in the tundra, and large female networks in the village and between the village and the relatives with regular access to the market.

The division of labour in the family

No matter if the man in the household was a reindeer herder, fisherman or just going fishing and hunting, he was supposed to bring food from the tundra, and therefore was often absent from the

village. The tundra was the field where men should be active, while the village and the relations with distant kin and friends were as a rule in the domain of women. This complementarity results in the following situation: most of what men eat, drink, are dressed with, and have in their houses is bought by their wives, mothers, sisters. Men almost never travel and are never at the market and therefore it very often was described as “dangerous” place – with pickpockets, swindlers and racketeers.

“*Why travel? We got everything here!*” – was the answer when I asked the herders if they would travel if they could. They get some work clothes from the cooperative; otherwise they get clothes from their wives who travel, or if one is single from their mothers and sisters, who also travel. Gleb had got a new set of hunting clothes from his mother who had been to Murmansk and he was quite proud of the clothes. He often laughed that he hadn’t bought anything in the village store for years, an assertion that often occurred when the herders got packages in the tundra from their families and discussed the contents.

During my stay with the herders at their summer camp, they got packages from the village (from their families) twice. The cooperative occasionally sent products and materials to the herders. The families of the herders also used to send them small packages. Most of the packages contained fresh products such as milk and bread, pastries, canned home-grown products, vodka, and cigarettes. Most of these things were shared right after the arrival of the all-terrain track vehicle [‘vezdekhod’]. Some of these things were bought in the village store, where the herders, especially those who were married, haven’t been for years. Most of them were critical towards the new products and the variety of products that they couldn’t get used to: *‘Before it was only one kind of butter – ‘Vologodskoe krestianskoe’, now there are hundreds of these, some are better, some are not so good, the butter we got last year is different from what we got this year and what we’ll get next year - how can we learn which one is good, one life is not enough...’* and joked:

They asked one old herder from the neighbour village if he has tried SNICKERS, he said ‘Oh, yeah’, then they asked him if he has tried MARS, the answer was the same ‘Oh, yeah, of course’, at the end they asked him if he has tried TAMPAX, the answer was again: ‘Oh, yeah, of course’.

Also the supply of products for the tundra stay of the herders are not ordered by the herders themselves but by their wives, sisters, and mothers, and the needs are carefully adjusted to the needs of the household, so that it should be managed in such way that they had to buy absolute minimal quantities of food in the store. Thus a herder had asked (and in fact - got it) for 150 kg sugar for his tundra stay in the second quarter of 1998. This means more than a kilogram sugar a day, something rather unbelievable – it was evident that most of this sugar remained in the house of the herder in the village. The consumption of spirits (mainly by men) was also in the safe female hands, while the men were in the village. Some of the wives managed to keep their husbands from drinking, and some failed. Aleksander, for instance, was a straight man who

didn't drink because his wife kept him sober. When he was in the tundra, she sent him vodka. Then, he was out of sight of the people in the village. On the other hand, one always should have alcoholic beverages for special occasions. Therefore, the wives were primarily concerned with keeping their men away from drinking and generally having control over the consumption of alcoholic beverages. Men could drink vodka uncontrolled, if they had the possibility. This was especially valid for the reindeer herders who were, after many "sober" days in the tundra, almost always drunk in the village. The herders, however, told me that they prefer to drink with each other in the tundra, not in the village.

The gender differentiation in the households in Krasnoshchel'ye thus leads to strong social networks that are in two opposite ends (Bott 1971) - strong male networks in the tundra¹ and strong interdependency among the women in the village. Gender is also of primary importance for relationships with the outside world and prospects for geographical and social mobility.

Geographical and social mobility

All over the Russian North, and apparently not only Russian, the migration of women has been a long-standing phenomenon and a problem for the local communities. The reason is in the fact that the main subsistences in the North (hunting, fishing, reindeer herding) are in the male domain of activities. Boys get socialised in the tundra in such activities like hunting and fishing, and do not show any will to move to town. For the girls there are not that many activities that could tie them to the place (Hägg 1993). Moving out from Krasnoshchel'ye had two further characteristics: It was never an individual project - many family members were involved in order to help with money or connections. Secondly, moving out of the village was, as a rule, closely connected with taking a higher degree of education either professional, or pedagogical. Furthermore, the latter was the only possibility to move from the village under the strong restrictions of rights of residence during the Socialist regime. Most of the young boys and girls went to vocational school in Lovosero (PTU). There they could become reindeer herders, mechanics, or traditional craft producers, and even accountants. After finishing the vocational school, the boys were sent by the authorities to the army and lost contact with their friends and town acquaintances. The girls remained in Lovosero with friends or took higher education in the pedagogical institutes in Murmansk. During this period they often got married and therefore it was easier and more important for them to remain in town. After two years in the army the boys had only the village as an option to come back to and most of them tried to find their luck there.

The prospects for geographical mobility defined also the prospects for social mobility. In many cases people with higher education occupied higher positions and were in the stratum of *nomenklatura*. This turned the networks into spatial-hierarchical structures. The more to the

¹ cf. Chapter Seven

centre in terms of geography (Lovosero, Murmansk, Moscow), the higher in the hierarchy were the “knots”.

At present there was no restriction on the rights of residence. Anyone could move wherever one wanted. The towns in the area, especially Murmansk offered better paid jobs, but surprisingly for me, earning cash was not an incentive for the villagers to move to town. Their main concern was to grant the children a good education—a phenomenon also observed in other parts of Eastern Europe (Kideckel 2002: 126). In the name of education, some of the young girls and boys chose their official “nationality” in their ID cards. For instance, when Misha’s daughter turned 16 and attained her majority, she applied to be written as a “Saami” in her papers, although before she was a Komi. The reason was that the Saami got a special quota in the Pedagogical institute in Murmansk and were admitted easier than Russians or Komi (nonindigenous population).

Some of the women in the village tried to break the pattern and fix higher education for their sons, but failed. One example came in the summer of 1999. Larissa, the head accountant in the cooperative and Antonina Borisovna, the head of administration in the village, had used all their connections and efforts to arrange for their sons, Artyom and Yury, to participate in an international program on reindeer herding. They were supposed to get trained in Norway and come back in a short time. The boys, who were best friends and reindeer herders, went to Lovosero, and after weeks of waiting there, they found that their places were taken by someone else. When I asked what actually happened I got different answers: That it was only for people with connections, that it was only for Saami, but the boys were a Komi and a Russian, and that the Norwegians were interested in collaboration only with people from Lovosero. Larissa, the mother of Artyom said that the boys failed because the Norwegian program wouldn’t be profitable for the cooperative. Zaitsev, the director of the cooperative, representing the cooperative and the representative for MOOS (Murmansk Experimentary Reindeer Breeding Station) didn’t agree to participate in it. Foreign aid programs and foreign enterprises were usually seen with distrust in Krasnoshchel’ye (see also Chapter 9). However, she hoped that her son would study one day. Artyom, on the other hand, didn’t want to hear about it. He wanted to go to the tundra when he finished 9th grade at school. His mother then said that if he gets a “four”¹ in Russian, then he’d be allowed to become an apprentice in the herd. He studied hard and got a “four”, but a “four” in Russian was a sign for good potentialities, and Artyom had to continue his education. After school he served at the military. In 1998 he came back in the herd. His Aunt Klavdiya, the wife of Zaitsev, the cooperative director, offered to support him if he continued with higher education in St. Petersburg, but Artyom was not interested in it. He wanted “*to be in the herd*” [*‘v stade’*]. When I asked him about the trip to Lovosero, he told me that because this happened in the summer, the transportation back to Krasnoshchel’ye was difficult. The boys had to walk the 150 kilometres back to the village, and as they said to me the

¹ school mark - B

moral of the story is, “*we will never leave the village, no matter what we are promised...*”. For me the reason lies in the strong ties among the members of the reindeer herding brigade where he worked, as discussed in Chapter 7.

In these examples I have outlined how gender (as the conjugal roles, husband-wife) is reproduced as a determinant for the spatial aspects in the networks (tundra, village, town), and for the function (production/ consumption and exchange). In the next part I discuss family as a factor for the size, the scope, and the density of the networks.

Family and kinship

My observations in the village started with the economic transactions around the grandmothers [*‘babushki’*] as they used to call themselves. They needed help almost daily and got it from their closest relatives in the village. On the other hand, they were also helping their children and grandchildren as they could. This form of mutual support was completely free of interest and according to Fadeeva stands in relation to two basic values in the Russian understandings of family, which she calls paternal guardianship (*roditel’skaia opeka*) and filial indebtedness (*synovnii dolg*) (Fadeeva 1999). Cash, food, home-grown products and services, material help or labour flew between parents and children in various ways, free of expectations for return, because as Aunt Elizaveta once put it, “*there will always be return, if in heaven.*”

Aunt Elizaveta

Aunt Elizaveta was a typical example of this, a kind of support ‘depot’; she got daily help from her five sons, and she was concerned with the ways she should help her children and grandchildren. Early in the morning she went to buy bread for herself, sometimes for her sister and sons. Afterwards came Nastya, her grandchild who brought milk from the cow and picked up bread. Afterwards Aunt Elizaveta went with the leftovers from our kitchen – to give them to the cow. Then Igor or Olesya came to see if she needed some help, to fetch water, or ask her for a small change to buy pens and pencils. Aunt Elizaveta got reindeer meat quite often. The same day when an all-terrain track vehicle came from the reindeer herders’ camp in the tundra, one of the herders from Third reindeer herding brigade came with a snowmobile and brought her half a reindeer sent from her son, Artyom, and a half from her grandson, Semen, both herders in Third Reindeer Herding Brigade. Later in the evening her oldest son, Mikhail came with a half deer that he got from his son: he got it, but he preferred not to have meat at home: he didn’t cook. He said he is either coming to eat with us, or eat with his ex-wife and his two sons. Aunt Elizaveta asked if they were going to send meat to his daughter who was studying in Murmansk. Mikhail said that his oldest son probably had to go there because of some affairs, and he could bring

¹ Gal and Kligman discuss the existence of these titles as a political/ public concern with reproduction and thus as one more of the controversies of making the private – public during the former regime (Gal and Kligman 2000).

the meat along to her. Aunt Elizaveta had a large family; she had five children and the Soviet authorities had conferred on her the title of “Mother-Heroine”¹. The pragmatic aspect of having many children around was the presence of a large network and help with the daily activities. On the other hand, being a “Mother - Heroine” had made my host part of all political and cultural gatherings in the village and increased her symbolic capital.

Aunt Albina

The oldest sister of Aunt Elizaveta, Aunt Albina, did not have many close relatives around her. She was around 80 years old. Her husband died in the summer of 1999. Aunt Albina had also recently lost a daughter – who lived in Severodvinsk. Albina had only one daughter who lived in Revda. She had also several grandchildren and some great-grandchildren who occasionally came to the village. Of primary importance to her was her daughter in Revda. She was her “intimate network”. From her relatives in the village she got small services, but mainly information on what and where something was sold, about how the infrastructure could be of help to her, etc. (although the village is not big, it is always possible to omit some events in the village life when they happen). Albina had to use her pension to buy goods and services in the village, in contrast to her sister Aunt Elizaveta, whose pension was given to children and grandchildren in the village and used in the market in town.

One morning Albina came and told us that she had bought reindeer meat at the *sovkhoz*. I was at the *sovkhoz* when they closed the day before. Later, when I went to the office they just hung a note that said: “*Reindeer meat will be sold from 10 to 12 and from 13 to 15 at the price of 12 rubles*“. Obviously, Albina had bought it before it was officially announced. When I asked, she explained that she got to know before the cooperative opened. She had talked to Antonina Borisovna, the head of administration in Krasnoshchel’ye, who is her brother’s daughter-in-law and found out early. Then she called Ksenia, the seller in the store, who was her sisters’ (Aunt Elizaveta’s) daughter-in-law to put aside the meat. Albina bought the meat and sent it to her daughter in Revda and to her sister in Lovosero, because they needed meat, and she left some for herself. Otherwise, she might have had to go to some private people for meat, and this would cost more, especially if she had to pay with vodka. Vodka was used very often to pay back for services in Russia (Hivon 1994) and Krasnoshchelie was not an exception in this regard. To ask relatives who were reindeer herders for meat was not possible, because they had big families and never had meat in excess. Those without family used to sell meat or exchange it for vodka. However that was not a good deal, although Aunt Albina used to buy great amounts of vodka and exchange it against small services such as firewood chopping, etc. In Albina’s case, the residence proximity didn’t count as a factor for generalised reciprocity with her fellow villagers, but made her dependent on the existing infrastructure in the village, both as a social security system (pension) and as an economic enterprise (the cooperative). In Albina’s case, the closest network was outside the village, but in the village she had the cooperative as formal enterprise,

but also had informal ties with its employees. This inverse relationship between the role of social networks and importance of the cooperative is further discussed in Chapter Eight.

Aunt Dina

Aunt Dina, to the contrary, had her sons in the village, but not children in the towns. She was most dependent on their daily help, and she spared her pension to use it in the market whenever she travelled with the folklore ensemble. The two sons were single and unemployed and lived together. Dina used to fire the ovens in their house so it shouldn't be very cold when they come back from the fishing trip, or from the hunting trip or whatever. She was all the time back and forth to the store as well, buying cookies, cans, or bread. *"Of course, she could afford it"*, said the other aunts and explained that Dina helped her sons only with the housework, and they brought her fish and meat. *"And she never gives them any money, they drink too much"*.

These three cases show the importance of ties between children and parents and ways of compensating for insufficiency of ties in the intimate network. Below I discuss the consanguine relations as standing next to the parental in the support networks.

Fraternal solidarity

There are several aspects of the consanguine relations in the networks I would like to briefly point out. Sisters usually exchanged material goods and food; between brothers it was mostly an exchange of labour (Fadeeva, 1999). Meat and fish were usually not given away to brothers, but to sisters-in-law. Brothers helped each other lending motors and boats, when building houses, ploughing the potato acre or preparing firewood for the winter. Sometimes unmarried or divorced siblings lived together. In such cases the role in the households was the same as in the ordinary family: the brother would go out in the tundra, the sister would grow potatoes and maybe tend a cow or chickens. In this way, they performed conjugal roles in the household. The importance of the siblings in the village was greatest in the age between 20 and 40 years. Later on when the children had grown up, the exchanges between siblings decreased, but the sociality remained.

Aunt Elizaveta met daily with her sisters in the village, but I never saw her asking them for anything. She told me that she asks usually her sister Sveta to cut out the fur, when she sews skin shoes [*'burki'*], because Sveta was much better at this. Whenever Aunt Albina and Aunt Elizaveta found themselves with meat, both sent a lot to their sister, Raisa, in Lovosero. She sent to them cookies and medicines from town. Although there is a hospital in the village, most of the medicines have to be bought privately in town. The hospital is supplied just with the minimum of medical supplies. Therefore, Aunt Elizaveta used to ask her sister in Lovosero to buy the needed medicines. According to her, it was more difficult to ask her children for such services. It was selfish; they needed the money for other things.

The role of the siblings who lived outside the village thus grew more important and complemented the relationship between parents and children with a more economic element. This is in conformity with Fadeeva's argument that fraternal solidarity contains much more striving for autonomy and independence (Fadeeva 1999). The relationships between siblings could also resemble the relationships between children and parents and get transformed either into paternal concern of the oldest brother or sister to care for the youngest, or in feelings of indebtedness of the youngest to help their elder siblings, as they do for their parents. Unconditional help and support was the main feature of the above discussed relationships. However, in many cases I observed unconditional support directed to people beyond one's intimate network. Below I discuss several forms of such support and the discourse around them.

Unconditional support

Whenever I shared my interpretations with my informants, I was encountered with counter-arguments. One of the first such cases was when I asked Aunt Elizaveta to reflect on her daughters-in-law. Aunt Elizaveta had her own ranging of the daughters-in-law and her feelings towards them varied from a moderate indifference to a motherly protection. She had an explanation for it and a scale of "goodness": this daughter-in-law was lazy and impudent and coming and worrying her for small things and begging for money for the children, that one was a poor woman who needed help because her husband (although Aunt Elizaveta's own son) was drinking too much and therefore Aunt Elizaveta was trying to help if she could, the third one came from the Izhma area¹. She didn't have anyone in the village from her own family who could support her. Therefore, Aunt Elizaveta tried to help her and very often gave her small gifts such as calendars, cookies, etc. I suggested that "the best one" was the one who helped most – but Aunt Elizaveta denied it. She could not say who helped most or least of all. They all did according to their capacities. Aunt Elizaveta not only denied my suggestion, but also denied at once all calculating aspects of these relations. She explained to me that it was care, and I had to understand that they had to help each other in order to survive. The care and the small exchanges were not economically motivated. However, in Aunt Elizaveta's life to stand up for those who didn't have family reappeared in several more cases. This only confirms the importance of the family, the awareness of this importance, and the expectations of the villagers.

The old woman

There was a 90-year-old lady in the village. She was the oldest one and came often to Aunt Elizaveta. It was very difficult to talk to her since she almost couldn't hear and spoke only Komi. This old woman didn't have any children. In the village she had two nieces, Irina and Ksenia who went everyday to her with bread and helped her with the oven. Aunt Elizaveta told

¹ Komi Autonomous republic

me that the old woman fired the oven all the time and used to say that she was cold even in the summer. Aunt Elizaveta concluded that this was a kind of dementia. The old woman used quite a lot of firewood, but she was also in some kind of kin relation to the director of the *sovkhoz*, and he had fixed it so that she got quite a big amount of firewood from the *sovkhoz*. I asked Aunt Elizaveta if it was right that she got the wood just like this. My host said, “*Yes, they have to care for her; she has nobody, and they should do it*”. She herself used to go to clean the house of the old woman and often told me that the old lady is not clean and tidy and there were ash, cinders, and leftovers all over her place. Aunt Elizaveta didn’t expect any form of return; the old woman was almost unable to communicate; she heard extremely difficult and didn’t hear after what was said. However, Aunt Elizaveta used to tell that she helps her and was proud of it. She also was very positive to the others’ help. When I expressed suspicion to director’s unselfishness when at work in the cooperative, she reminded me that he helps his old aunt, and ergo he was not selfish. During the previous regime, there was the fear that such improper use of official positions would be discovered. Therefore those who misused their positions were up to ‘make a good name’ towards the higher echelons as allowing for and compensating for “the sphere of blame and culpability” (Humphrey 1998:264). In the present, the endeavours directed towards making and keeping ‘a good name’ were about reaching the main part of the villagers. This is also an important part of the transactions in a volley of the empirical examples in the thesis.

In the above discussed examples I have sketched out the importance of the family in the everyday life. The family was the main part of the social capital of the individuals. Unconditional help was given to a larger number of the villagers, however. In the cases I describe below help was given to needy villagers with the clear consciousness that a return gesture is practically impossible. These gestures of giving affected not only the relationship between the donor and the recipient. Such gestures also gave the donor a good name in the village.

Care for the needy

It was an evening in the spring. There was a knocking on the door, and a woman with quite dirty clothes came in and began to talk to Aunt Elizaveta in Komi - paying no attention to my presence. I’d never seen her, and I pretended to be deep in my notes. Aunt Elizaveta was talking also in Komi with a stronger voice, and I wonder if I sensed moralising notes – (I pretend that I got used to the intonation in the Komi language). At the end she opened the cellar and brought a bucket full with potatoes. She gave it to the woman, and the woman left without saying a word. When I heard the door getting closed, I asked who the woman was. Aunt Elizaveta told me that this woman was drinking too much, and she was not even able to grow potatoes. She had helped her before last year – with potatoes for sowing, and the woman had said that she is going to pay back in the autumn, but she never got paid back. Aunt Elizaveta suspected that the woman had eaten the potatoes instead of sowing them. This time it was also potatoes for sowing, but she probably didn’t have anything to eat now, therefore she asked for potatoes. It was a question of

survival. Aunt Elizaveta had to help her; the woman was sick and had also to be cared for. “*God has said so.*”

A similar episode happened some time later. There was a man who came. Aunt Elizaveta also gave him a bucket full of potatoes. “*How can I leave him? He is alone. He does not have a wife or children; he is completely alone!*” The villagers explained such unconditional help from various points of view. In many cases it was intended to compensate for the lack of family. Traditional values in the Russian village imply also the principle of “collective guarantee” [*krugovaia poruka*’], i.e. the community helps with joint efforts to needy members, but restricts individual achievement (Ledeneva: 1998: 82)

Giving away to those in need is also seen as a traditional value in the village. One of the first stories I heard in the village was about a man by the name Kukushkin who during WWII had to go to Murmansk with a small herd of cows. On his way he gave away all the cows – there were so many women with children whose men were on the front line. They needed food and therefore he gave away the cows. Afterwards he went into hiding in Krasnoshchel’ye. Then he changed his name, and his sons took the family name of their mother.

Traditional values in the village often refer to pre-Revolutionary forms and Christianity, which at present is undergoing an upswing. New evangelical churches spread the New Testament all over the tundra¹. The increased presence of religion on the TV leads to religious revival. Many of the older women in the village explained the practices of giving away and helping the old and the sick by referring to Christian values.

Under the socialist regime these values were strengthened by its rhetoric of equality, and at the same time they were transformed into a notion of “human attitude” [*chelovecheskoe otnoshenie*’]. Then this notion was needed to challenge the bureaucratic rules, where they were too rigid, and to fill the gaps in the system. At present one had to show a human attitude to challenge and counterwork the predatory aspects of the market economy. In fact, it was very difficult to see clearly the difference in the ideological stances and whether they belong to different ideological regimes (Pre-Revolutionary, Communist and Postcommunist), when the practices of giving away and remained the same.

Being a good villager operating with three sets of reference: traditional, Communist, and Christian, Aunt Elizaveta had become one of the central senior figures in the village. She got invited to all occasions and celebrations in the village, and somehow gained the name of a person who helps and is worth helping, both as bearer of old values (she was mother – heroine with medals from the Socialist period), but also as a good Christian as the new time enjoins and not at least as engaged in the preservation of Komi folklore.

Care, concern, and help were shown not only to human beings, but to nature and institutions as

¹ In all reindeer herding tundra camps I found *The New Testament*

well. “*To care for*” appeared very often in my conversations with the old women. They had to take care for many people and things. The problems of the present time, as the old women saw them, were that young people didn’t care. For the older generations “care” was a generalised state. They cared for close and distant relatives and they cared for the nature. “*The herders cannot leave the herds, they have to care for the poor reindeer, that’s why they are working. No, they cannot just leave them to the mercy of fate*”, insisted Aunt Elizaveta.

A further example was the village library. I used to go there quite often, but I didn’t like to sit there because it was a quite cold place. Liudmila Aleksandrovna, the librarian, complained that the library was held by the municipality administration. In the past the library got firewood from the forestry services in the village. These services were also a part of the administration before, and the supply with firewood for the library went without any problem. Now the administrative forest services were gone, and there was no firewood for the library. The library got money to buy firewood, but it usually came with seven months delay. Not one of the private foresters would accept such delay. The librarian had to pay with her own money or bring her own firewood. She did it often. In this way, she kept the library working. The library was used mostly by the school children, and sporadically by some adults. By keeping the library open, Liudmila Aleksandrovna was helping the children to become educated and well read. The parents appreciated this. In this way Liudmila Aleksandrovna acquired a large social capital, but also the possibility for waged labour.

Until now, I have discussed gender and family as structural aspects of the support networks. I have stressed care and concern as basic values reproduced by the structural relations. In many cases people explained their acts as dictated by the moral imperative to help others solve vital problems. Any form of interest was out of question. The same logic appeared also in many of the monetary transactions I observed in the village. Below I’ll discuss how disinterestedness was present also in apparently economic and monetary transactions.

Chapter 5 Support networks: transactions

In this chapter I approach the networks with a focus on the transactions and discuss how norms get confirmed and reproduced in the transactions. A special focus is on accumulation of money as opposite to care and concern, discussed in the previous chapter. I end up the discussion with some examples of social sanctioning of such practices and understandings of crime.

Money is one of the most persistent topics in the anthropological science. It has been written that money creates social distance, by depersonalising relationships, and that its introduction had a subversive effect on indigenous and traditional structures (Bohannan 1959). The disappearance of money is said, on the contrary, to shorten the distance. In Krasnoshchel'ye, money has not totally disappeared; its functions and effects, however, have become strictly regulated, and my main aim in this chapter is to show how. These “norms concerning money” I approach through describing empirically several transactions, and in this way I add transactional aspects to the structural aspects of the networks, discussed in the previous chapter.

In the previous chapter, I mentioned several uses of money: to pay services (Albina), to shop at the local store (Albina and Dina), and to give away to the children, respectively grandchildren (Elizaveta). In the former case, money is a means of exchange; in the latter it has been a gift. Money thus operates in two transactional modes: one of short-term transactions and one that is long-term that reproduces the social order.¹

In “Das Kapital” Marx states that one of the particular uses of money is to accumulate or “breed” more money (then it becomes capital). In Krasnoshchel'ye, money has apparently lost this function, since its slightest symptoms, as I discuss later in the chapter, are socially sanctioned. Money as means of exchange still circulates in the old infrastructure, but in the interpersonal relationships there is a tendency to give away money. Thus, instead of a depersonalising effect, money obtains a “*personalising*” effect.

Money also can be bartered. People “*lend*” and “*borrow*” money, without charging interest. Often the terms of these transactions change on the way, and it is not uncommon that loans are tacitly repaid in goods and services. Hence money can be seen as having a negative effect in the networks when one speculates with it); neutral (when it circulates in the existing infrastructure) and consolidating (when it is given away). Here I'm concerned with the two extremes: the negative and the positive. The multitude of possible effects of money, therefore, complicated its circulation. Moreover, everyone showed wide concern for money transactions in the village, and also in town. One had not only to sell at the right prices (not to show greed), but also to buy at right prices (not to be cheated). Moreover, the circulation of rubles during my fieldwork was further complicated by the devaluation of the ruble.

In 1998, in order to counteract inflation, there was a devaluation of the ruble. In a transitional

¹ A similar case is described by Carsten (1989).

period both the new and the old money was in circulation. One thousand old rubles were the same as one new ruble. To me it was quite difficult to make calculations in the beginning and for Aunt Elizaveta and her sister Sveta – almost impossible. They had almost daily discussions about the bread. Sveta lived on the other side of the village, and it was quite a long distance to the bakery. Therefore she often asked Aunt Elizaveta to buy bread for her. Then in the afternoon, she came and picked it up. I remember the first time Aunt Sveta came to pick up the bread. She had to pay 15 new rubles to Aunt Elizaveta. Sveta said she had a two thousand from the old rubles and 10 rubles and the rest was just *kopeiki*¹. She was wondering if it was too much or too little. First she gave the two thousand old ones and expected to get some change. Aunt Elizaveta didn't agree and demanded the 10 rubles plus some of the other coins. They stood and discussed it for probably ten minutes in Komi – I could recognise very often the words “*ruble*” and “*kopeiki*”. It was quite amusing to see these two old women quarrel and since they didn't come to an agreement for a while, I asked if I should help. Then they laughed and said: “*No, no! It doesn't matter – it was just a small change!*” and switched to: “*Take all the money! No, I don't need your money!*” Afterwards Aunt Elizaveta had to “excuse” the quibbling and explain to me that it was probably because they were well on in years. Money actually didn't matter at all. This case not only shows the unfamiliarity with money, but also that they denied any possible concern with money.

Many writers have highlighted the parallel presence of different kinds of money: both as accounts of primitive money, special purpose money, and general purpose money and as accounts of operating with different currencies (Martinez 1990, Pine 2002). In the 1990s in Russia, the US Dollar became an alternative to the Russian ruble. Lemon writes “more U.S. currency circulates in Russia than within any other country besides the United states” (Lemon 1998:22). The dollars were more reliable than the hyperinflating ruble and in addition to that, they symbolised the new opportunities that opened with the market liberalisation. Their presence declined from the centre to the periphery (as also the rubles did). Many transactions in Murmansk were in US dollars, often abbreviated as c.u. (“conventional units”) [‘u.e.’] [‘*uslovnye edinitsi*’] -. Having in mind the inflation rates during the mid 1990s I used to have the greatest part of my money in US dollars. In Revda it was difficult to exchange unless one knew someone who would like to buy US dollars; in Lovosero, it was possible at the bank office, but there they often didn't have enough rubles in order to exchange. In Krasnoshchel'ye no one even needed dollars (as they used to say) and other foreign currencies were almost never discussed. When I was there for the third time, I had somehow learned how much I needed and used to spend and took out in Murmansk approximately the right sum in Russian rubles. Another reason was also that at the same time the Russian government was just starting collaboration with IMF (the International Monetary Fund) and the World Bank, and there were official promises for diminishing the inflation. For unexpected purchases, I had some of my cash reserves in US dollars.

¹ One ruble is 10 *kopeek*

In the following part I describe my first and the only time I used US dollars in Krasnoshchel'ye in order to reveal some basic features of the transaction. First, the whole transaction took a week with up and downs and its trade nature became disguised. The important aspects were that I got a new acquaintance and a traditional fur overcoat [*malitsa*] from Stepan.

Monetary exchanges in the village

In November 1999, I realised the need for some warmer clothing than what I had with me. The temperatures were below minus 25 for several days, and I intended to go out in the tundra with the herders where one easily could estimate 20 degrees – lower. I said to Aunt Elizaveta that I probably needed a *malitsa*. She tried to find an old one, from her son Gleb, but it wasn't good enough, she told me. Afterwards, she shared my problem with her oldest son, Misha. He suggested that I could ask Fyodor, one of his friends, who could sell his mother's *malitsa*. Misha and Fyodor were neighbours and knew each other well. Fyodor's mother herself had sewn the *malitsa*, and she was the best one to sew in the village in the past, when they still used to sew clothes in the village.

Buying the malitsa

I went to Fyodor together with Misha. Although I had been shown where he lived, I couldn't just go and ask him. I needed to be presented to him by someone of his friends. Therefore, I came as a friend of a friend and this was intended to encourage the transaction. Fyodor had a big wooden chest with reindeer clothing. He took out the *malitsa*. It was a nice one, and a very long one – it covered my ankles. The *malitsa* was old, but it was in a very good condition. It has been a *malitsa* for special occasions. It was very warm, and it was fitting me very well. I wanted to buy it and began to discuss a price; Fyodor said he didn't want to sell it – he didn't know the price. It took me several days before I got the *malitsa*: Fyodor didn't want to look like he was making profit from his mother's clothing; it was something special – it was memories; it was not him who had sewn it – therefore he didn't have any idea about the price. Nevertheless it was something that I also needed, he said. It was not like the fish – he could sell fish. However when I asked to buy fish, he said: *"No! I do not have! I'm not a trading man! Who has told you that I sell?! Here, the people, they can just go and fish themselves –but they are too lazy to do it! I do it – and they, then, tell things..."* Fyodor continued with a very long political argument about how in the present situation the weak will not survive. The reason was that they were ultimately spoiled by the Communist regime that made the villagers forget who they were by bringing laziness and alcoholism to Krasnoshchel'ye. This form of social Darwinism was part of his social appearance, built considerably upon contrast and opposition to the mainstream past and presence of the village, and especially the cooperative as the manifestation of the Communist ideology.

Fyodor was 49, single, he had worked in the collective in the reindeer transportation unit until the collective substituted the reindeer transportation unit with all-terrain vehicles. Afterwards he had worked on the farm as a worker until 1989, when Gorbachev allowed people to go 'private'. Then he went out from the state farm and since then he is making his living on red fish (salmon) and meat. He has a sister and a brother in Lovosero, and they help him to sell. In the winter, he lives with them and sells on his own, but he usually uses the connections of his siblings. Fyodor was most interested in hunting moose. For him it was a better deal because moose was "more meat and easier to sell in Lovosero". There were many people in the area who had access to reindeer meat, that it was not necessary to use so many endeavours. However, if he had bad luck and didn't get any moose, then he could take a reindeer or two. He was openly poaching from the reindeer, he told me, but it was the time of "absence of laws". He was somehow proud of abusing the system, the old one. It was his revenge for the family, he told me – he came from a big and known Komi family who had a skin processing factory in Lovosero and before the revolution they had exported even to Sweden. With the Soviet power, the family was dispossessed ['*razkulacheno*'] and many of his relatives disappeared in the Gulags. He told me that his mother used to tell him stories about people who were ordered to jump in the ice holes of Pechora¹, so that the authorities didn't have to bother to make graves.

Although he was ideologically opposed to anything from the Soviet past, he didn't break up totally with the cooperative. He still owned a number of reindeer that were in the cooperative herd. He did not mark them, and they had mixed with the *sovkhos* ones and then it was impossible to find out which were his, but he had some there and it didn't matter if he got some from the *sovkhos* ones – since the *sovkhos* had his. Therefore, he could take (read -shoot, kill) some of the reindeer from the *sovkhos* herds. He was not interested in herding himself, and was criticising the herders quite a lot for losing their traditional knowledge, and therefore the deer were too wild now.

When I asked Fyodor if it was possible to pay with dollars, I prompted a further form of manifesting opposition. He said he was the only one to accept dollars in the village. Dollars were good in Lovosero where he intended to spend some time in the winter and in the spring with his relatives – during the close season and when it was difficult to hunt a fish. He knew the dollar rate better than me – he followed it on the TV every day. Even this fact made him "different" and somehow fitted with the image he wanted to convey - namely as an 'outsider' in the village. Dollars were morally loaded for many of the villagers as something "foreign", that brought the ruination of the economy, or also as Frances Pine points out, it was used to "buy up" the country (Pine 2002:93). In the village, dollars were something that couldn't be used and therefore their social value was rather negative. Fyodor deliberately marked his opposition to the village and the former regime by accepting the US dollars.

¹ River in Arkhangelsk county

Fyodor postponed the transaction for several times. I got a cup of tea at his place, and a slice of bread and red fish, and we talked and talked, usually about politics or the state of affairs in the village. One week after I got to know him and after many visits to his place, Fyodor gave me the *malitsa* to try it at home, before I decided to buy it – so that I could try it and see myself in the mirror, because there was no mirror at his place. The old aunts gathered and discussed my appearance in the *malitsa*, most of all, they discussed the *malitsa* itself. Aunt Elizaveta even found a photograph from a festival, where Fyodor's mother was wearing it. They were all unanimous that the *malitsa* was very nice. For them it was difficult to put it on because it was heavy. They told me many times how exactly I should put it on and off in the right way, etc. At the end, they concluded that I have completely become a Saami [“*Sovsem oblaparilas!*”] and that I should buy it.

I believe that the transaction took so long time due to three reasons: first, the *malitsa* itself was an inalienable object – it had its history and value in the village, which increased the social sanctioning around the transaction. It was important to whom it is sold, and Fyodor needed the time to consider the moral aspects of the transaction. There were the following questions that appeared in the course of “bargaining”. “*It belongs here – what are you going to do with the malitsa in Norway or Bulgaria – sell it to a museum?*” (Read - I was an alien who buys up their values and then makes money out of them). On the other hand, he said that I shouldn't freeze in Krasnoshchel'ye; and if I was off for the tundra - I had to have a *malitsa*. Moreover, he added: “*no one of the women in the village would have it on – they have their “modern” clothes and coats, and they do not go in the tundra in the winter!*” (I was in need, and he was apparently the only one who could help me). The third sets of questions that arose were about the price; he couldn't take more than it costs or less, but how to set up a price (read – it was important for his image in the village to set a fair price). In this way the transaction was “morally” engendered – it implied that it could be positive for him because he helped me, when I was in need, or negative if it was perceived as a way for him to make money and foster “money breeding”. Getting familiar with him was expressed in his wish to call him towards the end of the transaction ‘uncle’. In the beginning I called him “Fyodor Dmitr'evich”, but at the end - Uncle Fedya [‘*diadia Fedya*’].

The situation of growing needs and declining incomes reinforced not only the social sanctioning on economising practices, but also increased the concern with the origin of money. Money from sale in the village was condemned, while money from sale in towns was rather neutral or positively evaluated; money from aliens were good, money from the ‘ours’ – negative. My position as not entirely ‘outsider’, but not entirely ‘insider’ I consider has had a complicating effect on the transactions with my informants.

I told Fyodor that the aunts had said that I had to pay for the *malitsa* 100 US Dollars (Aunt Elizaveta had said to me it would be a good deal). Both Fyodor and I were content and relieved. In

return, Fyodor asked me to bring some fishing nets from Norway; he gave me the specifications and said they were better than the Russian ones because they were finer. I said that in Norway they were too expensive. He encountered my argument, with the statement that I could buy them for him – I could afford it because he “gave” me the *malitsa*. By insisting that he almost gave me the *malitsa*, he wanted to distinguish this transaction from sale. It sought approval, it was something that had a value in local terms, and it shouldn’t be sold for small change as the local alcoholics do with such things. Fyodor was not interested in the money, but in doing me a service and therefore expecting that I could do something for him in return. I had to agree because I somehow felt that in order to confirm the disinterest of the transaction, I have also to show concern, and show that I was concerned with moral, not material values. I still keep the specifications knowing that when I come back to the village – I’ll have with me at least one fishing net for him.

Insisting that he gave me the *malitsa*, so that I could hold out against the frost in the tundra and not freeze to death, was in contradiction with his arguments for social Darwinism. Although he was ideologically opposed to the village, the *sovkhos* and the former regime, he also belonged to them. This impression was confirmed also at the end of my stay when he agreed to sell to me several kilos of smoked salmon provided that I’ll give some to Aunt Elizaveta (to show gratefulness), then take the rest with me to Norway or to my family in Bulgaria (to share with them). I paid 30 rubles per kilo and those who asked me how much I paid suggested that it was a good price for the quality (it was ecologically clean). I could buy it also on the road to Murmansk, but it was more expensive and the fish was from an ecologically polluted area.

Red fish was not an everyday item in the village, and Fyodor did not to sell there – unless there was some special occasion and need for an exceptional meal. His stance (according to his ideological point of view) was instructive – the local men were too lazy to fish red fish, and if he sold to them, he just spoiled them and then made money on their indolence. Aunt Elizaveta was pleased by the fact that I came back to her place with the fish and gave some to her – however she found some occasion to share some with her son and sisters while I was at the cooperative office. The most important feature was that Fyodor was pretending to have full control over what I’ll do with the fish. It should be used in the name of “sociability”; secondly, although it was an apparently insignificant transaction to me and after all - private, it was discussed by great number of people; not only my landlady, but also several of the reindeer herders and one of the accountants at the cooperative asked me about the details. It was important for both parts to have a balanced transaction. They concluded that I was not cheated

My perception of all these transactions with Fyodor was that I was not buying from him, but ‘bartering’ and that money was used not to maximise material value, but moral. We kept a “bargaining” tone all the time in order to achieve a moral balance. Humphrey (1999) and Fadeeva (1999) also have noted that money had become a barterable object in Russia: private

loans in money are given but they were not loans with monetary interest and could be returned in labour or goods and also, as Fadeeva remarks, they contained a percent of another value, namely the right to receive such a loan later. Thus for people beyond one's intimate network it was important to achieve a balanced reciprocity according to Sahlins model.

Giving away money

In contrast to the “bargaining” with Fyodor, talking money with my host turned out to be difficult. She was unwilling to talk about money with me – when I asked her how much I should pay for the rent, she said that she couldn't accept money, because it does not cost her anything that I lived there. When I mentioned the food, she confronted me with the argument that I was also buying some food. I was part of her household, and I did what I could. She did not want to have money from me. Right before we left for the airport to take the flight back to Lovosero, I put some money in an envelope, left it with a box of chocolates, and just said to her that I had left something on the table. She smiled: “*You do not need to do it*”. I said that she should buy medicines for herself and something for the children. There were no protests, however, and in the same manner as Fyodor pretended what I was supposed to do with the fish; I pretended to decide what she would do with the money. Fair thing.

In the above-described transactions, monetary at first sight, the basic values I outlined in the previous chapter - care and concern - were further reproduced. Moreover, they were explained as being *the only possible solution* with purely altruistic logic and that was, after all, the recurrent motivation for all activities: Fyodor could not let me freeze in the tundra; Aunt Elizaveta could not leave me on the street. In this way they denied any symptoms of rationality and calculations. Later I'll come back to the question of “the only possible solution” more closely. On the other hand, namely the emphasised care and concern in these transactions resulted in a very strong sense of indebtedness, which acts as an insurance for the turbulent future (Werner, 1998). In the next chapters I continue to discuss this drive for social credit in relation to the work of the cooperative, apparently the main factor for the future of the villagers.

Until now, we have seen that care and concern are the main values and that they do not bring immediate material benefits, but are intended to secure the future through interdependencies between the villagers. In contrast to accumulating social capital, accumulation of economic capital in the form of means of production or just money breaks down such interdependencies. In the village such practices were met with disapproval and social sanctioning. Social sanctioning was expressed in social seclusion and cutting the ties with the given person.

Immorality and Criminality

Below I describe three examples of social seclusion in the village: the vodka resellers

[*‘spekulanti’*], the pilferers, and the burglars. These three cases could be considered manifestations of “negative” reciprocity and had negative consequences for the perpetrators. Their families didn’t want to recognise in them close relatives, and they were excluded not only from the support structures, but also from the social happenings in the village.

The vodka resellers

The scarcity of vodka in the village opened possibilities for import and resale by private persons. This way of making money at the expense of the co-villagers was rather negatively perceived, but no one came into open conflict with them. There were two or three vodka resellers in the village. Their social contacts were minimal. They were not drinking themselves; they imported vodka to the village and sold it for 35 rubles. In the stores of Lovosero the same bottle vodka, when available, was sold for 11-12 rubles. For some occasions, such as birthday parties, anyone could go and buy there in the last resort, but it was not a desirable option. The vodka resellers break from two of the main moral understandings in the village. They were interested in getting the highest price, and in this way they made money at the expense of the other villagers. For the second, vodka and liquor play a social integrative role; they imply social solidarity (Mandelbaum 1965). Vodka has to be shared or exchanged in order to create and maintain social, economic, and political networks (Hivon 1995). What the resellers did therefore was considered immoral and in fact, often criminalised.

On May 6th 1998, a bomb exploded in the village and one person died. I was told contradicting stories: that he was into the vodka business in the village and had to pay racket to the Russian *mafia*. He didn’t pay it, and they came and found him in the village. The killed had recently come back to the village from jail. His criminal past was somewhere in Revda. Others said that it was only local people present there, and that it was an accident caused by booze, but it was one of the resellers. I didn’t try to disentangle the story, but several weeks later I was surprised to hear that the man who died was the husband of one of Aunt Elizaveta’s granddaughters. At the time when this happened I was living with Aunt Elizaveta but she didn’t say anything. When I asked her about the accident she was rather reluctant and said she didn’t know much about it. Later, when everything was almost forgotten, she mentioned the fact that the killer was her grandson-in-law. When I asked her why she didn’t tell me – she said, she didn’t have anything to do with him. The event with the bomb, however, confirmed the conviction that the *spekulanti* are criminals. The discourse on criminality flourished with the market liberalization. Frierson in her article on the criminality in the Russian village remarks, that rural understandings of what constituted crime “*bore the marks of other currents in the village life*”. She outlines three such themes: “*the strong link between morality and legality, the importance of family and community and the function of labour in defining concepts of property, damage and injury*” (Frierson 1987). Until now I have sketched the importance of family and community, and morality for defining crime. In the next section, I touch upon the role of labour in defining the scope of crime.

Pilferers

The existence of the *spekulanti* entailed also consequences for the alcohol-dependent in the village who pilfered in order to sell and get money to buy vodka from the vodka resellers. They were called “*nesuni*” (comes from the verb ‘carry’ [*‘nesti’*]) and most of the people I had contact with in the village tried to mark clear distance from them. Various people came to the house of Aunt Elizaveta and Misha in order to sell different things, from skin clothing to fishing nets and boat motors. Misha once recognised his own fishing nets in the hands of one who tried to sell them and got them back after several frantic arguments. “*These people are sick, they are after vodka, they steal and sell, but do not remember where they have stolen from and thus they came back to me with my own fishing nets*”, said Misha. He never bought anything from them, although it could be a very good deal, he admitted. They could sell a boat motor for the price of two bottles of vodka.

The *nesuni* were an abnormal phenomenon; they appeared mainly as a consequence of the existence of the vodka resellers, who came to the village with the market liberalisation, but also as a consequence of the unemployment. In most cases, they were considered sick and needing help, but nobody allowed them home, on account of fear of getting things stolen. Both the resellers and the *nesuns* were socially sanctioned, but accepted in the village as an unavoidable evil. Social sanctioning was the only effective way of punishing in the village. There was no police and the policemen from Revda who sporadically appeared were criminal. This impression was confirmed again with the following happening at the end of my stay in Krasnoshchel’ye.

Burglars

In November 1999, there was a burglary at the cooperative. The stolen things were 52 pairs of half-finished boots and *koibi* parts of the reindeer skin, used for sewing boots. It turned out to be of the most valuable goods in the village. Boots were sewn at the cooperative, but also privately. Aunt Elizaveta also used to sew boots and sell them in Murmansk. She had spent the winter of 1998 there and besides helping her daughter with the housework and childcare, she used her time to sew and sell several pairs of boots of reindeer skin. The price varied from 50 – 80 rubles, 100 – 150 rubles for foreigners. Therefore, the scale of the burglary was quite large. A policeman from Revda came to the village, but the burglars were not caught. On the flight which I took from the village the very same policeman flew together with a couple of local boys who had quite a lot of baggage, and Aunt Elizaveta who was with me at the airport said ‘*God will punish them for this!*’ and said rhetorically: ‘*What do you think they have in these bags?*’ (She had also touched their bags). However, the boys who had the half-finished shoes were not arrested, but accompanied by the policeman. This fact gave a new opportunity for the women at the airport to discuss the unreliability of the police and the spreading corruption. People from the village often said: “*We don’t have any policeman in the village, we don’t need policemen, it’s better without them - once they come to the village the trouble begins.*’ Moreover, this episode

confirmed the conviction that the state is ill-equipped to give protection. When Humphrey (1999a) describes the need for racket protection in Russia, she cites Konstantinov about the “cop’s syndrome”: in the beginning the cop sees any person as a potential criminal, afterwards the bandits become more understandable, close, and intimate, and it becomes easy to change the roles”. For the burglars the policeman from Revda acted as protector, (‘roof’ as they used to say). This is in contrast to the previous time when the burglars tried to sell the *koibi* to a man whose wife was working at the *sovkhoz*. They were caught and delivered the *koibi* back to the *sovkhoz*. The rumour had spread, and they were mistrusted. This time they had to leave the village and as one of the aunts suggested, they would not be back for a while.

In the first part of this chapter I was concerned with transactional practices that confirmed norms and reproduced balance in the village. Then I described the cases of showing economic interest as gaining profit locally, and the forms of negative reciprocity, that is, as the thefts in the village. What is important to note is that money breeding (vodka reselling) was identified or equalised with crime along with the thefts in the village. Theft was socially sanctioned, and the point where support flow stopped. Strathern, although discussing networks of a completely different character, states: “ownership cuts both kind of networks, homogenous and heterogeneous” (Strathern 1996:525). In accordance with her argument, social exclusion from the networks appeared where seizure on the property was present (forms of thefts). According to Strathern, the cuts in the networks imply also questions of *belonging*. In the transactions described above when the norms got confirmed and reproduced, the villagers confirmed also their belonging to the community and group solidarity in the face of economic adversity (Ledeneva 1998). What is interesting is that, although I was an outsider who came temporarily in the support networks in the village, the transactions I was part of were intended to confirm the rules and norms embedded in the other linkages.

So far I have outlined two types of cuts in the networks: the first one was when one stopped to be part of the support flow (the resellers), and the second one - when one did not belong to the community (the burglars). Exclusion from the support networks has to be distinguished from exclusion from the community. In the first case, the perpetrators are considered criminals on a small scale, and they could be controlled locally to some extent. In the latter – it was burglars, considered large-scale criminals. The difference is that in the former case, the villagers could exert pressure and the stolen property could be returned to the owner. In the latter, the criminals got higher protection (‘roofs’) from outside and social sanctioning (exclusion from networks) and social control (pressure) were not effective mechanisms in this case.

Frierson argues that in the practices of self-judging (‘*samosud*’), as a form of local control and sanctioning in the Russian village, theft had to be considered in relation to whom was the offender and the victim (Frierson 1987). She writes that the act was judged according to its effect and motivation, and I would add as a factor for Krasnoshchel’ye also the possibilities

for local control and sanctioning. The conclusion thus is that the local characteristics and understandings play an increasing role in the legislative vacuum. This impression was further confirmed by the local interpretation of the word “*nesun*”. According to the Russian language dictionary the word ‘*nesun*’ means “person who takes home from the production or from the work”. Misha often argued that Brezhnev taught the Russians to steal from work. There is a folklore saying: “In the factory you are not a guest, take with you a nail at least.” [“*Na zavode ty ne gost! Unesi domoi hot’ gvozd’!*”] that exactly shows the attitude towards theft in the Soviet enterprises during the Soviet time as a form of routine practice. Such practices were sanctioned under the previous regime, but there were no attempts to prevent them. At the present time, I could read in the newspapers about Russian managers mounting cameras in the production halls to prevent such practices because the guards usually showed too often a ‘human attitude’ and allowed such practices. I had a chance to talk with one of the guards at the copper mine in Revda. He was supposed to prevent the miners from exporting copper from the mine. Many of the miners tried to take with them copper, and he let them do it. He explained it with three arguments. The first reason was that it was a question of survival; many of the miners did not get their monthly salaries for up to eight months. The copper they exported from the mine, they sold in Murmansk, where a kilogram of copper costs 20 rubles, and this was the only way they could get cash. The second reason is that for some miners to take away copper has become a kind of mania, sickness, narcotics, affection; it is like if they do not steal - they’ll die. The third reason he pointed out was simply that their directors were sponging off the miners. In this way he presented himself as helping those in need, the sick, and the exploited.

So far, I have examined the social sanctioning when individuals manifested private interest at the cost of other individuals. The practices of *nesun*, in the vernacular use of the word, were considered a form of negative reciprocity, and socially sanctioned. The practices of the *nesuns*, in the lexical sense of the word, were, on the other hand, manifestations of private interest at the cost of economic enterprises or public institutions. Do such practices exist in Krasnoshchel’ye? What happens if employees manifest or realise economic interest at the cost of the cooperative? Does it happen in the open or is it hidden or disguised by practices of ‘dissimulation’ and ‘euphemisation’? Are such practices in contradiction with the corporate interest of the cooperative?

As I stated in Chapter Three, in the last part of the thesis I am concerned with the cooperative as a structure that grants different forms of capital: social, cultural and symbolic. These forms are, per definition, disguised forms of economic capital. In the rest of the thesis I explore the presence and the manifestations of private economic interest in the cooperative and their interplay with the forms of capital granted by the cooperative. Empirically seen, I ask if misappropriation of the cooperative takes place and to what extent, i.e. if there are ‘informal’ structures present in the cooperative?

In the next chapter, I describe the general characteristics of work and employment in the cooperative as an enterprise of the Soviet type and the appropriation possibilities it offered to its employees. Further, I go into detail of discussing the work of three kinds of employees, their economic interests, and how they disguise them if they do. Here, I would also like to underline that the practices of “euphemisation” or disguising the economic interest could be, according to Bourdieu, both conscious and unconscious. In my view, they were to a great extent unconscious.

Chapter 6 The Cooperative

In the previous two chapters, I have described how the transactions in the village are subordinated to principles of generalised and balanced reciprocity. Manifestations of economic interest and negative reciprocity are socially sanctioned. To be employed in the state enterprise, although apparently economically unprofitable in terms of money income, was appreciated. Here I further elaborate on the different values and benefits of work with reference to the Socialist mode of production. My aim is to outline how the cooperative introduced basic values in the village, and how they become reproduced at present. The cooperative gives possibilities for accumulation of economic benefits, social, and cultural capital and grants the director with symbolic capital.

So far, I have referred to the cooperative as the main guarantor for the future in the village and as the ‘owner’ of the existing infrastructure (in Chapter 2), as object of care and concern (in Chapter 4) and as target for external crime (in Chapter 5). In this chapter, I concentrate on the cooperative as an institution, its organisation and the forms of authority it accommodates and tolerates. In order to continue the discussion of morality and definitions of crime from the previous chapters, I concentrate on the various forms of legitimising practices in the cooperative. As it is widely known, in the Socialist system there was improper use of official positions at any level of the Soviet society, and the *blat* networks and the *nesuns*, I already mentioned, are examples of this improper use. How was and is this problem dealt with in Krasnoshchel’ye? What happens if someone from the employees is accused of ‘stealing’ from the collective property? Do such practices really exist, and if they do – how are they handled in the *sovkhoz*? In broad terms, the argument goes to the present understandings of formal and informal aspects of the economic activities, and how they can tell us of the ongoing privatization.

My starting point is to describe the cooperative as “the primary unit of Soviet society and the ultimate base of social and political power” (Clarke, 1992:7). The basis of the Soviet enterprise was not capital, but the productive activity of the labour collective. It was the reproduction of the *labour collective*, not the reproduction of economic capital at its bottom. In this chapter, I describe some basic principles of the organisation in the cooperative. What benefits did the cooperative bring to the employees in the past? What benefits does it bring now?

Values of labour

First, I would like to briefly outline some characteristics of the notion of work in Krasnoshchel’ye. Labour is to be approached as an economic value and as a social action that bears moral values. Lampland describes that idleness was considered almost vicious in rural Hungary (Lampland 1995). In Krasnoshchel’ye it was easy to recall the proverb “better work for no purpose, than stay idle”, I used to hear from my grandparents. Aunt Elizaveta seldom could just sit and watch the TV; she would rather be doing something with her hands. I experienced disapproval of idleness many times. The reindeer herders in the tundra camp heavily protested when I filmed

them just sitting, smoking, reading, or chatting. I had to film them when they worked. On the other hand, some people referred to the saying that “*they (the authorities/ the cooperative) were deceiving us that we are paid for our work, while we were deluding them that we were working for them*”. Does it mean that waged work was just pretending to work? If work was important anywhere except for the working place, how did the system function and has something changed with the market liberalisation?

In the following, I sketch some of the basic characteristics of work in the cooperative according to my observations. I start with a discussion of the economic, cultural, and social advantages brought by the cooperative and how these ousted the traditional knowledge.

Alienation

The growing interdependencies between the villagers and the increasing role of the work of relatives and friends in various undertakings place a dilemma of prioritising one's time between the official work at the cooperative and the service work for household or relatives. This especially concerns the reindeer herders in the tundra, whose working time is not regulated by office hours. On the other hand the office workers could also use their work time for private affairs: whether they had to prepare a son for tundra trip, go to the store, watch TV series or just get drunk. The “moral” imperatives of helping one's closest as a rule outweighed the employment. I couldn't be an exception. The day when Aunt Elizaveta got her firewood, I had an appointment in the office. She suggested that I put it off, or just go after I had helped her. If I was late, it was not a big problem because they were supposed to be there at the office and wait: “*What else can they do?*”, said Aunt Elizaveta. It was not a secret that Aunt Elizaveta and her cohort disapproved of the office workers, or rightly put, their number was considered too large. In the 1950ies there were only three office workers. The reason was the decline of need for manual work in the village due to mechanization, and subsequently most of the young women in the village took higher education or vocational training. Therefore, in contrast to their mothers who spent their lives on the fields or in the tundra, their workplaces were in the warm offices.

In the analysis of capitalism, the decline of manual work leads to the problem of alienation of labour (Marx 1976). In the framework of the political economy in the capitalist systems, work has been considered only as an economic action, and in fact becomes a commodity itself. That is to say, to draw on Bourdieu's terms, that work brings only ‘economic rewards’ to the worker and is part only of her or his economic capital. The main reason for alienation was the commodity fetishism in the market capitalism. The official discourse in the Soviet Union and its *plan fetishism* were also in favour of the process of “alienation” of labour. An example of this is the unification of wages for a given kind of work in the entire Soviet Union. There were detailed tables on the payments of any kind of work and according to them the enterprises paid

their employees. Furthermore, the plan was the main imperative in the work of the cooperative, and the workers were assigned jobs not according to their qualifications, but according to the plan. In her detailed analysis of the prolonged process of alienation of agricultural labour in Hungary, Lampland describes and interprets alienation as the main reason for the appearance of private enterprises after the fall of socialism (Lampland 1995).

In Krasnoshchel'ye, there were no new enterprises and, following Lampland's argument, the reason could lie in the lack of alienation. Therefore, in the following chapters one of my main tasks is to investigate the process of alienation of work in the cooperative. My informants could define their positions in the cooperative as the way of life [*'obraz zhizni'*] and to me it seemed that they were ignorant about the economic aspects of their employment. My argument is that in Krasnoshchel'ye, the work never succeeded to get completely alienated. Because of the small size of the village and the numerous relationships between the villagers, the cooperative was cross-hatched by informal (nonprofessional) ties and we can see work at the cooperative as part of the social capital of the individuals. For the second, very few people left the cooperative voluntarily. During the past years, there were some dismissals in the cooperative, but the dismissed were alcoholics who didn't care for the work, or people who left on their own will. To be dismissed against one's own will, was rather a matter of shame. Although one could be better off because the social security benefits were more regularly paid than the salaries, the work and the employment was very important part of life for the individuals. In *blat* networks, the work position was seen as the main resource for developing informal relationships and in this way, its function was mainly extending one's social capital. From a sociological point of view, waged work also bears cultural meaning and capital in terms of prestige and our understandings of prestigious positions, and not the least work was part of the Socialist propaganda. Aunt Elizaveta, for instance, was one of the 'general workers' [*'raznorabochie'*] and worked according to what was prompted by the plan. At some times she was employed as a milk maid, at others as field-worker or in the transport unit, and she never recognised her work as an economic enterprise; it was her contribution to the collective project of building the bright future of socialism as a response to the total propaganda of the previous regime.

Cultural capital

When I suggested that the work in the *kolkhoz* was coerced (the obligation to work was legally enforced), Aunt Elizaveta as well as all the senior villagers denied any form of coercion. They were building a better future for themselves and for their children and in fact, could see the fruits of their work: new houses, furniture, clothing, went on various trips, etc. They became "cultivated". The coercion to waged work is often described as having a liberating effect on women. They came to the public sphere, got engaged in productive work and became economically independent. The authorities implemented measurements for decreasing the manual work among women, and encouraged them to pursue education. The young women at

also looked positively on their work in the office. In this way, they contributed to the household, because the “household needed money”. This was the way to “*cleaner houses, cleaner clothing and whiter bed sheets*”, as they used to say. Although the *sovkhoz* built wooden houses for the reindeer herders to have their families in the tundra when they are with the herds, it was not an option for the women. The idea of living in the tundra and sleeping in reindeer skins was completely obliterated. The largest burden for women were the conditions of housework: lack of plumbing system in the village and the houses, the stove as the main source of heat. In other words, there were too many sources for dirt in the house. The idea of cleanliness was part of the Soviet propaganda and introduced by the Soviet authorities in their policy aimed at incorporation of the Northern minorities to the Soviet way of life. Slezkine describes how the authorities organised contests and competitions for cleanliness (Slezkine 1994:232). “*Exclusively well-kept house*” was written on a plate, hanging on Aunt Elizaveta’s house. This brought prestige for the homeowners. In this way the cooperative recognised and rewarded new forms of competence, experience and consumption; that is to say cultural capital.

Symbolic capital

Thus, the cooperative, the education, the progress, the cleanliness, and the employment were interdependent goods that contributed to the well-being of the villagers. Besides these cultural and symbolic goods, the cooperative offered further possibilities to its employees, namely to appropriate a part of production for private use. This misappropriation happened on two levels: on the production level - it was small thefts from the production (*‘the nesuns’* I already mentioned in the previous chapter); on the managerial-bureaucratic level it was misuse of the right to allocate resources. Both forms were parts of the second economy and were the wellspring of the *blat* networks. Verdery has described the importance of the bureaucrats in the distribution of goods and services under the command economy (Verdery 1991, 1996). The main part of these goods and services came from the surplus production that should be spent on improving the working and the social conditions of the labour collective (Clarke, 1992). The access to improved work conditions, such as holiday trips for instance, was strictly regulated by the bureaucrats in position, and many of the people sought such positions in order to become ‘important people’. The important people were holders of symbolic capital.

However, the mobility in the Soviet enterprise was insignificant. Hence, there were stable work groups in the cooperatives, and these work groups were part of the social capital of the workers. In addition to that, the insignificant mobility in the Soviet enterprises strengthened the place of the bosses and the important people in the system. There were very clear hierarchical relationships in the enterprises, and they were the main source for stratification: there were workers, but also auxiliary workers, managers, and head specialists. People were attached to primary work groups (Clarke 1995:7). The ties between the members of these groups were very strong. The First reindeer herding brigade was an example of it; most of the herders had begun

in the late 1970s as apprentices. Afterwards they were promoted to reindeer herders Fourth Grade, later into reindeer herders Fifth Grade. The brigadier had been brigadier in the brigade for 16 years; he also had the longest working experience; he had been employed since 1971. In this way the work groups became stable and, as I'll show in the next chapter based on my work with First Reindeer Herding Brigade, a salient part of the social capital of the individuals

The lack of mobility in the hierarchy of positions was accompanied by strict regulations on approaching the different levels. Neglect of relevant level might lead to sanctions. In the cooperative, however, there were various constellations of kinship, neighbourhood, and friendship at different levels. In this way the negotiations and the decision-making could easily become very informal. However, in most cases they were rather formal. Therefore, an appropriate question is how formality was induced and maintained. My observations show that the formality was maintained very often in the cases where a given resource would be allocated, especially towards the director of the cooperative as representative of the authorities in the village, or towards people who had connections with important people in the district or the county. The importance of 'very important people', those with connections and power, has persisted over the years in Russia. The need for them has been a lasting element in the work of the enterprises. The patronising bureaucrats in the higher levels of power were also part of the *blat* relationships (Ledeneva 1998), and in the same way as Lubov carefully looked after her relationship with the 'cultural' boss in the district, the top of the cooperative looked after the 'connections' with the important people at district and county level. In Chapter 4, I discussed that the linkages in the village were mostly horizontal and didn't imply hierarchy, while the relationship between village and town tended to be of vertical character, except for the close family relationships. To this I would like to add, that the linkages tended to become more formal, and dependent on the work positions. Hence the work position was a factor for the ties one had with the important people and consequently for the scope of one's social capital.

Important decisions for the cooperative and the village were taken outside the village, and therefore the opposition between 'us', who were sacrificed and suffered under the centralised decisions and 'them' who ran the country (cf. Gal and Kligman 2000: 50ff) was without doubt between 'us' who lived in the village, and 'them' who lived in the towns. Under the Socialist economy the leading cadres in the cooperative were sent or appointed by the regional Party Committee. Usually they were young specialists who needed some working experience in order to get better jobs later. Some of them married local women and remained in the village, but the greatest part left in four-five years. The only man who had the needed education and came from the village was the present director.

Under the director there are two hierarchies in the cooperative: the first one is *lineal* (administrative) and the other one *functional*. For instance, in the reindeer herding the production was subjected to the hierarchical relationship between the brigade leader (who knew the conditions of production)

and director (who is organising the production according to the market). On the other hand, it was subject to the livestock experts who set the recommendations for production (according to his biological expertise on reindeer). These three parts in the negotiation of the production allowed for three ways of presenting the work of the cooperative, which not always fitted in together. Therefore, I have decided to present the work of the cooperative from three different angles, from the point of view of three different groups of employees. In very few cases, there have been important conflicts between the lower and higher levels in the cooperative before. In 1999, I could observe several symptoms of conflicting interests come into being, but they were explained to me as induced by factors beyond the work at the cooperative. However, much of the work in the cooperative and the decision-making was shaped by informal and personal relations. Some decisions were taken by the work groups inside; some of the decision were taken “under pressure” from kin and relatives and fellow villagers. An example is the last episode of the Russian soap opera “A Gypsy Man” [*Tsygan* ”], in the autumn of 1999. Almost everybody in the village was watching it. The last episode was somewhat longer than usual and the electricity generator had to be turned off before the end of the film. Many women had called at the diesel station and asked the duty engineer Semen, Aunt Elizaveta’s second son, to let them watch the end of film. Also many women called Aunt Elizaveta to hear what he had said to her, in order to double-check it. Semen did it; the electricity was off five minutes after the end of the film, twenty minutes later than usual.

The conclusion is that work in the village was not alienated, and in fact not alienable, because it was embedded in cultural understandings and social relationships. This confirms the validity of Caroline Humphrey’s framework for study of a collective farm in Buryatia in the 1980s where she applied Max Gluckman’s perspective to show how informal relationships are more important than the formal legal rights (Humphrey 1998).

Further on, my intention is to go into detail and show how both written and unwritten rules co-existed and interplayed in the work of the cooperative and to what extent this interplay suggested change according to the macroeconomic reforms. In the following three chapters, I’ll go into detail on the work of the reindeer herders, the accountants, and the director to show how the practices, related to production, allocation, decision-making and selling also become altered by the dynamics of the social relationships beyond the range of the cooperative.

Social, economic and cultural benefits

First I will say something about the reasons for choosing these three groups: the herders, the office workers and the director. During my field stay with the reindeer herders I got some glimpses of how the reindeer herding was practically managed (see Chapter Seven). During my work in the office, I saw how it ‘scientifically’ looked on paper. The chance to look at the papers in the cooperative was ‘revealing’ because I found multiple sets of accounts and they very much

reminded me of the old practices belonging to the command economy when the plan – order came from above, but in many cases and for different reasons couldn't be fulfilled. The split in the numbers has to be “*made up*”. This practice was once subordinated to the principle “*get the job done*” but also explained with the fear ‘*from above*’. Today the fear from the party has been replaced by fear of the tax inspectors who might come and check if the annual financial report was in congruence with the actual state. The legislative system around the taxes changes quite often, and this also causes inconveniences for the accountants. Therefore, they had to keep multiple sets of accounts. In many cases, the accountants asserted that it was the director who gave directions on the numbers, whether he knew or not what was right according to the laws. On the other hand, the herders always sent me to the ‘experts’ whenever the answer was somewhat difficult to give. “*They have it there on paper in the kontora, they know it better*” the herders used to say. On the other hand, when I asked difficult questions in the office, the accountants referred to the director. The written paper was worth more than any oral statement. Above the written papers was the authority of the director. The director was elected in the general assembly of the cooperative. As in many other privatised companies, the practices under these assemblies did not differ from those under the command economy – although they were shareholders and in fact should have decision rights, the general assemblies almost always unanimously confirmed the decisions of the director. In fact, they rarely were attended by many workers. The attendees usually were retired people who wanted to keep well-informed of the developments at the cooperative and who needed social events and felt that such social events were a must¹. When I confronted them with the question if they were coerced before, they denied it.

Another inconvenience in the work of the accountants was caused by the lack of money in the village and subsequently the need to keep accounts with the debts and the credits of each employee and the villagers who used the services of the *sovkhos*. Their work was not only to adjust numbers and production, but also to take into consideration the relationship between the villagers and the employees and to fit it in the general view on the cooperative. The cooperative owes money to the employees in the form of salaries, but the employee owes money in the form of bills for gas, electricity, kindergarten taxes, use of the public bath, or house rent (see Table 1). This fact makes necessary a huge amount of accounting, which is done by hand in different account books.

¹ The importance of social events and socialist rituals in the work was not only to demonstrate loyalty to the system and authorities, but also to mark the role of the employees: giving away diplomas and prizes was a practice and such insignia of honour was part of the “cultural capital” of the individuals.

Table 1 *Sovkhoz* Production for February 1998

Sovkhoz Production for February 1998	
Public bath	445,00
Reindeer pasture	586,00
Materials	1874,00
Information and inquiries	35,00
Electric light	2795,70
Milk	303,90
Cream	200,40
Cottage cheese	67,20
<i>Obret</i>	18,00
Slippers	230,00
Boots	170,00
<i>Panduki</i>	112,00
Wood	600,00
Lever and hearts	335,00
Fish	1020,00
Meat	3222,00
Tongues	272,00
Rest	44,00
House rent	807,62
	13137,82

If the reindeer herders were to manage the material resources - the stock capital, the accountants ruled over the normative regulations in the cooperative and at the end it was the director, whose inheritance from the command economy (the practice of single leadership), was that no one challenged his position. The principle of single leadership implied not only that the director was on the top of both (lineal and functional) hierarchies, but that ownership and management were not differentiated in the cooperative.

To summarise, until now I have described the cooperative as an institution that gives economic benefits, social benefits, and cultural benefits. It is difficult to keep them apart, however. An example of this is the practice to give diplomas and prizes to prominent workers. As late as in December 1998 on a celebration of 70 years from the establishment of the *sovkhoz*, they gave away such diplomas for special merits. The wife of one of the prize-winning reindeer herders was very proud and mentioned it several times to me. She showed me his diploma and video recordings from the ceremony. The diploma was printed with golden letters and in many colours. In addition, they gave him a watch and a sum of 5000 rubles.

The economic benefits a Soviet enterprise offered to its employees were two, the wage as main income and possibilities for misappropriation of production or position. What was most important changed probably with the times. According to Caroline Humphrey's observations in Buryatia from the 1960s to the 1980s, the most important economic aspect of the cooperative in the past was the wages. At present, the role of appropriation possibilities and the possibility to turn them to the benefit of the household was growing bigger. This observation is true for

Krasnoshchel'ye as well. My question is how appropriation/ misappropriation is present in the cooperative, and what is the role of the work collective. In the cooperative (see Appendix 1), there are thirteen immediate work collectives, that is, people who work together and know the details of the work. What is the constellation between the work groups and the appropriation practices? A short cut to the answer is that 'appropriation' was in service of the support networks, and in this way the aim justifies the means. On the other hand, such appropriation is assessed in various ways, since the benefactors change. In the following part, I shall discuss the 'moral' work of the social networks in the cooperative and how they interrelate in the definitions and re-definitions of appropriation as 'economic interest' and perceived as form of negative reciprocity or not.

Above I described how the cooperative as an institution owns the means of production (the legitimate economic capital), and the means of reproducing cultural and symbolic capital. In the following discussion of work practices I describe how the individuals 'manage' these forms of capital in order to enhance their positions.

Chapter 7 The Reindeer Herding Brigade

In this chapter I describe the reindeer herding as the main subsistence in the village and how it is organised in the cooperative. The reindeer herding brigades and the cooperative are settled on paper in strictly economic terms. In practice, however it is regulated by social factors. Further I show how working in the reindeer herding brigade makes the reindeer herders holders of weighty social capital. This social capital can be traced down to material benefits for the individuals at the cost of the cooperative, but then again it brings benefits to the cooperative and large number of individuals, ensuring the production of reindeer meat

'Predatory pastoralism'

The reindeer herding on the Kola Peninsula reminds me very much of what Tim Ingold observed and called 'predatory pastoralism' in North East Finland (Ingold 1974). Ingold writes about the transformation from reindeer hunting to reindeer herding, referring to Paine's discussion of hunters in contrast to herders. If the former is an 'originally affluent' adaptation, the latter is "rudimentary capitalist." For the hunters the capital lies in the hunting expertise, and ownership of this expertise gives rights over the distribution of the meat. For the herders the capital is in the reproductive abilities of the herd. In Finland, Ingold finds a form, which is something between reindeer herding and reindeer hunting that he calls *predatory pastoralism*. The main characteristics are that of cooperative hunting (driving the herd into fences - corrals) linked to the market economy, is enmeshed with individual hunting (for subsistence, usually with firearms), and individual ownership is enmeshed with collective ownership of the reproductive capital.

The reindeer herders in the cooperative are organised into seven *brigades* and herds are assigned to them. The herd usually consists of a number of cooperative owned reindeer and a number of private reindeer. The grazing area encompasses thousands of hectares and for the First Reindeer Herding Brigade, (the brigade I spent several weeks with) was in a radius of 20 –80 km from the village. At important places of the grazing route, the *sovkhos* had built wooden houses for the herders - tundra camps [*olenevodcheskie basi*']. In all, there were eight or nine such camps; some of them were better equipped, and the herders used to spend more time there. In the late 1990ies, the herders used to spend up to five months in the tundra, in contrast to the past (under the command economy) when they were spending around 10 months in the tundra. The main consequence is that they had lost contact with the herd, and the herd did not exist as such, but had disintegrated into smaller parts. The same process could be observed in all brigades from both reindeer herding cooperatives on the Kola – "Olenevod" in Krasnoshchel'ye and "Tundra" in Lovosero. Thus, now in the tundra there were small parts numbered up to 400 wild-grown deer.

In the previous chapter I started two threads of discussion: the first was about the informal form of decision-making in the cooperative, the second one was the assertion that the work in

the cooperative is to a great extent led by principles of 'necessity'. This is very much evident in the practices of production in the reindeer herding. Under the socialist regime everything was regulated, and the director went to the tundra camps to ensure that the regulations were followed. In April-May the herders should assist the birth of the new calves and mark the new born calves, then cut the antlers in June, gather the herd back from the summer pastures in August, follow the mating season in October, and count the herd and slaughter in November. Then in February-March the herders were expected to castrate bulls. Now the tasks round breeding were abandoned and left to the natural selection. This was part of the '*perestroika*' phenomenon as the herders used to say. Marking was done to a degree, but the main task of the herders was slaughtering. The herders used to slaughter for the cooperative – they used to sign contracts with the director - and for the private persons who had reindeer in the brigade herd. For the cooperative they slaughtered on order, for the private persons they used to do it on their own account. Neither marking nor slaughtering were planned, but made "on occasion", when there was an opportunity. Thus, both the marked and the slaughtered deer were 'unplanned'. For private use they killed deer by firearms. For the cooperative the reindeer were in-fenced in the corrals, caught with lasso in the tundra, or pushed on hoof to the slaughterhouse in Lovosero. According to Ingold this form of "*slaughter when found*", symptomatic of 'predatory pastoralism,' is the "*minimax solution*" in game theory terms. That is to say, the best alternative is to kill the deer when found, so that the deer could not disappear, be victim of the predators or the poachers. Such practices make impossible the growth of the herd.

According to Ingold, the predatory pastoralism and the transformation of reindeer herding into hunting (caused in North Finland by overgrazing) were expected to result in strong individualism, unemployment, and inequality. This, however, didn't happen because new economic conversions and entrepreneurs appeared. In Krasnoshchel'ye it didn't happen either. I believe that there are three reasons: first, because both the collectively managed reindeer herding at the *sovkhos* and the individual hunting practised by the herders are interdependent; secondly, the 'game' from the individual hunting is distributed in the support networks to a large number of individuals, and third – there is no scarcity of deer and pastures.

The opposite form of 'predatory pastoralist' is 'symbiotic pastoralism' where the size and the structure of the herd are under the control of the herders. Reindeer herding at the cooperative was supposed to be a form of symbiotic pastoralism. The livestock expert made plans for the number and the kind of slaughtered deer, but I never saw these papers in use.

Killing deer with firearms and as the chance directs, made the herders look like poachers. The resemblance came not only with the firearms. Both poachers and herders were making encroachments on somebody else's property. Thus, one may conclude, that the cooperative gives shelter to coexisting productive practices and practices that correspond to 'misappropriation'. Is the cooperative unable to implement sanctions against the practices of 'predatory pastoralism'; are the herders poachers, or not?

Below I describe the reindeer herding as part of the formal economic activities, and as part of the informal networking activities. In what follows, I examine the reindeer-herding brigade as an official productive unit and as an informal network of individuals.

The reindeer herding brigade as a work unit

From the point of view of the cooperative, the work is organised on a contractual basis: the brigadier and the director of the cooperative sign an agreement for grazing cooperative and private deer. In the contract, it is mentioned how much meat they should produce based on the livestock expert's calculations. I could not find what the "*obligations*" of the cooperative as an employer were and could be in the agreement. I was told that the model they used in the cooperative came from a booklet called "*Recommendations for the organisation of collective order in the northern reindeer herding*" printed in 1986. According to these recommendations the administration provided pastureland, reindeer herd, means of mechanisation and equipment. Further they had to provide a wage fund, limited amount for material loss and living expenses while the herders are in the tundra, such as electricity and warming expenses, expenses for equipment, food and medicines and provide complex medical, commercial, cultural, and living standard services. In the present many of these obligations had partly or completely disappeared in practice. Only memories of them could come up in conversations with the herders, but some of the categories were still used by the accountants.

The employees in the reindeer-herding brigade are individually credited with monthly salaries, and supplied with products for their stay in the tundra [*otovarka*]. These are basic products: flour, sugar, rice, salt, tea, cigarettes, and tinned products. The end sum for the products was subtracted from the herders' monthly salaries. The salaries were defined in the unified index. The salaries are paid by the hour. One hour's pay was 1 ruble¹. That is to say the average monthly wage was 182 rubles. This was multiplied by a coefficient different for the different brigades, based on the meat production from the past year (let's call it reliability *co-efficient*). The coefficient varied for the different brigades between 1,3 and 0,6. Afterwards to the wage is added a county coefficient, which was 0,5, and a polar coefficient, which was 0,8. In addition, they get 11 rubles per day when they are not in the village (grazing pay). Thus, they end up with a monthly salary of 600-700 rubles per month from which the sum for the products was deducted and also the sum for other services as kindergarten, house rent for those who lived in *sovkhos* houses, use of public bath, etc.

At the end of the year, 23 percent from the realised production (sold meat) is the pay for the brigade. From this sum the salaries paid in advance, and all other products and services are subtracted. The remainder was distributed between the herders as additional payment. If the balance was negative, the 'debt' was transferred to the next year. However, the price of the

¹ The data are for 1998

goods and services the herders are “credited with” personally corresponds, in broad outline, to 500 Russian rubles per month. This, however, was rather a good deal, having in mind the non-payment of salaries in Russia, which was the major concern of the Russians in the 1990ies. Shteinberg refers to an opinion poll where the importance of the political events was graded in the following succession: not paying salaries and social benefits, the war in Chechnya, and the presidential election (Shteinberg 1999: 231).

There is a second balance sheet for the brigade where the balance between the brigade as a whole and the cooperative is calculated. Debit entries were wages, grazing pays, social security pays, reserve parts, working clothes, current repairs, fuel; credit entries were the new offspring of reindeer [*priplod*], the sold antlers [*panti*] and the skins from new-born calves [*pyzhiki*]. A newborn calf was valued at 100 rubles, the skins from the newborn 20 rubles and the antlers – 70 rubles per kilogram. The credit side should be the result of the ‘breeding’ activities of the brigade, but as they do not practice any breeding activities, the credit side is the result of herders’ endeavours in the autumn to gather the herd. Still, the herders expressed hope that one day in the future they’ll ‘breed’ the herd and corrected me each time I used the word ‘herder’ [*pastukh*] and asked me to use word ‘reindeer breeder’ [*olenevod*].

In practice, the herders happen to receive 50 or 100 rubles cash in advance. All other calculations are done by the accountants and in the process of calculating the herders are kept aside. No one, even the brigadier, knew how exactly the wages are calculated. In the end of the year, the final balance for 1998 for many herders was in the cooperative’s favour. If it was in the herders’ favour, the sum was transferred to a bank account. There is no bank in Krasnoshchel’ye; the nearest one was in Lovosero, but now the branch was moved to the town of Monchegorsk and a new one was opened in Murmansk. The herders, as I already mentioned, do not travel often, and in this way the money becomes a very abstract matter for them. Most of them did not see more than 100 rubles per month, and those went either for cigarettes or for vodka.

Production of meat (slaughtering deer) and control over the herd (expressed through labour to gather the herd when they are counted in the winter) are thus two separate activities from the point of view of the cooperative. My understanding of the whole situation is, that in this way the cooperative encourages the production of meat, under the above mentioned form of predatory pastoralism - “*slaughter when found*” - and not practising the traditional form of herding, when part of the herd is slaughtered. Fewer slaughtered cows from the own herd means more offspring, and better balance for the brigade, while at the same time according to the first balance sheet the more slaughtered deer, the more money. As if to further emphasise the predatory aspect of the reindeer herding, the director of the cooperative with the help of his acquaintance, the director of the regional police office, helped the brigadier of First Reindeer herding brigade to obtain a firearm gun. The service was accompanied with considerable amount of reindeer and moose meat and some red fish.

The form of double sets of bookkeeping showed brute growth in the capital as the reindeer

herds were growing. Each new reindeer was estimated at 100 rubles. The growth of the herds brought millions to the brigades in the yearly balance between the brigade and the cooperative. On the other hand, the balance between income and expenditures was always negative for the brigades, because the monetary expenditures of the cooperative exceeded the money from the sales. As I understood it, both balance sheets were used on different occasions. For me this was rather confusing. The coexistence of different accounting practices, however, is not unique for the area. Yet, these techniques reflect both the uneasiness of change and the learning of new formal rules as well as the lack of will to abandon the old system of bookkeeping. Most of all, they reflect however the lack of understanding and clarity of the role of the cooperative. Does it play the role of a middleman between the reindeer herders and the brigade, or is it the owner of the herds and the herders –hired workers?

So far I could see, the monetary rewards were minimal for the herders in the cooperative. In the following, I describe how their position in the cooperative was reproducing social capital.

The reindeer herding brigade as a social network

The reindeer-herding brigade is both a unit within the production network in the cooperative.. As an immediate work collective, they share not only the obligations towards the collective, but also a much larger circle of values, understandings, and interests (Ashwin 1999).

First reindeer herding brigade consisted of 12 herders. It was headed by a brigadier and an assisting brigadier. They were brothers. Among the members of the brigade there were their sons and a nephew. The others were also friends and classmates. The youngest often called the older “uncle” [‘*diadia*’], but there was no more familiarity than that needed. In the tundra camp they were working, and the rest of the time drinking tea, eating, playing, and reading etc.

The first time I departed for the tundra with the brigade, the herders stopped when the village was out of sight, made a small camp, boiled tea, and started drinking vodka. In eight hours they were back on the way to the tundra camp “*Semiostron’ye*”. For me this act just confirms Ashwin’s assertion that the work collective was used to relieve the individuals from the pressure at home. (ibid.) The herders didn’t agree with this interpretation, however. Later when I asked them they told me that it was better to know that all the vodka was drunk up, and then they easily could accept to stay sober in the tundra. Drinking in the village is quite a problem and many of the reindeer herders are drinking all the time when they are in the village, especially those who are bachelors.

The brigade itself takes the decision when to go out to the tundra, unless the director “orders”. The orders of the director were taken into consideration differently in the different brigades. First brigade showed consideration for them, while some of the other brigades did not. The intra-brigade mechanisms of decision-making were inaccessible for me because they were taken after discussions in Komi language, but I observed that as much as possible members of

the brigade took part in the discussions especially when they decided the time they would take off for the tundra. Then birthdays, holy days, school exams and household activities were taken into consideration.

The wives and children usually accompanied the herders to the place of departure, and the departure itself could take several hours. If someone didn't show up, others were sent to his home to fetch the '*defector*'. The musketeer principle "*one for all, all for one*" reigned in the brigade. The main reasons, as they explained to me, were that they used to spend all the time together in the tundra, that they grew up together in the tundra, and that they knew each other better than their wives did. Many of them had grown up in the tundra together with their parents who were herders in the then Third Brigade. When the brigadier was offered the position of brigadier in First Brigade, he called many of his friends in the brigade, although many of them meanwhile had taken other professions. Thus, in the brigade there was one tractor driver and two zoo-technicians (livestock experts), a builder, and a fireman. When I tried to write down the kinship ties between them I could manage (as also they did) only the closest as brothers, fathers and sons, cousins. The web of relations like "*the grandmother of Vlad is sister to Nikita's father*" or "*Nikita's father-in-law is uncle of Gleb's father*" was impossible to disentangle. At the end, they concluded that I needed a personal computer if I wanted to learn the kinship ties in the village because they were too complex, but for them "*It does not matter that much...*" Trust and confidence between them were also described as a result (not only of the long acquaintance), but to the fact that they didn't take risks. The hardships of the tundra require both knowledge and good estimation of the acceptable risks. The dangers are rather in relation to the weather and the predator animals in the tundra, especially bears. There were few accidents with bears, and these histories we retold often and discussed. Therefore the herders used to go in pairs in the tundra.

The herders often told me that they share everything, "*The wives, too*", once said Vlad; I insisted he clarify what he meant by sharing wives, until I considered that it possibly was a joke. They shared everything and probably knew everything about each other to the extent that they didn't need much verbal communication. One of the most used proverb among them was "Don't speak, it is unbearable as it is" [*Ne govori i tak protivno*']. In the hours they didn't work, they played "Five" [*piaterka*'], a domino based game, cards or chess, drank tea (the cook told me that the brigade drinks over 40 litres of tea a day) and talked. They also exchanged some small gifts like the homemade binoculars case, or self-made bridles or beads for the transport reindeer. These exchanges were symbolic; it was about skills and some tended to have better skills in handicrafts than others did (once it was in the female domain, but now the women no longer could work with skin). Some of them used to make a lasso every year; some of them used the plastic lasso they got from the *sovkhoz*. Lassoos were also given away or inherited. Self-made lassoos were highly valued.

However, there was also a sense of discipline that reminded of the life in barracks. The herders had

routines to keep the basic qualities of life and hygiene. Valerii, the tent worker, was responsible for the housework in the tundra. The other members of the brigade had the same tasks, and they did them independently. Thus, although some were better than others in constructing sledges, others were better in catching transport bulls; the herders didn't differentiate the specialised tasks, and there was no division of labour among the herders. In Durkheim's words they were bound by "*mechanical solidarity*" (Durkheim 1984). The apprentices in the brigade – the young boys got some assistance from their supervisors (each apprentice got a supervisor from the elder herders), but in return they were sometimes ordered to help in the kitchen. The only extra task of the brigadier was the paper work. The herders had to fill travelling warrants every time they were off in the tundra. They were used for the 'grazing pay' ['*otgonnye*'] 11 rubles (= 2 US Dollars) per day and were always written in the brigadier's handwriting.

For transportation, the brigade used reindeer sledges, snowmobiles, or all-terrain track vehicles. In 1999 the cooperative attached military-like all-terrain track vehicles ['*vezdekhodi*'] to each brigade. Earlier these vehicles were based in the village and sent around to the reindeer herding brigades according to the needs. By now, only one remained in the village for general purposes. From the point of view of the *sovkhos*, this was a step towards making the brigades more independent, and a step towards specialisation and effectivisation of the work in the cooperative. Therefore, to the brigades they attached also two drivers - reindeer herders, or as they were called "mechanics" ['*mekhanizatori*']. The herders welcomed this step, because it allowed them to take a large amount of meat on each tundra trip. Thus the numbers of trips could go down, and the quantity of meat, they harvested was larger. On a reindeer sledge the freight couldn't exceed 200 kilograms, on the all-terrain track vehicle they could transport up to several tons. Furthermore, the all-terrain vehicles implied the idea of progress and were seen as a prestigious achievement for the herders.

The access to meat was an appropriation possibility, offered by employment in the state enterprise, and the herders took advantages of it. The meat was used in the domestic economy not only for consumption in the household, but it was also given away. In November 1999, the herders of First Reindeer Herding Brigade and Third Reindeer Herding Brigade slaughtered reindeer for both the cooperative and for private use. The quantity was equal: 1 ton. The quality differed - The herders from First Reindeer Herding Brigade slaughtered mostly young one- and two- year- old female cows ['*vazhenki*'] and calves for private use and older reindeer for the cooperative. Each herder slaughtered for himself and his family, for friends or neighbours who had reindeer in the herd and had asked for it. Then the herders attached wooden pieces to the slaughtered reindeer, and wrote down the name of the recipient and loaded it up at the cooperative all-terrain track vehicle. For me it was rather surprising that slaughtering was rather uncontrolled; anyone could slaughter as many reindeer as one wanted, almost without paying any attention if there was an owner's mark.

The lack of control in the slaughtering, however, was substituted with quite strong control

over the recipients of meat. When the herders loaded up the slaughtered deer on the all-terrain vehicles, they controlled, whom the meat was sent to. The only conflict situation between herders I ever witnessed in Krasnoshchel'ye was because the brigade leader of First Reindeer Herding Brigade discovered that there was meat to be sent to persons in the village who recently had moved from Lovosero, and who had never had anything to do with reindeer, but was known as a vodka dealer. The brigadier knew who was responsible for the deed and directed strong criticisms in a mixture of Komi and Russian languages to him. The accused herder had recently divorced and after the divorce he had shown symptoms of resignation and close addiction to alcohol. In the spring of 1999, he had been fired from the brigade ("Fired," I was told, "so that he could get unemployment benefits, but actually he left on his own will"). In the autumn they had to ask him back, since they didn't have enough herders. He tried to defend himself, but it didn't help – almost all of the herders had something to say against it.

The social control in the brigade was strong, although it was not iron discipline. The distribution of meat was controlled and wasteful distribution of meat and other resources was not allowed. The forms of control, however, bear the morality of the support networks, discussed in Chapter Five. As networks the reindeer-herding brigade were, as I'll show below, self-reproducing. To get employed in the herding brigade has become a question of close kinship ties to members of the brigade. Usually the new members had to be sons of herders. Igor, one of the grandchildren of Aunt Elizaveta, had to argue to become an apprentice in one of the reindeer herding brigades. At the end he succeeded since he had two uncles in the brigade. Officially, this step was intended to stop the fluctuation of manpower in the herding, but it was also a step taken namely to maintain the reindeer herding as the main production in the cooperative. In the situation of cuts in the cooperative in general, there were new appointments in the herding. In First Reindeer Herding Brigade there were two for the last years - the sons of the brigadier and his brother. Furthermore, this form for socialisation of the boys in the tundra also plays a considerable role in reproducing the patterns of mobility, as I already have pointed out in Chapter Four.

Informal practices and services

The brigade is not only a 'closed' network – the herders used to interact with external actors and extended their networking strategies. Very often the decisions when to go out in the tundra were guided by the needs for meat in the herders' households. Furthermore the decisions were coordinated with other household activities as potato sawing. I heard herders' wives saying: "We have to send the boys in the tundra, there is no meat at home!" Then the brigade was an extension of the support networks in the village. However, not all the informal practices in the brigade were connected to the support networks in the village. Below I describe two cases where the brigade 'extended' its network in another direction. In the first case, the brigade has a long term exchange relationship, in the second case there is an informal exchange that in fact is sporadic and does not suggest the presence of network.

Fyodor, although openly critical of the cooperative, was dependent on it and made his living with the services done by people employed at the *sovkhos*. He needed a network inside the cooperative because he needed to transport reindeer, so that he could go fishing and hunting in the tundra. While I was there in November 1999, Fyodor was about to hunt and got for his sledge 10 draft bulls from the brigadier of First reindeer herding brigade. I asked him in exchange for what, and he answered that he'll pour a lot of vodka for the brigade leader. The brigade leader is his neighbour and in the recent years he had delivered to Fyodor draft-bulls for the winter. Sometimes Fyodor uses them for the whole winter, sometimes he disbands them and later he asks the brigade leader again. The disadvantage of being in the village and keeping the bulls is that one has to go everyday to change their grazing place and secondly, it is risky, because there are too many street dogs – most of them had an owner, but many of the owners couldn't provide enough food. The street dogs were attacking the draft bulls around the village. This was also a problem for the herders, and they often complained about it.

Making a service to a neighbour in a situation when one is at work is a practice of *blat par excellence*. For the reindeer herders it was a form of help that didn't cost too much to them and they didn't expect much in return. "We are just good neighbours", said some of the herders. The brigade leader had another explanation: Fyodor had some private reindeer in the *sovkhos* and the deer delivered to him was his own reindeer. Unlike the other villagers who had reindeer, Fyodor didn't want slaughtered deer, but living reindeer so that he could use them for transport purposes. In a completely different setting, however, it was mentioned that Fyodor was also buying cartridges for the brigade leader from Murmansk. Cartridges were a scarce resource in the village; in town they were an expensive one.

The terms of exchange, as I understood, were not written down and not articulated but probably there were expectations for the nature of return. Vodka drinking only confirmed symbolically the relationship. This is a case where the transactions between Fyodor and the brigade members are on the edge between legal and illegal, and therefore there were these three levels of explanations with different degree of legitimacy:

The objective: the legal relation with the cooperative: (Fyodor has deer in the cooperative)

The subjective: the human factor and the good neighbourly and social relationships,

The pragmatic: hope for return of the service in cartridges

I was wondering why it took me so much time to understand the fact that behind the legitimate explanations also lies a third one, which was not that legitimate one. Was it because they wanted to hide the nature of the exchanged things, namely cartridges, was it to hide the economic interest, or were the people not aware of it? The answer probably lies somewhere in the middle. However, I listened many times to different explanations with different degree of legitimacy and different argumentation behind. The threefold explanation appeared repeatedly in my reflections

on the field material. Let us go back to the folklore ensemble “Afterglow” [*‘Ryt’Kiia’ - in Komi*] of the old women dancing and singing old Komi and Russian songs. Its existence also had three explanations, the most legitimate was “to preserve the traditions and the roots of the Komi culture”; later, after I had spent some time with the women from the ensemble its existence was “to have fun and celebrate with the other women” and at the end, the most unarticulated reason, was the fact that this ensemble enabled them to travel around on folklore festivals, where they could sell home made souvenirs and thus make some money.

We can trace these three explanations to understandings of private and public from the Soviet regime. The “pragmatic” reasoning - the hope for cartridges in the case of the brigadier, and the selling possibilities in the case of the folklore dancers were almost never articulated and belonged to what we could define as an intimate network. Based on economic concerns this discourse never was legitimised, a fact that confirms the discussion of values in Chapter Four and Chapter Five. The subjective reasoning belongs to the effective network, where people did informal services in the ‘privatised public sphere’ (Voronkov 1998:90). In this discourse legitimisation was achieved by referring to concern with the closest and based on social values. The objective explanation was part of the official public discourse. Legitimation was achieved by referring to the rules of the dominant structure.

These three explanations also refer to the practices of ‘euphemisation’ or disguising the economic interest. The economic interest (to get cartridges) was dissimulated by claims on social capital: that they do it to keep the tone with the neighbour. Further, the same economic interest was disguised by claims on cultural capital in the form of competence for the legal rights of the reindeer owners. This was form of competence, based on long service and experience, and I couldn’t contest it by any means. In the case of the folklore ensemble, the reproduction of unique knowledge of traditional songs could also be converted in material benefits. The women got paid for the travel and the stay in towns, where they could also sell their own production.

An analogous threefold explanation based on the three forms of capital, I got when I asked the herders about their motivation to work. First, they were herders; they have grown up in the tundra; they have done this job since they were born etc. This was their embodied knowledge – they knew the tundra; they knew the reindeer; they could build sledges without any measures (the cultural capital). The second answer referred to the obligations they felt towards each other: they were friends; they couldn’t leave the others work (the social capital). The third answer was getting products, goods, and services from the cooperative and almost unconditional access to meat at present and pensions in the future. Their employment in the cooperative continued to grant them recognition for their knowledge and experience or “cultural/ symbolic capital”, a social network - the brigade and not the least economic advantages.

In contrast to the case with Fyodor’s reindeer, in the next case the herders gave away two cooperative’s reindeer to pay back for a service. In the spring of 1999 when the herders should go back to the village from their summer camp at Iokanga River, the all-terrain vehicle broke

down, and they had to find an alternative way of coming back. They called brigade No 3 and asked if they could pick them up. Third Brigade agreed but from the tundra camp 'Semiostrov'ye'. The herders needed transport, and they asked our drivers¹, who were from the Revda police department and spent their time fishing and hunting. They agreed and gave the herders a ride to the camp 'Semiostrov'ye'. In return, the herders helped them to kill a pair of *sovkhos* reindeer. This transaction was not made public to us. The drivers didn't tell us about it, but we soon realised that they had an incredible reserve of meat, and I asked where it came from. Then they willy-nilly said that they with the help of the herders had killed the reindeer when driving the brigade to Semiostrov'ye.

In the autumn, I reminded the herders of this happening, but nobody answered – it was probably the wrong question. Aunt Elizaveta, however, told me that they didn't have any other choice. They had to pay back for the service, and they did it. It was good that they did it then, because it was not good to be in debt to such persons. The instant exchange of services led to no expectations for future transactions. It was more like to end the exchange (Bourdieu 1977).

In fact, the drivers were in the category of people usually sanctioned in the village: they were policemen; they were also 'poachers from town', etc. And despite that the drivers promised different goods (tents, ropes, etc), when I asked the herders in the autumn if they had heard about the drivers, the answer was: "No... and better!"

In this chapter, I described the reindeer herding brigade as part of the cooperative and part of the networks. I started with a discussion on the general characteristics of reindeer herding in the cooperative and defined it as 'predatory pastoralism', a form different of what collective reindeer herding was supposed to be. When I mealy-mouthed asked them why what I observed differed considerably from the reindeer herding textbooks, the situation was explained to me with the following reasons: first, they cannot control the herd because they do not obtain the needed materials from the cooperative. However, there were herders who opposed to this view and said, that they never got the needed materials from the cooperative. Further explanations were that they are experienced herders and instead of keeping the rules written by someone in Moscow forty years ago, they could do it much better. They had claims on the expertise of reindeer herding and made them clear to me. The third explanation was 'practical' - they were needed at home – they had to do many things at home as firewood for the winter, build, etc. They had to combine their household tasks with the work in the cooperative. Therefore they couldn't be in the tundra to keep the herd 'in hand'.

My argument is that this form is good for gaining and maintaining social capital, and this social capital is used to legitimatise the informal practices and the practices of appropriating collective property. Thus, the material interest was disguised, consciously or unconsciously, by explaining

¹ In the spring 1999, I joined Y. Konstantinov in his efforts to come in the heart of the tundra. He used his acquaintances to provide transportation to the village in an all-terrain track vehicle belonging to the local police department.

it in many cases with concern for the closest. Although the material interest was realised at the cost of the cooperative, it did not necessarily have negative consequences for the cooperative. Working in the reindeer herding brigade brought not only meat for herder's own household and in the support networks, but also increased their 'prestige' in the cooperative. The director was depending on the herders to ensure production, sales and money for the cooperative. Therefore, he remained probably blind to the informal practices in the work of the reindeer herding brigades. In the village, the work of the herders was often criticised, mostly by other men who keep an eye on what happens in the tundra: small parts of the herds, no control, etc. Fyodor was a typical example, and as we saw above, the herders built 'social credit' towards them, too. The other villagers were either direct or indirect recipients of meat and therefore dependent on the herders. Thus, the herders are holders of considerable social capital in the village. This social capital is much weightier than the material benefits realised at the cost of the cooperative.

In Chapter Five, I asked if 'appropriation' from the cooperative occurs in Krasnoshchel'ye and what are the reactions. In this chapter I gave one possible answer: informal practices of misappropriation exist, but they are part of the social capital of the individuals and in this way they become legitimate practices. The material benefits however are turned to the benefit of large number of individuals and not the least of the cooperative. In the next two chapters, I describe some practices in the office [*kontora*] that shed more light on the question, but in relation to other forms of capital forms of stratification under the command economy; there was no private ownership (means of production), and it did not matter if one had money in a bank account unless one could not convert the money into goods or services or whatever freely. Therefore, people all over the Soviet Union and probably Eastern Europe tried to transform their money into cultural goods and values as education, books, music, etc.

Chapter 8 The Executive Officers

In Krasnoshchel'ye the functional top hierarchy of the cooperative was concentrated in the office. In the village the employees in the administration are called 'office people' ('kontorskie'). Their tasks were to manage the work of the cooperative with all its departments and bill the households in the village for the provided services. They kept the account books for inspection. If under the command model of economy their task was to follow instructions and execute, in the present they have to 'invent' rules.

In chapter 6, I discussed the three factors in the work of the reindeer herding: reindeer herders in the tundra and the needs of their households and networks, the livestock expert who scientifically made the balance for the herds, and the director who was thinking most in relation to the sale of meat. However, the livestock expert made a plan, and this plan was the background for the contract between the brigadier and the director. On the other hand, such papers are in contradiction with the practices of 'predatory pastoralism', discussed in the previous chapter. In this chapter, I concentrate on the management practices of representing the actual economic terms on paper. What is the framework they use? If before the managers took the plan order into account, in the present situation they have to take into account the new tax rules. How do they do it when the terms of production are getting more and more informal, as I described in the previous chapter?

The headquarters of the cooperative was situated in a large building together with the post office. There were many office rooms, but the permanently occupied were five: the director's office with a room for the secretary, one office-room for the radio-station and the radio-operator who was also head of the personnel office, one for the accountants and the economists, and one for the livestock expert. When I was in the office, I used to spend most of the time with the accountants and the economists. There the work and the conversations never ceased, irrespective of whether people were coming in or going out of the office. This room served also as a reception room. Anyone who had questions or remarks had to come to this office. There were seven desks in the room and a stove oven. Five well-dressed women with made-up faces and high-heeled shoes sat facing each other and wrote in heavy book files. On the desks there were two calculators and one wooden abacus, which were used when necessary. There was an unpacked personal computer in the office of the director's secretary. When I asked if I should help them to assemble it, they unanimously disapproved the suggestion: *"Do you want to get us fired? There will be no work for us, if the computer works! Moreover why do we need a computer, if we don't have electricity."* As I already in the previous chapter described, the accountants had quite a lot of work calculating salaries, keeping the balances of the reindeer herding brigades, and of the other production units, as well as the private balance of the villagers who used the services at the cooperative.

The expertise of the accountants

There were five accountants in the cooperative. Four of them were local women with vocational school training; a higher educated specialist from the town of Revda filled the head economist position on a short-term contract. I got to know these women not only as the specialists who worked at the cooperative, but also as housewives and mothers. A great deal of the conversations in their office centred on what they had done, prepared for dinner, watched on the TV, or read the previous evening. Two things preoccupied them: the family and what they did in their leisure time when not at work. In the beginning when I asked questions, they always spoke of the difficulties of their work, the unstable economic situation in 'expert' terms. The problem was scarcity of products and scarcity of money, of course. Later on, getting used to my presence, the conversations turned to how they managed their households and families. The whole situation at their homes was, in fact, not that bad. It seemed to me that the general economic crises had not affected the households of the office workers. What was bad for the cooperative and the country did not necessarily mean that it was bad for the private households. Where was the turn point?

Unlike the aunties they were not dependent on large networks, and unlike the herders their position in the cooperative did not generate social capital. The reason was that the accountants were responsible for regulating the distribution of products and cash in the cooperative. In the past it was a grateful place for creating a better position in the social networks and accumulating social capital, a practice I discussed in Chapter 2 and Chapter 6. At present, the scarcity of both money and products in the cooperative had the opposite effect. In the office it was apparent that allocating in one's favour, meant allocating in disfavour of others. Taking into account the small size of the village, anyone was aware of what priorities were made, and this had consequences for the accountants. Those who didn't benefit considered them selfish and 'not caring'. The social networks of the office workers were getting compressed. And the endeavours of the accountants were to regain their positions in the social networks. The way they involved in these networks was by offering 'cultural' goods. In the cooperative their cultural capital was their competence on the practices of distribution and accounting in the cooperative. Their work in the cooperative brought material benefits in the form of cash. In this chapter I describe the practices of accumulating and reproducing their competence in the cooperative (the thread I briefly discussed in Chapter 6) as a form of cultural capital and how these practices 'entail' euphemisations of the material interests.

In Chapter 6, I discussed how the cooperative institutionalised the interdependency between clean households, education, and cultural progress. To be employed as an accountant at the cooperative was a testimony of educational qualifications, that is cultural capital, and the accountants demonstrated it in three different arenas. They always acted as 'the public face' of the household in the village, while their husbands were the tundra-born 'breadwinners'. As

office employees in the cooperative, they represented the cooperative in the cases when villagers had questions, or requests. In this way they were also ‘the public face’ of the cooperative. A third arena was when they represented employees at the cooperative before the higher echelons and the media. The right to represent was justified by their claims for literacy and knowledge in a rather illiterate environment. I would like to illustrate this with an example: I once asked Larissa, the head accountant, why the herders never do anything to improve their situation, and she said that she already had suggested to the herders to write a letter to the administration of the *sovkhoz* to improve the camps, but it has never come to reality. Her explanation was: “You know all this pride and prejudices” and said that she is probably going to write it on behalf of them. She said that she had asked her husband to apply for a raise in the salary, but he didn’t want to ask the director. It was against his principles; he was too proud to do it. She even had to gather *koibi* (skin parts) and ask the sewing department in the *sovkhoz* to sew boots for him. The herders are supposed to get work clothing, but if they do not claim – they never get it. Therefore Larissa had to care for them (her son, her husband and sometimes for the rest of the reindeer herding brigade). In the cases when she claimed goods and services on behalf of others, Larissa referred to basic rights the employees had according to the by-laws of the cooperative. This information expressed her ‘juridical’ knowledge. This knowledge was recognised as a form of cultural capital. If she shared it, she did a favour. Such favours were rewarded. When, however, she was the one to be responsible for distributing scarce resources, the discourse veered course. If someone came with claims, she could argue at great length and almost never responded in a positive way. In fact, the accountants favoured their own families. An example of this was when they managed the supply with products, as we’ll see in the following section.

The supply process [*otovarka*] of the herders with products for their stay in the tundra is also among the tasks of the accountants. The products came from the towns and were a bit overpriced in comparison with the goods sold at the local store. However, the higher price didn’t matter much, because the products were available, and it was not necessary to pay for them in cash, but the bills were drawn from the monthly salaries that were not paid in practice. It was a good opportunity for acquiring basic goods such as butter, flour, pickled cucumbers, sugar, and cigarettes. The reindeer herders and their families were entitled to take first, then the rest was offered to the other employees at the *sovkhoz* and at the end to the villagers. The families of the herders usually took the advantage of this privilege and took considerable amounts of some products, as for instance 225 kg of sugar ‘officially’ taken for use in the tundra. There were regulations on the maximum quantity: it was allowed ‘up to’ 1 sack of sugar, and 1 sack of flour, or up to 5 kg of sausages. These limits could be overridden, however. One herder got condensed milk almost twice as much as the maximum quantity. It was hardly a coincidence that he was married to one of the accountants. These practices are reminiscent of the previous practices of rationing, especially because almost all products were taken in their maximum allowed quantity from the herders. Rationing in the Socialist economy was

subordinated to the following principles: urgent need, merit, family background, social status, political conduct, personal links of kinship and friendship with the allocator, return of favours done for the allocator and corruption (Kornai in Ledeneva: 1998:89).

When I studied the papers for the supply of food products for the spring of 1998, I noted that the end sum varied between 1758 rubles (for the brigadier) and around 2400 roubles in average for the rest of the herders. I asked if the brigadier had been ill for sometime. The answer was negative. The brigadier had dropped buying cigarettes, biscuits and rusks, some canned products and salt. The reason told by his wife, the treasurer of the cooperative, was that she was travelling quite often to town, and she bought cigarettes, biscuits, and cans at better prices. He didn't need rusks, because he never was for so long in the tundra with the brigade (because he was building a house in the village). The family didn't need big quantities of salt either, because they didn't salt meat and fish. They had it either fresh or frozen, or they used to eat 'imported' food, such as sausages and cold cuts. Their consumption was apparently based to a great extent on imported goods, unlike most of what I otherwise observed in the village.

Larissa, the treasurer, is the wife of the brigadier of First Reindeer Herding Brigade, Boris. Her sister, Alena, works as an accountant in the office and is married to one of the other herders. Larissa has one son, Artyom, who is also working as a reindeer herder in the same brigade as his father does. Larissa came from the village of Ponoï and was a Russian Pomor¹. She didn't have any relatives in the village besides her sister who also was an accountant in the cooperative. In the cooperative, the function of Larissa is treasurer. She usually travelled to Lovosero and Monchegorsk to get cash from the bank for salaries. This she combined with her medical checks at the hospitals in Lovosero and Murmansk (Larissa had high blood pressure and heart problems). At her home it was always possible to find some very popular and imported "goodies" as sausages, liquor, love novels, and tabloid newspapers, and of course vodka. She had to pay herself full salary in order to be able to buy all these things. However the money was very often invested in books and literature. Many of the tabloid newspapers and the paperback novels were later lent to other people in the village mainly through her son, Artyom.

The money Larissa brought from the bank, as paid out as salaries in the cooperative. Usually it was as an advanced payment: for the reindeer herders it was almost constant, from 100 rubles in the beginning of the month and 50 rubles at the end of the month. However, the office workers [*'kontorskie'*] always got their payments first and as much as possible - up to 700-800 rubles. Mikhail, the oldest son of Aunt Elizaveta, had not received any money for several months, while at the same time his cousin, the husband of the head accountant, had received each month an average of 200 rubles in cash. In other words, money was also rationed. The accountants, who were paying out, always had very good arguments for what they did, why they should pay to one and not to another, although one easily could find some hints of personal preferences

¹ Pomors are the indigenous Russian population on the Kola Peninsula.

and some relationships. The rules were about debts and indebtedness towards the cooperative, but this was a realm only the accountants had access to. Mikhail had tried to find out about his salary, but they had showed him the account books and according to them he was in debt to the cooperative. *"How did he dare to ask and doubt the correctness of the practice?"* Aunt Elizaveta had also experienced the same problem when she on behalf of her son had asked. And many of the stories ended up with resignation: *"It was written in the book. I owe so much money."* Many of those who were trying to complain were met by, as they said, an aggressive attitude and got scolded by the accountants, especially Larissa. Some men just called her names as "bitch" [*suka*] to express their helplessness before her arguments and account books.

Her central position in the cooperative, giving her possibilities to travel, have cash, and buy some consumer goods at the new markets in Lovosero, Murmansk and Revda, complemented and substituted the role of the relatives and the other kin. Larissa didn't have many friends in the village, however. Many women used to get together and watch the soap operas. Larissa didn't do it. She came once to us in order to watch some of my recordings together with her mother-in-law, Aunt Sveta, the oldest sister of Aunt Elizaveta. After watching my recordings, we saw the soap opera and ended up with tea and cookies. Larissa said, that she was surprised at having such a nice time just sitting and talking and that the time passed so quickly. Otherwise, she said, she would work with her papers all the evening. Larissa was devoted to her employment. In the wintertime, she even took work to do at home in the evenings when the electricity was on.

Larissa maintained before the whole village that her interests were to keep the accountancy at the cooperative in perfect shape for the tax inspection, and to keep the rules in the present lawlessness. For just a few persons in the office, she maintained that her primary interest was the well-being of her nearest family and the household (the subjective explanation). Her endeavours to be a perfect accountant and her endeavours to be a perfect housewife were interdependent under the shelter of the cooperative. Her appointment in the cooperative solved many economic problems for the household: from having cash at hand to travelling and shopping in town. She took decisions when to travel to town in relation to private occasions and took the advantages of her position in distributing cash and products to the members of her family. In contrast to the herders and the folklore singers, Larissa didn't tell that she was concerned with her family, friends or neighbours. When I asked Larissa about her motivation to work, she stated that 'someone had to keep the cooperative running'. In the village, she was not a part of the support networks and her social capital was insignificant. Therefore, there was no subjective explanation of her motivations to work. In contrast to the cooperation in the reindeer herding brigade, in the office people seldom showed friendship and care. In Chapter 4, I discussed three zones of networks: intimate, effective and extended. Obviously, these zones were overlapping with the three explanatory discourses: the pragmatic, the subjective and the objective. Larissa didn't have any effective network. However my impression is, that dependency on the cooperative and dependency on the social networks were to some extent like interconnected vessels. This

was also demonstrated in the case of Aunt Albina , who was depending on the cooperative due to lack of close support network in the village (see Chapter 4). If one is part of large support networks, the need to rely on the cooperative diminishes.

Although to me, it was obvious that Larissa could be vulnerable to criticisms in relation to misuse of position, her expertise was rarely questioned in the village. I observed only twice open criticisms of her expertise. The livestock expert questioned if her expertise was up-to-date. The second time her Larissa's expertise was considered too modern to be able to continue the traditions in the cooperative as collective concern for the single individual. I believe, that Larissa was considered as a holder of an 'organisational' expertise, i.e. cultural capital in the cooperative. The criticisms at her came from other holders of cultural capital, as if, they were competing who knows best.

Vladimir Vladimirovich Kozlov, the livestock expert, had been a livestock expert for a number of years and he was very well acquainted with the paper work. He should have been retired long ago, but the younger vets and zoological engineers did not want to master the art of paperwork. He accused Larissa of not keeping herself updated with the latest legal reforms and tax regulations. The reforms changed too often and in Krasnoshchel'ye it was impossible to follow all the changes without having access to any media. However, according to the livestock expert, Larissa used to travel often and it "would be better if she used her time to find information on the laws than to shop around."

Humphrey, citing a Russian textbook, writes that in most collective farms with a double set of hierarchy - lineal and functional - the head specialists in the functional hierarchy came often in conflict (Humphrey 1998: 108). The conflict between Larissa and the livestock expert very much reminded me of this kind conflict between the specialists. However, the conflict between them transpired because he was retired and secured from the state, and did not depend on a cash salary from the cooperative. To the head economist, who in 1999 was new in the village, and to me the conflict was explained with the fact that he is simply 'misogynist' and therefore he tried to hurt her. He had married a local woman with a bad reputation after he was assigned this position in the village, and stayed there forever. He didn't have any relatives; Stalin killed all of them as *kulaks*, and he had grown up in a boarding school. The accountants in the office also discussed the fact that his only son had just left for his military service and wrote his first letter from a 5-digit barracks. The rumours said, that all 5 digit barracks were to be sent to Chechnya. Therefore, the livestock expert was considered under psychological stress and unbalanced.

The second set of criticisms came from the old employees who claimed that the new management was not continuing the traditions of the cooperative. Most of them started working in the *sovkhos* in the years of WWII, when their fathers and brothers were sent on the front line. They had contributed to its development as one of the biggest *sovkhoses* in the county, For them the

cooperative remained the institution that cared for everyone, organised almost all political, social, cultural and economic transactions and was a collective property – the collective product of their efforts. Since the 1970s it was a state farm and its well-being was much more due to the subsidies of the state, than to the work of the aunts, but this dependency was not acknowledged by them. The *perestroika* and the market liberalisation meant a decline of the caring system and coincided with the generation shift in the cooperative. Therefore, the complaints often were directed to the young people who didn't follow the traditions of the cooperative and were negligent of the traditional knowledge vested in it. They attacked both the reindeer herders and the office-workers.

The criticisms were often accompanied by claims over the distribution of resources in the cooperative. The old people often referred to the responsibilities of the *sovkhos* as an employer or as a former employer. The form of these claims often reminded me of the rhetoric of *merits and justice*, inherent in the practice of *blat*. Aunt Elizaveta and her sister Aunt Albina differed considerably in their claims: both have worked in the *sovkhos* all their lives. Now both are retired. Aunt Elizaveta seldom went to the office, except if there was something extraordinary. While I was there, she went only once to ask for new shoes for her grandson, Igor, who recently had begun to work in a reindeer-herding brigade. She could not understand her older sister, Albina, who went rather often to the office to ask for help and to demand services. In the winter of 1999, she managed to get 3m³ wood cut and ready for use from the state farm. She argued that she was 'a veteran widow'. Then, afterwards she explained to me: "A children that does not cry, won't get any food!" Aunt Elizaveta showed disapproval and explained to me that it was Albina's husband, who was a Russian, an immigrant to Krasnoshchel'ye, a former chairman of the cooperative, (read - lazy and good-for-nothing), who taught her to be calculating, negligent, and selfish. Aunt Elizaveta, however, got her wood from the tractor with wood destined for the cooperative. When I asked what the deal was, I didn't get any clear answer. However, the help didn't come from the office workers: "*They leave their men alone in the tundra while they sit at warm places in the office. How come they'll help me?*" In this way Aunt Elizaveta never considered Larissa as part of her social network. In the same manner as Larissa explained to me that the livestock expert was a misogynist, she explained to me that the problem was not because of knowledge. "*How could the almost analphabetic grandmothers say what was right or wrong in the cooperative? The problem lies as always between the generations.*" In this way, the accountants didn't recognise the criticisms as questioning their expertise. Moreover, the challenge came from people who didn't have the needed education to challenge the expertise of the accountants: a livestock engineer and old people without education.

Holders of cultural capital

Until now I have described the educational qualifications and the professional expertise as granting cultural capital at the cooperative that could be transformed into economic benefits.

These granted forms of cultural capital made also possible the misrecognition of the above discussed criticisms. Here, I continue with other manifestations of competition between holders of cultural capital in the office. The accountants sought recognition for their expertise in competing with the head economists who usually came on short-term contracts from Revda. The head economist was supposed to have higher education and considerable work experience. They were considered the higher level of expertise and that as such was unobtainable in the village. The local accountants used to emphasise to me that their expertise was, however, most worthy because it was local. They had a life-long commitment to the cooperative and stayed in the village despite better personal opportunities in town. Despite the lack of information about the new accounting practices in the village, their knowledge was up-to-date. In the office, the accountants used the head economist to underline their belonging to the village. People who come from outside [*priezzhie*] as the economist were considered interested only in making money in Krasnoshchel'ye. The head economists, whom I got to know in 1998, had moved back to Revda in 1999. I was told that they bought flats with the money they got in Krasnoshchel'ye. The new one had moved to the village without her husband and was flying back and forth to Revda, whenever it was possible. Vis-à-vis the economists, the local women, who worked in the office, strived to look better, to know better, and to have better connections in the towns, especially with locally known and important people. The high heeled shoes were almost an imperative at the office. While the men could go out in the same clothes as their grandfathers did, the women rarely put on traditional clothes. One day Lubov had come to the office with new shoes; they were rather small, and it was difficult to walk with them. However, she stoically managed to use the shoes during the first half-day at the office, but in the lunch break she went home and changed. Make-up was also a very strong imperative – to underline the femininity and the belonging to civilization. I was asked if I ever used make-up, and why I didn't use it there, reminding me that we were not in the tundra, and I was expected to make some efforts to look better. They were preoccupied with what was in Norway, why I had only sporty clothes and nothing for formal occasions, and so on. They could be very critical towards my look, which was "as if I was going to milk the cows." Education and ways of clothing was interdependent. My arguments that working with a camera might be a physical challenge didn't stand.

The accountants also sought to be part of the local elite referring constantly to connections with important people in Lovosero and Revda. Especially through indirect familiarising rumours and stories for "very important people" in the area. *"Artyom was in Lovosero to look for a girl (he has to get married, soon), they went out with N. Then they met X. X brought them to an apartment and they started drinking. Then G. came with two women, and he flirted very much with one of them. Faina Nikolaevna, tell me, please his wife, wasn't she working in the hospital?"* Then the conversation went to his wife and how their relations seemed to be broken, and how difficult it was for the boys to find decent girls. Such conversations went on all the time in the office.

The accountants sought to supplement their 'granted' cultural capital in the cooperative

with other forms of cultural capital. The accountants strived to maintain the same level of consumption, to gain new objects and cultural media and move on with the times. As early as in the 1980s, Humphrey observes that the Soviet family has turned from a production unit to a consumption unit long ago. This further changed the image of the woman; before she had producing skills, she could sew and make traditional clothing, but now she was turned into a “modern woman” with modern clothes, make-up, high heels, a consumer of modern media and literature. In the same manner as their knowledge was “updated”, the women at the office had claims on updated consumption to the extent the circumstances allowed. Fridges, for instance, have become unnecessary since the electricity was off most of the time. However, some of the villagers had purchased new fridges and used them as cupboards.

Others have observed that the economic capital in its monetary form was excluded from the forms of stratification under the command economy; there was no private ownership, and it did not matter if one had money in a bank account, since it was impossible to convert the money into goods or services or whatever freely. Therefore, people all over the Soviet Union and probably Eastern Europe tried to transform their money into cultural goods and values as education, books, music, etc.

With the market, new forms of objects of consumption appeared: love stories in paperback and soap operas on the TV. The soap operas were watched in the afternoon together with other women, and the dramatic plot was analysed and morally evaluated over a cup of tea. The long way to happy-ending through many difficulties and tears was not only an escape from reality, but also a source of discussions where moral values were confirmed.

Under the socialist government, it was difficult to find literature, and there were informal cultural networks that exchanged self-published [*samizdat*] books (Nielsen 2002). In the present situation, deficit and inaccessibility of the forbidden works have been replaced by a new popular culture, which also became an object of exchange. A very instrumental difference between the support networks and the ‘cultural’ networks is that while in the former the objects were given to, in the latter the objects were lent and always had to be returned to the owner. Thus, in the village and in the reindeer herding brigades a number of paperback love stories and women- and teen- magazines circulated. The new cultural media brought new forms of deficit. A form of this deficit information was what happens further in the soap operas and how they end. An example that illustrates the importance of the soap operas was the behaviour of the hotel receptionists just after my arrival in Murmansk. I didn’t have any Russian roubles, and I had a lot of luggage, and after the turbulent arrival, I went to the hotel at the airport and asked to stay there. I had not changed any money and hoped that I could pay the day after, when I had been in Murmansk and got money from the bank terminal. I had heard from the border officers that they wouldn’t accept dollars, and I knew that I couldn’t pay with the dollars I had on hand. When I came in the hotel, the two receptionists sat and watched TV; they almost didn’t notice

my presence. They said, that I had to pay before I could get into the room. I asked them if it was possible to leave the luggage in the room, and then I would go and change my dollars in the airport. While one of them registered my passport and all the formalities I chatted with the other one about the soap opera that was the same as my mother was following several months ago in Bulgaria. They were so eager to learn the end and asked if I knew it. By chance, I knew it and hinted some clues for the ending of the soap, before I went up to leave my bags. When I went across the hall the administrator said that they could exchange the dollars on the official rate; they already had checked it in the newspaper and probably not only for the night, but also to have some roubles to buy me some food at the airport and for bus tickets for the next day. I never knew that the soap operas had such effect, but I gave them something that they desired – the happy-end of the soap opera, that they could tell it to their friends. The Western soap operas were both an escape from the reality, but also a way to get to know capitalism and the market (Pine 1998:109).

The office workers in the cooperative are holders of cultural capital. This form of capital, when granted by the institution, resembles the forms of symbolic capital. Therefore it is rarely contested. As I also stated, the position of the accountants allows for regulating the rules on distribution of cash and other benefits. In some cases, the regulations are designed to serve the material interests of the accountants. For instance, there were no limitations for them to take goods ‘on credit’. In this way many of them ran into debts to the cooperative and became more and more dependent on it. At the same time the accountants were no longer able to re-distribute goods and do favours to a large number of individuals, as they did in the good old times, and their social capital declined. The former control and directions ‘from above and outside’ were thus in many cases substituted by locally produced decisions. The accountants were more and more becoming the source of legal authority and in this way, involved in the management of the farm.

Chapter 9 The Director

The tasks of the director are to organise the production and the realisation of production. In these two activities he relies most on personal connections. He is also engaged in private undertakings. The experience shows that unless the undertaking is “formalised” through the structures of the cooperative, it cannot be profitable. Private undertakings are dissolved in the social networks and turn out to be unprofitable. In order to adjust his zigzagging on the formal – informal axis, the director relies on his symbolic capital. This is partly possible by keeping apart two sets of social networks – one in the village of Krasnoshchel’ye, one in the administrative centres.

Until now I have discussed how the position in the cooperative served to enlarge one’s social networks in the case of the herders in chapter 7, or to claim cultural capital in the case of the accountants in chapter 8. In this chapter, I’ll focus on how the position of the director in the cooperative offers ‘symbolic capital’. If by definition capital is anything that can be used to influence behaviours of others or to aid in achieving desired goals, then symbolic capital is the subtle influence on people’s behaviour by shaping their minds in various ways. For Bourdieu symbolic capital is the imposition of the legitimate vision of the social world – power over the instituted taxonomies, inscribed in people’s minds and presupposes the intervention of the habitus as socially constituted cognitive capacity (Bourdieu 1986, 1991). Symbolic power is, therefore, always legitimate and disinterested. In the following, I’ll concentrate on the position as director of the cooperative as *objectified* and guaranteed by the state symbolic capital. In the previous chapter, I discussed how the accountants’ representation of how things were was granted by their educational qualifications and, in fact, considered more legitimate when conflicting interests met. However, the accountants always referred to the director who was their reference source. For instance, when I asked why the additional pay for the reindeer herding brigades was 23% from the realised production, they said: “The director said so, probably such is the law; he travels, he knows”. He represented the state in the village, and this right to represent was granted through his position as director of the cooperative. This also implied that he was considered in the village as one of the “pals” in the circle of important people in the municipality: the military generals, the police director, and several higher-ups from the agricultural department in Moscow. His acquaintance with those people and firsthand knowledge of market vested him with the needed experience and authority to be heard and believed about how things are, both in town and in the village. My observations show, however, that this symbolic power could be exerted only by reproducing his social capital and in the presence of necessary qualifications. In this way he played a pivotal role for the present state of the village and the cooperative, which was not recognised. His main attitude was to show economic disinterestedness, and he succeeded convincingly both in the village and outside it.

In April 2003, he couldn’t attend a meeting of the local authorities. He said on the phone that he could come to Murmansk, but then he had to wait weeks for a flight back and he didn’t have

anything to do in Lovosero. He had to work in Krasnoshchel'ye and keep the discipline in the cooperative. This argument was met with sympathy, and it might be a clue to show what kind of image he was building outside the village: a honourable person who has sacrificed his career in the towns to go back to his village and live and work there 'in unbearable circumstances among alcoholics' as I was told in the municipality administration in Lovosero. I suggest that further implications of presenting the village as completely unprofitable, was to protect the village from new actors who might see possibilities to make profits in the village, such as fly-fishing tourism entrepreneurs. On the 'local' scene he stressed social protection from the hostility of the market and the new market actors. When I asked him about how lucrative the reindeer herding was or could be, he answered: *"Lucrative? Forget about it, the only lucrative thing in the area could be the Fly-fishing tourism; you know the Westerners pay crazy money for it.... But we are not in that game... If we weren't there the tundra would be sold to them, and there would be big money"*. Usually in the village he represented the situation of a disinterested manager who was hard hit by the changes and a victim of the bunch of policy makers and new *mafia*-like Swedish entrepreneurs. Sometimes when he talked to me he could switch and blame the bad discipline and drinking in the village as the bigger evil. That was his parallel battlefield - the calamities and the difficulties in this remote village.

Old obligations and new possibilities

The present director as I already mentioned was a local man. He was in his fifties and had moved to Krasnoshchel'ye in the sixties from the village of Ivanovka. He earned higher education and was appointed by the authorities as director of the *sovkhos* for five years early in the eighties. With the privatisation of the cooperative, the task of appointing directors was delegated to the general assembly of the owners, that is to say, the employees. In 1996, he was elected chair of the cooperative as the single seeker for the office. Since then, he succeeded in keeping the cooperative on soft budget constraints and preserved the organisational practices of the cooperative, and in this way the social functions and the importance of old values as the "work collective". The efforts to preserve the work collective coincided with the will of the core workers who identified their value for society with the cooperative they worked (see Chapter 6) in the same way as before the market reform (Kuznetsov & Kuznetsova 1996). However, the workers considered him both a good and a bad director. The main criticisms were that he was not strong enough. Many social scientists have stressed the need and the desire for stronger leaders as the only possible solution out of market crisis in Russia. The election campaign of President Putin in 1999 showed namely the sentiments for a strong leader on a national level. According to the reindeer herders, the present director of the cooperative was not the strongest one; he openly admitted the difficulties of working in the present situation of market economy. The accountants confirmed this assertion and added, that it is difficult to see what he is doing from outside, but he managed the cooperative quite well.

Many of the former bureaucrats [*apparatchiks*] who found themselves in the same position as he did turned ‘the entrusted capital’ of state-owned means of production to private capital and thus got the name ‘*entrepratchiks*’ (Verdery 1996:33). In many cases, they accelerated the privatisation of the state enterprises. In the cooperative “Olenevod”, this was not the case. The director seemed to have reconciled himself with the situation, which was to organise the production of meat and its realisation on the market. Under the command economy his task had been to manage the plan-orders according to the deadlines that came from above. In the present situation his responsibility has increased, and he is responsible for all decisions when it regards production, management, and markets. The new responsibilities are met by finding the “*only possible solution*”, often expressed in painless and short-term gains. When I tried to suggest possible alternatives, he always had counterarguments and concluded: “*There was no choice. We had to sell at this price*”. His argument was that there was just one possible solution, which excluded any option for rational choice and possibilities for economically rational action. Many in the village shared the understanding that rational and practical action and long-term gains seem to be impossible in Russia. “*If the other cultures build roads to fit their needs, the Russians have to adapt to the roads they have,*” once Misha Kuznetsov said, when we were talking about transportation. This illustrates the feeling of being doomed to eternal ‘suffering’ as victims of outside orders. To find ‘*the only possible solution*’ is also to free oneself from responsibility. The allocation of responsibility or irresponsibility was one of the main issues in the analyses of the command economy. The hierarchical structure of the economic and political life in the socialist countries gave room for considerable dislocation of responsibility. Humphrey refers to Hegedüs and Bahro who call the command economy – *a system of organised irresponsibility* (Humphrey 1998: 264). The essence of Humphrey’s argument is that the liability was greater than the actual possibilities for control, and the individuals needed a second base to enlarge their effective capacities. The second base was unofficial use of official control (position) in the work of the cooperative and building up social credit. The higher up in the system, the more responsibilities and greater the sphere of culpability. The greater the sphere of blame and culpability was, the greater was the need for social and cultural credit. Let’s look on the statistical data for measuring the director’s work.

There were two major facts that were considered important for the ‘success’: having cash, and appointments. Having cash at disposition has become a measure for the state of the cooperative. In 1999, the cooperative had for the first time indicated growth. The reason was that they sold 832 living reindeer to Norway. I couldn’t get any details about this transaction, but the consequences were that they could allow themselves to buy a tractor and several snowmobiles for the cooperative. Two of the snowmobiles were given to reindeer herders, who were close friends to the brigadier of the First Reindeer Herding Brigade. Incentives were given once in official ways through the additional pay, and in the form of equipment for the brigade. Incentives were also given in unofficial ways such as the help for the firearm license.

There were some new appointments in the reindeer herding units and most of them were in the First Reindeer Herding Brigade – the sons of the brigadier and his deputy (his brother). Appointing new staff in the recent years is one of the indices of change in the cooperative: there were not many such, but they were of great significance and showed important new developments at the cooperative. The director had to meet people and find buyers in the towns, where he spent more and more time and therefore appointed drivers. To meet the needs of taking practical decisions in the cooperative in his absence, he appointed a new executive [*zavkhoz*] who worked as an overseer, hard task master, and responsible for the coordination between the director and the production units, except for the reindeer herding.

The only time I met the *zavkhoz* was when I got permission from the director to travel to the reindeer herders' camp at the river Iokanga with the *sovkhos* all-terrain vehicle. The *zavkhoz* accompanied me to bring the 'order' and make an arrangement for me for the next day when we should depart. The driver said that he didn't want to have me in the all-terrain vehicle, but reconciled with the situation when the *zavkhoz* bawled him out.

Sales, scale and meat market

The new appointments in Lovosero were to make director's work easier outside the village. In contrast to the past when the plan orders came 'from above' and helicopters just came and took the production, now he has to travel a lot outside the village in order to find buyers and fix the logistics of the sale. This necessity for getting closer to the buyers made him buy a car and employ two drivers and an engineer-mechanic in the village of Lovosero. The engineer-mechanic responsible for the car repairs was his son-in-law, but this fact was generally accepted from the other employees. When I asked the accountants if that was the right person to employ, they backed him pointing to the fact that on his business trips in Lovosero or Murmansk, he stays overnight at his daughters' places, and he doesn't spend cooperative money for hotel, and so on. The rumours said that he bought the apartment for his daughter, when he was in charge of the local store, stole from the turnover and increased the prices so high that he could make higher profits. The local store was in contrast to the cooperative target of 'thefts': both the suppliers who provided high-priced products and made profits, and the local shopkeepers who just took from the turnover. Moreover, the present shopkeepers were always accused of the same 'sins'. Although the saying goes that a leopard does not change its spots, the work of the director in the cooperative was considered generally disinterested, to the extent of 'not caring about what happens there'.

As I already pointed out, the loss of the state-order rather prompted the need for new buyers and new markets than it reoriented the production. The survival of the cooperative is dependent on the sale of reindeer meat outside the village: in the municipality centre of Lovosero or the bigger towns in Murmansk county. Sale is a question of meeting the correct people outside the village and making the right agreements. There were traditional buyers as the local meat factories in

the towns Severomorsk, Olenegorsk, and Monchegorsk and newcomers - newly established commercial organisations. The main buyer of reindeer meat in the area was a “newcomer” - a Swedish entrepreneur, called Berger, who built a slaughtering house in Lovosero that holds the international standards for meat production. The traditional buyers, the meat factories and the military bases, are in the same situation of money deficit as the cooperative. They do not pay regularly for the meat and owe the cooperative considerable amount of money. Sporadically, meat is sold or bartered with private trading companies [*‘komercheskie organizatsii’*] in Murmansk. In 1998, the cooperative managed to barter tons of meat for two snowmobiles for the reindeer-herding brigades with one such company.

However, the accountants and the director himself told me that he was not that eager to work with the Swede. Their director preferred to use his own connections with the meat factories in Monchegorsk and Olenegorsk, Murmansk and Severomorsk where he had connections from the 1980s, when he was director of the state-farm, although some of them already had private enterprises, most of them engaged in trade. Few times I was allowed to look at some of the accountancy sheets with the names of the buyers – most of them were commercial organisations [*‘komercheskie organizatsii’*] or limited companies [*‘TOO’*]. The accountants, however, hinted that many of them are personal acquaintances of the director. He had his own network of *entrepratchiks*, people working in the district authorities before who had already turned their political capital into economic capital, who led many of the commercial organisations and he preferred to work with them. The director told me that one of the basic reasons to prefer to work with these organisations was that they were more capable of paying than the meat factories, and it was possible to exchange goods. His preferences reproduce the ideal type pattern for the director’s business: cooperation with other directors, rejection of new market entities, care for the *kollektiv* (Kharkhordin & Gerber 1994).

Following Lampland’s argument, also in Krasnoshchel’ye it was wrongheaded to think that the small scale economy will flourish with the disappearance of functioning marketing units (Lampland 2002). The meat factories remained large scale buyers, as a rule - in debt to the cooperative. The cooperative delivered meat to them, but never got money, because first they should make sausages from the meat, then they had to pay the employees and at the end there was no money to pay back for the raw meat from the cooperative. However, the director continued to work with them because they were large buyers. According to the director, it was important to keep the same large scale of production “*in order to keep the ecological balance*”. Another aspect of keeping a large scale of production was that it could increase one’s strength in contractual negotiations with the present local authorities and also increase the economic advantage one could have at one’s own disposal in a roundabout way. The third aspect is that it allowed for some private undertakings under its shelter, as I’ll show later.

Bartering directly with the commercial organisations was easier; instead of money the director could make contracts for goods and in this way get in return flour, sugar, butter, tomato cans,

fish cans, etc. The director himself didn't want to discuss this with me. He also didn't want to discuss his relation with the military. I have heard that with the military the cooperative exchanges meat for transport services and reserve parts for the all-terrain track vehicles. The image of the Swedish company was more negatively outlined: being the main buyer of reindeer meat from the two largest *sovkhoses* on the Kola Peninsula, they could offer lower prices, knowing that they didn't have competition in the area, at least not a crucial one. The advantage was that they used to pay in cash with insignificant delays. Cash for the cooperative was very important because it is the only way to pay for diesel and fuel, and keep in drift the electricity generator and the transport units as all-terrain vehicles and snowmobiles. Thus the activities of the director outside the village were directed to keep the scale of production, to supply the cooperative with products, and with cash. The nature of transactions was quite unlike the principles of a self-regulating market. In the case with the meat factories, the cooperative almost gave away meat, having in mind the unsettled possibilities for paying back; in the case of the commercial organisations meat and products were bartered. Even in the case of the Swedish entrepreneur who had the monopoly as the single buyer for cash, the prices were not steered by supply and demand. The importance of the earlier mentioned transaction of living reindeer to Norway as an exception could also be used as an argument for concluding that a functioning self-regulating market for reindeer meat on the Kola is rather absent.

Private interests

In the following part I discuss the unfolding of two private undertakings and the importance of the networks and the cooperative.

The director never talked to me about his entrepreneurial activities besides the cooperative, as if they didn't exist. I was interested in the cooperative and our conversations turned around the cooperative. The aunts, however, were interested in what he did, and how. They had claims, criticisms, and reasons to forgive (he was son-in-law to Aunt Sveta). My data for the following examples thus come from secondary sources.

I was told that the director had bought a combine machine to reap and saw, and he used to hire it out and make money out of it, or just lend it to his closest relatives in the village. When I asked Aunt Elizaveta if it happened that someone hired the combined machine, she said she didn't know. Personally speaking, she could accept to borrow it for a while, but not pay money for it, and many of those who borrowed it didn't pay – and how could they pay, since there was no money: *"It is just to spare time but there is enough time for anything here in Krasnoshchel'ye, so it doesn't bring that much money – it helps mainly them."* Moreover for most people in the village hay gathering is one of the main social events in the year. In the late summer they used to go down the river Ponoï, stay several nights there, and gather hay. Before it was for the cooperative and the collective endeavour was part of the Socialist competition and propaganda, now it was more or less for the cooperative and the people who had private cows

(the cooperative had sold some of the cows to private persons), but people kept on going to the hay gathering. Thus the combine machine didn't bring any profit but saved time and brought some social credit in his social network.

The next example reveals how private business arrangements used the *sovkhoz* infrastructure. In the summer of 1999, the director organised a campaign to exchange meat for fuel. Gleb, a reindeer herder, told me that he slaughtered a bull and bartered 42 kilograms for 200 litres fuel. It was a good price. Three facts made me conclude that this transaction was on the side. First, the summer is quite unusual time for slaughtering, secondly, the director did not ask the brigades, but everyone in the village and thirdly, the accountants didn't remember it. Nevertheless, it didn't infringe upon anyone's interests and therefore was considered not a topic to bother about. Moreover, I left with the impression that those who gave meat considered themselves on the gaining side. This also brought probably some social credit to the director, although I barely can believe that it didn't also bring economic profits for him. The 'mystification' of the deal, however, had further implications discussed later in the chapter.

As I described above, the director uses his own networks of local entrepreneurs in the sales. As I discussed in Chapter 7, the director relied very much on his own kinship ties in the village – the brigadier of First Reindeer Herding Brigade (the most reliable brigade) was his brother-in-law. In 1999, the director helped him obtain a carbine license as I already mentioned, and the brigadier responded to urgent calls for meat from the *sovkhoz*. The director was most confident with this brigade, and therefore he suggested I make observations on their work. The reasons, as I have interpreted them afterwards, were to have control over what I was doing and to show a *working* brigade. His family was also part of the village and involved actively in the local support networks. Zaitsev's family took care of Gleb, a retarded boy and nephew of his wife. Gleb's mother was working in Lovosero, and the family decided that it was better to keep the retarded boy in the village, away from the criminal and alcoholic environment in the municipality centre. Zaitsev's wife came once to Aunt Elizaveta's place to make a copy of some videorecordings. She was warmly accepted, - we had made cookies to have with the tea, to make her feel welcomed, because Aunt Elizaveta herself was always invited on birthday celebrations to the director's place.

Symbolic power: disinterested and misrecognised

These two sets of networks never met, however. The director was, so far I can see, the only linkage between these two sets of networks, and he utilised this position for gaining social capital. Symbolic capital produces its effect concealing the fact that it originates in material forms of capital, which are the source of its effects (Bourdieu 1977:183), and much of the symbolic capital the director had at his disposal was built upon his social capital. The social capital was raised on the lack of links between the village and the county towns and his own role as binding them together.

The Director's gains of social capital were maintained through the distance between the two spheres where he operated and the two sets of networks: the village and the towns. Thus in the public awareness the village remains an uncivilised place in the tundra, and the market - a predatory place. He was manipulating rather unconsciously the knowledge about the actual relations in these two spheres in order to emphasise his disinterest and thus to gain social credit. In this way he further reproduced stereotypes and worldviews. In the village, for instance, anyone referred to the Swede as almost a criminal and unsympathetic person, though the only person who knew him was the director. He was in this way shaping the image of risks in the present market situation and further the responses of his co-villagers to it. The idea of "market" comes mainly from the TV-news, which in contrast to the previous propaganda of successful socialism, were rather focussing on the shortages and the perils in the present situation. "*We live well here*", Aunt Elizaveta often said, "*Just think about all the robberies, killings, cheating and all this stuff in the towns*". Thus, in contrast to other places from the Soviet bloc, where the moral advantage is prescribed as a rule to the past and anger is directed to the present situation, the villagers of Krasnoshchel'ye granted the place: "*here, in the tundra*" with moral merits.

Thus, although the villagers of Krasnoshchel'ye had gained the right to free speech, much of what I heard as reasoning in the village echoed the words of the director. The mystification of the above mentioned 'meat for fuel deal' was a further moment of enshrouding his position and the way it was accepted, without asking questions, had almost a religious aspect. The same was the effect of the discourse on the 'only possible solution'. The lack of transparency in the decision-making and the mechanisms could also be traced to previous practices when the enterprise got the plan 'from above' without any explanations, and people were not supposed to ask critical questions.

According to Humphrey, mastery of organisations in the Soviet *sovkhozes* was a quality of individual personality (a quasi-magical, quasi-sacred power) that transcends both genealogy and knowledge expertise (Humphrey 1998a: 7) that is, as we have seen so far, social and cultural capital. The base for transforming this cultural and social capital in symbolic power was the fact that the organisation of the state farm was always subordinated to *the principle of the single leader* (Humphrey 1998: 109) whereas the leader concentrated in his hands political power, legal authority, and economic management. Moreover, he could never get blamed from below. The workers had to *obey* and try to make sure that the official is not angered (Humphrey 1998a: 6) in order not to appear in an unpredictable situation. The directors, to the contrary, could appear as arrogant and use high-handed methods. In Krasnoshchel'ye arrogance was almost impossible. The director was too dependent on his social ties in the village, and I never saw him show any rage or anger at some of the workers even though he had reason to. Semen, one of the drivers, confirmed that it was untypical. Unlike the *zavkhoz* and the livestock expert and even the accountants, I never saw him yelling, a fact that further points to his social dependencies on the villagers as stronger than the authority vested in his position.

However, his importance and power were misrecognised in the village. I never heard any criticism aimed at his misuse of position or power. As I stated in the beginning of the chapter, he was considered rather powerless in the present situation. Most of the criticisms were directed towards his lack of knowledge about the reindeer herding: *'However the director does what he is supposed to do, he could be a better leader if he knew something about the herding and could adapt the management to the characteristics of reindeer herding, if he cared about the herders'*, Gleb once concluded. Gleb probably was bitter, because he expected also a snowmobile that could enable him to go more often to the tundra, facilitate his work, and become an asset in his social networks. However, this is my proposition. In this Chapter I discussed the director as a heir of symbolic capital from the past, and that this capital is maintained at present through maintaining forms of social and cultural capital.

Chapter 10 Conclusions

November 2003. I was reading on the Internet news from Murmansk, and I came across a transcription of a program from the radio station “Freedom” [*‘Svoboda’*] called: “The Kola North: reindeer and people” by a journalist named Andrei Korolev. The program consisted of three interviews. The last one was with a newly established reindeer herding entrepreneur in Krasnoshchel’ye, Andrei Yulin, where he spoke of his enterprise “Piras”. I could not evoke any memories that I had heard the name in the village. He was a Saami and had a private herd of 1500 deer. In the interview he focused on the problems of getting the pasturelands where he already had invested 60,000 US dollars. He complained over the management of the cooperative. The concluding remarks of the journalist were as follows:

“About the incomes in the Saami business, including the reindeer herding it is not accepted to talk. Due to correctness. The small people do not stand to be encroached upon from outside. Being in their own world, they do not deal with millions and even do not suspect of the existence of such institution as the nation state. Because they are a state on their own. Everything outside this state is through the TV. Last winter Yulin hung out a satellite dish, but it is gone with a hurricane. Thus, the TV is also for the future civilisation. Until then, every day at four o’clock in the morning the dogs will call him out in the tundra.”

The journalist according to me is denying any possibility for future opening of more possibilities for the state to take care of the village and its inclusion in the new realities of market liberalism.

The view from the centre, thus, shows that the people of the village have to rely on themselves to become part of the nation-state or the ‘present civilisation’ and they do, as the large support networks, discussed in Chapters Four and Five, show. But as we saw in Chapter Six, the role of the state has been first and foremost played by the cooperative in the village. It has been a microcosm on its own, as Humphrey writes, and it still remains a *total social institution* - an institution that concentrates different forms of power and reproduces itself not only as an economic enterprise, but also as a social, cultural, and symbolic institution (Clarke 1992). Therefore, it still functions in the same way as it did under the command economy. Once being an instrument of the state power, in the present it still remains the main source of symbolic power in the village. At the same time its functioning as such is dependent on the ‘social capital’ and the social networks of its employees, whether they are in the production units or in the administration. In Chapter Seven, I discussed how much of the motivation in the reindeer herding is seen as ‘obligations’ towards close relatives and friends; in Chapter Eight, I discussed how the accountants keep, produce, and reproduce a system of rules and papers, so that they can balance between kin expectations and the lack of money in the cooperative. In Chapter Nine, I discussed the importance of the social networks for the work of the director, both in the village and outside it. In the last three chapters I sketched out how the support networks generate more

social capital in the case of the herders, more cultural capital in the case of the accountants, and increase the symbolic power vested in the position of the director by utilising the soil of the cooperative.

Bourdieu suggests that any form of capital could be reduced to economic capital, although the bearers are rather ignorant of this. In the case of Krasnoshchel'ye all forms of capital could be reduced to and transformed to economic values, but these in turn, as we have seen in most cases, are converted to social capital, a fact that shows a very strong 'embeddedness' of the economy in the social relationships (Polanyi 1944). This embeddedness thus facilitates the reproduction of the cooperative as a 'total institution'. The cooperative's monopoly in the village is more or less a result of the fact that it lies inaccessibly in the tundra, where the means of transportation and communication hardly can bring any change and alternative solutions for the practical problems. Although the market reform is intended to transform such total social institutions into economic enterprises, in the case of Krasnoshchel'ye, it was doomed to fail. While new possibilities to break with the strong hierarchical ties and structures of the former regime appear in the centres, in this remote village the cooperative runs the conversion of economic capital into social, cultural, and symbolic and vice versa as a closed system. Its future seems also to be dependent on new alternatives for gaining on economic, social and cultural capital. But how come new alternatives appear in such places? And if they appear, as Yulin apparently did, how do they become viable there – as I read in the transcribed radio program for the journalist this project was rather doomed to decline.

In the three last chapters, I have discussed how tasks and responsibilities are divided and delegated to the different employees. We observed that in many cases the awareness of the responsibilities for the work at the cooperative was formed under the pressure of pragmatic interest dictated by social obligations. This transforms the cooperative to an 'insider collective' as Humphrey has suggested on the one hand (Humphrey 1996). On the other hand, taking over responsibilities is a clear sign of reconceptualising ownership. The differentiation of tasks and responsibilities in the cooperative is probably the only way to make it viable on the market in the new situations.

Throughout the last five chapters I was concerned with the question whether misappropriation occurs. The answer was positive; however, my conclusion is that misappropriation does not have negative consequences, but is facilitating the differentiation of tasks and responsibilities. Moreover, it points to new reconceptualisations of property and questions the ownership of the cooperative and the resources managed by it. That is to say, when tasks and liabilities are no longer abstract, but concrete - they will change the attitudes of the employees. The former lack of ownership is to be reconceptualised and replaced, especially in the face of endangering economic enterprises in the area, as the fly-fishing tourism or some existing Western-initiated mining projects in the tundra.

When it regards the form of the enterprise that seems huge, bureaucratic, and hence outdated,

I have come to the following conclusions. In the chapter on the accountants, I discussed how rules are produced, maintained, and enforced in the cooperative. The rules were used to serve particular interests and keeping them was a way to escape responsibility and obligations and to legitimize some restrictions. This informality was intrinsic to the formal rules, and it could also be its source. In the beginning of my project I intended to use an old Russian saying: ‘God is high above and the Tsar is far away’ [*Do tsaria daleko, do boga vysoko*] in order to discuss the lack of rules and regulations in the present *status quo* in the village. To my surprise, I was prompted to find out that rules and regulations are easier abused in the centers. If the woman at the airport was to sell me a ticket and allow me on the flight with my entire luggage, she probably wouldn’t be able to allow several others to send packages to Lovosero, as there are limitations on the weight. If the border officer at the airport had to keep me for several more hours or even days, I would become a heavier burden to him and to his subordinates. To let me in the country ‘on his own responsibility’ brought relief both to the other officers and to me. In the first example, keeping the rules is maintaining one’s social credit; in the second breaking the rules had the same effect. This double effectiveness of the bureaucratic system is probably the main reason for its persistence. It reveals short-term strategies, but it also has the effect of guarantee for the individuals under the pressure of constant insecurities.

Thus, in the long run, it was possible to see that there is a movement from the systemic domination, towards more person-dependent, network-based forms of domination that gradually become institutionalized. The cooperative has come to a form of economic enterprise that is, to use Shanin’s definition, “expolar” – both defined as market rational, and also as bureaucratic, it is both formal and informal (Shanin 1999). Whether it is a stage on the transition from command to market economy, or whether it is a more lasting state, is difficult to tell, but one thing is clear – that the way to the markets is long and intractable, literally speaking.

Appendix

Structure of the cooperative “Olenevod”

The Cooperative consisted of head office in Krasnoshchel’ye and had two branch offices in the other two villages: Kanevka and Sosnovka. In Lovosero there was also small representation consisting of an engineer and three drivers. According to the information I got in the office, the *sovkhos* had the following units: engineering and technical staff, dairy farm, diesel electric generator, building corps, motor vehicles unit, repair and maintenance unit, tractor unit, sewing workshop, reindeer herding brigades and general workers. The offices in Kanevka and Sosnovka manage the reindeer herding brigades there.

The following tables are from the personnel department of the cooperative. In the first column is the wage rate. The considerable difference between the director and the other employees is explained with the difference in ‘responsibility’ and education. For me it was also interesting to look on the category ‘nationality’ [*natsional’nost’*]. It was in contradiction with the ethnic stereotypes I heard in the municipality centre and that are expressed in the media. Especially, with the representations of Saami as always subordinated to the powerful Russians and profit-seeking Komi. The two key positions in the cooperative (of the director and of the supply manager) were held by Saami, and they were by no means underrepresented in the management.

Table 2 The Engineers and technical staff (ITR) at the cooperative “Olenevod”

	Engineering and Technical Staff	Age	Education	Nationality	Employed since
16	Director	1946	University	Saami	1984
9	Deputy director	1956	Secondary vocational-technical school	Ukrainian	1989
9	Head accountant	1953	Secondary vocational-technical school	Komi	1973
9	Senior veterinarian	1954	Secondary vocational-technical school	Komi	1982
7	Veterinarian	1959	Secondary vocational-technical school	Komi	1984
5	Head of personnel office	1947	Secondary vocational-technical school	Komi	1973
2	Radio operator				
7	Senior accountant	1956	Secondary vocational-technical school	Russian	1994
6	Accountant	1977	Secondary vocational-technical school	Komi	1996
6	Senior paymaster	1952	Secondary vocational-technical school	Komi	1974
7 L	Engineer	1970	Secondary vocational-technical school	Russian	1995
9 K	Head of department	1968	Secondary vocational-technical school	Komi	1988
7	Senior electric engineer	1959	Secondary vocational-technical school	Komi	1986
5	Salesman	1960	Secondary vocational-technical school	Komi	1997
4	Secretary/ typist	1959	Secondary vocational-technical school	Komi	1986
6	Head of storehouse	1950	Elementary/ secondary school	Nantes	1971
2 S	Paymaster of department	1934	Elementary/ secondary school	Russian	1971
1 K	Paymaster of department	1963		Komi	1992
	Supply manager	1965		Saami	1999
	Head of department	1966	Tenth grade of secondary school	Russian	1999

For the rest of the staff the information was very scarce.

Table 3 The staff of the cooperative

	Dairy farm	6			Sewing workshop	10
	Brigadier				Female worker	6
	Milkmaid	2			Male worker	1
	Stockman	3			Brigade leader	1
					Master	1
	Electric generator	8			Home worker	1
5	Diesel engineer	1				
4	Diesel engineer	4			Maintenance unit	3
4	Electric engineer	1		5	Welder	
3	Electric engineer	2		6	Fitter	
				4	Welder	
	Motor vehicles unit	6				
3	All terrain vehicle driver	2			Others	
2	All terrain vehicle driver	1			Workers	14
L	Driver	3			Guard	1
	Tractor unit	12			Building corps	4
	Tractor driver			4	Carpenter	2
				3	Stove mason	
	Reindeer herding	52				

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