



Faculty of Humanities, Social science and Education

## **(In)voluntary entrepreneurs**

*A study of tradition usage as a departure for rural entrepreneurship*

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*Master's thesis in Visual Cultural Studies / STF-3903 /  
Spring 2018*

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Instead of the preface:  
<https://youtu.be/f9FCv38UByw>

## **Abstract**

People from Kenozerje ceased to be citizens of the Soviet state on December 26, 1991, and two days later received a citizenship of the Kenozersky National Park, a new incredible country stretched on the borders of the Arkhangelsk region in Russia. The Park uses traditions established on its territory as a departure for activities and constructing an everyday life in Kenozerje. The Park is constantly facing the dilemmas – how to preserve local culture and how to involve people into handling and initiating projects in Kenozerje?

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor Trond Waage for his advices, patience and support. Special thanks to Lisbet Holvedahl and Bjørn Arntsen for conversations we had together.

I would like to thank my classmates for time we spent together, to Åsgårdvegen, 9 for happiness and friendship, to Darya Danilova for Summer 2016.

I am extremely thankful to Norway and University of Tromsø for the funding support and sponsoring my research and my studies.

Special thanks to all those people whom I met and spent time with in Kenozerje!



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## 1. Introduction

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*“I was so much happy that I still have the Kenozersky National Park, so beautiful, so incredibly cozy”*

(Elena Shatkovskaya in her interview to Vladimir Lebedev, RIA Novosti)

### 1.1. Awakening

It is common for people from Severodvinsk, my hometown, to spend summer time in *their village*. Everyone has *his own village*. Often a remote settlement with an unpronounceable name. Vaimusha, Uzhoma, Solza, Chakola, Piyala and so forth. *The village is yours* because you have your grandparents living there or at least your old family house which needs to be visited and maintained every summer. I didn't have any village at all because of my family history. My father's mother sold her huge village house in the middle of the Arkhangelsk region to a summer camp for children back in the 1970s. My mother's father was a military officer and therefore re-settled in a town almost immediately after entering service for the Soviet Army in the 1950s. I spent all my childhood without going to my family's village simply because there was none.



Figure 1. Severodvinsk, pr. Morskoy, 13a. The house where I grew up. Photo from <https://yandex.ru/maps/>

I remember the first time I visited rural Russia. It was a school excursion organized by my mother (she is a history teacher in a high school) to the ancient Pomor village Nenoksa, remarkable for its unique wooden architecture. Nenoksa is located in 30 km from Severodvinsk. It would seem that this is not far away but there is no road to this village. Only a small passenger train goes there every day at 7 am from the outskirts of my hometown. A road was never built because a rocket launching site of the Russian Navy is located there. The Soviet authorities did not build the road as one of many attempts to keep the military base secret. When I got there I found myself in a completely different landscape. Instead of the prefabricated high rise buildings and neo-classicist buildings of the Stalin era I saw handmade wooden houses of one and two floors. In the middle of the village stood a huge wooden church with five domes with an impressive wooden bell tower next to it.

My first village experience was shocking. I realized that the concrete-panel nine-stored houses typical for every Russian town are abnormal, that there is a different lifestyle in different landscapes still unknown for me. I comprehended that wood was a dominating building material throughout centuries preconditioning everyday life. The trip to Nenoksa awoke my interest to rural Russia, to artisan knowledge still existing in remote areas, to wooden architecture and to its contemporary usage.

This interest was shaped into a decision to enter the master's in Cultural Studies at Northern Arctic Federal university (NArFU) in Arkhangelsk in 2013. And already there at the end of first year me and my classmates got invited to conduct a short-term fieldwork at the Kenozersky National Park in the south-western part of Arkhangelsk region. The fieldwork was made possible through an ongoing collaboration between the Department of Cultural and Religious Studies (NArFU) and the Park's administration. Marina Meylutina, the head of research department of the Kenozersky National Park, teaches several courses at the NArFU, and professors from the Department of Cultural and Religious Studies used to conduct their research in the Park. The main objective for our fieldwork was to collect stories about local storytellers in the villages of the Kenozersky National Park and, if possible, record their tales and legends. We went to Kenozerje, the northern part of the Park, and spent there five days. The fieldwork itself was extremely unsuccessful since we didn't manage to collect any tales but *I lived in a real village* for the first time in my life. *I spent days there, I faced rural everyday life* which came to be so badly distinct from what I used to experience before - I ate simple freshly cooked village food, I had only poor cellular connection and no Internet, I owlishly stared at wooden houses trying to imagine how many city apartments could possibly fit inside each of them, I was afraid of free-moving cattle.

For the second time I went to the Kenozersky National Park with RAKETA, a Stockholm based artist collective which runs disciplinary projects within art, design, digital media and

architecture. RAKETA started to be curious about wooden houses in Arkhangelsk region during their collaborative “Mobile Institute” project in 2014 - they found lots of similarities with the Northern Sweden and wanted to research more. In the same year at the "Contemporary Arts in the European North" forum in Arkhangelsk I suggested them to collaborate with the Kenozersky National Park. The collaboration started a day later in the office room of Elena Shatkovskaya, the director of the Park. It was very easy to reach the Park - I just called Marina Meylutina and asked for a meeting. At the office room besides the director there were two deputies interpreting our conversation and a board with berry pies and herbal teas from Kenozerje. The Park representatives seemed to be extremely curious in any possible collaboration with foreigners and moreover - in any injection of money into their affiliated territory. As a start of collaboration we've decided to restore couple of wooden houses by joint forces and to study restoration techniques both theoretically and practically. The project was named HOUSE IN THE FOREST – THE SCHOOL IN BETWEEN, got funding from the Swedish Institute and the Swedish Arts Council and later on in October 2015 was shown in the parallel program of the 6th Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art. Since then me and RAKETA are still continuing collaboration with the Kenozersky National Park on different levels.

My first two interventions in the space of the Kenozersky National Park inspired me to conduct research on its territory. During those trips I felt that the Park creates something anew. This something could be called as a myth based on the rites and traditions which existed here in the area many years ago mixing them with stereotypes or expectations about rural life existing now. Thanks to the Kenozersky National Park and while being on its territory I got to know through various excursions and workshops that all the people there in villages of Kenozerje worship the local Orthodox shrines and the pagan groves at the same time, that fairy tales and epic stories are still being told, that people build huge wooden houses like in the old times using rustic materials. I felt there is a significant gap in between museums built by the National Park and what they want to introduce to visitors and the original everyday life of locals and their rising scepticism towards to the Park. My desire was to jump into this gap, to discover inner processes of the Kenozersky National Park, to pursue traditions - new or old ones, to enter museum life and to meet people who live and work in Kenozerje.

## **1.2. Before fieldwork**

I think I had personal interest in coming back to Kenozerje, the northern part of the Kenozersky National Park, where almost all my previous activities in the area have happened. I was fascinated by landscapes and the people who inhabited these places. I was interested in

relations built in between the locals and the Park. Is living there really feels like a mosaic as it was noted by Elizaveta Nechaeva-Anikieva in one of our conversations? If yes, who creates this mosaic then?

To some extent my research was triggered by Roy Wagner's "The Invention of Culture". Wagner argued that anthropologist

*"invents then, is his own understanding; the analogies he creates are extensions of his own notions and those of his culture, transformed by his experiences of the field situation. He uses the latter as a kind of "lever," the way a pole vaulter uses his pole, to catapult his comprehension beyond the limitations imposed by earlier viewpoints. If he intends his analogies to be no analogies at all, but an objective description of the culture, he will make every effort to refine them into a closer and closer approximation of his experience. Where he finds discrepancies between his own invention and the native "culture" as he comes to know it, he changes and reworks his invention until its analogies seem more appropriate or "accurate." (Wagner 1981, 19)*

I imagined that the Kenozersky National Park could be this anthropologist who tries to create the subject in order to represent it more objectively? (Wagner 1981, 19) And what if the Park is driven by the desire of only one person? My hypothesis is that the Park uses traditions established on its territory as a departure for activities and constructing an everyday life in Kenozerte. Here by 'tradition' I mean a belief or behavior passed down within a group or society with symbolic meaning or special significance with origins in the past (Green, 800). In my research I followed key actors who contribute to the development of the Kenozersky National Park. I also tried to consider the dilemmas facing the Park's contemporary reality - an ongoing need to preserve culture that was successfully preserved until now by its natural isolation and an increased demand in local people to handle or initiate projects on the Park's territories.

## **2. The Field**

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### **2.1. Historical context**

Kenozerte is an area in the North of Russia lost among endless forests and awful roads on the border of Karelia and Arkhangelsk region. For example, the journey there takes about 25-30 hours from Moscow, depending on the time of the year. The nearest train station is in Plesetsk in

160 km, the nearest airport - in Arkhangelsk is 470 km. The situation is much better with other transport, a spaceport is nearby (only in 175 km) and various waterways connect the region. Nevertheless, waterways are rarely used even for local transportations and the spaceport is something like a surreal dream - sometimes at night local people see military rockets launching over the water surface of Kenozero lake.

Kenozero lake is the hub of a regional water system. It is possible to get to the White Sea by following the rivers Kena and Onega or to go south on the same rivers passing by Lacha and Vozhe lakes. These waterways had been used as main transport routes for a very long time. Starting from the 10th century Russians began to come to these lands and to displace local indigenous population (mostly they were different Finno-Ugric tribes who in their turn had suppressed proto Sami). In general, the indigenous population of Kenozerje had adopted Russian language, crafts and everyday life at the turn of the 11th-12th century (Heavens and Neighborhoods of Kenozerje 2009, 15). The ancient peoples left after themselves crafts, customs, tools, habits; most places (rivers, hills, peninsulas, etc.) were named by them as well. For example, the name of Lake Kenozero originated from the Finnish word *keno* - 'curved' and the Russian word *ozero* - 'a lake' (*Kenozero* - 'a curved lake') or the name of Kuklahta, a small bay next to a steep in the southern part of Kenozero, came from the Vepsian (*kuk* - 'a small hill') and the Karelian (*kukkulla* - 'a small hill') languages (Mullonen and Zakharova). Finns whom I met in the beginning of my fieldwork were extremely happy to see the word *Maselga* on the area's map.

*"Here it is a very important point. This is in Russian Maselga and in Finnish Maaselgä. And it means [a place] where water goes in different directions"* (Field work video archive 2016/07/11. Interview with Finnish tourists).

Several villages are spread on the shores of Kenozero Lake. Kositsyno, Tyryshkino, Semenovno, Zihnovo, Semenovno are in the south; Pogost, Vershinino, Shishkino, Gory are located on the peninsula in the middle of the lake; Minino, Ryzhkovo, Fedosovo, Glazovo, Myza, Ust-Pocha are in the north. Other villages related to Kenozerje are located on nearby lakes - Philiposvskaya, Dedova gorka, Stroeva gorka on Pocha Lake up north, Fedorovskaya on Bolshoe Lake down to the south on way to Lekshmozerje. All of the mentioned above villages have almost the same shape which is common for a majority of the Northern Russian villages. "One or two rows of houses stood in lines [...] facades of one line are facing back walls of another. Facades were usually oriented to the water" (Bernshtam 2009, 35). Most of the villages have a cluster structure with a number of different ends, parts, or sides. Usually each part is dedicated to one



family (Bernshtam 2009, 28). For example, *Shishkina* village is mainly inhabited by representatives of *Shishkiny* family, *Kalitiny* are coming from *Ust-Pocha*, etc.

Almost every village has its own chapel or even a church. Nikolskaya (named after St. Nicholas) chapel, the architectural dominant of Vershinino, was built before 1846. It has a wedge-shaped roof distinctive for church buildings of that time (Heavens and Neighborhoods of Kenozerje 2009, 73). The biggest areal church complex is located in Philipovskaya village and consists of three separate buildings - two churches and a bell tower connected by external galleries. This “triple” complex is one out of four remaining in the Russian North and three left in Arkhangelsk region. These churches and chapels “play an important role in the organization of surrounding space not only they are different from other buildings by their architecture but also because of their location” (Heavens and Neighborhoods of Kenozerje 2009, 73). It’s rather obvious that the church buildings were not placed at random, the builders followed a consistent plan. “The religious buildings in Kenozerje are located on hills, on slopes or in valleys; always in a place where they are well-combined with the landscape” (Heavens and Neighborhoods of Kenozerje 2009, 76).



*Figure 2. The Nikolskaya (named after St. Nicholas) chapel in Vershinino*

The remoteness of Kenozerje allowed to preserve its historical heritage comprehensively with a unique toponymy and cultural landscape. However, in the 20th century the area’s remoteness made most of the local people leave Kenozerje. Most of the villages mentioned above

are now abandoned or consist of one or two houses. Desolation came to the territory right after the 1917's October revolution. The revolution itself passed imperceptibly. Spring after 1917 the local men returned to villages from winter jobs (each winter people of Kenozerje used to live to St. Petersburg and Murmansk in order to earn some money) with red ribbons on their sleeves and told to people of Kenozerje:

*“The Revolution has happened. There is no more tzar.” Everyone listened to their stories enchantedly, and then people went back to their routine. What should they care about city affairs? It was more important to take care of the land and livestock and the Revolution was forgotten for a while (Ivanova).*

Later in the 1930s the village life was affected by the USSR's New Economic Policy - the production of grain had been doubled, the forest industry was growing. The state wanted to preserve the distinctness of peasant farms by supplying them with modern equipment and loans. This new policy was crossed out by the policy of collectivization. All peasants were supposed to be united in *kolkhozy*<sup>1</sup>, the peasant's property was mostly taken away. People were starving.

In the 1940s the male population of Kenozerje went to the battlefields to fight the Nazi invaders, women and children still continued to sow and to harvest. Not only men were taken to the front but also horses. *Kolkhozniki*<sup>2</sup> still had to plow the land in order to implement the state plan. They had to harness cows which don't fit for such work at all.

After the WWII various arms industries were set up in Arkhangelsk region - the most significant being the naval yard in Severodvinsk capable to build nuclear submarines and the spaceport next to Plesetsk. Industrialization sucked the village population into cities where it was possible to find work in the industrial sector. By 1958 personal households had been reduced by almost 20 percent comparing to the before WWII period. In this decade every fifth village disappeared. In 1962 the state revealed and eliminated "unpromising" settlements. The crops have been decreasing, and on the collective farms there was less and less food for livestock. The villagers were increasingly moving to cities (Ivanova). Till 1991 the population of Kenozerje had been reduced drastically. And in 1991 the Kenozersky National park was founded in Kenozerje and Vershinino was chosen as its administrative center.

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<sup>1</sup> *Collective farms* in English

<sup>2</sup> *Collective farmers* in English

## 2.2. An epic region

Kenozerje has been an interesting place for researchers for a very long time. First ethnographic observations of the area were written down by Petr Inohodzev during his trip to the Russian North in 1785 (Kritskiy 2005). In the same year *Tutolmin's description* was published which has included notes on local history and portraits of peoples of the Russian North. The last version of *Tutolmin's description* published in 1808 and titled as *Historical and geographical descriptions of the Olonets region* (Kenozerje was a part of this district at that time) was supplemented by a map with all local settlements (Kritskiy 2005). Pavel Rybnikov, ethnographer and folklore researcher, was sent into exile in Petrozavodsk in 1859. He was assigned to the staff of the provincial chancery and as an employee he was given with the task to collect statistical data in Pudozhskiy district of Olonets province. Pavel used this possibility to collect ethnographic data and local epic poems<sup>1</sup>. This trip and several others resulted in *The Songs collected by P.N. Rybnikov* published in 4 volumes in 1861—1867 made him a well-known author both in Russia and abroad.

In 1871 Aleksander Hilferding, an ethnographer from Warsaw, went to Kenozerje and managed to collect over 80 epic poems there (Kuznetsova). Which he has published later all together under title *Onezhskie byliny*<sup>2</sup>. A huge amount of epic poems in the area of Kenozerje made him to name this area “Island of Russian Epic Poetry” (Shatkovskaya 2009). In 1927 the research work continued, the State Art Academy and the Museum of Ethnology organized an expedition lead by the Sokolovy brothers to the Onega lake basin in order to collect epic poetry. The expedition titled *Following Hilferding and Rybnikov* became a successful enterprise; its participants recorded 91 historical songs, epic poems and ballads (Shatkovskaya 2009).

In the 1950s - 1960s several research groups were sent to Kenozerje by the Moscow State University. In the 1980s a study of the Kenozerje's toponymy had been conducted which in the 1990s resulted in the 2 volumes of *Toponymy of Kenozerje* by Viktor Deryagin, a Russian Language professor from the Arkhangelsk Pomor State university (Shatkovskaya 2009).

Along with ongoing folklore studies Kenozerje was often visited by architects and architecture scholars. In the 1903 - 1905 Ivan Bilibin, a Russian artist and illustrator, studied the wooden architecture in Kenozerje as part of his research trips to Olonets, Vologda and Arkhangelsk provinces. Results were published in the monograph *Folk Arts of the Russian North*

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<sup>1</sup> *Byliny* or *stariny* in Russian

<sup>2</sup> *Epic poems from the Onega Region* in English

in 1904. Many photos taken by Ivan Bilibin were published in the *Mir Iskusstva*<sup>1</sup> magazine in 1904 and in 1910 in the 1st volume of the Igor Grabar's comprehensive *History of Russian Art* (Dudina).

In 1943 Alexander Opolovnikov started to work in Kenozerje. He was sent there on request of the USSR Architecture's Academy to study the heritage of wooden architecture. His research resulted in a series of photographs, drawings and measurements taken in the area of Kenozerje and its surroundings which has allowed to preserve at least visualizations of lost historical sites (Opolovnikov 1983). Opolovnikov took detailed pictures of the triple church complex in Philipovskaya village and pictures of the village itself - of huge two-storey peasant cottages, of the old cemetery with a chopped fence, of the smallest St. Kirika and Ulita chapel located at the northern end of Philipovskaya (Dudina). Most of the photos taken by Opolovnikov are stored now in the Moscow State Architecture museum.

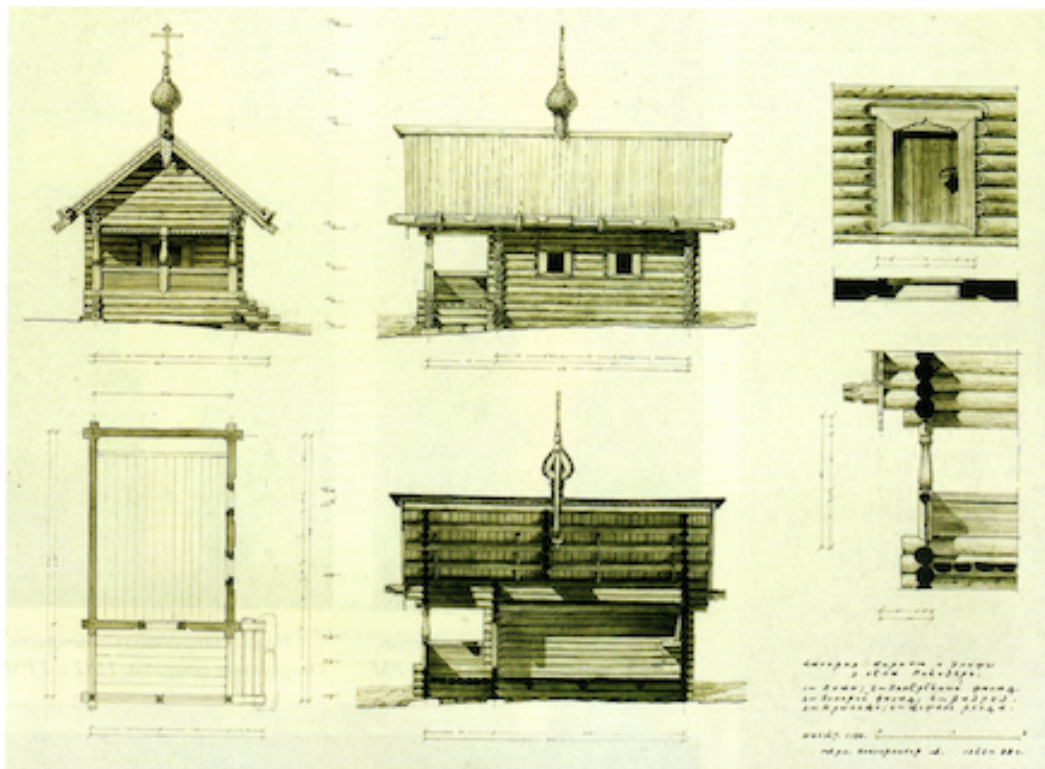


Figure 3. Sketches made by Alexander Opolovnikov from the Kenozersky National Park archive

In the 1970s researchers and scholars started to get worried about the current state of historical monuments in Kenozerje, deforestation and bogging of the area. No plan to take measures in order to protect the territory existed. In the mid 1970s the Ministry of Culture and the Soviet Council of Ministers of the USSR were informed about the situation in Kenozerje, shortly

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<sup>1</sup> *The World of Art* in English

after, in 1975, the Ministry of Culture and the Soviet Council of Ministers officially recommend the authorities of Arkhangelsk region to create in Kenozerje an open-air architectural and historical heritage museum. In 1977, a group of researchers and cultural workers (Alexander Opolovnikov, Boris Rybakov, Oleg Volkov and others) asked the Council of Ministers of the USSR to preserve the diversity of the Russian North's heritage by creating several national parks. The Kenozersky National Park (named after Kenozerje and Kenozero Lake) was meant to be one of them. The Park was created in 1991 by the Russian SFSR's government. The official paper *On the creation of the state national park "Kenozersky"* was dated by the 28th December 1991. This happened only two days after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Undoubtedly there is no connection between the creation of the Park and the fall of the USSR. The USSR was a slow bureaucratic machine prioritizing industrial development to even development of rural areas, modern Soviet culture to archaic rustic life. Most of the times rural territories were perceived as a source of human and natural resources. In Kenozerje this situation was able to change only thanks to the efforts of only several people who fought for this land for decades and inspired others to continue this fight.

### **2.3. The National Park**

*In order to preserve the valuable cultural historical and natural complex of Kenozerje in Arkhangelsk region and to use it for recreation, cultural and scientific research the RSFSR Government decides [...] to create in Arkhangelsk region the National park "Kenozersky".*

*Governmental note, the 28th December 1991*

The decision to create the park in the Arkhangelsk region was in no way motivated by the idea of stopping local population from moving out from rural areas. At least official papers, both *On the creation of the state national park "Kenozersky"* and Statute of the Federal State Institution *"National Park "Kenozersky"*, don't say so. According to them the Park has the following main tasks:

- 1. "To preserve natural complexes and objects, unique natural sites, historical and cultural sites that have ecological, historical and recreational significance; along with studying and promoting them.*
- 2. To ensure the integrity of historical ensembles, complexes, historical environment and adjacent landscapes; to create the best conditions for the preservation, study and use of*

- immovable and movable historical and cultural monuments; to promote cultural and natural heritage by museums [...].*
3. *To preserve and to restore historically developed cultural landscapes; to restore violated natural, historical, cultural complexes and objects; to create conditions for regulated tourism and to organize it.*
  4. *To develop and to adopt scientific methods of conservation of natural, historical, cultural complexes for their further recreational usage and for environmental education.*
  5. *To conduct environmental monitoring.*
  6. *To deal with environmental education of the local population.*
  7. *To preserve and to restore traditions of the folk craftsmanship and folklore.*
  8. *To study and apply international experience in the field of preservation natural, historical and cultural resources through the system of specially protected areas; to develop partnerships with with other Russian and foreign specially protected areas and other organizations and institutions in accordance with the aims and objectives of the Park.*
  9. *To assist in developing the region and in creation of new jobs.*
  10. *To supervise the regime of the special protection of the Park's territory". (Ministry of natural resources 2003)*

The Kenozersky National Park is preserving natural, cultural and historical heritage on the area of 141354 hectares. This area includes Kenozerje, the western part of the Plesetsk district of the Arkhangelsk region, centered at the Kenozero Lake and Lekshmozerje, the north-western-part of Kargopol district of the Arkhangelsk region. The Kenozersky National park borders with the Russian North National Park in the south and the Vodlozersky National Park in the north-west. Around 2600 people in 46 villages live in both Kenozerje and Lekshmozerje (Kuskov and Arsenieva). Kenozerje is connected to Plesetsk, the nearest big town, by a dirt road. The same kind of road connects Lekshmozerje to Kargopol and to border towns of the neighboring Karelia. There is no motorway in between two parts of the Kenozersky National Park but only a pedestrian path through forests and swamps. Elena Shatkovskaya, the director of the Park, have argued for maintaining the historical absence of roads in order not to ruin cultural landscape. Usually it takes 4 hours to get from Kenozerje to Lekshmozerje by car. Since the area of the Park is overfilled with different lakes and rivers (the total length of streams and rivers is 532 km and the total area of water reservoirs is about 20000 hectares), boats of different kinds remain the main means of transportation. The Park owns a motor vessel *Zarya*<sup>1</sup> made in the USSR in 1960s, a motor boat

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<sup>1</sup> *Dawn* in English



*Strelets*<sup>1</sup> and a number of small motor boats for rangers. Locals usually have their own motor boats.

The Kenozersky National Park since the moment of its establishment actively preserves and restores cultural landscape of Kenozerje. For instance, the pedestrian path in between parts of the Park was named as *Transkenozerskaya tropa*<sup>2</sup> well renovated and equipped with navigation and numerous benches. The Park's official web page says that it was a historical route belonging to people from Novgorod, an ancient capital of the Northern Russia, who used it in the process of colonization in the 12 - 14th centuries. Despite of the old villages, sacred forests and memorial orthodox crosses scattered all over the path there is a newly restored church, the *Porzhenskiy pogost*, located right in the middle of it. The *Porzhenskiy pogost* was inaugurated by Igor Orlov, the governor of the Arkhangelsk region, Sergey Donskoy, the minister of the natural resources, and was consecrated by the Head of Arkhangelsk Eparchy Metropolitan Daniil during the Park's 25th anniversary in August of 2016 (Metropolitan Daniil will visit Kenozerje 2016).



Figure 4. The Porzhenskiy pogost after restoration. Photo from <http://www.kenozero.ru>

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<sup>1</sup> *Archer* in English

<sup>2</sup> *Through Kenozerje Path* in English

The restoration process of the *Porzhenskiy pogost* was always considered as *Elena Shatkovskaya's personal project, the Kenozersky National Park's director* (Extract from my field notes 2016/07/11). She had described it in her interview:

*“Another turn and IT appears, the Porzhenskiy pogost, the Park's Treasure, the Cross of the Worlds [...] stands alone and proud in the middle of vast silent space. Firstly, you see a chopped fence, behind it there are might spruces in a sacred grove and further in its depth - the St. George Church. An amazing place, a place to meet your soul, a moment of truth, an insight. There are so many hidden, sacred or “secret” small and large places, but especially here you feel what is real and what is a fuss”* (Shatkovskaya 2016).

Vladimir Putin, while being the prime minister of Russia, allocated additional funding for the restoration of the *Porzhenskiy pogost* and the *Pochozerskiy pogost*, another big church complex in Philipovskaya village, after a private conversation with Elena Shatkovskaya in 2012 (Vladimir Putin supported the Kenozersky National Park 2012). Then Shatkovskaya mentioned, while talking to Putin, the current poor condition of historical monuments nevertheless both church complexes were unique for the Russian North and kept original *nebesa*<sup>1</sup> - ceiling wooden constructions in the form of a truncated pyramid with the Jesus image in the middle and with icons of angels and saints on the adjacent panels. Shatkovskaya remembered in her interview to RIA News:

*“Putin asked how much money do we need for their restoration. On the next day the written request was ready and Putin has signed it”* (Lebedev 2017).

The administration of the Kenozersky National Park was focusing on restoration and preservation work since the very beginning. In 1992 the St. Athanasius Chapel in Tarasova village was fully restored, in 1991-1995 *heavens* from several chapels were renovated and so forth. But the major help came from the Norwegian Directorate for Cultural Heritage starting with 1996 when the Park has started to take part in the Russian-Norwegian program on preservation of cultural heritage. “Thanks to this cooperation we could maintain restoration work, to involve local population in preservation of our heritage, to implement new principles and approaches to its protection and preservation based on the traditional carpentry and modern methods of restoration work” (Heavens and Neighborhoods of Kenozersky 2009, 33). The Norwegian side was largely

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<sup>1</sup> *Heavens* in English

interested in the study of Northern Russian carpentry. For the park it was the only source of funding of restoration projects in the 1990s. But the Norwegian carpenters brought new technologies to the park. They helped to restore the Nikolskaya chapel in Vershinino village. Their suggestion was to lift the chapel's body, to replace lower rotten logs and then to put everything all together again (in the following years the Park has started to use this technology very actively) (Vershinino 2007).



Figure 5. Heavens in Zehnova village. Photo from <http://www.kenozero.ru>

The image of the Nikolskaya chapel in Vershinino has later become the Kenozersky National Park's emblem designed by architect Viktor Yandovskiy. In addition to the Chapel there is an image of a huge, chapel-sized spruce. All together it's supposed to picture unity and richness of the natural and cultural heritage of the Park (The Kenozersky National Park got a new logo 2016). Nature of Kenozersje is really unique. It's located right on the border of the East European craton and the Baltic shield. The water ridge in between the basins of the Arctic and the Atlantic oceans is located here as well.

*“The Kenozersky National Park is an outstanding sample of the North-European landscape, preserved on its territory traditions and relict crafts, traditional economy and land usage”* (The Kenozersky National Park. General Info).

The Kenozersky National Park differs from other national parks because it has quite a big amount of historical monuments and preserved historical cultural landscape on its territory, and

not only distinctive nature. However, the Park does a great job in terms of preserving nature. In 2000 it was declared as the Important Bird Area of International Importance in the European Part of Russia and in 2004 the Kenozersky National Park joined the Global Network of UNESCO Biosphere Natural Reserves.

Nature and unique landscapes make territories of the Park perfect for tourism development. And it's exactly what the Park has been doing in the last decades. In 2016 the Kenozersky National Park came up with a new corporate identity. It looks like a mosaic or a patchwork and has four basic motives. A natural one is inspired by sceneries of Kenozerje, by a numerous amount of rivers and lakes; the patches with crafts are dedicated to traditional patterns which are still in usage in the local crafts; the patches with people of Kenozerje show keepers of local traditions; the patches with chapels and churches represent the Orthodox Christian culture and the heavens of Kenozerje (The Kenozersky National Park developed new style 2016). Basically these four motives show four main directions of developing tourism in the Kenozersky National Park. For instance, the 2011's Strategy of tourism development in the Kenozersky National park assumed the opening of several exhibitions or museums (*The Carpenter's alphabet*, a small museum dedicated to carpentry in Vershinino, *The Zehnovo flour mill* in Zehnovo village), a touristic path in between woods (*The Ancestor's Path* in the south of the Park's) and opening of several hotels and huts in different places of the Park (Trutnev supported tourism development in the Kenozersky National Park 2011).

## 2.4 Kenozerje neighborhoods

Vershinino is the biggest village in the Kenozersky National park. About 400 people live there permanently, but in a summer time the population increases significantly up to 1000 people or even more. It's located on the peninsula in the middle of the Kenozero lake. Originally Vershinino was just one village out of a *nest* (a group of villages located very close to each other). The villages *Vershinino* (a place on a hill), *Gory* (a place next to a mountain), *Shishkina* (a place next to a pine grove), *Karpovo*, *Pogost* (a church) belonged to this *nest*. Now Vershinino and Pogost merged together. Shishkina and Gory, because of their proximity to Vershinino (only 1 or 2 km), are increasingly perceived as its parts. Vershinino is stretched along the shore of the Kenozero Lake and retains the historical planning. The Kenozersky National park's office with a hostel on the second floor is located here, right in the middle of the village. Approximately 200 meters to the right of it is the central square with a post office, a village administration building, a club and shops. In the opposite direction are the *Vershinino library named after Alexander*



*Nechaev*, a local storyteller, the *Dormition church* and the Park's open museum depository. The church built of stone in the end of the 19th century at the expense of local peasants. In the 1930s all the interior decoration was taken out and the church itself was turned to a club building (Vershinino 2007). In the 2000s the local orthodox community has started to renovate it. The church's caretaker, Lidia Chalova, noted that this work was possible thanks to volunteers and philanthropists, one of which is the Kenozersky National park.



Figure 6. *Vershinino* during the *Uspenskaya fair* in 2017. Photo by Dmitry Bastet from <http://www.kenozero.ru>

The Park's open museum depository is called *Ruchlyadnyi ambar*<sup>1</sup>. It was opened in 2006. *Ruchlyadnyi ambar* contains the main museum collections of the Park, including a collection of *heavens* from the surrounding villages, a collection of objects of village life, a collection of peasant clothes and so forth. Other museums of the Park are located close to the exit from the village and dedicated to the local crafts. *Masterskaya Drevodela*<sup>2</sup> shows local carpentry practices, *Gefesetovo Podvorie*<sup>3</sup> presents history of the local blacksmithing, *Kitovrasovo Podvorie*<sup>4</sup> is dedicated to the

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<sup>1</sup> *The Barn with stuff* in English

<sup>2</sup> *The Carpenter's workshop* in English

<sup>3</sup> *Gefest's Yard* in English

<sup>4</sup> *Centaur's Yard* in English

local pottery. All of them were curated and designed by Marina Melyuitina and opened in the end of the 2000s.

There is a group of buildings owned by the Park next to these three museum. The Park's tourist office is located in the old house belonged to merchant Kalashnikov in the past. There is a tourist booking center and a gift shop with locally produced goods inside. Behind the tourist office there is a newly opened hostel and a small restaurant. On a flat hill next to all these buildings stand the *Nikolskaya chapel*, a symbol of the National Park.

Further in Shishkina village there is the Museum of Epic poetry located in a fully-restored two-storey house. The house belonged to the Shishkiny family and was donated to the park in the beginning of the 2000s. There was unjustified legend than the ethnographer Alexander Hilferding used to stay here while his trips to Kenozherje, but the recent done by the Park archival work proved that it is not so. The Kenozersky National Park opened this museum in 2016. On the outskirts of the Shishkina village stands a sacred grove, a relic of the pagan Russia, with an Orthodox chapel in the middle.



*Figure 7. The Museum of Epic of Poetry in Shishkina. Photo by Evgenii Mazilov from <http://www.kenozero.ru>*

There is a school and a kindergarten in Vershinino. The school has around 80 students which is a relatively big number for a village. A couple of years ago the Park launched 'The Young Guides' project. Local high school students started to be able to guide excursions and thus to earn some money during a summer time.



Ust-Pocha is one of the oldest villages on the territory of the Kenozersky National Park with the most interesting history. It's one of the biggest ones as well. It has almost 300 people living there regularly. The Soviet state turned a small coastal village into a large center of timber-rafting and woodworking. The village was actually rebuilt, a number of barracks for workers were built. Ust-Pocha has almost completely lost its old appearance. The only leftover of the pre-Soviet past is the St. Nicholas Chapel dated by the 17th century and hidden on the Kenozero Lake shore among a huge number of bathhouses next to it. The Chapel was used as a storage for salt throughout the Soviet era, which allowed the building to be preserved with minor losses. It has been restored in the 2000s by the Kenozersky National Park. The heavens (one of the few on which the signature of the icon painter was found) were restored by the The Grabar Art Conservation in Moscow as well in 2000s. One of my informants, Elizaveta Nechaeva-Anikieva is a caretaker of the St. Nicholas Chapel.



*Figure 8. Ust-Pocha – road to the village library*

In addition to the chapel, the village is notable for the Center of Folk Crafts established by the National Park in 1998. It has a birch bark workshop, a felting workshop and a small tea room where tourists can try local herbal teas. The rest of the village lacks any touristic infrastructure. The usual touristic route goes from the Center of Folk Crafts to the St. Nicholas Chapel and passes

along the very edge of the village. Most of the buildings were built in the 20th century as temporary barracks for workers. There was a hospital at the far end of Ust-Pocha but now it's abandoned as many other abandoned houses. The local community tries to preserve the village club building but can't get any support neither from the Kenozersky National Park nor from the municipal authorities. The municipality simply does not have any money and replies to every request that Ust-Pocha doesn't have enough people living in the village. And since there are not enough people, there is no need to support it. The Park develops its territories slowly and gradually. Perhaps the turn of Ust-Pocha has not yet come.

Zehnovo is one out of a few villages in the Kenozersky National Park preserved the iconic historical planning and cultural landscape. It's partly abandoned, only 12 people live there. The Postman's White Nights, Andrey Konchalovsky's drama film that received the Silver Lion at the 71st Venice International Film Festival, was partly filmed here. The building in which the protagonist of the Konchalovsky's film lived is now being restored by the Park and converted into a guesthouse. In the village there is also a chapel with a belfry and preserved *heavens* dated by the 18th century. One of the last storytellers of Kenozerje, Anna Semenova, was a caretaker of the Zehnovo chapel until her death in 2017 (Sacred to the memory of Anna Semenova 2017). Behind the village is a water-mill restored in the 2000s by the Park. The village is a part of the tourist route along the southern part of the Kenozero Lake. Usually tourists stop for several hours in Zehnovo.

Ivan Roymuev's mother-in-law lives there. Ivan uses her house as a summer house and a place where he starts his hikes and hunting trips. There I filmed Ivan collecting hay with a group of volunteers (a reserve, 2017. 11:07).

### **3. Methodological framework**

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#### **3.1. Research design**

My field work has been conducted in the Kenozersky National Park in Arkhangelsk region in Russia. In addition to it, after several weeks spent in Kenozerje I travelled to Kargopol, a small provincial town next to the Park, and stayed there for a couple of days before going back home. Kargopol is historically linked with Kenozerje and Lekshmozerje, and now it serves as the southern gateway to the Park for those tourists who are coming from the central regions of Russia. The fieldwork period was from the end of June 2016 till the end of July 2016.

The original design of my fieldwork has been agreed with the Park's administration beforehand. The first meeting concerning my possible fieldwork in Kenozherje was in December 2015 at the Arkhangelsk office of the Kenozersky National Park. I met there Aleksandra Yakovleva, the deputy director in development, and Marina Melyutina, the head of the research department. We have discussed time frames, financial issues and possibility to get assistance from the Park in terms of building network and finding relevant informants for my fieldwork. My initial idea was to film the Park's anniversary in August 2016 and all possible events connected to it (the grand opening of the *Porzhenskiy Pogost*, the *Uspenskaya Annual Fair* and so forth). Next time I met Aleksandra in May 2016 - I've hastily returned from Tromsø to Arkhangelsk at the earliest possible time. But when I got back there I found out that the Park's anniversary is moved to the end of August. Which meant that I was not able to film it because of the semester start in Tromsø. Moreover, I got to know that I can find accommodation in the park hostels only for two weeks maximum since it has been booked for the rest of time at that moment. To find any other accommodation was expensive or hard as well because of the high tourist season in Kenozherje. At that moment I got a feeling that my presence at the Park is just a part of their daily routine and could be largely happening due to my personal connections with the administration of the Park. I was one of many other individuals, companies, NGOs which were devilishly willing to cooperate in any form with it.

Aleksandra Yakovleva gave me a list of possible informants. I got their names and phone numbers. Marina Melyutina called these people and introduced me to them saying that her colleague from Norway is coming soon to the Park's territories with a film project. Of course, some of them were hesitating to be in front of a camera exhibiting their everyday life to a stranger, others were referring to their extreme employment. But Marina masterfully persuaded everyone.

All the people who were recommended (and agreed on collaboration later on) - Ivan Roymuev, a chief forester in Verшинino village, Maria Anikeeva - a craftsman and a leader of the Center of Folk Crafts in Ust-Pocha village, Nina Fedotova - a chef and owner of a small guest house in Tarasovo village, Elena Kalitina - the only potter in Kenozherje and a museum watcher in Verшинino, Nikolay Popov - the head of the southern district of the Kenozersky National Park, Elena Makarova - the administrator of the southern district of the Park - were somehow connected to the Park administration. The majority of them were regular employees, some of them were cooperating with the Park as private individuals hosting guests and providing extra services such as guiding, boat rent, etc. Basically, none of them was able to refuse due to being in sort of dependence from the decision-makers from the Kenozersky National Park's administration.

I spent 20 days in Kenozherje. 16 days in Verшинino village and 4 days in Ust-Pocha village. I never went to the southern part of the Kenozersky National Park, because after a week in

Vershinino village it seemed to me pointless, I just would have lost focus. So I decided to spend all my time in Vershinino and Ust-Pocha expanding my network there. In Vershinino I have met Ivan Roymuev, Elena Kalitina, Boris Anikiev, Alexey Ershov who were employed by the Kenozersky National Park and Lidia Chalova, Nikolay Porshnev the local residents, who were not associated with the Park anyhow. In Ust-Pocha I met Elizaveta Nechaeva-Anikieva, Mariya Anikieva, Nina Markova. Everyone mentioned above was in different degrees connected with the Park.

I tried to expand or change the proposed list of people but it was quite difficult to do in a short time and with the Park shadow behind. Some of those with whom I spoke tried to use me as an intermediary in the dialogue with the Park, some being under influence of alcohol was very negatively tuned to the Park, some people were very modest and careful in their judgments the next day. Now I can recognize that starting a research work "from above" was somewhat erroneous. But Aleksandra Yakovleva and Marina Melyutina were my only gatekeepers and the only way to get to the area lawfully without being confused on a every step. My links to the administration of the Park have certainly affected my work by relieving it to some extent, making regular communications easier. On the other hand, I lost some part of the trust from those locals who have ongoing misunderstandings with the administration which manifested itself in mild irony or even unwillingness to talk.

Ivan Roymuev, Elena Kalitina, Elizaveta Nechaeva-Anikieva became my main informants. I can't say that they have agreed and continued to cooperate with only on Marina's request. Ivan turned to be nice and smart guy helping me with accommodation, transport and so forth back then and later on when I came back to Kenozersje again. He was the only one who wanted to see what I filmed there during my fieldwork. Elena, as I think now, was very touched by our acquaintance. It was absolutely new for her to meet a person who had lived abroad for a long time and was keenly interested in what was happening in the village. Elizaveta wasn't proposed neither by Aleksandra nor by Marina. I have no idea why it has happened like that. Nevertheless, she added a lot to my trip - conversations with her were more inspiring, more sincere, more challenging than anything else I've experienced there during my fieldwork time I would say. I moved to Ust-Pocha just to try the other, non-tourist life, life of Elizaveta. I followed her while guiding tours, workshops and recorded activities and voices of people surrounding her.

I filmed and interviewed almost everyone to whom I managed to talk. Not each conversation became a part of my film or thesis paper, but of course each of them influenced my research work to some extent.

### 3.2. Doing anthropology in my home country

I was completely unsure about my fieldwork. I was in the Kenozersky National park several times before but every time I was accompanied by someone whether by my classmates or fellow artists. There was always distance in between me and locals. I was supposed to walk around, to gaze but not interfere everyday activities. Of course, I could. But what was the point? I stood steadfastly on an etic standpoint and did not want to move from my place.

Thus I could not imagine how would it all go this time. When I came to the Park in June 2016 quite many locals knew me from before. They knew me not personally, but could recognize a stranger who was around before and did something. For the period of fieldwork, I've inherited my previous identities. I was perceived as *a tourist* since while my first trip to Kenozetje I did the majority of possible touristy things. At that time, I visited chapels in every small village around the Kenozero lake and took part in every possible workshop. I didn't succeed in any workshop and I need say that the felting workshop turned to be a complete disaster - my city background was completely defeated by a village craftsmanship. Then I was a very curious tourist who has been talking to the guide (that's how I got to know Elizaveta Nechaeva-Anikieva before my fieldwork) and asking question about the area.

The other identity was *a Swede*. I obtained it while doing project work in Kenozetje together with RAKETA, a Stockholm-based artist collective, in 2015. The "Swede" word referred mainly to my outsider's origin. The locals didn't really care from how far did I come from For instance, Elizaveta thought that I'm from Moscow. And later when I told her that I'm coming from the Arkhangelsk region she told that I'm "*ours [countryman], Arkhangelskiy (a person from Arkhangelsk)*" (Extract from my field notes 2016/07/24). Throughout my fieldwork I have experienced being both insider and outsider (Spradley 1980, 57). But I need to say that being outsider has been prevailing.

I've never lived in a village before. I grew up in an industrial town with the biggest naval yard in the whole country built by Joseph Stalin's order in the 1930s. I spent the first 16 years of my life on the fifth floor of the nine-storey building. I've never thought that fairy tales that I ecstatically read in my childhood appeared just in 400 kilometers from my hometown. I've never had a possibility to live in a two-storey wooden cottage with a magnificent view on an enormous lake.

Also the village community is so much different to city communities where I used to live before. In Kenozetje I needed to use the "a wide-angled lens" in order to collect more detailed information and to look at things from different angles (Spradley 1980, 56). I needed to write down more spontaneous notes, to film seemingly uninteresting events and to talk to strangers in order to

get a structured image of Kenozerje. The “long-term personal involvement with those being studied, including participation in their lives” required additional resources from my side (Davies 2008, 80).

However, I consider that it was relatively easy to establish relationships with the residents of Kenozerje. The locals used to forget often that I was a researcher who came from outside. After forgetting my origin and my role there were attempts to involve me in their daily activities. For instance, Elena Kalitina, forgot that my actual task was to observe her and to film her clay toy making workshop and asked me to attend it. The Glushevskie family saw me with a camera when I was walking along the Kenozero lake shore and almost immediately invited me to their family dinner followed by drinking sweet alcoholic liqueurs made in Arkhangelsk. This liquor party followed by friendship with younger family members since we realized that we’ve graduated from the same university and the same faculty. Then I was simply pulled out from outsider position and thrown to the insider one. Doing ethnographic fieldwork involves alternating between the insider and outsider experience (Spradley 1980, 57), that’s why I didn’t worry much and let it go.

My assumption that the growing feeling of self-importance made people to talk to me. The presence of the researcher made my informants feel their special purpose. I assume that they enjoyed to be objects of someone’s research work. As a result, it made me to become their student, and my informants became my teachers (Spradley 1980, 5). Through the learning process I was able to obtain a tacit knowledge. Effective transfer of tacit knowledge generally requires extensive personal contact, regular interaction (Goffin and Koners 2011). I learnt how to make pottery from Elena Kalitina, how to prepare wood for buildings from Ivan Roymuev and his colleagues foresters, how to cook dishes from the local cuisine from Nina Fedotova. From Marina Anikieva I learnt as well which herbs are good for making teas and when and where it’s better to pick up cloudberries. All the knowledge I got from people of Kenozerje was highly personalized (Polanyi 1966). Nevertheless, throughout my fieldwork I’ve been trying to avoid ‘going native’ too much in order not to jeopardize my abilities to analyze and to notice native cultural assumptions (Davies 2008, 71).

The participant observation was my main method. I tried to be engaged in daily people’s activities and thereby to obtain an insider position. As well I tried to observe people, their activities and physical aspects of what was happening as an outsider (Spradley 1980, 57). As a supplementary method I used ethnographic formal and informal interviews. Informal interviews occurred whenever I asked someone a question during the course of participant observation (Spradley 1980, 123). For example, I wanted to know how and where does Elena Kalitina harvest clay right in the middle of her workshop. I waited for some time and then asked



her straight ahead. She was glad to answer my question. Formal interviews were mainly result of established friendly relationships with my informants. They have happened at an appointed time and resulted from a specific request to hold the interviews (Spradley 1980, 123).

Kenozerje turned to be a completely brand-new world for me. That's why I can't consider my fieldwork as an 'anthropology at home'. I studied "my own society, where "others" are both ourselves and those relatively different from us, whom we see as part of the same collectivity" (Peirano 1998). I and my informants have been speaking one language, sharing the same cultural values and coming from the same media landscape. But my home is the industrial militarized city built in the era of Stalin's terror by Gulag prisoners. The image of my hometown is quite distinct to the rural paradise which I've seen in the Kenozersky National Park. The landscapes of Kenozerje, openness of the local people and even the local manner of speaking with inclusions of seemingly forgotten words from already unused dialect were new for me thus I don't attempt to use the concept of 'anthropology at home' in my research.

### **3.3. The visual way**

I enjoyed the filming process throughout the fieldwork however it has been overfilled with technical and practical issues. The camera was pretty inconvenient, too big and not handy enough in many situations. I think filming people while running through the taiga forest along a small path or on a leaking boat in the middle of a huge lake demand a special training. It's quite impossible to get a stable image when you bail out water from your boat with one hand and try to hold the camera with an another. There was no need in all provided equipment since I wasn't able to use it all. I was supposed to move almost all the time and usually it was not possible to set up all the given equipment properly. Other issues were connected with focusing in between close-ups, medium shots and wide shots or overexposing while leaving houses and going outside together with informants. In order to avoid major failures, I switched my camera settings to automatic very soon after starting doing the fieldwork. At that time, it seemed to me the only appropriate solution since informants simply could not wait for me most of the time being busy working. This resulted mainly in not-so-steady images and a complete absence of staged scenes.

On the 3d day I met a group of Moscow-based four filmmakers from *Ninja Films*. They came by car all the way from there. They had a goal to film a real rustic Russia all together with its customs, habits, folklore, daily routine and to produce a documentary. Their film under working title *Fairy tales of Kenozerje* was aimed to to picture "a marvelous place called Kenozerje far from civilization somewhere in the North" (Keepers of Heavens, 2017). In a couple of days after another

group of filmmakers came to the Kenozersky National Park. These were journalists from the state owned *RIA Novosti* news agency. Their presence in the area resulted in the article *The Keepers of Heavens: How does the National Park live in Kenozerje?* and a couple of accompanying video interviews. A few sentences from this article I used as an opening title for my film in order to provide an outsider perspective of the National Park.

*“One day and half from Moscow by train and three hours more by bus from Plesetsk. A long journey to the Kenozersky National Park doesn’t scare those who are dreaming to see these marvelous places and the famous wooden with painted ceilings which are named as ‘heavens’. Quarter of century ago these enormous territories declared to become a national park. And local people hot jobs” (Kocharova 2016).*

Different groups of filmmakers were operating in a small area in the same time and, most likely, bothering the same people with similar questions. Those couple of days I used to start my every morning with discussing our routes with other filmmakers in order not to be interrupted and not to interrupt others and to end my evenings with sharing results and plans for the coming days. Our “joint work” left a mark on my fieldwork design. Usually there was sort of line to certain people and to certain places - for example, both Elena Kalitina and Elizaveta Nechaeva-Anikieva were quite busy with interviews. It’s needed to say these certain places and people were usually suggested by the Park in advance. Each group got almost the same informants and places to go, got accommodation and board for free, trips and guiding were provided as well. The Kenozersky National Park sought to facilitate our work in all possible ways and simultaneously acted as a supervisor offering us the desired story through trusted people most of whom worked in the Park and were directly related to it. Nevertheless, none of us was stopped or banned from contacting people and visiting places which were not among suggested ones. The only thing that influenced the shooting process of different filmmaker groups was our desires and the angles, under which we wanted to look at what was happening in the Park

It was reasonable to contact the Kenozersky National park in advance since it has an undoubtable expertise in the area of Kenozerje knowing every person living there. Usage of this knowledge together with recommendations of other film groups allowed me to expand my network, to intensify the shooting process and, perhaps, to avoid common narratives.

Most of people whom I met were experienced enough in terms of filmmaking process. They were able to provide relevant information and didn’t hesitate in front of a camera. They were ready to look directly at a camera eye but not at a person who stays behind it. Local people were used to camera men of a different kind and to researchers as well. Since the 1970s a few dozens

documentaries were filmed there. Situation was changed by Andrei Konchalovsky in 2014, a well-known Russian director, with his decision to film a quasi documentary in the Kenozersky National Park. *The Postman's White Nights* tells a story of

*“Lyokha, played by real-life village postman Aleksey Tryapitsyn with a natural soulfulness, ease and understated sad-clown quality that belie his total lack of experience in front of the camera. Puttering along on his boat across the vast lake, he calls on friends and neighbors, delivering mail, but also pension payments and basic necessities like bread and light bulbs” (Rooney 2014).*

Lots of local people got roles in the Konchalovsky's film. And lots became proud in some way. For example, when I told Ivan Roymuev that his son wants me to interview him and to be presented in my film, Ivan laughed and told that his son is already a movie star because he got lucky to be in an episode in *The Postman's White Nights*. On the other hand, that film caused mistrust of locals towards filmmakers because Konchalovsky wanted them to overact and to present Kenozerje worse than it is. One of major characters, Kolobok, was simply made to be drunk everyday by the Konchalovsky's film crew (Extract from my field notes 2016/07/9. Interview with Ivan Roymuev).

In general, local people wanted to help me in doing my fieldwork. Some of them declined to be filmed because they have not considered themselves relevant for the film. But others even counting themselves useless for the research helped me out by addressing me to people who could assist much more. When I met sisters Porshnevyyh in the Museum of Epic poetry in Shishkina village and explained that I'm doing my anthropological fieldwork in Kenozerje and looking for people to talk to, they immediately invited me for a short conversation with their uncle - Nikolai Porshnev. They thought that he is extremely important and could be extremely relevant for my documentary since he was a history teacher in the Vershinino School and used to study the local history. Thus he could help me to find true stories of Kenozerje (Extract from my field notes 2016/07/9. Interview Nikolai Porshnev).

Sometime later I was caught on a street by Aleksei Sidorov, a young lad around 12 years old, and his two friends of the same age. They had an extreme desire to become a part of any film being fascinated by the fact of camera presence. So they became my best friends in the area for 2 weeks approaching me every possible time and asking when can I film them. They were giving me tips where to go and what to do as well. Without any hesitations Aleksei has decided to send me to his grandmother Lyudmila Sidorova, a head of the Vershinino library, since he thought she might be very useful for my research.

I had much more trust when I was using my tripod. Mostly people asked me if I'm going to screen on the Russian Channel One or somewhere else on television. "Verdensteatret Kino, Tromsø" was not a satisfactory answer for them. Being filmed somehow connected to them to personal pride and to a chance to be more visible for others. Lots of people just came by and asked if I'm a filmmaker and what am I doing in Kenozerje. Most often my camera was "a catalyst that helped to create the context in which it was used" (Pink 2001, 84).

Some became more curious about my fieldwork when they got to know that I'm affiliated with a Norwegian university and I will produce my documentary film abroad. There is a certain link in between Kenozerje and Norway. It's determined by the joint Russian-Norwegian activities in restoring wooden heritage in the Kenozersky National Park in the 1990s (Extract from my field notes 2016/07/9. Interview with Ivan Roymuev). The local people had pleasant memories about this period.

*"Once Norwegians came here about 15 years ago, so they called my harvesting machine antiques and asked how do we use it", - laughed Ivan Roymuev while harvesting hay on a field in Zehnovo (a reserve, 2017. 11:40).*

He mentioned those Norwegians intentionally for camera because he knew already that I'm coming from a Norwegian university and going to screen film in Norway. This phrase was to be heard by the Norwegian audience.

Filming allowed to get more data not only by recording details, context and so forth. Almost every time I've stopped filming, my informants used to start telling things which they have "forgotten" or even some stories which were not supposed to be told. My camera became able to help establishing a certain level of trust, to become a link between me and them. So, even after switching it off my informants used to comment our dialogue and to provide more relevant details. Elena Kalitina while talking to me at the camera told she doesn't remember any folklore stories, fables, fairy tales. When I have switched off my camera she added that her relative from Ust-Pocha has disappeared some decades ago and her family asked the local conjurer to assist them in the search. *Most commonly people shouldn't talk about rituals which are still common in Kenozerje and still have a sacred meaning for a part of population* (Extract from my field notes 2016/07/16. Interview with Elena Kalitina).

The film became "a very much cooperative product" (Davies 2008, 9). Often my informants have been saying what, whom and when exactly should I shoot because of better light, weather or just an opportunity to reach a certain place. They felt importance of being filmed and the most of the time they liked the idea of being in one place together with a camera man.

### 3.4. Ethics

Doing ethnography often raises ethical issues which needed to be addressed. During my fieldwork I've been going deeply into people's lives, asking questions, being present at private conversation, analyzing the received material and sometimes being critical to all these things (O'Reilly 2011, 73). Moreover, I have filmed it all. And I'm going to publish my collected data as a written research paper and a documentary film. However, I had a verbal agreement with all my informants that they agree to participate in filming for a documentary project. They agreed as well that I'm going to use the obtained data in my research work. For my part I will share footage with them.

I've been doing an overt research work and following basic ethical principles. Which means that I have been completely open about what I was actually researching, what I was going to do with materials, who I was and I came from (O'Reilly 2011, 59). All this allowed me to adhere to given ethical guidelines. But at the same time I admit the possibility that some people could forget (since I spent quite some time in Kenozërje doing my fieldwork) and could not know (for example tourists, although I used to report that I do fieldwork at every opportunity) that I'm a researcher. But during the fieldwork and to the present moment I have not received any complaints.

### 3.5. Film and text

David MacDougall argued that *"the visual evokes the myriad concerns of anthropology, and yet it can remain frustratingly uncommunicative about them"* (MacDougall 1998, 64). I do not endow my film with any specific function besides the outline of the social landscape of Kenozërje. It has to be an evoking tool and a performative part of my research work (MacDougall 2006, 272).

In my film I deliberately didn't provide any of my informants' names trying to push the Kenozersky National Park to the fore, to present it as my protagonist. Thus I imagine the written part of my research as an extended comment. I put inside the maximum possible amount of information connected to my fieldwork. It's supposed to provide new angles on the field represented in the film. My thesis largely performs the function of deanonimizer picturing Kenozërje in details.

At the same time the film and the thesis complement each other since I use different cases. Some informants are presented more in the film; some are better described in the written paper.

#### 4. The Park hierarchy

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«We don't have more important task than preserving the local population.  
In order not to study later in archives what were traditions, which skills had locals,  
in order to let local population to have their traditions ongoing»  
(Elena Shatkovskaya in her interview to Anna Kocharova, RIA  
NOVOSTI)

Elena Shatkovskaya has been the director of the Kenozersky National Park since it opened. Once she was offered the post of the minister of culture of the Arkhangelsk region from, but she refused the offer by saying that the Park will fall apart without her guidance (Elena Shatkovskaya refused to become the minister of culture 2012). The first time I've met her was while planning the collaborative project with the Swedish artist collective in 2015. She met me and my colleagues in her spacious office with real wooden furniture and huge plastic posters with views of Kenozerje. It was rather hard to talk to her since it was clear that she was constantly and attentively studying us as she was trying to understand possible benefits from our conversation. Alexandra Yakovleva, daughter of Shatkovskaya, works as well in the Kenozersky National Park as a deputy director in development dealing with international projects of all kinds and promotion of Kenozerje.

The Park's administration in Vershinino in Kenozerje is represented by the Head of the northern district and the chief forester (now it's Ivan Roymuev, one of my key informants). The role of the head of the district is quite vague and unclear. According to Ivan these two positions mainly duplicate each other and there is no need to keep them both. The Head is mainly supposed to be involved in administrative work, and chief forester needs to deal with practical issues outdoors.

In exception of the Park's administration there is a municipal administration. But the balance of power in Kenozerje is not in favor of the municipal authority. The Kenozersky National Park has much more resources, more employees, more freedom of action. There is no visible conflict in between two administrations, but sometimes it seems that they are playing a tag game. For example, the Park doesn't favor the holiday *Kenozerskya durakovina*<sup>1</sup> held annually by the municipal authority. This holiday is dedicated to Alexander Nechaev, a local storyteller who grew up in Kenozerje. Aleksandr remembered that he got his inspiration and the idea of becoming a storyteller and a writer because of continuous listening throughout his childhood to his mother's stories and fairy tales by Polikarp, an old storyteller from the Vershinino village (The 105's anniversary of Aleksandr Nechaev 2007). The holiday's title is referred to *Ivan the Fool*, a trickster

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<sup>1</sup> The *Kenozero foolness* in English

character presented in many Aleksandr's fairy tales. My assumption is that the Park doesn't like this holiday mainly because its name is directly connected to foolness and may adversely affect the Kenozersky National Park's brand and image of its territory.

Lyudmila Sidorova, a head of the Vershinino library, has initiated *Kenozerskya durakovina* in the 1990s together with the municipal administration trying to keep the memories about the storyteller alive.

*"It's a unique holiday, there is no a similar holiday anywhere. Even if someone doesn't like the title, Kenozerskya durakovina... But it's not an abuse, it's just a brand"* (Field work video archive 2016/07/18. Interview with Lyudmila Sidorova).

There several more events organized by the Vershinino library and dedicated to Alexander Nechaev like *Fairy Tales Week* or *A drawing competition on fairy tales stories* but the Park doesn't support these activities anyhow.

*"We had an idea of establishing the Alexander Nechaev museum and it has never happened because we didn't get any funding from the Kenozersky National park"* (Field work video archive 2016/07/18. Interview with Lyudmila Sidorova).

But the main discontent with the Park among locals is caused by its multiple attempts to prevent them from using synthetic materials of certain colors or building houses of inappropriate shapes.

*"The Park dictates which kind of a fence or a roof should I have. It's my own business and it's my own house. I'm totally against it. They can build a village... they can build it with old-fashioned cottages without chimneys but with stoves and mud huts. And bring tourist there. And I will not care about it anyhow. But when they say here what to do... It's a living village! Why should I have a black roof or paint my fence with grey? Why can't I paint them with an orange color? I might have this kind of taste and I like to be bright. They explain it by the fact that tourists don't like it. And why should I care about the tourists. I don't say that some houses in Arkhangelsk should be grey or other houses in Moscow should have a blue rooftop. Why do they say to us? If tourists don't like... I think, if you don't like then you should build a village on the Medvezhiy (Bear in English) island [an island in the middle of Kenozero lake] and bring there tourists and build there huts for a God's sake"* (Field work video archive 2016/07/18. Interview with Lyudmila Sidorova).

The most famous and discussed case occurred with the family of Glushchevsky. They have rebuilt their own house in a somewhat unconventional style, covered it with bright plastic panels and changed the roof's shape. The problem was that the house stood on the very shore of the Kenozero lake between old houses without any traces of restoration thus spoiling the view from the lake. The Kenozersky National Park tried to negotiate possible redesign of the house with its owners. But the owners refused to have a dialogue with the Park. The Park in its turn was threatening to bring the case to court. But so far this has not happened. This case is quite illustrative showing that the Park has almost no legal power over inhabitants of Kenozערje.

It has recently developed regulations of the appearance of houses and neighboring territories within the project *The Wooden architecture in cultural landscape* in collaboration with *The Wooden Architecture Support fund*. These regulations provide recommendations on houses positioning in cultural landscape according to the established historical planning in Kenozערje and Lekshnozerje. But for now there are only few houses built or rebuilt in accordance to the Park's rules. Most of them belong to the Park itself and were restored in the recent decade. One of the "right" houses is located next to the village's exit on the Kenozero lake shore under a big sprawling tree. It belongs to Elena Shatkovskaya, a director of the Kenozersky National Park.

Nevertheless, most of the locals have a good life living in the National Park. Alexey Ershov from Ust-Pocha was hired as a blacksmith because the director liked his work and invited him to the Park's smithery. Aleksey tried to find work in Arkhangelsk and didn't manage to do it. Then he went home to Kenozערje and met there Elena who told him to start working immediately. Several years ago Aleksey married the Park employee and moved with her to Vershinino village. Then the Kenozersky National park has decided to build a bigger smithery in Vershinino where Aleksey could work (Field work video archive 2016/07/18. Interview with Aleksey Ershov). I asked him if he was happy with his life in Kenozערje. He said 'yes' without any doubts - he got a stable salary, a favorite job, a small but constant income. He received land from the National Park, and now he is building a house for his family.

Elena Kalitina has a similar story. She was educated in the Arkhangelsk Cultural college where she learned how to work with clay, didn't find any job in the city and returned to Kenozערje. At that moment the Park was looking for a potter. That's how Elena got her job. Now she builds a pottery workshop next to her house in Vershinino. All the workshop equipment provided by National park and partly by a German cultural foundation.

During one of the interviews Elizaveta Nechaeva-Anikieva from Ust-Pocha named relationships in between locals and the Park as a mosaic.



“There are still people who persist and don’t consider the National Park as something good for the territory. It might be some kind of ‘soviet thinking’, when people think that the others owe to them. We can’t step aside from the stereotype that the landowner will come and solve all our problems. [...] The Park is an undoubted benefit for Kenozerje. People coming from other national parks and reserves are always surprised how much the Kenozersky National park has done in the past 25 years” (Field work video archive 2016/07/24. Interview with Elizaveta Nechaeva-Anikieva).

In the 1990s the Park was trying to solve economic and social problems of Kenozerje alongside with its actual tasks of preserving nature and historical monuments. It was rather hard to take responsibilities of the whole state and the Park has failed it. Nevertheless, the Kenozersky National park inherited all possible symbolic capital of the state. People have started to perceive it as the onliest problem solver.

Pierre Bourdieu argued that charm and charisma designate the power (Bourdieu 1976:208). In the case of the Park it was mainly charm and charisma of Elena Shatkovskaya, its director, and her coherent policy since the 1990s plus high hopes of the local population for a better future. And Kenozerje has become in many ways what locals wanted it to be.

*“The charismatic leader manages to be for the group what he is for himself, instead of being for himself, like those dominated in the symbolic struggle, what he is for others. He ‘makes’ the opinion which makes him; he constitutes himself as an absolute by a manipulation of symbolic power which is constitutive of his power since it enables him to produce and impose his own objectification” (Bourdieu 1976, 208).*

Only those who were not distributed with benefits from the Park feel frustrated and unsure. The others who have agreed to cooperate with the administration have a decent life in the Kenozersky National Park.

*“I would say that the Park is an almost 100% good thing for the population. Everything what was done here is thanks to the National Park. I’m not sure if the Park is doing something against Kenozerje. [...] I think that the area will start to die if the National Park leaves it. [...] Here in Russia people are used to be under control, so the local population will feel completely differently without the Park” (a reserve, 2017. 23:29).*

Symbolic power “is a power to make groups” (Bourdieu 1989, 23). I could say with some degree of uncertainty that Kenozerje is divided into two communities - one is “loyal” and supportive towards to the Park’s administration and most often personally owe to Elena Shatkovskaya. The other one claims changes and stays idle due to the absence of any structured plans concerning not only the development of Kenozerje but even their everyday lives.

## **5. The Connector to the Orthodox belief**

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### **5.1 Ivan Roymuev**

The road to Vershinino required a little bit longer than I thought. I have arrived quarter to 7 pm, put my stuff in the village hotel and headed to the forestry office. There I had to meet Ivan Roymuev, a chief forester in the north of the Kenozersky National Park. I was in a hurry because I thought Ivan would be incredibly important for my research. Until that day I spoke with him only on the phone, he seemed very punctual and busy man.

Ivan is about 45 years old, well-built, dressed in a military uniform. He sat in the middle of the office room on the ground floor of the old wooden Soviet building, which was adapted by the Park for its own needs. The forestry office together with the accountant’s office were facing the entrance. On the right was the door to the second floor where a small hotel was located.

In addition to Ivan in the office there should be two or three foresters but that day was a holiday *Kenozerskaya Durakovina* and so he let them go early. On his desk there was nothing except a pair of notebooks and a button phone. At this office they had only paperwork but no computers. Ivan seemed to be a man who is not at all used to sit in the office, a person who appeared within these walls accidentally.

When Ivan spoke to me it seemed that he was talking the pre-prepared information. He gave official data about Kenozerje and the National Park, briefly and abruptly told his biography. He was born and raised in Kenozerje, never wanted to leave. Of course, he tried to find a better life outside the Park like many others but he was offered the position of forester right after the army service. He quitted his job in the park only once because of a disagreement with his boss, worked as a fireman in the same village and returned back at the personal request of Elena Shatkovskaya.

A chief forester in Kenozerje in Kenozerje report directly to the director thereby representing her power on the spot. His powers and responsibilities are somewhat wider than what is indicated officially. Often he fulfills the duties of the policeman, the organizer of the annual fair

and so on. Ivan seemed to me a modest wise person who was scrutinizing his conversation partner while talking to him.

We talked for about half an hour and agreed on several meetings. Ivan said that he would certainly call, when something will be planned. I said goodbye and went on holiday to film the party.

## 5.2 The pursuit of Orthodoxy

Foreign tourists are not coming to Kenozherje so often, maybe one-three times per season. That's why I was so much surprised (the day before we negotiated a possibility to film a tourist group of Russians, but not foreigners) when Ivan Roymuev suggested me to accompany him and a group of Finnish tourists during the day-trip to the *Porzhenskiy pogost*, a church complex in the very middle of the Kenozersky National park. Most likely that Ivan has agreed on this trip because of Marina Melyutina's request to assist me in every possible situation. He guides people from time to time but this is not his daily job, he has more important things do. When he does guiding he does it for fun.

Most of the Finns came from the North Karelia, a border region of Finland with some Orthodox population. Their trip was initiated by a Finnish lady who used to be involved in a project work with the Kenozersky National Park in the past. All of them booked this tour from the Kargopol touristic agency *Lache*. It's the onliest agency which deals with tourists in the whole Kargopol district and in the Park as well.

*"We are interested to see which kind of churches is here and which kind of villages are here in this part of Russia. For me it's the first time to visit this area. [I'm interested in churches] because my wife is Orthodox. At home we have icons on walls. We leave in the eastern part of Finland in Joensuu. [...] Our tour leader knew this place from before, she told that it's worth a visit. And that's true. [...] Our goal was to visit this forestal area. We are happy to see this kind of place"* (Field work video archive 2016/07/11. Interview with Finnish tourists).

Finns came to Vershinino the day before our joint trip. I would say that the decision to visit *Porzhenskiy pogost* was quite spontaneous and originally came from the Park's administration. The church there was under renovation since the Kenozersky National park was founded in 1991. Its opening was supposed to become the biggest thing within the upcoming 25th anniversary of the Park. Ivan told me that July became the busiest month ever for all foresters based in Vershinino

since they were supposed to fix road to *Porzhenskiy pogost*, to equip it with benches, huts and information boards till the 1st of August. It's needed to say there is no normal road in between both places. There is only a cart-road around the Kenozero lake which is called now *Transkenozerskaya tropa* (*Through Kenozetje Path* in English).

I was supposed to meet Ivan at the forestry office in Vershinino at 8 am and then go together with him to the Zarya boat (a relic of the Soviet Union maintained in the working condition by the Park) and to wait there for the Finnish group. The Finns were late. They were coming from a neighboring village, as there was no place to stay in Vershinino (all places were already taken by other tourists by the moment of their arrival). The motor boat was already cranked up. Everyone was waiting for them.



*Figure 8. Ivan Roymuev on a boat*

All Finns were over 50 years old. Some of them have been in Russia before. They were in Russia not as tourists but because of work, border cooperation and so forth. All of them seemed to be experienced, prepared for long hikes tourists.

Some of the Finns came to Kenozetje because of personal or religious reasons. During the boat trip one of them said that Kenozetje

*“is a very special place. I’m Orthodox and my grandparents come from the eastern part of Karelia [the republic of Russia]. Before the War [the Winter War] it was Finland and not Russia”* (Field work video archive 2016/07/11. Interview with Finnish tourists).

The boat moored in Vidyagino village. To be more precise - it's no longer a village, but only a stopping point on the way to *Porzhenskiy pogost*. Only the St. Andrew church, the St. Andrew Chapel dated by the 18th century and several abandoned houses remained from the village past. The church is being restored right now by local carpenters. And the restoration work is funded by Norwegians. Next to the pier and to the church there were specially designed information stands with short description of the village and the monuments both in Russian and in English.

Passing the St. Andrew church, Ivan told us the local legend that in the 1980s the local authorities decided to transport the St. Andrew church to another village and to turn it into a club. But hundreds of snakes suddenly appeared right in front of workers and scared them. So workers refused to transport it. Then Ivan added that actually there are snakes in the area but only a small part of them is poisonous.

The entrance to the *Transkenozerskaya tropa* is equipped as well with huge carved gates which imitate the front of the old manor house. The gates also have writings in Russian and in English made with the same font and style as the previous ones in Vidyagino. Behind these gates there is a narrow path through a dense boreal forest. At every turn there are the centuries-old trees felled by the recent hurricane. Walking along the path, Ivan speaks without stopping.

*“Usually tourists, who are from Vershinino, take this path three times per week. There are tourists from Maselga as well, and vice-versa people go from Vidyagino to Maselga. Usually it takes 3,5 hours to reach Porzhenskiy pogost from here. There are information stands on the path. In 3 km we will see river Porzhenka, there is a viewing point. [...] The Park supports the path and all surrounding roads for fire safety in the first place [...]”*  
(Field work video archive 2016/07/11. Interview with Ivan Roymuev).

This path has been a regular road over a century ago. But then the villages located in these forests have started to disappear due to the state on enlarging villages, people have started to move to Vershinino and Ust-Pocha or even further to Plesetsk and Arkhangelsk, and the need for this path has disappeared as well. The Kenozersky National park has restored the path as touristic route and gave it a new name, *Transkenozerskaya tropa*<sup>1</sup> thereby explaining its binding function. The Park's foresters usually move along the path on tractors and ATVs. Due to the upcoming anniversary celebration the number of trips on tractors have increased significantly, which has almost destroyed the path. The Finnish guests complained about the quality of the road and said

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<sup>1</sup> *The path through Kenozerskye* in English

that the tractors are destroying nature. Ivan calmly noticed that everything would be restored by itself in a few months after the anniversary.

The Finns turned to be very curious tourists. They asked for the names of trees, mushrooms, berries and tried to translate all the names to us in Finnish. They have found out that they have a similar flora back in Finland, and that spurred their curiosity.

*“(Finn) Do you know you the name of black gnarls on birch trees?”*

*(me) We call it a chaga mushroom.*

*“(Finn) Yes, something like this. We make tea out of it”* (Field work video archive 2016/07/11. Interview with Finnish tourists).

Ivan was happy to answer all my possible questions about the area. He was telling stories about his family and the life in Kenozerje and its surroundings. Suddenly we have discovered the Finns are far behind. We needed to wait for them for some time. Ivan told that it would be nice to have a bear behind them, it will make them walk much faster. In some minutes after we found a trail of a bear on the path. The Finns became to walk much faster and complained that we don't have a gun with us.

Soon we were on the shore of *the Bolshoe lake*<sup>1</sup>. Ivan has decided to shorten the route, so we boarded rowing boats. The trip took only 40 minutes, but it was a frightening experience for those who were not used to this kind of transportation. The boats had very low edges and they constantly leaked. Luckily each boat was equipped with life jackets enough for each passenger.

The church complex *Porzhenskiy pogost* looks like a small colored fortress hidden in a small groove in the middle of nowhere. Before the 1970s there were three villages around it - Fedorovskoe, Okatovskoe and Turovo Seltso. The Soviet government, as part of the policy of enlarging the villages, decided that these villages are not economically effective and closed the local school and later closed the only grocery store. The church was closed even earlier in 1938. Life in the forest is impossible without a specific infrastructure, so people began to move away taking their houses with them (the Northern Russian house can be easily dismantled and transported to a new place). The Kenozersky National Park has started to restore the complex in 2010. It has been fully restored and painted with 'original' colors. The decision to paint it was rather controversial since usually churches in the Russian North were not painted. Elena Shatkovskaya, the Kenozersky National Park's director argued that this decision

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<sup>1</sup> *The Big Lake* in English



*“was preceded by the archival work in the state archives of Arkhangelsk region and the Republic of Karelia. It is known for certain that in 1875 the walls of St. George's Church [the main church of the complex] were for the first time covered with battens and painted. Obviously, since then it has been repainted many times, depending on the presence of colors among the peasants and their taste preferences as well. But what was the last color? The Grabar Art Conservation center helped us to answer this question After the analysis of the preserved wood” (Shatkovskaya 2016).*

The heavens, ceiling wooden constructions with icons were restored as well but the Park's administration decided not to return them to original places in order to avoid thievery. The chopped fence around *Porzhenskiy pogost* is a copy of a similar one from the old cemetery next to *Pochozerskiy pogost*. Carpenters used that fence as a model all together with old pictures and drawings made by Ivan Bilibin in 1900s. People in the Park have been saying that the restoration of *Porzhenskiy pogost* is a personal project of Elena Shatkovskaya.

We entered *Porzhenskiy pogost* together with Maksim, its caretaker. Maksim lives permanently next to the church complex. His tasks are minor repairs and security. Behind the fresh painted chopped fence is the deserted courtyard in the center of which stands the St. George's Church. The Finns complained about the fact of having this fence because they didn't not consider it an example of a good restoration work since it's visible that the Park has built a brand-new fence. Maksim opened the gates of the church and we went inside. Inside we got to know that the original heavens were replaced (perhaps because of the extraordinary value of them) with plastic copies. One of the Finns said loudly that every icon in the Church is a copy and went outside. Maksim confirmed that actually all the icons there were copies.



*Figure 10. Finnish tourists inside the Porzhenskiy pogost*

While the Finns were talking disappointedly about their visit to the church at the fireplace next to the Porzhenskiy pogost, Ivan was brewing a herbal tea for all of us. This tea was collected in Kenozerje. Also Ivan added there some herbs which he has found around the fireplace. The Finns were more inspired by the trip, surrounding landscapes and Ivan's guidance than by the church, they were ready to return home.

### **5.3 Nostalgia tours**

Nostalgia tourists are temporarily returning to their community of origin to participate in family, social, and cultural activities that are carried out throughout the year (Morales and Sanchez). The Kenozersky National Park was capable to establish several communities of this kind targeted to different social groups. It was strengthening its network throughout decades gradually exhibiting Kenozerje to strangers as a cradle of Russianness, Orthodox faith and rural ideal life. Locals in their turn were explained that visitors experiences could be improved through senses of belonging and personal attachment to the place. Most of the tourists coming to Kenozerje coming there to belong. Some of them are willing to reattach themselves to Orthodox religion and thereby to relaunch their ability to believe. Others are recolonizing Russia by connecting themselves to exotic people of countryside, absorbing leftovers of their gigantic epic tradition (Etkind).

Tourist hikes to Orthodox shrines accompanied by the locals contribute to the sense of place of a destination by remembering what is deeply intimate and meaningful to a place and thus

connecting with people's nostalgic senses of place (Caton and Santos). The locals are capable to provide to visitors insider experiences and it fits visitors desires (Lew).

The merit of the Park is that it preserves the local population in every possible way by providing new creative jobs and facilities for personal development. Beyond its borders you would rarely meet a forester storyteller providing you a positive vision of the place and awakening your desire to return.

## **6. Rural entrepreneurs**

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*“The Kenozersky National park [...] organizes and supports [...] existing crafts and revival of old ones”*

*Regulation on the Kenozersky National park issued by the Ministry of Nature on  
05.03.2003*

### **6.1 Elena Kalitina**

On the fourth day of my fieldwork I was invited by Elena Kalitina, the only potter in the Kenozersky National Park, to her clay toy making workshop. The previous two days I was filming her at the Epic Poetry museum in Shishkina village where she worked temporarily that summer as a museum watcher.

Elena seemed to be quite confused not by the fact of filming but mainly by my attention to her. She could not imagine that she is able to appeal any interest of outsiders. But that summer she was lucky. Almost every day she was followed either by journalists of a different kind or filmmakers or tourists.

Due to new work contract and various pottery commission she settled down in Vershinino with her husband and daughter. Originally she was coming from Ust-Pocha - her father worked there in the forest industry. Like many others she tried to leave the village, find herself in the city, and, like many others, she returned back. People in Russia say that a man needed to be where he was born. According to this saying many people in Kenozersky live.

She wasn't able to find a job for some years. But later she was suggested to become a potter in the Kenozersky National Park, the only potter in the area. The Park knew about her ability and desire to work with clay and supported her initiative.

*“I was invited to work as a potter because I’m used to handcrafts and, what is more important, I’m local. (strange sentence). Before me there were different potters from other places but the Park wanted a local potter. I have studied it. Something I learned at the Arkhangelsk Cultural college. Later I went to Kargopol to practice together with local master. Now I have all needed equipment, the Park has provided pottery wheel and pottery kiln (was given to me due to some collaboration project with Germans). And now I can work... I have all tools, all equipment. I craft now different pottery, different toys”* (Field work video archive 2016/07/22. Interview with Elena Kalitina).

In Kenozerje there was a whole village of potters from which there is only a few skeletons of houses and a mountain of shards left. Local pottery production ceased to be necessary in the era of Soviet industrialization when the locals started to be able to buy manufactured goods. The Park tried to support local production, but the last potter died in the late 1990s. Therefore, Elena was a real catch.

## **6.2. Toy-makers**

The invitation to the workshop was spontaneous. The day before she told that there might be a workshop soon because several touristic groups came to the Park but she didn’t specify the date. In the morning of July 12 she called me and said to be at the Kenozersky National Park Tourist center at 6 pm. The Touristic center is located among other buildings belonging to the Park. In addition to the workshop room, there is a tourist booking center and a gift shop inside. The hostel where I and other visitors stayed was five meters behind the center. Elena’s private house was nearby as well.

When I came to the workshop room besides Elena Kalitina there was a young woman with two-years-old son. Later I got to know that the woman came to the Park together with her child, husband and parents for a two-week holiday from my hometown. They wanted *to try something unusual or even exotic that’s why they have decided to discover the Russian North in the Kenozersky National Park* (Extract from my field notes 2016/07/15). The two-week holiday was held mainly through visits to various excursions and workshops.



*Figure 11. The workshop participants*

After some time with a little delay an elderly woman with her granddaughter entered the workshop room. The woman was a little confused by the fact of filming especially when she found out that the materials would be shown in Norway. She told that she is a well-known psychology professor from the Arkhangelsk University, and she would not want to be recognized by her Norwegian colleagues. Then I told her that my fieldwork was being carried out in agreement with the Kenozersky National Park and that the received materials would not later be replicated in any way. We agreed to film the process of making clay toys but not the workshop participants. A couple of days later, in a private conversation that woman presented herself as an experienced tourist. She was fascinated by the Russian North and visited many of its touristic destinations.

Elena put the necessary tools and clay on the green oilcloth tablecloth. The workshop participants sat around the table. The workshop itself started with price negotiation. Elena doubted whether it was worth it to start it, because there were two persons less than planned. It meant that the other participants needed to pay more. Nevertheless, Elena decided to solve the issue with payments later because she could not do it at that moment. All the payments go through the administration of the Park and only the administration can deal with any financial issues.

That day the workshop participants were supposed to make *Kitovras toy* out of clay. *Kitovras*<sup>1</sup> is a mythical creature mentioned for the first time in the 16th century. By *Kitovras* it was meant generally a monster or a proper name. It was portrayed as a monster-centaur, sometimes with wings. To Kenozerje *Kitovras* as a clay toy came from Kargopol where it was widely known

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<sup>1</sup> a literal transliteration of the Greek word *centaur*

as *Polkan*<sup>1</sup>, a half-human, half-horse (and sometimes a half-dog). Kitovras unlike Polkan isn't painted and usually covered with intricate patterns.



*Figure 12. Elena makes a Kitovras toy*

Elena put several ready samples in the middle of the table and began to explain the process of making the Kitovras toy very patiently and step by step. She has been explaining things much slower than usually mainly because she wanted me to film everything in details. She gave a piece of clay to each participant. All clay was brought from Kargopol (a town which is famous for its clay toy). Elena told that they need to work fast because clay gets dry soon. The tools that were used by her were either partially invented by her or bought online. The patterns applied to toys are also largely invented by Elena Kalitina. They usually were made up spontaneously and are inspired by the local craft tradition. The basic patterns go back to the traditional ornaments that existed in Kenozerje. Elena said that the invention of designs, patterns and tools seems normal for any craftsman.

Elena told stories when she was working. We got to know that different craftsmen make different toys. Even the Kitovras toy came out in another way at each craftsman. Some make it with wings, some put a man figure on its back depending on their preferences. We got to know how to burn pottery in the usual way and with milk (milk closes microscopic holes in the pottery which makes it more convenient for cooking). Elena told about a group of Norwegian tourists who were in the Park some years ago. They made Kitovras toys as well and added their national

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<sup>1</sup> from Italian - *Policane*



elements. The Norwegians gave to Kitovras a Viking image by adding swords and horned helmets to almost every toy they made.

Each participant got a small clay Kitovras toy in end of workshop. Every toy was a little bit different from another having its one size and a different pattern. Elena promised to burn every toy in the oven. She asked to leave the toys on the windowsill. Several dozens other Kitovras toys were already there.

### **6.3. Entrepreneurship in Kenozerje**

In this particular case Elena was presented as an entrepreneur who has designed, launched and run a new business. The Kenozersky Park was involved on every step in the construction and development of this small cultural industry helping Elena and fundraising from extremely different sources starting with its own reserves and ending with random German money. Cultural industry refers not only to a certain type of industrial activity, it also invokes a certain tradition of thinking about this activity (Hesmondhalgh 2013, 24). These industries have

*“their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property”* (The UK Government 2015).

Elena Kalitina and her small business confirms the effectiveness of the ongoing National Park policy aimed at supporting and preserving the local population. The Park follows *The Regulations on the National Park* where it is said that it is obliged to develop the region and create new jobs. But at the same time the park significantly increases its economic and symbolic capitals by differentiating touristic products. And there is always a certain person standing behind each of the products. The Kenozersky National Park was always investing in its social capital, the collective value of all existing on its territory social networks (Sander 2006).

For instance, the production of herbal teas in Ust-Pocha has been developed some years ago. Marina Anikieva was a cleaner in Ust-Pocha. Then she settled herself at the Center of Folk Crafts, then headed this center, then she became responsible for the tea project finding workers and organizing the harvesting of herbs. She told me the project has been initiated as collaboration of the Kenozersky National Park and the World Wide Fund for nature. The WWF has shown to locals how to gather herbs, how to keep them. Recommendations were also provided about when and what exactly to collect.

*“They have gathered all locals together and shown them the process of collecting herbs. The locals became very curious especially when they got meaning of all those herbs. And then we have started to read a lot of literature on this issue. And we got to know from books that there are important microelements especially needed by our bodies. As well they told us that we will get some income out of it. In order to receive money we need just to collect some leaves, to dry and to pack them later. The local woodworking factory got closed at that moment. And there were no jobs in the village. That’s why locals got easily interested”.*  
(Field work video archive 2016/07/22. Interview with Marina Anikieva)

The residents of Ust-Pocha had never been collecting herbs before. Or at least it was not done on an “industrial” scale. Usually people had some stock of herbs for personal use. But the set of herbs was much less varied than now. There were healers in the villages who knew how to collect herbs and how to use them. A habit of using herbs was interrupted by the Soviet era since modern methods of medical treatment have become more accessible with the opening of hospitals in villages. And the Kenozersky National Park has successfully reconstructed this habit. The same was done for pottery in Kenozerje. There was a developed local pottery-making tradition (it’s well presented in *Kitovrasovo Podvorie*, the pottery museum in Vershinino) and it was interrupted by a turbulent history of the 20th century. But the Park managed to hire Elena Kalitina as a potter and thereby restored the tradition.

The Park in its relation with local residents acts as a gatekeeper deciding whether the prospective value of creative output warrants the cost of humdrum inputs needed to place it before final buyer (Caves 2000, 19). The Park determines as well what to produce and how much to produce, and what services to provide. The local residents, in their turn, feel comfortable in these circumstances. According to Elizaveta Nechaeva-Anikieva from Ust-Pocha locals are waiting that *“the landowner will come and solve all our problems”* (Extract from my field notes 2016/07/24). Since the very beginning of the USSR Kenozerje obtained a landowner - people started to rely on their government and to perceive it as a problem solver. The contemporary Russia in many cases irresponsibly behaves towards rural areas. The Kenozersky National Park used this situation, took the power together with responsibilities and started to be the biggest entrepreneur in Kenozerje.

## 7. People and Stories

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*Myth in neither a lie nor a confession: it is an inflexion.*

Roland Barthes

### 7.1. Lizaveta Ivanovna

I don't remember exactly how I met Elizaveta Nechaeva-Anikieva or, as he calls herself, Lizaveta Ivanovna - a shortened version of her name plus middle name. Most likely it was a guided tour along the banks of Kenozero lake on my very first trip to the Kenozersky National Park. And she was our guide. An imperceptible woman about 40 years old who spent all her life in Ust-Pocha and raised two sons there. She began her career in the village kindergarten.

*“When I graduated from the teacher’s college in 1984... it was common to return back home. At that time, they had opened a new kindergarten for 90 children here in Ust-Pocha. It was an awesome kindergarten even better than the city one where I did internship before. There was a huge room combining a canteen and a bedroom. But here in Ust-Pocha everything was separated. So that’s how we started to work here.”* (a reserve, 2017. 3:58)

Then she was forced to start working as a school teacher since the kindergarten was closed. After working in a school on different positions she got laid off. And almost immediately received a job offer from Elena Shatkovskaya. The Park needed locals to guide tourists, to introduce guests to Kenozërje.

In the 2000s Lizaveta Ivanovna joined ‘*Kenozerochka*’, a folk collective based in Ust-Pocha. ‘*Kenozerochka*’ was started by Nina Markova, a professional choreographer and folk singer from Arkhangelsk who bought a summer house in Ust-Pocha. Now Lizaveta Ivanovna is a leader of this collective. The Park supports all folk collective from Kenozërje giving them the opportunity to earn on tourists and guests. For example, ‘*Kenozerochka*’ performs at every significant event with a repertoire of songs from different villages of Kenozërje. Also they often perform at local and regional festivals representing the Kenozersky National Park. During my fieldwork I followed Lizaveta Ivanovna together with ‘*Kenozerochka*’ to the *Istominskiy festival* in Izmailovskaya village in 100 km from the Park’s borderline (a reserve, 2017. 26:40). There is an unspoken competition between folk collectives in the district, and during the last couple of years ‘*Kenozerochka*’. Not only because of the high quality of performance and repertoire but

because of authentic costumes as well. Lizaveta Ivanovna wears her grandmother's dress that was carefully preserved in the family.



*Figure 13. 'Kenozerochka' at the Istominskiy festival. Lizaveta Ivanovna in the middle*

Being a bearer of the Kenozerje past Lizaveta lives in the remnant of the Soviet era and a flourishing forest industry - in a two-stored barrack. The barrack was built in 1986 but is already half sank into the swamp. Lizaveta and her family are the only ones who live in an eight-apartment house. Near the entrance she has a small barn where she keeps her goats. Goats bring milk and some wool from which you can make something to sell to tourists.

Her husband like many others from the local villages works in Mirnyi - the next door town where Russian spaceport is located. Her sons grew up and moved away becoming military officers.

*"They got educated and now they need to live in a city. But my sons are always willing to come back. And they would work here in a village if there are any jobs". (a reserve, 2017. 25:55)*

As a guide at the Kenozersky National Park Lizaveta Ivanovna walks tourists through her own village explaining city dwellers why are there so many goats around, shows leftovers of big and rich forest industry and says to them why all it was abandoned, opens the St. Nicholas chapel's door and tells people how was it even possible to use this masterpiece of wooden architecture dated by the 16th century as a storage facility for Ust-Pocha sawmill.

## 7.2. Childhood tales

I moved to Ust-Pocha for a couple of days since I wanted to film Lizaveta more in her own village. In Ust-Pocha there was no accommodation arranged by the National Park. So I asked Lizaveta Ivanovna to help me. She found me a small off grid house on a river shore. Before it belonged to an old man, then this man died and the house was rented out to rare tourists by Elizaveta's colleague from the 'Kenozerochka' collective.

Lizaveta Ivanovna asked me if I want to follow her guided boat tour the day after my arrival. It had to start in Vershinino and to end in Ust-Pocha with a series of workshops. The day after I got up at 7 am, had no breakfast since I've forgotten to buy food and went outside to look for Elizaveta. We have agreed to meet at the Center of Folk Crafts. When I came Elizaveta was already there. Then the Park's car has arrived to bring us to Vershinino. The Park was always sending a car to bring Lizaveta Ivanovna since she had not her own transport.



*Figure 14. Lizaveta Ivanovna as a guide*

In Vershinino we entered the same boat which was used to transfer the Finnish tourists to the Porzhenskiy pogost. It's the only boat in the Park capable to carry that many people from one village to another. Lizaveta was equipped with a handmade sarafan<sup>1</sup> and a small microphone with a speaker. She introduced herself to visitors, describe the route and started to talk. It seemed to me that this was the most common conversation. She was telling her personal story - how she lived

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<sup>1</sup> A long, trapezoidal traditional Russian dress

there, what did her mother do when Lizaveta was a small kid and so on. Lizaveta Ivanovna was proudly telling to visitors about Kenozerje and the visitors in their turn patiently listened sometimes interrupting her with questions. The guests were extremely interested in the excursion. Perhaps, some of them had the same childhood and Lizaveta was returning them back by sharing her own memories.

Those visitors, who were not enough lucky to spend childhood in a rural paradise, were trying to get new experiences under her patient supervision. In chapels she was explaining what are heavens and what was their purpose, outside she was telling the story how did she run with freshly baked bread from a village bakery. She told us that abandoned houses were not always abandoned but had different functions - a school where her mother worked, a club house where Lizaveta Ivanovna liked to watch movies, a grocery where she was able to buy candies.

In Ust-Pocha it was almost an interactive show - she was showing where timber was stored and and where there was a stoker. The guests were showing genuine interest.

*“Our village - Ust Pocha. It was always a peasant one. It started to grow bigger right before the World War 2 when they’ve opened here a wood working factory. Then it became a lumber-floating department. [...] The timber factory was shut down in 1991. This house was a cultural house and these several houses used to belong to the timber factory”.* (a reserve, 2017. 14:18)

I might say that Lizaveta Ivanovna knew her audience, she knew habits and desires of those people who are able to travel that far to reconnect themselves to Russian villages, to their own probable past, to the Soviet industrialized life, to the craft of icon-painting. These people are coming to Kenozerje for emic experiences, for equal conversations with locals. They wanted to participate in a rural everyday life, to nostalgize for a while and then to go back to their own normality. Lizaveta seemed to be happy to share her life with a touch of irony and a sense of pride caused by her village origin. She created a landscape *“where combinations of memory, action and meaning are complex and performed together”* (Dorrian and Rose, 2003).

This landscape is largely determined by the visitors’ desires which are claiming the ability to stay in certain conditions, to experience certain actions (Barthes 1993). The Park is willing to fulfill their desires through skilled employees thereby preserving and affirming its own image of the Russian culture outpost.

## 8. Conclusion

It happened that Kenozerje is filled with various enterprises and entrepreneurs. Children are collaborating with world-famous directors and having cash from tourists by telling them stories about their motherland, ex school teachers are dressing up in rustic clothes and uniting together in folk ensembles, foresters are governing the land wisely resolving all controversial issues. But still there is a chief entrepreneur - the Kenozersky National Park.

In the last three decades the Park managed to relaunch the territory entrusted to it and to create a new widely known brand - *Kenozerje*. Before it was a semi-abandoned territory located in thick woods marked with masterpieces of the Northern Russian wooden architecture in some places. Now both forests and architecture are attracting people to this remote area. The Park is highly personified institution often inseparable from its permanent leader – Elena Shatkovskaya, who started to manage since its very beginning. However, she doesn't separate the Park from herself and her family. Maybe, that's why her daughter, Aleksandra Yakovleva, works as the Kenozersky National Park deputy director and runs all international cooperation projects.

Elena is a “cultural change agent and resourceful visionary who organize cultural, financial, social and human capital, to generate revenue from a cultural activity” (Anheier, Cunningham, Isar & Paul, 2008). She is a key actor of my research despite the not so obvious presence in the written text or film. Elena Kalitina and Ivan Roymuev stayed in Kenozerje only because Shatkovskaya provided them with a decent desirable job. Elizaveta Nechaeva-Anikieva started her guiding career by a personal request of the director. Most of people who came to Kenozerje for research, work, etc. came there because of incredible charisma of Elena Shatkovskaya.

One of the core issues of my research paper was placed in its title. I believe that Elena Shatkovskaya is the only truly voluntary entrepreneur in Kenozerje. She was able to leave many times being proposed with higher positions in other institutions. And she always declined. Her employees became entrepreneurs largely because it turned to be the only possibility to have good life at their home thus I can't speak about their voluntariness.

Elena Shatkovskaya or the Kenozersky National Park - not such a big difference I need to say – built its enterprise on a huge cultural capital of Kenozerje constantly mixing it with the newly found social capital. People and stories are the core of the Kenozersky National Park. While there are people there will be stories. While there are stories there will be people.



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