

Yukaghir Questionnaire

1. Description

1.1 Name of society, language, and language family:

- *Society*:³ Two societies
 - Northern Yukaghir, also known as Jukagir, Northern Yukagir, Odul, Tundra, Tundre, Wadul, Yukagir
 - Southern Yukaghir, also known as Forest Yukagir, Jukagir, Kolym, Kolyma, Odul, Southern Yukagir, Yukagir
- *Language*:³ Both speak Yukaghir-nearly extinct in Southern Yukaghir society, Even, Russian, and Yakut while Northern Yukaghir also speaks Chukchi⁷ “It is believed that the Yukaghir people had many languages and dialects at the time of the Russian conquest, although only a small remnant of this nationality survives today” (71).
- *Language Family*:
 - ⁸ Yukaghir-unknown, some hypothesize it is a distant Uralic language but doesn't fit well, just the best it fits anywhere
 - ³ Russian is the most prominent language, with 100% speaking it while only people over 60 speak Yukaghir, and is in the Indo-European language family. Even and Yakut are spoken by individuals over the ages of 60 and 35, respectively. They are both considered a part of the Altaic language family.

1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com):

- ³ Northern Yukaghir: ykg
- ³ Southern Yukaghir: yux

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude):

- ³ Northern: Sakha (Yakutiya), lower Kolyma county, Andryushkino, and Kolymskoye
- ³ Southern: Magadanskaya Oblast', upper Kolyma county, Nelemnoye and Zyryanka, Kamchatka
- ⁹ Mainly inhabit Sakha: N66°45'43.2" E124°07'30"

1.4 Brief history:

- The Yukaghir is an endangered tribe in Northern Siberia. The mainly fishing clan that travels in unison with meat food supply, whether it is in the water or on land, along with gathering berries and shrubbery has always battled with its neighbors. Many believe that the Yukaghir population has been steadily decreasing. I think the Yukaghir culture has been drastically decreasing. While the Yukaghir people are steadily decreasing by marrying and having families outside of the clan, their culture is disappearing rapidly. It's unfortunate that children don't understand when their grandparent speaks their ancestral language. I want to blame the Russians for ruining the Yukaghir culture but if it weren't for the Russians, the Yukaghir might have been extinct decades ago.¹¹ Russian colonization began in the mid to late 17th century and documented the brutal and numerous attacks on the Yukaghir.⁶ Due to the positive relations the Yukaghir hold with the Russian Federation, they have been treated better than many other native tribes in recent years. However, they are struggling to keep their culture alive with modernization and loss of land to hunt and gather on.

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors:

- *Missionaries*:¹¹ Began to Christianize in the 18th century
- *Schools*
 - ³ The state sent children to boarding school from 1950s-1980s
 - ⁵ Students are taught their ancestral culture through secondhand sources, improper materials, and drastically different patterns. A current teacher says patterns used to be much simpler and “modest” but now the children are learning complex patterns. (161)
- *Governments*
 - ³ Soviet collectivization-reduced amount of Yukaghir land to farm enough land to meet the demands of Soviet society
 - ⁴ 1733- “Empress Anna Ioanovna abolished slavery among the Siberian peoples. This decree helped to normalize inter-tribal relations and contributed to a gradual cessation of devastating tribal wars, especially the...Chukchi-Yukaghir wars” (109).
 - ¹² “Merciless tax policies” by Russians reduced population to about 200
- *Powerful neighbors*
 - ¹ Harsh warfare between Paleo-Siberian tribes that brought tribes close to extinction
 - ³ Paleo-Siberian-classification of geographic similarities instead of genetic similarities
 - ⁷ When the Yukaghir were so close to extinction because of the assimilation with Yakuts and eventually Chukchis, the Russian military recruited them as auxiliaries to fight other natives that occupied the territory. (88)

1.6 Ecology:

- ² The land in which the Yukaghirs inhabited has some of the harshest weather in the world. The average temperature is -18° during the year and can reach below -70° in the winter. (26)⁵ “Yukaghir territories are spread over an immense Siberian expanse of permafrost (which has always made cultivation of soil impossible.) Another topographical feature of the Yukaghir territory is the great quantity of lakes...” (151).

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density

- *Population Size*
 - ⁴ Prior to Russians- 5,000 Yukaghirs in the Tundra from Ural Mountains to the east (48)
 - ⁶ 17th century- 4,775 Yukaghirs (71)
 - ¹ 1876- 1,600 Yukaghirs left between the Yana and Kolyma Rivers.(321)
 - ² 1890s-700 Yukaghirs (26)

- ² 1970 census-288 Yukaghir (26)
- ⁵ 1989 census-697 Yukaghirs (149)
- ³ 2010 census-370 Yukaghirs
- *Mean village size:* ¹⁹ 150 Yukaghirs
- *Home range size:* ¹⁴ Sakha Republic (3,103,200 km²) and ¹³ Chukotka Autonomous Okrug (737,700 km²)
- *Density:*
 - ¹⁴ Sakha Republic
 - .34/km² general population density
 - .01/km² Yukaghir population density
 - ¹³ Chukotka Autonomous Okrug
 - .068/km² general population density
 - .4/km² Yukaghir population density

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s):

- ¹⁹ Berries (581) ¹⁵ Imported bread (193) ¹¹ Nuts, shrubs, and other tree products ⁷ Roots (24)

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources:

- ⁵ Wild reindeer-“pokolka”-name for the special way Yukaghir hunt wild reindeer
 - “This involved chasing a reindeer until they had to swim across a river or a lake. Waiting for them in canoes were the hunters ready to move in for the kill. For the most part, the Yukaghir knew the time and route for the natural migration of the wild reindeer and thus set up their stations to kill them without much effort, demonstrating the Yukaghir’s sophisticated knowledge of animal behavior, timing, and their own mobility” (152).
- ⁵ “Elk is now the main prey for the Yukaghir hunter since the wild reindeer is on the verge of extinction” (152) ⁵ Sable is the main source of income. The hunters set traps in trees one meter above the ground and then leave because sable will smell the smoke on the Yukaghir. (155) ⁵ Fish are the main source of food for the Yukaghir, hence why they migrate along rivers. (156)

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?:

- ¹ When discussing similarities with another tribe, Bobrick explains, “ Like the...Yukaghir...they belonged to the Stone Age” (212). This is because the Yukaghir people used weapons made of bone or stone until very recently. People have uncovered ancient burial mounds in which more weapons were placed inside of. These weapons include the bows, arrows, and spears. (321)
- ⁵ The Yukaghir have two types of bows including a compound bow, made of two types of wood, and a bow made from a single piece of larch wood. The arrows are made from bone, ivory, and wood. However, the Russians introduced guns to the Yukaghir and now each individual can legally use a gun when he registers. This is extremely difficult for poor tribesmen and the government official is refusing to travel to the tribe. If the official comes out to check registered guns, he would have the right to take away any unregistered weapon and leave the hunters with the bow and arrow. The Yukaghir created skis to help hunt even more efficiently than with snowshoes. (159) Warfare and hunting weapons were the same. (167)
- ⁶ A leghold trap is a pair of metal jaws that close around an animal’s foreleg to keep it there until a hunter can finish the kill. This trap catches all animals in the weasel family, mainly sables and wolves while doing the least damage to their pelt as possible. (193)
- ⁷ The principle tools were stone axes, adzes, and fishhooks. This was all their society needed to survive for an extensive amount of time. (24)

2.4 Food storage:

- ⁵ If not eaten immediately, fish are frozen in the winter. (156)

2.5 Sexual division of production:

- ¹⁵ There was a traditional division of production in which all hunting and men did fishing and women did everything in the household and gathering. However, there was a sense of “genderlessness” in the Yukaghir community where the roles could be easily switched. Unless a woman was menstruating or pregnant, making many things including hunting taboo, she could go hunting with a group of men or by herself. (195-196)

2.6 Land tenure:

- ¹⁶ Legally owning land never crossed local tribesmen’s thoughts until the late 1920s when Soviets implemented the collectivization policy to consolidate land and economic prosperity among individual families and improve the Soviet economy. Local tribes simply roamed the lands previous to these laws and fought over land when they crossed paths. This land tenure did not fairly distribute land to the indigenous people, but strip them of much of the land they made a living on. Then, the Soviet Union began to “civilize” the indigenous tribes through sedentarization. A great example is of the Evenki society and how the relationship with their land was weakened due to the parameters.

2.7 Ceramics:

- ⁵ “A harsh environment and an arduous life have prevented the Yukaghir from developing an art form of their own. Decorations applied to their implements and clothing is the extent of their aesthetic achievement. The few art pieces documented are wooden amulets in the form of human figures made from birch bark. Some birch bark animals are made as children’s toys but these, too, are very crude” (161).

2.7 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

- ⁵ Clans would always give the catch to the elders or most authoritative figure to distribute to each household. (167)

2.8 Food taboos:

- ¹⁵ Women cannot hunt if they are menstruating or immediately after giving birth. (195)
- ¹⁷ Prohibited to kill animals that will not be eaten ¹⁷ Animals that are killed should not be thrown around
 - If either of these occurs-animals species will leave that area

2.10 Canoes/watercraft?

- ⁵ Use canoes to hunt animals. Their favorite animal to hunt with a canoe appeared to be wild reindeer. (152)

3. Anthropometry3.1 Mean adult height (m and f): **N/A**3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f): **N/A****4. Life History, mating, marriage**4.1 Age at menarche (f): **N/A**4.2 Age at first birth (m and f): ¹⁵ *Female*-All Yukaghir women try to have their first child before 18 years old (202)4.3 Completed family size (m and f): **N/A**4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f): **N/A**4.5 Age first marriage (m and f): **N/A**4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce: ²⁶ Divorce is said to be common, no percentage was found (19)4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: ²⁵ 50% (289)

4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?:

- ²⁰ "...nor was it their custom to make payment for the bride. They do, however, have the custom of bride-service, but this...is but another proof of the old law of obligatory marriage" (116). ¹⁰ "...the exchange of gifts 'is designed to bring the members of both families into close contact'...Mr. Crawley connects it with savage ideas of gifts: 'a gift...means far more to primitive man than it does to us; it is part of himself.' And he even maintains that marriage by purchase is a development from a previous custom of exchanging gifts, the so-called bride price being originally 'a pledge, a part of one's self, given to another and received from him'" (400).

4.9 Inheritance patterns: ¹¹ Patrilineal for Northern and Southern Yukaghir4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict: **N/A**

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:

- ¹ This could mean happy or homosexual but Bobrick lists the effects of mushrooms on Yukaghirs, Kamchadals, and other tribes who discovered the drug to include "lightheaded, more lively and gay, more daring and bold" (322). While one cannot question the observer whom Bobrick quoted, both meanings can be understood. The individual under influence may be more lively and happy to be around or more daring and bold to do what is not commonly practiced, which is homosexuality in this case. The latter is stretching the imagination a little bit, but that's an effect of mushrooms.

4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy):

- *Exogamy*
 - ²⁰ "...the existence until now of the clan among the Yukaghir is conclusive proof that in former times the Yukaghir were a strictly exogamous tribe" (116).
 - ⁵ "...due to a small number of people of marrying age, many Yukaghir clans have mixed with the neighboring Even, Russians, and Yakuts" (167).
- *Endogamy*-²⁰ There has been an "intrusion of endogamy while the feelings and traditions of exogamic practice still persist...The reasons are quite clear. The Yukaghir, numbering only a few hundred people, are scattered over an enormous area and are obliged to marry with the clan, and sometimes even into the same family" (115).

4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these "other fathers" recognized?

- ¹⁵ "...most of the Yukaghir hunters remained bachelors, either in fact (about 25% stayed unmarried according to the local village statistics) or else in effect (they lived away from their wives and children most of the year...[and] considered to be at the bottom of the social status hierarchy: living the greater part of their lives in the wilderness in a state of enforced celibacy..." (197). From this Yukaghir woman, an absent father and almost any other form of father figure within Yukaghir society seemed common and not appreciated.

4.14 What is the belief of the mother's role in procreation exactly? (e.g., "receptacle in which fetus grows") **N/A**4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)? **N/A**

4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape

- ⁸ Men of authority and wealth can lay with any woman, married or single, when they travel through. (91)
- ²⁶ Women can sometimes refuse to be "lent" to a visitor, but other times they are forced to do so. (19)

4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin)

- ²⁰ It appears the Yukaghir were once strictly exogamic but have slowly become more inclined and desperate to marry close kin. The preferential category depends on the availability of spouses with the most distant kin ranking highest and closest kin ranking lowest as they normally practice incest avoidance. (115-116)
- ¹⁵ Yukaghir women marrying Russian men helped a woman advance in society (196) One woman was asked who she would marry and she stated that no one was ever appealing because the men from her clan were blood relatives or drinking while the Russian men who were sometimes appealing tended to have wives in their hometowns. (202)

4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?

- ⁸ After a woman starts menstruating, she sleeps in a separate tent and can lay with anyone who visits her. (90)

- ²⁶ Women exhibit a “sexual looseness” (19)
- 4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring: ²⁶ It is common for males to “lend” wives to visiting males. This is direct evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners because the extramarital affair would not happen without the husband giving her up as a gift. (19)
- 4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children? ²⁶ If the children’s mother dies or abandons them, the matrilineal grandmother raises the children. (13)
- 4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females **N/A**
- 4.22 Evidence for couvades **N/A**
- 4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older)
- ²⁰ Elder brothers are referred to as “big fathers” and younger brothers and cousins are called “little fathers” (115).
- 4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?
- *Avoidance:* ²⁰ “Sexual intercourse is not only forbidden between the elder brothers and cousins and the wives of the younger ones, but there is also a strict avoidance taboo between them” (115). Another avoidance comes from the Tungus tradition in which the paternal nephew has marital rights over his youngest paternal uncle’s wife. This is not reciprocated for the paternal uncle. Previous to this era of extreme endogamy, avoidance of brothers and sisters was practiced. ²⁰ “...avoidance between members of the class emjepul, which embraces brothers and sisters and cousins of both lines, agnatic and cognatic. This is salient when we consider than in modern as well as olden times, cousin marriage [with the exception of first-cousins] was lawful. It is clear that this avoidance must originally have embraced only agnatic brothers and sisters, between whom intercourse has been forbidden...” (115)
 - *Respect:* ⁵ There is a deep feeling of kinship within the Yukaghir tribes and clans. Families hunt as a unit with the most authoritative person distributing the catch per family. It is always taught to help each member of the clan to the best of ones ability. They have the utmost respect for each other. (167)
- 4.24 Joking relationships? **N/A**
- 4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations
- ¹⁵ Matrilineal-“...children of ethnically mixed couples would still be regarded as Yukaghirs as long as they were given their mother’s surname, settled in Nelemnoye and ‘think, eat, and in general behave according to the Yukaghir tradition” (201).
- 4.26 Incest avoidance rules ²⁰
- “Sexual intercourse is not only forbidden between the elder brothers and cousins and the wives of the younger ones, but there is also a strict avoidance taboo between them” (115).
 - “...avoidance between members of the class emjepul, which embraces brothers and sisters and cousins of both lines, agnatic and cognatic. This is salient when we consider than in modern as well as olden times, cousin marriage [with the exception of first-cousins] was lawful. It is clear that this avoidance must originally have embraced only agnatic brothers and sisters, between whom intercourse has been forbidden...” (115)
 - “Particularly conclusive are the avoidances (1) between elder brothers or elder male cousins and the wives of their younger brothers or younger male cousins; and (2) between the elder brother or elder male cousin and the wife of the younger brother’s or male cousin’s son” (115)
- 4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?
- ²⁰ “Until now the Yukaghir knew no religious marriage ceremonies, nor was it their custom to make payment for the bride” (116). ¹⁰ “blood is used at weddings as a prophylactic or means of purification” (448). No definite ceremony was found.
 - ¹² It was common for clans to meet during the summer at prearranged places for reasons including nuptials.
- 4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name?
- ⁶ “Apart from a Christian name, every Yukaghir also has a nickname, which has the purpose of confusing the evil spirits...What nicknames have in common if their reference to an unflattering trait of the person” (160).
 - ¹⁵ Children who were ethnically mixed had to take their mothers maiden name and practice every tradition to be considered a Yukaghir (201).
- 4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?)
- ²⁰ It is preferred to marry outside of the community, but marriages commonly occur within the community due to clan size and isolated location. There seems to be no female or male difference. (115)
- 4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)?
- The father arranges marriages and the daughter may refuse a man her father accepts but those cases are extremely rare. (19)
- 4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who: **N/A**

Warfare/homicide

4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare:

- ¹ Before Russians discovered the number of tribes who lived in Northern Siberia, some groups were almost extinct compared to the numbers they once had. The tribes who inhabited the land included Buryats, Yakuts, Tungus, Ostyaks, Voguls, Koryak, Chukchi, and Yukaghir. The Yukaghir population was one of the worst tribes in terms of death rates. Believed to once the most populous tribe, the Yukaghir people were weak when the Russians arrived. I would conclude a large percentage of deaths are due to warfare as Bobrick states, “ Some blood feuds approached a genocidal scale. The Yukaghir had once occupied the whole region...But the Koryak, Chukchi, and Tungus had all become their deadly enemies, and by the time the Russians arrived, the Yukaghir population was so reduced as to make them the least of the northeastern tribes” (77). ⁷ The percentage of warfare

deaths only increased when the Russians recruited the Yukaghir as Russian auxiliaries to fight against other indigenous societies. (88)

4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death:

- ¹ There seem to have been a lot of attacks on the Yukaghirs specifically and I think it's because they were such a big threat at one point in time. Why their people were continually sought after with lower numbers than other tribes is something I can't answer for sure. It probably took a turn for the worse when the Yukaghir became allies with the Russians. (217)
- ⁵ "The Yukaghir were traditionally known as very good warriors, but their mobility has been inferior to that of the reindeer-herding nomads. Sudden raids by the Even took their toll but were not devastating due to widely dispersed settlements of the Yukaghir" (167).
- ¹ "Natives drank with predictable abandon...and in a spirit of communal generosity even shared their brandy with babes-in-arms. One skipper who visited a small Chukchi settlement on the Asiatic shore found every person, including the smallest children, in such a state of drunkenness they were on the verge of insanity." (322). Bobrick provides the perfect example of alcohol negatively affecting one society and its ability to affect another one. If someone is too drunk to properly think, tempers can flare and violence ensue if he doesn't like so much as a look someone gives him. This is exemplified in *On the Run In Siberia* when the author drinks too much and threatens the life of a Yukaghir. The individual's mother awakened him the next morning and it was already understood no harm was meant. Does it happen that often that possible homicide is disregarded so easily?

4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing:

- ¹ Several Yukaghir men who had been forced to fight for and guide the Russians traveling the west to east coast reportedly rebelled and killed six and injured 15 of the Russians as soon as the opportunity arose. (97) The Chukchi almost "exterminated" the Yukaghirs because they were so hard for the Russians to "tame" and therefore rebelled in any way possible, including genocide of fellow tribes. (217)

4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations):

- *Number*
 - ¹ Eight local tribes: Buryats, Yakuts, Tungus, Ostyaks, Voguls, Koryak, Chukchi, and Yukaghir (77) ²¹ Even as well
- *Diversity*
 - Northeastern Asian nations ²⁰ "...consist of three groups: (1) the Yukaghir, (2) the Chukchi, Koriak [aka Koryak], and Kamchadal, and (3) the Aleut. Far apart as these three groups are in language, origin, culture, and geographical position, they are unified through fundamental common traits in their matrimonial institutions..." (113). Each tribe differs from the next in a number of ways, becoming more diverse as you look further outside of their typical land area.
 - ²¹ Even and Sakha (Yakut) have genetic, anthropological and linguistic ties with the Yukaghirs.
- *Relationship with neighboring societies:* ¹ The natives who lived amongst the Yukaghir clans were more violent toward each other than anything else. A key reason behind Chukchi attacks on the Yukaghir was the hatred the Chukchi felt toward the Yukaghir for being allies with the Russians. (217) Koryak war parties formed an alliance with the Yukaghir to ensure their protection from the Russians. (99) This was a successful strategy because the Yukaghir had the most positive influence on affairs of the native people in Russian politics. ⁴ "Wars played an important part in the lives of all Siberian peoples...armed conflicts constantly took place between tribes and clans with the result that more powerful groups subjugated and gradually assimilated weaker ones" (49).

4.18 Cannibalism?

- No evidence in anything I've read to suggest cannibalism. Dismembering a shaman that has passed away is the closest I have read but they make amulets out of the body.

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size: ¹⁹ 150

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):

- ⁵ "It was during the winter when he was not hunting that the Yukaghir would only drink tea and eat several slices of stroganina between meals. During the hunting season, they would run all day on snow shoes without taking any nourishment, only eating pieces of snow" (156). The Yukaghir are a semi-nomadic tribe with a dwelling they live in during winter months, proceed to tear down, and live nomadically during the summer. The traditional dwelling is known as an "Ursa" while the ancient dwelling is called "Chandal" and was most likely used as a permanent winter dwelling. However, the current Russian government brought drastic changes from the mobile homes they once implemented to poorly constructed log cabins. (163-165)
- ¹¹ Seasonal summer homes used bark and/or skin with bone and/or antler

5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes):

- ⁴ Slavery before 1733 (109)
- ⁵ Elders of a clan run the daily life and interactions between other clans because of the strong respect among kin. (167) Historically, the Yukaghir had no political organization amongst them. Now, they have cultural organizations to raise concern about topics they find important, like the loss of their oral language. However, these organizations do not have a political counterpart to truly bring about the change they wish to see. Essentially, there is still no political system of the Yukaghir. (169)

5.4 Post marital residence:

- ¹¹ Northern-Tundra-patrilocal society
- ¹¹ Southern-Kolyma-matrilocal society

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense):

- *Defined Boundaries:* ⁵ The rivers on which they fish (156)
- *Active defense:* ⁴ “In spite of Siberia being only sparsely populated, the Siberian peoples’ roving lifestyle inevitably compelled them to fight for new territories (pastures, hunting and fishing grounds, sea mammals breeding grounds, etc.)” (49).
- ³ 19th century-territory shrank due to merging of clans, warfare, assimilation with the Even, and lastly collectivization

5.6 Social interaction divisions? (age and sex):

- *Age:* ¹ No age interaction division. There seems to be an increased number of interactions between adults and children when it comes to smoking tobacco and drinking. (322)
- *Sex:* ² No sexual interaction division. Young women are writing to young men (26)

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships: N/A

5.8 Village and house organization:

- ⁵ Log cabins and tents (163-165)

5.9 Specialized village structures (mens’ houses):

- ⁵ Nothing is specialized anymore and all of the houses that were built for the Yukaghir are essentially falling apart. (164)

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?

- ⁵ Winter-Sleep in dwellings
- ¹¹ Summer-skin or bark shelters

5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc:

- ⁵ With the exception of Elders, who are sometimes shamans, there is an egalitarian social organization because the clan is mainly close kin. (167)

5.12 Trade:

- ⁵ Yassak, otherwise known as fur, was the main export of Yukaghirs. They traveled with their trades via dog sleds because dogs were the only domesticated animals Yukaghirs kept. The fur was a popular item in all markets including Moscow and Cossacks would occasionally take Yukaghirs hostage if they did not receive payment of fur. (149-150)

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?

- ⁵ The Elders are the only higher authority of the tribe on earth. ²³ Only after death does a shaman become treated as a local deity. Their power includes receiving food before anyone else only to distribute it to each household. They also keep relations between clans. (167)
- ⁴ “Socially, the life of almost all the Siberian peoples was organized on a kinship basis. Only the Siberian Tatars and the Yenisei Kirghiz had a higher level of social structure” (49).
- ¹⁵ Willerslev wrote about an “informal status hierarchy which has evolved throughout the Soviet and post-Soviet periods. Within this hierarchy, the Yukaghir hunters, who are virtually all men, have been moving steadily towards the bottom. Many Yukaghir women, to the contrary, have been moving upwards of the scale” (190).

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6 Time allocation to RCR:

- ¹⁷ RCR has to do with daily life from hunting taboos and traditions to death and birth rituals.

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine):

- ⁵ Shamans- People who have spiritual strengths and gifts granted by the owner of the taiga, or supreme deity, and assisted by souls of the dead that travel back and forth between Land of Shadows and earth (171)
 - Conventional Shaman-follows conventional steps and therefore cannot become a “great one”
 - “black Shaman”- thought of as doing evil, likelihood that he will use his powers for personal gain
 - Can become a “great one”-most powerful and ethically acceptable humanistic power that is granted as a gift
- ⁶ The bear is thought to be the most powerful shaman and his physical body is known as the “owner” of the forest. He is always referred to as “Grandfather” to show the utmost respect for him. (66)
- ⁵ “People with open bodies”- heightened sensitivity to nature and subtle changes that happen to it (169)

6.2 Stimulants:

- ¹ Tobacco introduced from Ukraine is commonly noted as the beginning of this tribes demise. From Russian communication, they believed that tobacco was good for the lungs and throat and thus began teaching young children to smoke. ⁵ This obviously had the opposite of the intended effect and the smell causes problems when hunting sable. (155) Then matters became worse when the Yukaghirs discovered mushrooms, “The Yukaghirs...had also discovered the narcotic delights of the fly-agaric mushroom, which made them ‘lightheaded, more lively and gay, more daring and bold.’ ...Although such psychedelic illusions acquired a semi-religious cast, simple addiction to the drug was undeniable...” (322).

6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal):

- *Birth:* ⁵ “...old people, before dying, determine into whose unborn children’s bodies their souls will re-enter. Souls of deceased relatives enter the child long before birth...The goddess Ayisi’t, the protectress of women in labor, leads the soul into the body of the child” (175).
- *Death:* ¹ “...among the Yukaghirs, corpses were sometimes affectionately dismembered and the parts dried and distributed as amulets, called ‘grandfathers’, to close relations” (118). This happens when a shaman died and then he would be viewed as a deity. ¹ Ancient Burial mounds of the Yukaghir have been found between the Yana and Kolyma rivers. (321) ⁶ Before adopting Christianity, the Yukaghir would remove all of the meat from a deceased relative and place all of the bones on a scaffold. (71)

- *Puberty*:⁸ “Jochelson^ observed no rites connected with puberty” (90).
- *Seasonal* N/A

6.4 Other rituals:

- ⁶ Hunting ritual- each hunter takes a turn bowing a bear and saying “Grandfather, it was not me who killed you but a Russian.” Then they poke the bears eyes out and cry like birds to make it seem like a bird is attacking the bear, not men. They will then skin the bear and tie the upper and lower jaw together so its spirit cannot attack them. (71)
- ¹⁷ Fire-feeding ritual- a mandatory ritual in which the Earth and Fire receive a share of food, alcohol, and tobacco. (2)
- ²³ After shamans pass away, they dismember the body, dry it, and create amulets from it to give different members of the clan. They then worship the shaman as a sort of deity.

6.5 Myths (Creation):

- ¹ **Two Creation Myths**
 - Seveki-the deity Seveki (meaning “seven”) created the world in the “midst of a watery waste, and...told his older brother (who lived in the underworld and ‘made all the bad things, every kind of worm and snake’) to destroy it. In the myths elaboration, temptation was followed by hereditary sickness and shame, with unmistakable resemblances to the biblical account of the Fall” (117).
 - Tree and Man- thought to be a combination of Tree of Knowledge and Man’s descent, ““Man was born from a tree. The tree split in two. Two people came out. One was a man, the other a woman. Until a child was born, they were covered with hair. People went on being born from son to son, and at first they had neither reindeer nor dogs, and did not think about how everything came to be. But then their descendants began to think”” (117).
- ⁵ “One spring the Yassa-chnaya Yukaghir met while hunting a large herd of elk. The snow was deep and soft. The large animals sank in it and were easily killed. The hunters became so excited that they began to kill the elk without thought, and when they were done, they could not carry all of the meat. The elk rotted away in the field, infecting the air for a long distance. After this, the elk disappeared; the indignant pe’jull (spirit) had led them away, far from the unreasonable hunter” (155).
- ⁵ An elder spoke of the Okhullah fish legend when he talked about fishing, “. . .the Okhullah fish, one without fins and with a thin skin. The king of the lake decided to send this fish as a messenger to the king of the sea. He tried to decide what kind of armor to give this fish for the journey. Since his original skin was thin, he was given spikes to fend off other predator fish. The king also gave him bodyguards. Well prepared, this fish started the long journey to the sea. After overcoming many dangers, he finally reached the king of the sea and delivered the letter from the king of the lake. The sea king was very happy, thanked the fish and awarded him a military skin with stripes, allowing him to be a predator to other fish. He then returned tot the lake from which he was sent” (156).
- ⁵ If a “black Shaman” confronts someone, they can protect themselves according to this legend, “He arranges for a meeting with the challenger on the day following the encounter. After killing a calf or a dog, he removes the heart and lays the animal on the side of the road. He then takes the heart to the other side of the road, making sure to leave a blood trail. A trap is then set up, stringing a rope across the road in the same manner used when hunting wolves. At night, the Shaman will send a spirit helper in the form of a wolf to kill the man. The wolf will go tot the dead animal where the trap is sprung. The ‘black Shaman’ will die the next morning” (171).

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games):

- *Art*:⁵ Due to the harsh environment, art was not commonly nor successfully practiced. This is why Yukaghir women love wearing metal on their aprons. (161)¹⁸ Londol-traditional Yukaghir dance
- *Music*:¹ Shamanistic drums (321)¹⁸ Ununie song-about an old Yukaghir land, Yarkhadana song, song about a young man’s love for a girl. (193)
- ⁵ Idols under the Shamanic tree including beads, coins, gun cartridges (173)
- *Games*: N/A

6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

- ⁵ A man or woman can become a shaman regardless of age. (171) Some anthropologists have claimed females are not shamans in the Yukaghir culture, but⁶ Willerslev proves these beliefs wrong when he writes about a female Shaman in *On the Run In Siberia*. (156-157)

6.8 Missionary effect:

- ¹¹ Christianized in the 18th century and⁶ fostered a more humane burial for deceased relatives (71)

6.9 RCR revival:

- ¹¹ There was a revival of religion when Christianity was implemented in the 18th century and then combined with the shamanistic and animistic beliefs of the Yukaghir.

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs:

- ¹ “. . .Yukaghirs. . .hoped for an afterlife in the *aurora borealis* where they might dwell ‘on the red blaze, and pass their time playing ball with a walrus skull.’ In more exalted conceptions the motionless North Star in the canopy of heaven was imagined as the passage to a celestial place in the east ‘towards morning’ where the Master Spirit dwelled with those who had lived good lives on earth, in a land of everlasting day” (117).

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

- There are a couple of reasons I believe naming dead people is not taboo.⁵ Yukaghir clans believe that souls of the dead cross between a Land of Shadows and the earth to help shamans. (171)⁶ Willerslev recounts a conversation he had with a Yukaghir

about a dead person. This may only be acceptable because he is an outsider but I think it's acceptable in everyday Yukaghir life. The Yukaghir believe in reincarnation and when someone is rebirthed, they remember and talk about their past lives. (164)

6.12 Is there teknonymy?

- ²² Maslova discusses the reciprocals used in the Yukaghir language to denote kinship within a generation. For example, someone can refer to a younger sibling, youngest sibling, eldest sibling, or each other's siblings. However, this is practiced within a generation and therefore not teknonymy. (19)

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.)

- ⁶ Animism- The Yukaghir believe spirits are inside of everything, most especially animals. It is said that when a hunter succeeds in catching and killing his prey, that animal's spirit made a conscious decision to give itself to the hunter. (157, 160)
- ⁶ Orthodox Christianity- some religious affiliations determined tax payment, people who practiced this kind of Christianity were categorized as promyshlenniki and taxed 10% (14)
- ^{5,23} Shamanism- The practice of a shaman or a person with an "open body" reaching states of consciousness in order to encounter and interact with spirits and their surroundings. They worship the ancestral spirits of Fire, Sun, Hunter, Earth, and Water in hopes that those spirits protect them from enemies.
- "Every clan had a shaman 'Alma'. After death every shaman was treated as a deity. The body of the dead shaman was cut to small pieces and kept by the clan members as holly objects."
- ⁶ Idols- There are three wooden Yukaghir idols. The first is named nu'monpogil', meaning "Owner of the House", who protects an individual's home from evil spirits. The second idol is named yiodeiis'ien'ulben, meaning "Grandfather with the Pointed Head", who is the head of the evil spirits. This idol is placed next to infants to make the evil spirit recognize each infant as its own and not harm them. The third idol is named ayibii and represents the hunter's soul. All three carry a Christian cross to ward off evil spirits, and they must all be fed regularly with bone marrow from killed prey. (195)

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint: N/A

7.2 Piercings: N/A

7.3 Haircut:

- ¹ Lice was thought to be a sign of good health. (322)

7.4 Scarification: N/A

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.):

- *Beads*: ²⁴ "One of the primary methods used for adornment is intricate bead work. There is evidence of trades for small quantities of beads for whole reindeer in the times of Pre revolutionary Russia."
- *Feathers*: N/A
- *Lip Plates*: N/A
- ⁵ Women wear metallic ornamentation on their aprons that announce their approach. (161) ²⁴ "The ringing of small metal pendants was believed to drive away bad spirits and protect the wearer."

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:

- ²⁷ Shaman wore a ceremonial dress and always had a drum

7.7 Sex differences in adornment:

- ²⁴ "Men's clothing differed little from that of women. The only difference being in the type and quantity of the decorative elements. Men's clothing would be more modestly decorated, while women wore fringing and fur tassels, pendants of metal and bead work."

7.8 Missionary effect:

- ³ Christianity is practiced within shamanistic traditions because of the missionaries work in the 18th century.

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment: N/A

8. Kinship systems

8.1 Sibling classification system: N/A

8.2 Sororate, levirate:

- *Levirate*- ²⁶ "Widows were expected to marry a brother of the late husband" (19).
- *Sororate*- ¹⁰ "Frazer attaches much importance to the fact that the levirate and the sororate are often found among the same people" (164). I can't find any evidence that supports or contradicts the Yukaghir practicing this system. Westermarck goes on to talk about the reasons for these traditions is to preserve the union between the two families, which is why I think the Yukaghir practiced sororate as well.

8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.): N/A

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

⁶ When all of the dogs of a village howl at night together, it is believed to be an omen that a death will occur that night. On the night Willerslev heard this, it was believed that an older and negative man was supposed to die but the village awoke to a seventeen year old who hung himself. Even though the old man had nothing to do with the boy's death, he was blamed for it. The Yukaghir claimed he used some kind of magic to stay alive and not succumb to an eternal sleep when he naturally should have. (160)

²⁶ There was a "sexual looseness" the Yukaghir women tend to practice that Jochelson attributes to the Russians. (19)

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