This book draws on a wide range of theoretical perspectives – from Chaney and Bourdieu to Berger, Sontag and Bakhtin – and from ideas about nostalgia to theories of consumption, nation, and ethnicity. The ethnographic detail in each chapter is impressive, and in my view is the real core of the book. It is a resource which will be widely used by Russian, Soviet and postsocialist specialists, by anthropologists, sociologists and geographers, and by anyone interested in cultural studies, material culture and consumption, and place and ethnicity.

—Dr. Frances Pine, Goldsmiths, University of London

Lifestyle in Siberia and the Russian North breaks new ground by exploring the concept of lifestyle from a distinctly anthropological perspective. Showcasing the collective work of ten experienced scholars in the field, the book goes beyond concepts of tradition that have often been the focus of previous research, to explain how political, economic and technological changes in Russia have created a wide range of new possibilities and constraints in the pursuit of different ways of life.

Each contribution is drawn from meticulous first-hand field research, and the authors engage with theoretical questions such as whether and how the concept of lifestyle can be extended beyond its conventionally urban, Euro-American context and employed in a markedly different setting. Lifestyle in Siberia and the Russian North builds on the contributors' clear commitment to diversifying the field and providing a novel and invaluable insight into this vast and dynamic region.

This book provides inspiring reading for students and teachers of Anthropology, Sociology and Cultural Studies and for anyone interested in Russia and its regions. By providing ethnographic case studies, it is also a useful basis for teaching anthropological methods and concepts, both at graduate and undergraduate level. Rigorous and innovative, it marks an important contribution to the study of Siberia and the Russian North.

As with all Open Book publications, this entire book is available to read for free on the publisher's website. Printed and digital editions, together with supplementary digital material, can also be found at www.openbookpublishers.com.
It is the summer of 2010, and Viktor is walking with a couple of his friends towards one end of a spacious village. They are on holiday in a village called Chemal, a well-known tourist area of the Altai Republic. Chemal has a dam, with a beach where tourists flock when the weather is good, and a connected open-air market and amusement park. Tourists can also try white-water rafting on the Katun’ River or visit an Orthodox chapel built on a rock island in the river. Absorbed in such leisurely activities, Viktor and his friends are missing out on visiting another well-known attraction of Chemal: a private museum of Altaian culture. This is the realm of Raisa, an enthusiastic woman in her sixties dressed in a traditional Altaian costume. As she guides groups of visitors through several aïyl, traditional Altaian hexagonal houses, Raisa tells them about the native population of the Altai Republic — about traditional means of subsistence, social organisation, and costumes. Visitors can slip on an Altaian coat and take a picture of themselves dressed in it. At the end of the visit, tourists usually purchase some traditional souvenirs and try national food, such as a rock-hard dried cheese called kurut.
This chapter is based on the holiday-making experiences of these two informants, Viktor and Raisa. Their biographies mirror distinct forms of holiday-making in Soviet times as well as the conspicuous changes that have occurred in the post-Soviet decades. One informant is from a big Siberian city, the other from a small village in the “deep” province (glubinka). One is Russian, the other of non-Russian ethnic identity. One is a male born in 1963, the other a female born in 1945. Seeking to embed a comparison of our two protagonists’ travel biographies within a more general interpretation of changing predilections and patterns of mobility in Siberia over the last thirty years, we approach these biographies through the notion of taste and collectively sustained desires. Noting that not all the journeys our protagonists talked about were made of their own will (and not all of them were experienced positively), we keep our focus to voluntary journeys conducted to a certain destination during weekends, holidays, or summer vacations and then back home again. These journeys are associated with certain positive expectations and motivated by certain desires. Although they are individually held, these desires are crafted and shaped collectively: the idea of what is to be desired was and is regimented socially and politically. Such collectively shared desires point to the existence of communities of taste. Desires and dreams are products of taste, which itself is sustained by an individual’s position in the social space and, vice versa, is what sustains that very position (e.g. Bourdieu 1984). They also reflect personal sensibilities (Chaney 1996; see Chapter 1) and serve as collectively shared motivations for leisure and holiday journeys, which in this chapter we describe as noble causes. More so than in many other spheres of life, tourism carries the promise of making dreams come true (temporarily).

Apart from drawing on the concept of communities of taste and pointing out the changes such communities have undergone over the past few decades, this chapter explicates how ethnicity has acquired new value not just in making certain destinations more attractive than others, but also as a noble cause in the self-perception of the travelling individual. Moreover, we aim to uncover shared spatial imaginaries, expectations, and actual practices of travelling that have shaped holiday-making and leisure mobility in Siberia from late socialist times to the 2010s.

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1 We owe the concept of spatial imaginaries to Joseph Long, who discusses this term in more detail in the following chapter.
The chapter is arranged roughly chronologically, divided into sections on so-called late socialism (see Yurchak 1997), the 1990s, and the 2000s. To add nuance to the otherwise highly schematic character of such a comparison, for each period we will describe what makes each of our informants typical or unique in his or her social context and what other patterns of holiday-making were in operation in such contexts. Building on this debate, we will then discuss more generally how vacation was framed in terms of rest and exercise in official Soviet discourse; how practices and tastes of holiday-making have developed over the last thirty to fifty years; and how touristic self-exploration in Russia and beyond has been shifting between visions of a unified modernisation project and visions of a particular indigenous magic.

Before we proceed to discuss the travel biographies and practices of holiday-making in Soviet and post-Soviet times, let us briefly introduce our two protagonists:

Raisa was born in 1945 in the Shebalino region of what is now the Altai Republic. Raisa is an Altaian. Due to her late husband's job, she has lived in almost every part of the Altai Republic while working as a teacher. Raisa lives in Chemal on her own, but is often accompanied by her daughter and grandchildren, who spend the whole summer with her every year. Even though she has retired from teaching, she is very active in running her family's small museum and Altaian cultural centre in Chemal. Raisa has two daughters and many grandchildren.

Viktor, born in 1963, grew up in a suburb of Novosibirsk and has lived there all his life. Viktor is Russian. At the beginning of his career, he worked for Novosibirsk's public transport system as a trolley driver and clerk. Since 2006, he has had no regular employment. Between 2011 and 2012 Viktor was involved in commerce and managed to accumulate quite a lot of money. Viktor is single and has neither children nor a permanent partner, but has a large network of friends. He owns a flat and earns his livelihood by renting out two of the three rooms.

Tourism and holiday-making during late socialism

Raisa attended four years of elementary school in her native village before moving to the village of Shebalino, the regional centre, to attend
boarding school. After finishing her fifth year there in 1958, the best pupils of the year — including Raisa — were taken by lorry to Gorno-Altaisk, the capital of the administrative unit that is now the Altai Republic, for sightseeing. She remembers details of what they saw very well, as it was the only travel experience of her childhood; she spent all her holidays working with her parents, who were herders. She nevertheless recalls that her mother went to a pioneer camp in the early 1930s, something that the Soviet Union was unable to provide for her war-born generation (see also Zubkova 1998).²

After finishing school, Raisa moved to Gorno-Altaisk to attend a pedagogical institute to become a teacher. She was admitted to study foreign languages in the city of Barnaul, but was too timid to go, as she had never been there. In Gorno-Altaisk she met her future husband, an Altaian engineer, who soon became a member of the Communist Party — a “party man” (partiinyi chelovek). Their first daughter was born in Raisa’s final year of studies. Because the Communist Party sent her husband from one district to the next, Raisa’s family often had to change residence and hence lived in many different parts of the Altai region. Raisa’s husband was frequently stressed and overworked, yet his position made a crucial difference to the family’s holiday-making possibilities. She emphasised that thanks to his managerial status, unlike “ordinary citizens”, he was entitled to putëvki (holiday vouchers) for two: himself and his spouse.

As a distinct and widespread phenomenon of holiday travel in the Soviet era, it is worthwhile to take a more detailed look at the distribution of putëvki. Genealogically, the voucher system goes back to Thomas Cook and his coupon system, yet in the Soviet Union the putëvka represented “a nonmarket mechanism for the allocation of the scarce

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² The Organisation of Young Pioneers of the Soviet Union (established in 1922) played an important ideological role in socialising children into socialist values. “Pioneers” were children between the ages of ten and fifteen. Membership in the organisation was often preceded by membership in the Little Octobrist/October kids’ organisation (for children between the ages of seven and nine) and followed by membership in the Komsomol (the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League). After World War II, Organisations of Young Pioneers were also established in other countries of the socialist bloc. Pioneer camps differed from holiday resorts with permanent structures; rather, they resembled Boy Scout camps. Life in pioneer camps was ideally disciplined, aiming at improving the health, hygiene habits, and ideological loyalty of future socialist — and eventually communist — subjects.
resource of a place on a tour or in a tourist destination. [...] The economic organisation of Soviet tourism revolved around the voucher, rather than disposable income, personal savings, or consumer demand” (Gorsuch & Koenker 2006: 4). People were most often able to obtain putëvki via the regional branches of the Trade Union (Profsoiuz), allegedly based on the merit of the worker, but in practice putëvki were often acquired on the basis of informal favours known as blat (cf. Ledeneva 1998, 2006). In the late Soviet period, the two main genres of travel — recreational and educational tourism — were supervised and managed by two different councils within the overarching structure of the Trade Union. The Central Council of Health Resorts distributed putëvki to spas (kurort), sanatoriums (sanatorii), health-oriented vacation centres (pansionat), and recreational centres (dom otdykha). The Central Council of Tourism and Excursions issued vouchers for guided tours and supervised both the tourist bases and the small number of motels and camping sites. Some of the vouchers were given for free to exemplary workers in recognition of their commitment; most vouchers were sold at subsidised prices, i.e. the Trade Union covered thirty per cent of the nominal cost of the voucher. A putëvka entitled the holder to accommodation and board at his or her destination; in the case of a tour, it also covered transportation expenses. Vouchers entitling holders to curative procedures in spas and sanatoriums had to be paired with a doctor’s prescription (spravka); there was also an option to purchase medical treatment on the spot without accommodation and board, which was called kursovka (see, for example, Noack 2006: 282–85, 302).

3 Noack’s (2006: 302) statement that “The heavily subsidized vouchers were normally sold at 30 roubles” seems to be incorrect. We have heard from several sources that thirty per cent of the cost of the voucher was covered by the Trade Union, while the rest was to be covered by the travelling individual. Usually, a putëvka was valid for one person only and the Trade Union would allocate one at a time to each lucky worker. Cadres of party nomenklatura of Raisa’s husband’s standing were entitled to an additional voucher for their spouse. People in higher nomenklatura ranks were entitled to even more privileged holiday-making in restricted-access holiday resorts and sanatoriums. Special holiday-making regimes were some of the numerous privileges enjoyed by the de facto ruling class of the Soviet Union (see, for example, Andrei 1994: 254–55; Matthews 2011). A famous depiction of a restricted-access catering facility for members of the Union of Soviet Writers can be found in Mikhail Bulgakov’s novel Master and Margarita. Figure 5.2 in Chapter 5 shows three young women who got to know each other during a putëvka to Crimea in 1991; one of them is Nastia, interviewed by Joseph Long.
Fig. 4.1. In the spa (kurort) of Arshan in Tunka District (Buryatia), the local administration kept track of “the number of patients that underwent treatment in the spa”. Since its pre-revolutionary beginnings, the spa claims to have received steadily growing number of visitors. At present, the two sanatoriums of Arshan attract customers with medical treatment, health and relaxation for the whole family (http://kurort-arshan.ru). Photograph by Luděk Brož, 2011, CC-BY.

In the early 1970s, Raisa’s husband got a putëvka to the well-known spa of Piatigorsk, in the south of the European part of Russia, about 4,000 kilometres away from their home. Unlike her husband, Raisa said she was more interested in sightseeing (chtoby posmotret’) than treatment (lechenie). In Piatigorsk she was very enthusiastic about places connected to Lermontov’s life, while her husband simply wanted to relax. In her words, she always made him see places there. Having obtained the putëvka, the couple decided to take their younger daughter with them, as she was often ill (their older daughter spent that summer with Raisa’s mother). The putëvka, however, was only valid for two people. Therefore, they found private accommodation for their daughter in Piatigorsk in the flat of an Altaian girl who had married there. Their daughter only spent the nights in this flat; the rest of the day she was with her parents and ate in the spa canteen (stolovaia) with them.

To improve her rather poor health, Raisa’s younger daughter later went to several children’s sanatoriums (detskii sanatorii), including one

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4 Similar in function to spas, sanatoriums provided important sites for holiday-making in Soviet — and, to some degree, post-Soviet — times. Their centrality
in Belokurikha, a spa in the piedmont of Altai some 150 kilometres away from Gorno-Altaisk. Their older daughter, on the other hand, once went to the famous pioneer camp Artek as a reward for her good grades in school.\footnote{Youth camps (molodezhnyi lager’) and pioneer camps (pionerskii lager’), etc., were managed by separate organisations. They deserve a closer analysis, a task that goes beyond the scope of this chapter. Therefore, these forms of holiday travel are mentioned only occasionally here.}

During late socialism, Raisa and her husband were very active holiday-makers, which was rather unusual in Altaian rural areas. Raisa is aware that this is partly due to the fact that her husband was a high-ranking party official; therefore, as previously mentioned, they could enjoy comparatively exceptional access to putëvka trips for two people. Raisa nevertheless suggests that an important part of the story was their will to travel, which she associates with professions like teachers, doctors, or clerks of all kinds — in other words, with small-town and rural intellectual elites. In contrast to them, she believes the collective-farm herders largely did not want to travel far on their holidays. They preferred to rest in the mountains at arzhan suu (healing springs) and other sacred sites in the region. One of our informants called this otdykh po-altaiski (‘rest in the Altaian way’), which, among other things, might implicitly classify Soviet holiday-making styles as “Russian”.

Raisa went with her husband to Kislovodsk (another spa in the southern part of European Russia) twice, and to Belokurikha three times. Her last trip of that era took place in 1988, after she had received a putëvka in recognition of her excellent work performance from her employer, the education department of the municipal administration. She went to one of the Black Sea resorts for a month by airplane. On the way back, she had a lay-over in Barnaul and stayed overnight with her younger daughter, who was studying there at the time. Raisa brought all kinds of presents for her family, especially clothes for her
daughters. When she landed in Gorno-Altaisk, no one came to meet her; she surmised that her husband must be very busy and made her way back to their flat herself. That evening when he came home, she found out that he had just been instructed by the party to become chairman of a collective farm, which required his family to move to Chemal, 120 kilometres from Gorno-Altaisk. Tearfully, Raisa accepted the last move of her career. This move inadvertently defined the circumstances under which she and her family encountered the breakdown of socialism — in what would later become one of the most touristy areas of the Altai Republic.

Viktor still remembers many details of his first holiday: back in 1969, as a young boy, he went by train in a third-class sleeper (platskart) to the famous Black Sea city of Sochi with his mother and an older male cousin. His father could not go with them — Viktor thinks now in hindsight that his father probably liked the opportunity to do his own thing. The journey by train took three or four days. The stay in Sochi was based on informal arrangements. Immediately after their arrival in Sochi, Viktor’s mother phoned a female friend, also a holiday guest from Novosibirsk, who helped them find private accommodation for two weeks. They soon settled in lodging provided by a landlady, one of many residents in Sochi who privately let rooms. But their private accommodation had its drawbacks: there was no electricity in the room, thus one could not prepare hot food there. Viktor, his mother, and his cousin went to a canteen (stolovaja) for lunch, though not every day. There were quite a few canteens in the city, yet they did not have sufficient seating to cater for all the holiday guests in the city. The queues for these canteens were awfully long — up to two hours. Restaurants did exist, but their prices were rather prohibitive. Those who had received accommodation in one of the hotels or sanatoriums were better off: each sanatorium had its own cafeteria or restaurant where the guests would take their lunch in shifts (this system is still in practice in many sanatoriums). Viktor remembers how impressed he was by the sea, but after two weeks he felt ready to go back to Novosibirsk, where he would see his relatives, neighbours, and friends; he looked forward to telling them so many exciting things.

Our protagonists’ early memories of travel mainly fall into the late 1960s and 1970s, a period when recreational travel and tourism
experienced rapid development. Noack (2006: 281) states “that the number of Soviet domestic tourists more than doubled between 1965 and 1980” and holiday travel became a mainstream activity — for the urban and educated parts of Soviet society, at least. However, the state-provided sector of infrastructure in tourism and recreation always lagged behind the growing number of travellers and their demands. This made many travellers opt for informal arrangements and practices, which came to be known as dikii (“wild”) tourism. Raisa’s account of taking her daughter to Piatigorsk without putëvka and Viktor’s account of his trip to Sochi resemble Noack’s (2006) description of the interplay of “wild” and organised tourism in Anapa, another important Black Sea resort, in the same period. Their accounts illustrate that in late Soviet times, tourist accommodation, catering, and services were intended to serve the demands and desires of visitors who came via the approval and arrangement of their factory, office, Trade Union, etc., not of visitors who came on their own initiative. Nevertheless, the latter often had to rely on the state-provided tourism infrastructure and used it in informal ways. Occasionally, “wild” tourists even managed to find informal accommodation in a large factory’s recreational centre on the shores of the Black Sea.

In 1984, Viktor was declared the “best trolley driver in Novosibirsk” and he was rewarded for his outstanding work performance with a two-week, all-expenses-paid journey to a youth holiday centre (molodezhnyi lager’) in Kanev, Ukraine. This part of Viktor’s story illustrates the management of social recognition in Soviet society. While only a limited number of workers were granted such a privilege, there was an established mechanism for the allocation of such rewards. The local branches of the Trade Union distributed complimentary tours (along with other forms of recognition; see Habeck 2011). In line with — and as a model for — other socialist countries,6 the function of the Trade Union in the Soviet Union, where conflicts between employers and employees supposedly no longer existed, was not a form of political mediation. Instead, it involved the distribution of benefits and entitlements to particular forms of consumption.

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6 In the case of the German Democratic Republic, Görlich (2012) has conducted a study on the history of the FDGB-Feriendienst (the holiday service of the Trade Union); see also Moranda (2006). On the adoption of the Soviet model in socialist Romania, see Light (2013).
In the years to follow, Viktor took a few business trips (komandirovka) for professional training courses to cities in the European part of the Soviet Union, but he mainly conducted journeys on his own initiative, investing a significant part of his income into what he described as spontaneous hops by airplane to such cities as Kiev, Kharkov, Vilnius, Riga, and Leningrad. Thus, while having some experience along the lines of organised and state-provided complimentary travel, Viktor mostly travelled on the basis of individual, informal arrangements.

**Precursors and “noble causes” of socialist holiday worlds**

As the first part of our comparative travel biography of Raisa and Viktor has shown, leisure mobility under late socialism did have some commonalities with leisure mobility in Western countries, i.e. those on the other side of the so-called “iron curtain”. In the 1970s, for example, the seaside resort holiday was a mainstream aspiration in the Soviet Union as much as it was in Western Europe. To a certain degree, the reasons for this could be called historical. Considering English historians’ assertions that “the roots of our own recreational practices and beliefs about leisure lie in the nineteenth century” (Lowerson & Myerscough 1977: 1; quoted in Baker 1979: 85), we are tempted to say the same about the leisure practices of Raisa and Viktor. Industrialisation created work “organised as a relatively time-bound and space-bound activity, separated off from play, religion and festivity” (Urry 2002: 19), which was a major change when compared to pre-industrial spatial-temporal divisions of life (see Thomas 1964). In effect, modernity broke up “the ‘leisure class,’ capturing its fragments and distributing them to everyone” (MacCannell 1999: 37).

Such democratisation of leisure nevertheless posed a challenge: “Viewed from above, leisure constituted a problem whose solution required the building of a new social conformity — a play discipline to complement the work discipline that was the principal means of social control in an industrial capitalist society” (Baker 1979: 82). Hence “In Victorian England, partly in response to a perceived threat of social and political disorder, and partly out of a wish to improve the conditions of working-class life, reformers embraced leisure as a means of educating
and edifying the masses” (Parratt 1999: 471). The leisure of the growing working classes therefore became a concern of the upper and upper-middle classes — the patronising, philanthropic idea of “rational recreation” was born (cf. Cunningham 1980; Rosenbaum 2015). Leisure mobility soon became one of the building blocks of rational recreation, enabled — like the spatial-temporal leisure slot itself — by important socio-technological changes of that time.

Without a doubt, Britain was the vanguard of changes leading to the emergence of tourism and organised travel in the nineteenth century. The specific factors behind the trend were summarised by Scott Lash and John Urry (1994: 260) as follows:

- rising real incomes; rapid urbanization with pronounced levels of class segregation; new transportation technologies such as the railway and the steamship; the systematizing of work and the increased regulation of the hours and conditions of labour; novel methods of facilitating and organizing travel; and the development of a number of romanticized ‘place-myths’ to attract potential travellers. Travel therefore came to be both organizationally possible and desired by large numbers of people, beginning with the more affluent sections of the English working class.

The democratisation of leisure and the consequent rise of leisure mobility pioneered in Britain was soon followed in other European nations and the United States. Imperial Russia was known for its urge to “catch up” with Europe by adopting, among other things, European tastes. Aristocratic and other affluent classes of Russia developed leisure mobility early on; they travelled to European spas such as Baden-Baden or Karlovy Vary, but they also initiated the development of spas and similar resorts in Russia. Although other segments of Russian society mimicked the aristocracy and affluent members of the bourgeoisie, more significant was the democratisation of leisure initiated during the industrialisation and urbanisation of the early Soviet Union. In 1936, the Soviet state even codified the right to relaxation in its constitution (Article 119). Interestingly, as in Britain decades earlier, such development created a concern about the way leisure time was spent, which led to an ideology similar to “rational recreation”. In the early years of the Soviet industrialisation and urbanisation process, just like in Britain, members of the upper classes (especially women) voluntarily took on the civilising mission
(cf. Parratt 1999; Volkov 2000). Soon, however, the task was taken over by the state.

As the civilising mission was to be accomplished during the workers’ free time, in socialist ideology leisure activities were far from being fun for fun’s sake. They were bound up with specific noble causes, or sensibilities (Chaney 1996). Prime among these noble causes were physical and mental health. In line with the Marxist thesis about reproduction of labour power, leisure activities were meant to reproduce “physically and ideologically healthy Soviet citizens” (Gorsuch 2003: 761; cf. Rosenbaum 2015). Holiday-making in socialism was characterised by a discourse that in effect “medicalised” what elsewhere would be understood as simply recreation and relaxation. It seems that the word “recreation” was implicitly endowed with some deeper meaning of re-creation of oneself as a good worker, able-bodied to participate in the building of a socialist society. Putting oneself together in terms of health was almost an obligation for the socialist subject while being on holiday.

The hard-core turizm “proper” as a kind of outdoor sport officially recognised since the early 1950s was quite a different route leading to the noble cause of physical and mental recreation. It was meant to produce healthy citizens not through medicalised rest, but through zakalka — training, extreme exercise, preventive strengthening of the human organism, literally a process of “hardening” as that of metals. It emphasised the agency of the turist, expressed through independent muscle-driven locomotion and self-reliance in the wilderness with almost military connotations. Ozdorovitel’nyi or lechebnyi turizm in sanatoriums or spas and hard-core outdoor turizm both thus combined ideological goals with a focus on the healthy body (constructed in each of the two in very different ways).

Apart from the medicalised or athletic recreation of healthy socialist subjects, edification and self-cultivation were noble causes of leisurely travel as well. This type of travel, called poznavatel’nyi turizm,7 primarily cultivated the ideological-educational aspect, mostly omitting the aspects of physical health and the body. Trips to Soviet cities (be they Riga or Samarkand), historical sites (Shushenskoe, the location of Lenin’s

7 In this context, poznavatel’nyi could be translated as “educational”, “exploratory”, or even “experiential”.

Lifestyle in Siberia and the Russian North
Siberian exile, or Yasnaia Poliana, Tolstoi’s estate), and picturesque landscapes (the Baltic Coast or Lake Baikal) generally included an appeal to travellers to acquaint themselves with local particularities and the place’s contribution to the common Soviet project (cf. Qualls 2006: 167). This principle of unity in diversity (Chapter 8 in this volume) served as a contextualisation of the peculiar against a background of regularities in social and economic development.

All three abovementioned modes — health-focussed recreation, turizm as outdoor physical exercise, and tourism aiming at mental self-cultivation — were supported as noble causes of travelling by the state, regional and local administrations, the Youth League (Komsomol), the Trade Union, and other official institutions. Motivated by these noble causes of Soviet leisure, such support was further nested in an emphasis on social equality. However, since communism (which was supposed to satisfy all people’s needs) was yet to be achieved, needs, including the need for recreation, were allegedly satisfied according to one’s merits under socialism. As is already apparent from the examples of Raisa and Viktor, the key instrument of distribution according to one’s merits was a putëvka allocated by the Trade Union.

To equate the official ideologies of (late) socialism with the actual desires, imaginaries, dreams, or practices of Soviet citizens would be too simplistic; no discourse is “consumed” in the way it is “intended”. Alexei Yurchak (2006) has offered what is probably the most sophisticated argument along these lines regarding late socialism in the USSR. Yurchak’s thesis about the hegemony of form in this context helps us to understand equality and socialist merit as hegemonic rhetorical forms that were not fully representational of the actual practices of Soviet holiday-making. It was obvious to everyone that there was a limited number of putëvki, hotel beds, restaurant tables, and sanatorium facilities, and more generally a limited infrastructural capacity of the entire official tourism sector. It was also clear that one’s deservingness, nominally defined as work performance, was in fact often a priority equated with one’s position in the state enterprise/institution or party structure, and the recognition of one’s claim and actual allocation of

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8 For children and youth, a similar canon of motivations was in operation, even if their destinations, modes of travel, and mechanisms of entitlement partially differed from those of adults.
holiday vouchers often depended on the claimant’s ability to exploit the network of informal favours (blat).

Creative use of the system was not limited to the exploitation of connections to obtain holiday vouchers. If holiday-makers acquired an entitlement for a certain type of holiday, it often did not fit their expectations, desires, or needs; they had to try to shape the holiday accordingly (Noack 2006: 287). The absence of putëvki for families was a particular sticking point in the system; anyone seeking to spend a holiday with their spouse and children had to search for ways to do so. “Wild” tourism was the most notable expression of this. Interestingly, though different from state-promoted tourism in many aspects, wild tourism did not differ that strongly in terms of destinations. Surely, numerous wild travellers went to places far off the well-trodden putëvka itineraries and far out of the realm of recreation as officially imagined. Nonetheless, our research findings corroborate that a large contingent of wild travellers followed the stream of official tourists, sometimes due to the sheer necessity of arrangements for family members to come along, and sometimes out of the wish to go to places that were featured as “desirable” destinations. Even our two protagonists’ travel biographies bear witness to the fact that wild and organised forms of tourism were intertwined, particularly in the most prominent resorts on the Black Sea coast (cf. Noack 2006: 301).

In specific ways, the actual practices of late-socialist holiday-making re-interpreted the official emphasis on social equality and deservingness (see above); moreover, they also re-interpreted the prescribed noble causes for tourism. Intended to recreate socialist subjects physically as well as ideologically, places like Black Sea resorts in fact often worked as hubs where the latest (often western) trends, such as “The Twist” dance and connected fashions, were learnt and taken home (Yurchak 2006: 171). Mountaineering, to give another example, often took place within official structures of organised outdoor turizm, yet it worked as a centre of gravity for subcultures (tusovki) that were vne, i.e. outside of the Soviet ideological world, to use Yurchak’s terminology (2006), if not against it outright.

Communities of taste under late socialism differed not only in their preferences, desires, or dreams of leisure travel and how these diverged from those promoted by the socialist ideology; they also
differed in ways of fulfilling such desires and in utilising the system for doing so. Compared to many European nations, the Soviet Union was a relative latecomer to the process of democratisation of leisure travel. During late socialism, such democratisation allegedly achieved the ideal of equality and deservingness. In practice, however, within the shared world of late-socialist leisure travel, there were divisions correlating with regional and ethnic identity, level of education, age, and gender.

Considering, for example, Raisa’s trip to Piatigorsk and Viktor’s childhood trip to the Black Sea, we can see a crucial similarity: the desire to embark on leisure travel with close relatives. Nevertheless, there are some important differences. While the comparatively more highly educated Raisa did not mention a single completely self-organised trip in her narrative, Viktor started his holiday travel narrative with the experience of a “wild” tourist. Wild tourism was a much more widespread phenomenon among urban people and better-educated classes of the Soviet Union. We believe that a certain diffidence and hesitation towards self-organised travel was (and probably still is) typical for rural areas and less-educated people with less study- and work-related travel experience. While Raisa stands out among our informants from the Altai Republic thanks to her account of bringing her daughter on their voucher holiday as a wild tourist, Viktor, who grew up in a large city, may be seen as more representative of informal holiday arrangements, given his experience of travel without a voucher at all.

We also came across divergent interpretations of supposedly universal (i.e. all-union) socialist values in tourism. One of the professional tourism employees in Altai, for example, mentioned the case of a holiday-maker from Uzbekistan who came to Altai on a putěvka for a mountaineering trip in the 1980s. Horrified that walking with a heavy pack was considered “recreation”, he refused to participate in trekking, explaining this with reference to his dignity. Drawing on different sets of values and meanings, he did not consider this kind of walking appropriate for a person of his status.

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9 Such experience helps to form what may be called “travel competencies”: each kind of travel requires a certain degree of specific skills. See Chapter 2 in this volume.
Divergent travel biographies in the first post-Soviet decade

The end of the Soviet Union in 1991 catalysed a period of Russian history that is often referred to as a decade of depression and despair.\textsuperscript{10} This was a difficult time for most people as extreme insecurity entered their lives; for many of them, the economic transformation of the 1990s meant life at the poverty line — if not below. For Raisa and her family, however, this period was more ambivalent and less bleak. On the one hand, they certainly did not belong to the small number of people who benefited from economic deregulation and consequently could make a fortune during these years. On the other hand, Raisa’s husband could be seen as belonging to what Andrle (2001) called the “Buoyant Class” in the context of the post-communist Czech Republic — i.e. the class of people achieving success regardless of the actual political climate and economic circumstances. A senior Communist Party member, Raisa’s husband retired in 1993 from his position as chairman of the collective farm, but he subsequently accepted the position of regional director of Altaienergobank in Chemal. At the same time, he became active in the Altaian national revival and was elected as aga jaisan (political leader) of the Maiman clan in 1992.\textsuperscript{11}

In the mid-1990s, following some health problems, Raisa’s husband retired from his position at the bank and focussed fully on what he regarded as “work for people”, the results of which would outlive him. He decided to build a museum and cultural centre in the Ongudai region of the Altai Republic, where he had originally come from. Yet at the time, his goal was almost impossible to achieve. He did not have enough resources to contract workers or secure land, and mere social capital was not enough in a time of crisis when people were struggling to feed their families. Resourcefully, Raisa extended their garden in

\textsuperscript{10} This characterisation is supported by more than economic figures and the devaluation of the Russian rouble. During the 1990s, the Russian Federation witnessed an increase in mortality rate “unprecedented in a modern industrialised country in peacetime” (Men et al. 2003: 6), which was accounted for by “changes in mortality from vascular disease and violent deaths (mainly suicides, homicides, unintentional poisoning, and traffic incidents) among young and middle-aged adults” (Men et al. 2003: 1).

\textsuperscript{11} For more on the Altaian national revival in general, and the function of jaisan in particular, see Halemba (2006: 24–27).
Chemal by purchasing two neighbouring plots, and she suggested to her husband that he could bring the timber he had purchased in Ongudai over to Chemal and build the museum in their garden. Those years were certainly hard on the family budget, yet in her story Raisa occasionally spoke about individuals from the Altai Republic’s government or important state agencies who had been her husband’s peers and helped with money here and there. By the end of the 1990s, Raisa’s family had a museum and cultural centre in her garden that consisted of several aïyl, with a partially paid mortgage of some 350,000 roubles (almost 13,000 US dollars at the end of 1999).

It is not surprising that Raisa’s travels, including holiday travels, were dramatically reduced during the 1990s. At the beginning of the 1990s, she went to the nearby spa of Belokurikha with her colleague during a summer holiday; her husband went there on his own the following year in the autumn. Raisa’s husband once also went to a sanatorium in Barnaul to deal with his health problems. Even though his position enabled him to claim two putëvi, his schedule as a collective-farm chairman was simply not compatible with Raisa’s schedule as an elementary school teacher (where she worked until 2008, including twelve years as a working pensioner). Thus each of them individually used the putëka entitlements that they had obtained via their respective employer. In the later 1990s, the system of putëvka practically collapsed. In Raisa’s words, there were other pressing issues, especially long delays in receiving salaries and retirement-pension payments. Amidst this complicated situation, Raisa’s husband used his social capital not to maintain their comparatively high living standards, but rather to realise his dream.

Nevertheless, there is a link between Raisa’s husband’s dream and tourism/holiday travel. The first three years of the museum’s operation (between approximately 1997 and 2000) were purely non-commercial, i.e. Raisa and her husband did not charge visitors entrance fees. The museum was visited by virtually every class from each school in the Chemal region, as well as by many other classes from schools throughout the Altai Republic. After three years, Raisa said, both the regional administration and local travel agents suggested the museum start charging visitors. The regional administration organised a

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12 Summer school holidays coincide with the peak season of agricultural work.
seminar for travel agencies at the museum, during which Raisa and
her husband performed an exemplary guided tour, gave a lecture, and
fed travel agency representatives samples of Altaian meals. The most
important result of the seminar was an agreement with participating
travel agencies on the price of tickets for the museum’s first regular
season — fifty roubles per person.

Even though Raisa and her husband resembled their fellow
compatriots in the 1990s in terms of decreasing holiday mobility, in
their case this was partly caused by voluntarily channelling their better-
than-average resources to other ends. At the end of the “horrible” 1990s
and the beginning of the 2000s, Raisa and her husband had not only
managed to realise her husband’s dream of establishing a museum
and cultural centre, but also found themselves to be entrepreneurs of
tourism in a region destined to boom in the years to come.

Viktor’s account of travels in the 1990s is very different from Raisa’s.
With the end of the Soviet Union, travelling abroad became an option,13
and Viktor applied for a passport (zagranpasport).14 Germany became
his favourite destination for the next twelve years. Every other year, he
got to Bremen to stay with a former classmate from school and used
this as a secondary home base for short stints in different German cities.
He also learned the German language. Vilnius and Riga were no longer
on Viktor’s travel list.

Viktor’s travel experiences in the 1990s exemplify the new, post-
Soviet connectivities that emerged when movement and communication
across the state border became less restricted. The flipside of this new
prospect of journeys to the west was the almost prohibitive level of
living costs in western countries throughout most of the 1990s; still,
many people from Russia managed to get around on a shoestring. There
was also a growing influx of tourists from abroad into Russia, including
Siberia (Zuev 2013). Among other factors, the rapid development of the

13 In Soviet times, going abroad was either connected with a business trip or a package
tour; in both cases, travellers were considered to be very privileged and expected to
be morally steadfast against all forms of (capitalist) seduction (Gorsuch 2006, 2011;
see also Natal’ia’s memories in Chapter 5 of this volume).

14 In present-day Russia, authorities issue two types of passports: domestic ones,
which are obligatory for every citizen aged fourteen or older, and international
ones, for those who plan to travel abroad. These two types of passports also
existed in the Soviet period (Matthews 2013), yet it was much harder to obtain an
international passport than it is now.
Internet facilitated contacts and increased exchange in certain cultural domains.

While the Far Abroad appeared to be nearer, the Near Abroad (the successor states of the Soviet Union) moved away politically and symbolically. If in earlier times, cities like Samarkand or Riga seemed to be just around the corner, and were in fact located in the same political and discursive space, they now became “strange”. Living in these places presumably became difficult for Russians as well as for nearly everybody else. Few would wish to travel for a holiday to the Central Asian republics in the 1990s when numerous individuals, ethnic Russians in particular, were trying to leave everything behind in order to migrate to Russia. The Far North and the remote regions of eastern Siberia also turned into a space of withdrawal, but not all of those who dearly wanted to leave the Far North were able to move (Heleniak 2009). For many — probably most — citizens of the Russian Federation, the 1990s were a period when habitual destinations were no longer within reach. Immobility became a primary aspect of social and personal suffering.

The economic turbulence of the 1990s did not affect Viktor that heavily, though for different reasons than in Raisa’s case. Even though Viktor’s job did not provide a sufficient income, Viktor was privileged inasmuch as he owns a three-room flat and does not have a family of his own; he can let two rooms and combine the revenues with his salary. Despite being very sociable with a large circle of friends, Viktor has always sought to be self-reliant. His mother used to have a dacha, but Viktor made it known early on that he was not keen on helping with it. Thus, unlike a large number of urban inhabitants of Russia (Caldwell 2011; Stammler & Sidorova 2015), Viktor does not think of a dacha as a place of recreation and self-fulfilment. And unlike many, he does not rely on familial networks of support. Moreover, he generally tries to avoid courtesy journeys to relatives. Viktor’s action space, his mobility, and his travel destinations are not influenced by kinship ties, which places him in stark contrast to our other interlocutors.

Here, we have to make a detour to address some important developments of leisure mobility in 1990s Siberia that neither Viktor nor Raisa can help us exemplify. The first trend we will mention is shopping tourism. Even during (late-)socialist times, many — if not
the majority of — travellers saw shopping as an important part of their holiday experience, somewhat contrary to official warnings about the “cult of things” (see Oushakine 2014). These items not only included memorabilia connected to the particular holiday destination, but also consumer goods that were otherwise hard to get in the late-socialist economy of shortages. Under late socialism, some people used their leisure mobility to supply their extended family with consumer goods or used these goods to participate in the informal economy of favours, but some also sold them on the black market. In the 1990s, this phenomenon grew considerably larger. People started to travel regularly to the borderlands with Poland, Finland, or China in order to obtain goods and use the revenue from selling them to cover their travel expenses as well as their own shopping. For some, these small side businesses were the beginning of a serious involvement in commerce that resulted in trips of a purely economic nature, rather than leisure (for an analysis of post-socialist border trade, cf. Stammler-Gossmann 2012). The passenger car was a typical commodity that inhabitants of Siberia travelled to border regions to obtain. A whole class of traders grew around the passenger car, which also served as a means of intra-Siberian leisure mobility (see Broz & Habeck 2015).

In the 1990s, Siberia also witnessed a rebirth in package tourism to Europe, luxurious trips to tropical seas, or educational tourism, all offered by newly established travel agents. While Raisa and Viktor did not partake in that segment of leisure travel emerging in the market economy, some of our informants did; its heyday nevertheless came only with the rising economic powers of Russia in the following decade.

**Growth of the Siberian tourist industry in the 2000s**

The stabilisation of Russia’s economy at the beginning of the twenty-first century correlates with a sharp increase in holiday travel by Russia’s citizens within Russia and abroad. Not surprisingly, some parts of Russia became booming holiday destinations in the 2000s. This upsurge particularly affected the Altai Republic — Raisa’s home region. Parts of the present-day Altai Republic featured as destinations of both state-organised and dikii tourism during late socialism. During the decline of the 1990s, and much more markedly in the last fifteen years, the image
of the Altai Mountains appealed to Russia’s tourist industry. A place of unspoiled natural beauty, Altai started to attract thousands of tourists; nowadays, it receives hundreds of thousands of tourists annually. Some of them simply enjoy typical holiday activities like sauna, barbecue, and drinking surrounded by the scenery (see Broz & Habeck 2015); others “recharge their batteries” through the “energy” of the genius loci with a slightly new-age flavour, or use Altai as a playground for extreme sports such as mountaineering, white-water rafting, or paragliding.

Chemal soon became one of the booming tourism spots in the Altai Republic. There are multiple reasons for this: a relatively mild climate; proximity to some of the big cities of south Siberia (Barnaul and Novosibirsk), which makes even a weekend visit by car manageable (Broz & Habeck 2015); and some elements of tourist infrastructure that emerged in late-socialist times. Many inhabitants of Chemal started to rent out parts of their houses or built additional housing facilities in their gardens to host tourists. A sizeable open-air market and an amusement park at the local dam started to form each tourist season. From mid-May
to mid-September, Chemal’s main street is flooded with visitors’ cars, little kiosks offering adventurous trips on off-road vehicles or white-water rafts, and dwellers of Chemal selling their produce.

Even though the actual placement of the museum was an outcome of the circumstances of economic hardship of the 1990s, it could not have been located more thoughtfully. During the summer tourist seasons that coincided with Raisa’s summer holiday at school, the museum welcomed individual tourists as well as tourist groups. During the school year, the couple continued to host school excursions and acted as a showcase for visitors hosted by Raisa’s husband’s friends and supporters, be they politicians or entrepreneurs. The museum has since featured in most tourist guidebooks of the Altai Republic. Raisa also makes sure that leaflets advertising the museum are in wide circulation among travel agents and turbaza owners, at least in the Chemal region.

During the 2000s, Raisa, her husband, and one of their daughters extended their involvement in the tourist business by establishing a small farm-like chalet some thirty minutes away by car from Chemal. Ownership of land under Russian law is far beyond the scope of this chapter and the comprehension of its authors, but the law seems to recognise various categories of land, such as “land of agricultural exploitation” as opposed to “land of agricultural destination”; various kinds of (legal) persons, such as Russian citizens or companies with less than fifty per cent of foreign capital; and various types of entitlements that the latter can claim over the former, varying from short-term lease to “ownership proper” (for a comprehensive, book-long summary, see Wegren 2009). For the purpose of this chapter, we will note that land ownership outside urban areas (in the context we are describing) is often emulated by long-term rent, typically for 25 or 49 years. Land

15 While the Chemal region is at the heart of tourist development in the Altai Republic, the Ongudai region, where Raisa’s husband originally wanted to build the museum, has avoided major streams of tourists until recently.

16 Turbaza is an abbreviation for turisticheskaia baza (tourist base), an institution that in earlier decades used to cater to hikers and was premised on the understanding that a turist (literally, “tourist”) is a hiker (see main text above for a more detailed characterisation of the turist). In the Altai Republic, our interlocutors used the word turbaza to denote an accommodation facility that offers additional services to tourists such as guided tours, catering, etc. It is not always clear what distinguishes a turbaza from a hotel, for example. Use of the term seems to deliberately activate connotations of tourism with the Soviet meaning of physical activity, i.e. as a kind of outdoor sport.
that used to belong to (now often defunct) collective farms is subject to leasehold claims by former collective-farm members. The claimant has to prove their eligibility with a certificate of collective-farm membership and identify a plot of land that used to belong to the collective farm and is not already claimed by another former member. The actual process of negotiating a rent agreement is complicated and far from transparent, which leaves lots of space for what is known in Russia as blat.\footnote{As was mentioned in earlier sections, \textit{blat} denotes the practice of informal favours and the networks around them. In places like Chemal, where land in tourist areas became a scarce and precious resource, the atmosphere became very tense at times. People with interest and means — both locals as well as those from elsewhere in Russia — invested in collective-farm membership certificates for “peanuts” during the crisis years, and now they can acquire lucrative plots of land. Many locals in Chemal feel cheated; they have only recently realised the real value of their long-gone membership certificates, or they are facing the fact that while they are still struggling to obtain their rent agreements, professional speculators from elsewhere are effectively receiving rent agreements for the best plots. Some authors understandably describe the general situation in Russia in terms of land grabbing (see, for example, Visser et al. 2012; Ledeneva 2013: 192–93).}

As a former collective-farm director, Raisa’s husband got involved in the process as a claimant and succeeded in renting a plot of land with pastures and meadows at the bank of the Katun’ River, upstream from Chemal. Just as Raisa’s family museum combines activism for the sake of Altaian national revival with creating a commodity in the tourist industry, their small farm project was meant to combine herding with services for tourists, notably an open-air museum with accommodation. However, Raisa’s husband’s health started to deteriorate in the mid-2000s, and he died in 2008. Their elder daughter is now taking care of the farm, which in 2010 consisted of several unfinished aiył meant for accommodation and exhibits, a small log cabin, and cowsheds. During the site’s early stages of development, the farm’s main tourist revenue stemmed from renting plots on the riverbank to campers, with some basic services such as litter disposal included in the charge. Raisa did not seem completely sure about the cost-effectiveness of the museum and farm.

In terms of Raisa’s own leisure mobility, the 2000s were not that different from the 1990s. During her holidays, she worked at the family museum with her grandchildren and husband, who spent more time at the farm when he was still relatively fit. With the exception of Raisa’s husband’s several hospitalisations, they spent their time in and around
Chemal. The only somewhat regular leisure journeys that Raisa made were one-day trips to theatre performances or concerts in the republic’s capital, Gorno-Altaisk. As a retired schoolteacher, she enjoyed subsidised transport and free tickets, which the regional authorities distributed to school employees and other interested state employees. Raisa’s attendance of concerts and theatre performances is in line with her self-perception as belonging to the “cultured” rural elite.

Viktor, our other protagonist, ceased to travel long-distance after 2006 — partly because his financial situation had changed as a consequence of losing his job as a clerk at the trolley company, and partly because his urge to move around and see how people live in western countries had waned. Viktor was affected by the consequences of economic changes later than others; for him, this led to a reduction of mobility at a time when he was starting to feel jaded by travelling. While many of his friends are still longing to go to Turkey or Cyprus, to Thailand and other “exotic” destinations, Viktor claims he has no need for it. Occasionally, though, he spends a weekend with his friends at Chemal or Aia, another holiday resort in the Altai Republic.

New directions and motivations: post-socialist holiday worlds

Twenty years after the end of the Soviet Union, the diversity of communities of taste has obviously increased; likewise, though not quite in the same way, the range of desirable destinations has become wider. The inventory of noble causes has grown, too. Soviet tastes, spatial imaginaries, and touristic sensibilities have not been fully replaced, but rather augmented. Many communities of taste that exist today are genealogically rooted in Soviet habits of travelling and holiday-making. Raisa’s predilection for concerts in the capital of the region where she lives can be seen as a continued exercise and persisting belief in the noble causes of travelling: for her social status and self-esteem, the benefits of edification and cultivation have not lost their importance. In addition to these motivations, new noble causes have emerged: spending time in good company; getting to know new people;\textsuperscript{18} self-experience

\textsuperscript{18} This is done, among other means, through “couch-surfing” (Zuev 2013).
through encountering cultural difference; and putting oneself to the test in extreme situations (*ekstrim*). Perhaps somewhat more mundane, and now more openly acknowledged than in earlier years, are holiday purposes such as shopping, sexual encounters, or simply the wish to stay in a luxurious environment. Consequently, new communities of taste have come into being.

The differences in access to fulfil such aspirations have increased as well. In earlier decades, access to touristic resources was determined by personal achievement, privilege, and informal connections, in partial contrast to the principle of deservingness and squarely in contrast to the principle of social equality. In the 1990s, that mission of equality was abandoned altogether. What we see instead are not just newly formulated desires, but also new (mostly commercial) mechanisms of how these desires are fuelled, along with much more blatant financial inequalities in the ways people can try to pursue such desires.

Turning to ethnicity and “local tradition”, we first must very briefly assess the symbolic significance of Soviet-era touristic journeys to Soviet non-Russian cities and regions, for example Riga or Samarkand (subsequently, we will turn to tourist destinations in Siberia). Riga, with its Hanseatic Old Town, and Samarkand, with its outstanding oriental architecture, had the flavour of the picturesque and exotic. Surely cities such as Samarkand or Riga were promoted as “unique” in terms of local culture, folklore, and cuisine. However, guided tours and guidebooks always featured the achievements of socialism, presenting with pride the landmarks of socialist architecture, Soviet cultural institutions, and memorial sites in honour of revolutionary heroes. As an intended result of centrally orchestrated urbanisation, Soviet cities came to resemble each other, and the consequent orchestration of the “tourist gaze” (Urry 2002) is evident in the postcard sets that were issued for each large city. Samarkand and Riga were indeed unique, but their uniqueness was partly eclipsed by stories and pictures of modernity and similarity in order to show the integrative power of new Soviet society (in the case of Tallinn, see Gorsuch 2012: 60). Just as the principle of unity in diversity governed the symbolic space of the Soviet Union, it also moulded officially legitimate holiday experiences. In her study on tourism in the Soviet Union in the late 1940s and 1950s, Gorsuch (2003, 2012) summarises this experience: “Through tourism, the more
‘exotic’ parts of the USSR were incorporated into the central circulatory system of the Soviet Union” (Gorsuch 2003: 776). However, she adds, “while promoting tourism to spaces of ethnic and cultural difference might have been intended as ‘taming’ these unpredictable places and minorities by Sovietizing their spaces for tourist consumption, it is not obvious that it had such an effect” (Gorsuch 2003: 778).

This all-Union dimension of tourism noticeably changed in the late 1980s and 1990s. Not only did the Soviet Union republics break apart from each other, but also, within the Russian Federation, ethnicity acquired a new, “less tame”, and sometimes violent dynamic; ethnic diversity came to be seen as a social and political challenge in the early and mid-1990s. When tourism grew again in the early and mid-2000s, the Russian state had regained some of its hegemony to produce iconic forms of diversity; however, the whole arena of negotiating otherness had changed, for three reasons. First, indigenous spokespeople and entrepreneurs had become able — temporarily, at least — to formulate new, allegedly more authentic images of their respective ethnic identities (cf. Kasten 2009). Second, in line with a general tendency to turn ethnic difference into capital, in Russia, too, the display of symbols of ethnic identity gradually underwent a process of commodification (see, for example, Bruner 2005; Comaroff & Comaroff 2009; Greenwood 1977). In Chemal and elsewhere, artefacts and narratives have been refashioned as consumables of culture, endowing hosts and guests of the tourist encounter with different ethnic and cultural qualities, so that a host/guest divide has come into play. Third, as previously mentioned, the range of touristic sensibilities had widened: among the newly emerging noble causes, one can find self-experience through otherness — in this case, ethnic otherness. This requires the highlighting of difference rather than similarity, hence the marked tendency towards exoticising indigenous spaces and livelihoods in Russia over the last fifteen to twenty years. Now, a growing number of tourists — both from within Russia and abroad — come to the Altai Mountains or to Lake Baikal in search of shamans and indigenous peoples supposedly living in harmony with nature. By experiencing “the other”, many tourists try to pursue a new way of experiencing themselves.

For a discussion of depictions of such dilemmas and tensions in Soviet cinematography and literature, see Pattle (2015: 92–94).
Ethnicity and “local tradition” are important drivers of tourism. Though formally conceived as multi-ethnic states with all nations enjoying the same rights, both the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation share an important feature: “Russians never became a nationality like any other”, but rather “were increasingly identified with the Soviet Union as a whole” (Slezkine 1994: 443), which arguably only deepened with the creation of the Russian Federation. Standing behind the state as a whole had specific implications for identity politics. While other groups, whose identity was defined along the lines of nationality/ethnicity, had their specific territory regarded as homeland, for Russians such territory was everywhere and nowhere at the same time. Obviously, many ethnic Russians also have a sense of ancestral homeland and regional belonging. We can observe that cities like Yaroslavl’, Vladimir, and Suzdal’ actively invest in fostering the image of key sites of Russian history and identity. It is nevertheless impossible to single out an area in the Russian Federation that could be turned into a destination intertwined with the idea of Russian homeland at the expense of all other locations. This has important implications for those who moved into countless tower-block districts of various cities during the processes of Soviet urbanisation. While non-Russians kept their default regional belonging, for ethnic Russians it became much easier to drift away from any distinctive local identity.

In any case, while certain small towns and villages in Russia are known to be peculiar and picturesque, and hence serve as destinations for mid-range or local tourism, rurality as such — in contrast to France, Great Britain, and Germany, to name just a few examples — does not seem to feature as an intrinsic touristic attraction. Large swathes of “the province” are of nearly no interest to any tourist. For non-locals, the idea of spending time there would be rather deterring. Local identities thus have very unequal touristic appeal, and places with visible marks of indigenous “non-Russian” culture can generate particular value that distinguishes them from the grey sea of other places. While this is in line with worldwide trends toward commodified ethnicity, what is distinct about post-Soviet Siberia is the rapid speed with which ethnicity has turned into an asset. With the exception of Irkutsk, which serves as a stopover for railway travellers (Zuev 2013), and Vladivostok, located at “the end of the line” and a particularly scenic spot on the Pacific coast,
Siberian cities are rarely considered as destinations for tourism. And with the exception of the Trans-Siberian Railway, sites of technological heritage have not received much touristic attention in Siberia either. Over the last twenty years, there has been a tendency towards depicting Siberia as an exotic and culturally diverse yet fragile place, one that is worth being cherished and protected. By this very tendency, indigenous inhabitants such as Raisa receive positive attention and respect for their innate “alterity”. Now their otherness is perceived as a source of vitality, whereas in late Soviet times it was seen as quaint, though ultimately contradictory to the idea of modernity.

Having said that, we are aware that Raisa and her husband actively crafted the indigenous feeling of the village where they live. They participated in the construction of the divide between guests versus “exotic” hosts. This guest-host relationship is characterised by both ethnic and economic difference. The growing stratification of income in Russia throughout the 1990s and 2000s has been accompanied by new forms — and more ostentatious expressions — of social distinction. The guests can afford to travel and “leave” their money in the region (the museum, the village) of the hosts.

More generally and very obviously, new economic inequalities also mean that some citizens of Russia pursue tourism as a form of consumption and mobility, whereas others do not have the financial means even for low-budget tourism. We thus return to the point that leisure mobility in Russia is influenced by household income, gender, and familial status. But in addition, leisure mobility also depends on particular skills, social networks, time constraints, and one’s place of residence. Social networks and travel skills enable individuals to travel even on a very minimal budget, as Zuev’s (2013) study on couch-surfing in Siberia shows. Such travel arrangements are usually slow and time-intensive. Place of residence is a particularly strong factor in a region where transportation networks are dendritic rather than netlike (see Chapter 2 of this volume). Differences in leisure mobility between big cities and rural settlements had already existed in Soviet times, not just because of the fact that the habit of “going on holiday” initially developed among privileged urbanites, but also because of social and institutional control over individuals’ movements (Matthews 1993: 27–35; cf. Burrell & Hörschelmann 2014) and requirements of mutual
support, especially in the countryside. Visits to relatives were an accepted cause for leisure mobility, but recreational trips were not on the agenda of kolkhoz (collective farm) members before the 1960s. Such trips became available to rural dwellers only in late Soviet times, and we have argued above that their distribution was managed unevenly. Today, rural inhabitants who want to spend a holiday at the seaside are doubly disadvantaged: their average earnings are lower than those of urbanites, and their expenses for getting to a holiday destination are higher because they must travel to the regional capital first, which is now relatively more expensive than it used to be in the late Soviet period.

Both Viktor and Raisa had similar experiences of visiting seaside resorts and spas in the south of Soviet Russia on the basis of combined putëoki and informal arrangements. We nevertheless cannot take such a convergence of travel biographies for granted as an inevitable outcome of the official ideology of equality. Quite the contrary, as we tried to demonstrate, the reason that a rural dweller from Altai had similar experiences to someone from the largest Siberian city is due to the fact that Raisa was a representative of Soviet native intelligentsia connected to the political nomenklatura through her husband.

The itineraries of our two protagonists started to differ in the 1990s. Raisa continued to pursue the project of self-cultivation on several fronts. On one hand, she continued travelling to attend theatre and music performances, complying with the ideal of culture in the “opera house” sense of the term. On the other hand, she partook in the shift of mood of native intelligentsia towards intensified ethno-national revival. She and her husband established their museum as an institution focussing on the self-cultivation and fostering of Altaian culture and national identity. Combined with the simultaneous commodification of ethnicity, their project gradually assumed an entrepreneurial character, at least to a degree, without losing its genealogical link to certain Soviet ideals of sociality, with the individual gaining importance as part — and only as part — of a bigger whole. Over those years, Viktor explored the cities of Ukraine, the Baltics, and later Germany, staying with friends and extending his social networks into Europe. Having left his Soviet professional past and associated ideals behind him, he is an excellent representative of an individualist and hedonist approach to life, one
that is nevertheless in continuation of the Soviet ideal of *poznavatel’nyi turizm* (educational/exploratory tourism).

In both biographies, goals and destinations were partly conditioned by economic circumstances; more strongly, however, our protagonists actively pursued certain personal interests and predilections. Both were able to realise their projects. Their comparatively high degree of personal success makes them different from many other interlocutors within our research, who had fewer opportunities to make their dreams and plans come true. We have argued in this chapter that life projects, favourite travel destinations, and tastes have changed from Soviet times to the present: their range has generally broadened, and the role that national/ethnic identity has played in their establishment has become much more acknowledged by various social actors. Simultaneously, the means to practise such tastes are now distributed much more unevenly than three decades ago.

**Final thoughts on the future of tourism to, from, and within Siberia**

Many of the “old” Soviet destinations are still widely popular today. As a striking example, the city of Sochi has experienced enormous investment in infrastructure in relation to the 2014 Winter Olympic Games, which have enhanced additional flows of tourists to the Russian Black Sea. In recent years, there have been initiatives to promote the popularity of tourist destinations within Russia, both in view of the temporary inaccessibility of previously popular destinations such as Turkey and Egypt (Leonidova 2016) and with the aim to improve the image of tourism-related services and facilities in Russia. As in Soviet times, but to a much lesser extent, there are some work-related entitlements to holiday-making (as of 2017, for instance, employees of the public sector in some Siberian regions may obtain subsidised railway tickets for holidays at the Russian Black Sea coast every second year). Apart from patriotic appeals to domestic tourism, exemplified among other means by the holiday choices of President Putin displayed in the media and certain subsidies for holiday-making within Russia, passport and visa regulations continue to deter elderly people and rural residents in particular from travelling abroad. For the latter, visiting
relatives continues to be a noble cause for travelling; if close relatives live outside Russia, this provides an incentive for travelling abroad. For example, after the large-scale emigration of ethnic Germans from the south-western part of Siberia to Germany in the 1990s (see for example de Tinguy 2003), transnational contact and travel between Siberia and Germany have become more frequent.

Within Siberia, flows of tourists are still highly structured by the dendritic character of transportation and infrastructure (e.g. Kuklina & Holland 2018). Hence the growing popularity of Lake Baikal, for instance, which is facilitated by its proximity to the main Siberian artery of transportation. At the same time, the remotest corners of Siberia have a distinct attractiveness due to their pristine nature and/or local culture, which incites some adventurers to visit them. Their numbers may seem negligible when compared with truly popular destinations, but might be significant when seen in the context of the very low population density of those areas. Importantly, in between these easy-to-reach and very hard-to-reach destinations, there are large sections of Siberia of almost complete insignificance in terms of tourism. Their intermediate position between central and remote, between markedly urban and markedly rural, creates an atmosphere of indifference. Having said that, Raisa’s case demonstrates that ethnicity can be an economic asset, especially in a region that offers picturesque scenery and athletic forms of entertainment. While many communities in Siberia may hope to attract more domestic and international tourists in the future, Chemal is in the privileged position of already doing so.

Even privileged destinations in Siberia have to compete with destinations abroad, however. Viktor’s case exemplifies post-Soviet individual tourism of the early 1990s, which preceded the mass movement of Russian tourists to seaside resorts characteristic in the 2000s. Indeed, for many travellers, holidays are considered relaxing and satisfying when they are spent at the coast, in the sun, in a comfortable environment. Spatial imaginaries of seaside resorts were already influential in Soviet times and have only increased in attractiveness since the 1990s, as is documented by increasing flows of holiday-makers from Siberia to the coasts of the Mediterranean or to Thailand. As a recent phenomenon, one can discern a certain trend among young urban intellectuals of Novosibirsk to spend several months in Thailand
in order to escape the coldest months of the Siberian winter and, to a lesser degree, to save money thanks to smaller living costs.

What we observe, however, is not (only) straightforward competition. Rather, there are strong signs of complementarity and co-existence between tourism from, within, and to Siberia. The weeklong seaside trips of families from Novosibirsk might well have replaced similar trips to Lake Teletskoe in Altai. At the same time, however, the growing automobilisation and improvement of infrastructures enabled a new genre of weekend trips to Altai (see Broz & Habeck 2015) that have been responsible for a striking increase in visitors. In other words, the leisure-travel repertoire of many inhabitants of Siberia is becoming more diverse rather than simply shifting. For a smaller but growing number of people, this also means interest in less mainstream leisure travels to or within Siberia. Their additional or alternative motivations subsume pristine nature and/or culture with the potential promise of physical or spiritual regeneration or extreme athletic activities, conditioned on geographical features such as high mountains or white-water rivers.

With the wax and wane of economic difficulties that replaced Russia’s prosperity in the 2000s, we can also foresee the continuation — if not the deepening — of inequalities in terms of leisure mobility across Siberia. Those inequalities are played out not only along emerging class divides, but also along regional (including urban versus rural) and ethnic/national identity divides; they will likely continue to do so. The lesson we can learn from Raisa and Viktor nevertheless reminds us that communities of taste are fuzzy, amorphous entities; and that despite “objective” structural constraints of social, economic, or geographical character, individuals shape their leisure travel biographies through a creative combination of socially shared predilections, familial arrangements, and personal preferences.

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