Women and the Tundra: Is There a Gender Shift on Yamal?
In the Yamal tundra, you need to travel at least 20 kilometers to see another person, and when the polar night begins, you get no more than four or five hours of daylight. You spend most of your time in darkness, and if you want a cup of tea, you'll have to go to the lake and break some ice to take home. To melt it and boil the water, you need to chop wood and stoke the potbelly stove in your chum. Once everyone's things are packed, the chum is broken down: The covers are pulled off, the frame is dismantled and the poles are loaded on the sledges. When the chum has been packed up, the yolkolava begins: The reindeer are herded into the corral, and the argishes, the sledge caravans, start off. Konstantin, the master of the household, leads the way.

This article questions the notion of gender shift in the Yamal region. It looks at the migration of indigenous women from the tundra/taiga to settlements and towns, as well as at the specific gender division of space that has resulted from this process in the Russian North. The author provides a detailed analysis of quantitative and qualitative sources dealing with these issues in different regions of the Russian North and compares this material with the situation she observed and studied in Yamal in the 2000s. In this way, the author not only shows that Yamal seems to hold a special position in terms of how gender relations are organized today, but she also stresses that although the general picture of the gender shift may look similar, one should pay attention to differences that challenge generalization for the whole of the Russian North.