

Specificity of ethnogeny indigenous peoples by Central Siberia in the transition from the traditional type of society to modern society

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Abstract: This article focuses on the processes of ethnic and cultural identification and self-identification, which the indigenous peoples of the North of Russia and Siberia, living in the Russian Federation, are currently going through. The post-Soviet cultural practices of preservation of ethnic identity of the small-numbered peoples of Siberia—the Kumandins and the Dolgans—are studied. The conclusion is made that there is not any state language policy aimed at preserving of the Kumandin language and Dolgan language. The Kumandins and the Dolgans have active processes of ethnic identification, but the post-Soviet cultural practices do not relate to these processes. Processes of ethnic and linguistic assimilation are accompanied by post-Soviet practices, where state policy does not increase and does not weaken the ethnic identity of the indigenous peoples of Central Siberia. In present time are developed and strengthened social stratum “national elites”, which are characterized by symbolic ethnicity. For modern ethnicity processes of Indigenous Peoples of Central Siberia are characterized by dual ethnic identity.

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1. Introduction

In the course of recent twenty years, ethnographers, occupied in researching of demographic processes in the sphere of small indigenous peoples of Central Siberia, have had enough reason to believe that in the nearest future fast-paced assimilation processes will cause disappearance of a whole row of ethnic communities of small indigenous peoples (Krivonogov, 2007). Though, the results of several National Population Censuses, which will be analyzed farther, demonstrate that the number of people, living in Central Siberia and defining their ethnic identity as small indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and Far East, is not only decreasing, but somehow becoming greater. To be precise, demographic processes of the last 10 years in the sphere of small indigenous peoples of Central Siberia, differ in dependence on a concrete ethnic group. Though, the tendency, which is revealed by the National Population Censuses, is obvious: total number of people, having ethnic conscious of some small indigenous peoples, is not decreasing, but has a steady growth. Moreover, some ethnic groups, which earlier have not stood out from a certain ethnic family, in recent years have started to activate their ethnic conscious and in the course of census they refer themselves officially to the ethnic group, which earlier has not been singled out for the given geographical territory.

The hypothesis, which will be proved in the given article, is concluded in the following, that certain post-soviet cultural practices direct the processes of ethnic identification and self-identification in a special way. These specific practices are connected with the activity of state organs of power, with legal mechanics, and are also a manifestation of new social strata's' activity – «national elites», the so-called «professional aborigines», which is not least of all connected with the world movement of indigenous peoples, to some extent opposing modern national states.

2. Material and Methods

The main method of study is field research under the guidance of Professor Natalia Koptseva, carried out in the years 2010-2013 by scientists, post-graduates and students of Siberian Federal University majoring in culture studies (Koptseva, 2013). In 2010-2013 years, scientists, aspirants and students of the Siberian Federal University, of the Krasnoyarsk State University n.a. after V.P. Astafiev, of the Krasnoyarsk State Medical University n.a. after Luka Voyno-Yasenevskiy, of the Krasnoyarsk State Agrarian University carried out field researches in the areas of compact settlement of small indigenous peoples of the Krasnoyarsk Region. Preliminary results of these research works were published in the monographs and in a row of scientific articles (Kirko et al., 2013;

Reznikova, 2013; Semenova and Bralkova, 2011). Field researches were carried out in northern villages of Surinda of the Evenkiya Municipal Region, and also in camping sites of reindeer-breeders of Surinda (2010), in the Pasechnoye Settlement of the Tyukhtet Region (2010), in the Farkovo village of the Turukhansk Region (2010), in the settlements Nosok and Karaulniy of the Taimyr Dolgano-Nenets Municipal Region (2011), in the Essey settlement of the Evenkiya Municipal Region (2012), and in the Dudinka settlement of the Taimyr Dolgano-Nenets Municipal Region (2013).

In the course of field researching they carried out questioning and journals of observation. There were also made recordings of stories, told by the aboriginal population, they were fixed by the Dictaphone for their further decoding. The scientists applied official statistic data for the given research work. There were carried out expert interviews with the representatives of local self-government authorities, creative intelligentsia of indigenous peoples, teachers, reindeer-breeders, fisher-men, and hunters. In the course of author's work within the frames of the Expert Consultative Board for the affairs of small indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and Far East under the Representative of the RF Presidential Envoy to the Siberian Federal District (SFD), in October, 2013, the authors of this article had worked out and sent to all the regions of the SFD, on which territories there were compactly settled indigenous peoples, a questionnaire for the representatives of organs of power, targeted to find out what kind of cultural practices and what kind of legal mechanics were used for all the regions of the Siberian Federal District for preservation of the cultural heritage of small indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and Far East.

3. Results

On the territory of the Siberian Federal District (SFD) there compactly settled 18 indigenous peoples of the North, and their total number is 53.9 thousand people in 10 subjects of RF. (21.8% from the total number of SIPN population of this country). According to the 2010 census data, population relative density of the territories, included in the list of traditional SIPN habitations, makes up 7.1% in average for the district from the total number of people. Thereat, this indicator is 27.9% for the Altai Republic, 21.4% for the Kemerovo Oblast and 15.7% for the Tomsk Oblast. Relative density of SIPN population in the total population number at the territory, which is included in the list of places of the small indigenous peoples' traditional habitation, makes up 5.2% in average in the district. Thereat, in the Tuva Republic this index is about 25.0%, in the

Krasnoyarsk Region – 20.0%, the Khakassia Republic and the Zabaikalye Territory - correspondingly 19.0% and 18.1%.

In the course of analysis of the National All-Russian and All-Soviet-Union Census data, one should take into consideration that in this case the scientists face the processes of ethnical identification. According to the Legislation of the Russian Federation the main attribute of one's reference to one or another ethnic group is one's ethnic conscious, i.e. one's ethnic self-identification. What concerns small indigenous peoples, here researchers have added one more (quantitative) criterion, as far as SIPNs' status has allowed them to have certain economical preferences from the state, which are fixed in some regulatory legal acts, including the Constitution of the Russian Federation, some federal laws, concepts, programs, RF governmental decrees and many other documents. The status «small» means that the number of the given ethnic group does not exceed 50 000 people. The given criterion – population – is applied only in the Russian Federation.

Let us consider some more examples. The Dolgans – a small indigenous nation, who live only on the territory of the Krasnoyarsk Region in the Taimyr Dolgano-Nenets Municipal Region. Dynamics of the Dolgans numerosity in correspondence with their ethnic conscious is given in Table 1 “Dynamics of the number of Dolgan from 1926 to 2010 (Krasnoyarsk Krai and the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia))”.

Table 1. Dynamics of the number of Dolgan from 1926 to 2010 (Krasnoyarsk Krai and the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia))

1926	1970	1979	1989	2002	2010
656	4877	5053	6945	7261	7885

Summarizing the results of the 2010 All-Russian National Census, one can see that the numerosity of the Dolgans is constantly growing, for example for the period 2002 - 2010 years the addition of population has made up 624 people. Now, shall we have a look at the results of Pr. Krivonogov's research of the ethnic processes of the Dolgans, he did this work in the period 1993-1994, 2003, and 2004. According to the data by V.P. Krivonogov, who used household books of Rural Administrations of Taimyr, the number of the Dolgans in 2003-2004 years was 5732 people (Krivonogov, 2013). According to the 2002 All-Russian National Census data, in 2002 there lived 5805 people, in 2010 there were 5810 people in Taimyr. Official data show that the Dolgans' numerosity has been stabilized.

There are several major ethnic (national formation) processes. The first one is the share of the ethnos in the total population of Taimyr. It has been

constantly growing. In 2002, according to the National Census data, its share was 13.8%. This tendency was as well observed in 2010, when the share of the Dolgans was 16.8% of all the Taimyr population. The second process is migration appetences of the Dolgans, which are in a greater degree typical for women than for men. There are three times more women, who strive to move to settlements and to the Dudinka town, than men. By our observations, the same kind gender tendency also exists among the Selkups. In August, 2010, in the course of interrogation of the people of the Farkovo village, it turned out that most adult men spent not more than 3 month a year with their families. While the rest of the time they were occupied with hunting. Right in presence of their husbands, the wives wished to leave for Turukhansk. The reaction of the men was just one and the same. They suggested their wives to do it without them, saying that they themselves would never leave Farkovo (Reznikova, 2013).

The third basic process is social and professional orientation. If we pay attention to reindeer-breeding, then we see that it has practically vanished among the Dolgans. In 2004, only 3.9% of people were busy with reindeer-breeding. Thereat, in some settlements the reindeer-breeding become completely extinct. As for today, it is preserved only in the Popigay village. And again the gender correlation of the Dolgans is of our special interest: 40.5% of men and 6.6% of women are occupied with traditional kinds of cropping. It looks like that the most important cultural-anthropological and ethnic-forming practice is food. More than 90% of the Dolgans as of men, so of women stick to their ethnic cuisine. Other situation is with national clothing. A full set of national clothes can be found only at 24.5% of the Dolgans'. Data concerning gender composition of this item are not available.

The core of any ethnos is its native language. Even official data of the census testify that the number of the Dolgans, speaking their native Dolgan language in everyday life, is constantly decreasing. According to the official data, in 2002, 75.9 % of the Dolgans used the Dolgan language in communication, and according to V.P. Krivonogov's data – only 38.6%. 16.1% of the Dolgans used in their everyday life both the Dolgan and the Russian languages, and only Russian language was used by 45.5%. But what is the most important thing is distribution of the Dolgan language usage among the age groups. In 2004, 13 % of children under the age of 18 years inclusive spoke the Dolgan language in their everyday life, 16 % used both the Dolgan and the Russian languages, and only Russian language was used by 71%. And it is amazing that the number of people, using the Dolgan «young» written language is growing. According to V.P.

Krivonogov's data, it has doubled over the last decade (Krivonogov, 2013). It is more important, that 80% of the Dolgans actively speak for studying the Dolgan language at school. I.e. the number of people, using oral Dolgan, decreases drastically, while the number of those, who use the Dolgan written language, just the other way round, suddenly increases. An important ethnic-forming indicator is the way the Dolgans see and characterize the state policy in relation to them. Only 22.2% of the Dolgans consider it to be reasonable, while 27% suppose that in future their ethnos will extinct. And 12% are undecided.

Religiosity does not play a pole of an ethnic-forming core of the modern Dolgans. Approximately one fourth of the Dolgans (as of men, so of women) call themselves to be the followers of Shamanism, thereat they do not reject Eastern Christianity as well. Similar situation is observed from year to year in modern Japan. One and the same Japanese people, answering the question concerning their religious affiliation, say that they are both Shintoists and Buddhists at one and the same time. It is connected with the fact, that religious psychology of the given religions does not contain in itself any requirements to follow the principles of only one religion and does not announce conceptual content of other religions to be a complete mistake. From the point of view of traditional communities of small indigenous nations of Central Siberia, Shamanism and Eastern Christianity do not contradict each other. In 2010, in the course of our questioning of inhabitants of the Turukhansk Region of the Krasnoyarsk Krai, the people characterized their religiosity not by one, but with a help of two or even three terms. For example, they said that they did not believe in ghosts and that they were Christian and, besides they were Buddhists. Such religious self-identification also testifies that, modern processes of religious self-identification in the sphere of most indigenous people of Central Siberia go on according to their special logics, which also points at a special type of logics of the processes of ethnic self-identification.

Thus, in relation to the Dolgans we can mark two contradictory vectors of ethnic identification and self-identification. The number of people, who define their ethnic affiliation as «the Dolgans» in the course of official inquiries and in the interviews with the research scientists is growing. Though, all the basic processes: native language usage in dependence on the age group, professional affiliation, traditional occupations, religious affiliation, usage of national clothing, knowledge of ritual songs being performed in the Dolgan language, tolerant attitude to interracial marriages, migration processes – all these phenomena bespeak of the fact that the Dolgans are characteristic of assimilation processes. The question arises: what

kind of modern practices reinforces the ethnic consciousness of the Dolgans, and why indigenous identity is so important for them in the public sphere?

It is interesting to compare ethnic-forming processes of the Dolgans, living in the Krasnoyarsk Krai, with the similar processes of another indigenous nation of Central Siberia – Kumandins, inhabiting the Altai Region. A.N. **Chemchieva has considered the processes of** ethnic identification and self-identification in every detail. (Chemchieva, 2012). And in the given article we shall consider a moderate aspect of the given scientific problematics. In spite of the fact that today native language usage is not the leading principle for ethnic identification (the given fact has got already a form of a legal norm, when the Soyots of the Buryat Republic have gained the status of a small indigenous nation, having certain economical preferences), linguistic situation and linguistic policy are the most important indicators of the way the ethnic processes are going to.

Population of the Kumandins was fixed for the first time in RSFSR in the course of the 1926 Census. Later they were not singled out as a separate nation with its own language, but they were referred to the group of Altai peoples. The Kumandins gained their status of a separate nation with its own language in 2000, in the Russian Federation and they were again counted for the first time in contemporary history of Russia in the course of the 2002 and 2010 All-Russian Censuses. As it follows from the given in Table 2 “Dynamics of number of Kumandins (Altai, Altai Republic, Kemerovo region, other regions of Russia)” demographic data, the numerosity of the Kumandins in the Russian Federation has been decreasing in the Russian Federation. If we look at it in an absolute expression, then in the 8-years period the number of people, referring themselves to the Kumandin ethnic group, decreased on 285 people, then in relation to the year 2010 this number made up 10%, and in relation to 2002 – 9% from the total number of the Kumandins. Such a tendency was quite predictable, as far as there could be observed certain linguistic processes in the environment of the Kumandins, and also because of the fact, that the state policy, concerning Kumandin ethnic culture preservation, was not active enough, and opportunities of Kumandins’ ethnic identification intensification were not realized at their full degree by means of post-soviet cultural (pedagogical, informational, managerial, and legislative) practices.

Table 2. Dynamics of number of Kumandins (Altai, Altai Republic, Kemerovo region, other regions of Russia)

Year	1926	2002	2010
People	6327	3114	2892

In June, 2003, N.S. Urtegeshev carried out a vast socio-linguistic research work in the Solton Region of the Altai Krai. According to his data we come to the conclusion that the Kumandin language in the Altai Krai is enduring a critical situation, it is used only by the senior people. The children from the age groups of 8-11 years old and 12-15 years old, who mark their Kumandin ethno-cultural identification, do not accept the Kumandin language as their native one. Half of the children of these age groups accept only Russian as their native language. Other half of the children of these age groups supposes that both Kumandin and Russian languages are their native ones. They do not communicate with their parents in Kumandin until they go to school, and they do not use only Kumandin when they interact with their grandfathers and grandmothers. Only about 10% of children in the age of 8-15 years old (in 2003) communicate with their parents as in Kumandin, so in Russian. And they do not interact in the Kumandin language at all with other children «in the street» The main quality of their Kumandin language knowledge can be expressed as follows: I understand words, but I cannot speak this language myself. Thereat representatives of the Kumandin ethno-cultural group are aware of the fact, that precisely their native language is the basic practice for actual preservation of their ethno-cultural identity. Besides, these people mark in their questionnaires that preschool education and education in elementary school should be only in Kumandin. Almost 77% of respondents speak for this. And nobody out of them wishes preschool education and elementary school education to be exclusively in Russian. 23% of respondents speak for that, that preschool education and education in elementary school for the Kumandin children to be as in the Kumandin, so in Russian languages (Urtegeshev, 2005).

Modern ethnic-forming processes of the Kumandins of the Altai Krai in the sphere of their native language are similar to the corresponding processes at the Dolgans’ of the Krasnoyarsk Krai. Here and there, children do not have a good command of their parents’ native language. Here and there, the majority of people (about 80%) suppose, that the state should take upon itself the function of indigenous peoples’ native language teaching by means of pedagogical practices at state secondary schools, and also by means of state dissemination channels using the small indigenous peoples’ native languages. Consequently, we can trace a certain tendency, connected with that, that at present time there are two vectors of ethnic-forming processes among the small indigenous peoples of the Central Siberia: the number of people, using their native language in everyday life, is decreasing (up to 10% among the Dolgans, and up

to complete disappearance in the sphere of the Kumandins), but the number of people, holding to account by the state and political and legal mechanics for their ethnic group existence is equally big (80%). It testifies of the fact, that there is positive ethnic identity, but there are objective in relation to this given group factors, which whether increase or decrease its positive ethnic identity. Do these ethnic processes differ in dependence on a concrete region? In order to answer this question, we can compare the results of the All-Russian Censuses of 1989, 2002, and 2010 years in relation to the same ethnic groups, settled compactly in various regions of Russia. In the given case, for comparison we have selected the Evenkis, living in the Tomsk Oblast, and the Evenkis, inhabiting the Krasnoyarsk Krai; the Selkups, living in the Krasnoyarsk Krai, and the Selkups, inhabiting the Tomsk Oblast; the Chulymys, settled in the Tomsk Oblast, and the Chulymys, inhabiting the Krasnoyarsk Krai; the Kumandins of the Altai Krai, and the Kumandins of the Kemerovo Oblast. The demographic processes in the same ethnic groups do not differ in dependence on concrete administrative-territorial entity, on which territories the given ethnic groups are compactly settled. It indirectly confirms the hypothesis about that, that legal mechanics (which is different in various regions) has significant influence on the processes of ethnic self-identification for small indigenous peoples of Central Siberia, but it is impossible to intensify significantly the processes of positive ethnic self-identification of small indigenous peoples of Central Siberia only with the help of just legal mechanics. Ethnic identity must be subjectively valuable for the people themselves. They should perform responsive social-psychological actions towards various forms of state policy. Nevertheless, legal mechanics is able to support the processes of ethnic self-identification on a certain level; the other thing is that, that the usage of this mechanics requires specially-organized communication.

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