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Indigenous Peoples of Krasnoyarsk Region: Concerning the Question of Methodology of Culture Studies

Natalia P. Koptzeva*
Siberian Federal University
79 Svobodny, Krasnoyarsk, 660041 Russia [1]

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The article deals with methodological and conceptual bases of cultural studies of the peoples living in the North of Krasnoyarsk region.
The author considers the key terms accepted in the contemporary research works and substantiates the use of «indigenous peoples» term applied for the North aboriginal inhabitants living in the territory of Krasnoyarsk region.
The potential of John Barry's conception of acculturation as a foundation of contemporary cultural studies of the indigenous peoples of Krasnoyarsk North are narrowly discussed in the article. The author thinks that today there is a cultural interaction between the Large pluralistic society and a certain ethno-cultural group, but not between two rather separate ethno-cultural groups (the Russian ethnos and that one of the peoples of Krasnoyarsk North).
This approach signifies that both of the sides influence on each other and change in the process of acculturation. At present, the changes taking place in a local ethno-cultural group have been studied best of all while the Large pluralistic society is also changed.
The author supposes that today Russia is going through a certain stage characteristic of the world community and connected with the change for a new type of social and economic relations between the state and the indigenous peoples of Krasnoyarsk North. This period is characterized by the transition from fixation of traditional way of life (allegedly characteristic of those peoples) to the search for mechanisms of inclusion of those cultural standards in the market system.
This social and economic reality requires new cultural and anthropological approaches, in particular, connected with the use of capacities of Human Relations Area Files (HRAF) for cross-cultural studies of the North peoples living in Krasnoyarsk region.

Keywords: indigenous peoples, peoples of the North, Krasnoyarsk region, acculturation, HRAF, methods of culture studies, cultural anthropology.

Key notions

The areas of Siberia and the Far East make two thirds of the Russian land. Siberia takes 40% of Asia while only one fifth of the Russian population lives in Siberia. The vast majority of the population is the Russians, who have been assimilating the lands in the Urals, Siberia, and the Far East since the end of the 16th century, as well as the Ukrainians, the Byelorussians, and the representatives of other nationalities of the European part of Russia.

* Corresponding author E-mail address: decanka@mail.ru

The nationalities, which had been existing here long before the migration of the peoples living in the European part of Russia, are variously termed by the scientists as «aboriginals», «native-born population», «autochthonous nationalities», «aboriginal inhabitants», «indigenous peoples».

Such words as «aboriginals» and «natives» can be referred to the epoch of colonial seizures and they bear the spice of disparaging attitude as far as public conscience and science have been under theory of evolutionism for a long time. It was positively rejected by contemporary cultural anthropology (ethnology) but it still secretly exists as conceptual and methodological basis in many scientific papers. In relation to social processes, the main point of evolutionism is the thesis that all ethno-cultural groups have similar stages (from the lowest to the highest ones) in their development. To speak plainly, there are three such stages: «savagery», «barbarity» and civilization. European culture as it was formed to the moment of mass industrialization and urbanization is represented as an ideal of civilization. The extreme aspect of that conception of evolutionism has brought to an idea that various human races are different human species. It's not a secret that great Charles Darwin kept to this point of view.

But the socially political and cultural consequences of this scientific hypothesis were utterly negative. Various races took different levels in the scale of «human evolution». Some social and cultural systems were declared to be the best, supreme, and perfect while the other ones were inferior, dead-end, and defective.

At first, the only arguments in favour of equal accomplishment and unique nature of all ethnic cultures were those ones of Bible anthropology, which referred to the Holy texts of the origin of all people from Adam and Eve and three Noah's sons after the Deluge, of the tower of Babel which was built after all people had spoken one language.

In the middle of the 19th century, there appeared scientific communities in Britain, German, France, and then in the United States and other countries which developed exceptionally scientific arguments besides references to the Bible. There were formed scientific conceptions connected with the denial of evolutionism and recognition of independence, unique nature and equality of all ethno-cultural groups in relation to each other.

This scientific position was of special importance in the years of war with the German Nazism and American racism as well as in other similar situations.

Cultural anthropology is a young science in Russia as far as human and social sciences were under Marxism paradigm for a long period. It denied the consequence of ethno-cultural differences and the main structural element of social system was considered to be classes of people differentiated according to the principle of possession or non-possession of property for capital goods. Thus, Y.V. Bromley wrote in the 14th essay «Ethno-social processes in the world of socialism», the book «Essays on theory of ethnos» (2009): «In comparison with interethnic conflicts in the capitalist world, the achievements in the sphere of national relations are especially obvious in our state and many other countries of the socialist commonwealth. It demonstratively proves the well-known thesis of the founders of Marxism that «hostility of nationalities against each other will fall» together with the disappearance of class antagonism» [2, p. 338].

However a continued disregard of significant ethno-cultural dissimilarities in policy practically can bring about the situation that those interethnic relations could become a zone of grave social risk. Ignorance of the inner functional structure of one or another ethno-cultural group can be resulted in a case that all political decisions would be skidded around that group for many decades,

all economic investments would be vain, and the territory would be a zone of incessant and endless war conflict. A bright example is the situation in the North Caucasus.

Certainly, the territory of Siberia and Krasnoyarsk region is not a zone of social and political risk due to various reasons. But civilizing development of the lands in Siberia, new economic realias, and a new view on the laws of social development make scientists change both scientific terminology and scientific approaches to investigations in culture and anthropology.

It seems to be that such terms as «natives» and «aborigines» applied to the peoples of Siberia are to be excluded from the scientific lexicon because they contain the arrogance of «invaders» explaining their invasive actions in theory of evolutionism anticipatorily regarding the people, who had been living in these lands, as inferior in economic, political, and cultural respects, including religion.

The term «autochthonous peoples» (autochthones) means «primary and original population living in a country of any land or territory» and it is shifted from cultural anthropology (ethnology) to biology thereby it isn't used also.

The term «native peoples» is fixed in many international normative acts to start with the first article (Part 1. General Policy) of C 169 Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989, International Labour Organization (ILO):

«(a) tribal peoples in independent countries whose social, cultural and economic conditions distinguish them from other sections of the national community, and whose status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions or by special laws or regulations;

(b) peoples in independent countries who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonisation or the establishment of present state boundaries and who, irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions» [4].

J. Barry, A. Poortinga, M. Siegel, and P.R. Dasen (2007) put forward another term – «indigenous peoples» – peoples who «have always been living here»; their roots are lost far in the past, and there weren't left any evidences of any peoples who had been living there earlier and whose descendants still exist in a population. The main characteristic of indigenous peoples is their continued inhabitancy in the territories forcibly included in a large national state. The lands they had were often diminished in size and that reduced their chance to keep up their existence, and finally they were considered to be another «minority group» within a large pluralistic society.

The term «indigenous peoples» has many advantages:

1. It isn't loaded with «colonial» meaning like «aborigines» and «natives» terms.

2. It has scientific status, not that one of law, like «native peoples» term.

3. It has a cultural and anthropological meaning, not a biological one, like «autochthonous peoples» term.

4. It is included into cultural and anthropological scientific space where they use the terms fixing not frozen state of ethno-cultural group but a process of interaction of an ethno-cultural group and so-called «big» (pluralistic) society.

2. Indigenous peoples as an object of cultural and anthropological research

There could be pointed out two positions characterizing contemporary studies at culture.

The first position: an object of study is particular cultures which are «independent,

self-consistent and stable» with geographically fixed location; they are not characterized by globalization processes. If there can be fixed any change inside those cultures, it is to be connected with the process of interaction between individuals within a certain culture, but it's not a result of contacts of cultures.

The second position: every ethnic group has its own culture that's why one mustn't say «culture of minority». Today there isn't any monocultural society. Various cultural groups coexist together in one society. In the modern world, there practically cannot be found any society with one religion, language, culture, and identity characterizing the whole population. The modern society is pluralistic.

We chose the second position of John Barry and his colleagues. Thereby, the contemporary indigenous peoples interact not only with a single ethno-cultural group (monocultural society) but with pluralistic society consisting of many cultural groups.

We can distinguish two viewpoints on pluralistic society.

The first point: there is a «melting pot», an only dominating society, «main stream» society with minority groups around it. The fate of those minority groups is double: they can be either dissolved in the «main stream» society or remain marginal groups set aside by the majority in that society.

The second point is called as «multiculturalism» by J. Barry and his colleagues. There is a variegated palette of ethno-cultural groups maintaining feeling of their cultural onliness and taking their own place in the social structure characterized by some universal (conventional) norms: economic, political and juridical agreements on how various ethno-cultural groups can coexist together. Thus, multiculturalism is characterized by two things: maintenance of cultural unique nature of all ethno-cultural groups and co-partnership of all groups in one big pluralistic society.

The suggestion of John Barry and his colleagues is of great interest for formation of research position to indigenous peoples in Krasnoyarsk region. They discern two levels of study: group-cultural and individual-psychological. This subject matter requires a special consideration, but it is already clear now that this idea will allow scientific resources of both social anthropology and cross-cultural psychology to be attracted, and that will further scientific reliability (validity) of results of studies.

Indigenous peoples as an object of contemporary cultural and anthropological research can be considered from all the scientific viewpoints mentioned above. However it is obvious that scientific points of view are closely connected with socioeconomic and sociopolitical interests of different countries.

3. Indigenous peoples of Krasnoyarsk region in the context of foreign experience in interrelation between the state and peoples of the North

Despite a large number of scientific and popular publications on the Russian North peoples, the main conceptual space of those articles has clearly pronounced ethnographic or historical and ethnographic nature. Serious cultural and anthropological investigations are a matter of the future. It is urgent to solve two serious problems connected with the crisis in Russian human sciences: 1) assimilation of the achievements of foreign scientists stored for the last 120-150 years since initiation of social (cultural) anthropology; 2) solution of the methodological problems the world scientific community has to face with, which are connected with negotiation of research position of «intrusion of cultural standards of one's science as standards of the study of another culture».

It appears to be that the solutions of these problems are interrelated and logic of development of Russian cultural anthropology for the nearest ten years is the following: concrete (local) studies connected with elaboration of ethnographic materials by means of the newest cultural and anthropological approaches of brightly pronounced cross-disciplinary character.

Thus, some very interesting investigations of the indigenous peoples of Krasnoyarsk region can be carried on taking into account economic studies when the first place is taken by the analysis of social and economic situation of the indigenous peoples of the Russian North, the mechanisms of state control over processes of improvement of social and economic conditions of the indigenous peoples and old-time communities of the North are studied, and the suggestions concerning development of policy in traditional village economic life and traditional life support of the indigenous peoples in the places of their dense living in Krasnoyarsk region are also analyzed.

For instance, A.A. Maximov's research «Realization of interests of the peoples of the North in the situation of industrial development: from foreign experience to the Russian model» (2007) reveals three key periods in the history of interrelations between Russia, Canada, the USA, Scandinavian countries, and indigenous peoples living in the North:

1. cooperation;
2. domination and assimilation;
3. formation of partnership relations.

In this connection, it is to be mentioned that the situation in Russia is not an exception and it falls under the general objective laws.

At the first stage, a state, which has an intention to colonize a certain territory, recognizes significance of economy of indigenous peoples and their right for the land and autonomy. Indigenous peoples prevail in number in large territories and economic branches traditional for those indigenous peoples predominate in those territories. Indigenous peoples become involved in exchange of goods, trading relations and processes of political, economic and cultural development.

At the second stage, development of new economic branches is accompanied by the explosion of non-indigenous population in the lands of indigenous peoples. Policy of cooperation with aboriginal peoples is replaced by policy of domination and assimilation together with demographic changes. The essence of new policy is determined by the following key elements.

1. Indigenous peoples are deprived of their lands and resources.

2. Policy of paternalism substitutes for self-government of indigenous peoples.

3. The steps destructive for culture of indigenous peoples are taken (Christianization, a new system of education, courts and laws, colonialist state language is forced into application as the main language).

4. The ideology justifying political, economic and cultural domination over indigenous peoples is formed. This ideology obtains its name in the second half of the 20th century: «assimilation doctrine» or «colonialist theory». According to the doctrine of assimilation, advantages and profit obtained by indigenous peoples while using resources of new lands appear to be a burden they bear for economic and social progress. At the same time, the destiny of indigenous peoples is archaic way of life with according low level of material production and consumption. The previously valid agreements, laws or legal standards declaring the rights of indigenous peoples for their lands and autonomy and corresponding to relations of partnership are considered to be a historical anachronism insignificant at present.

5. Racial prejudices are spread around including «domestic nationalism» corresponding to the policy of paternalism and the doctrine of

assimilation. Even humane ideas of self-value of indigenous ethnic cultures and need of their protection actually degrade representatives of indigenous peoples and bring about racial prejudices as far as they represent indigenous ethno-cultural groups as special collectives able to keep up the traditional way of life but incapable of self-organization and self-development.

Having lost control over their lands and resources, indigenous peoples weren't able to protect their culture and achieve equality to non-indigenous population in their share in economy and level of wealth. Economic necessity, dependence on foreign political decisions and economic aid, and racial relations brought about progression of mental and infectious illnesses as well as social ones among indigenous peoples (alcoholism, suicides, violence in a family, criminality, apathy towards economic activity and life on the whole).

Until the middle of the 20th century, the high indexes of troubles of indigenous peoples had been explained as specific features of their physiology and social life while the processes of assimilation and «dissolution» of indigenous peoples in the society of migrants had been estimated as objective and positive phenomena.

Finally, the last stage comes – about from 1960s and 1970s up to now – when in response to the large-scale resource and hydroelectric projects as well as to the attempts to liquidate the Indian legal system in the USA and Canada, the indigenous peoples of Alaska, the north territories of Canada, Greenland, Sweden and Norway publicly claimed the lands they had previously inhabited and thought to be their motherland. The organizations of indigenous peoples spoke in support of such economic development that wouldn't destroy their community but strengthen their autonomy and capacities for economic and social progress. They brought in land lawsuits, began to compile materials proving the right of indigenous peoples to live as communities and nations in their lands and structures of government. The problems of north peoples are of great importance in public and political discussions. There has begun a dialogue of indigenous peoples and federal organizations and search for the ways of satisfaction of the rightful claims of those peoples. The central part is taken by the questions concerning the rights of property in land and resources of settlement and territorial communities of indigenous peoples and political rights connected with autonomy.

Since A.A. Maximov's research work has a well-pronounced character, the author is interested in such processes as institution of indigenous peoples' property rights for the lands and resources, the processes of development of the local self-government characterizing the north territories, traditional economy and its capacities for integration with market relations in the context of self-development of indigenous peoples of the Russian North.

It seems to be that A.A. Maximov's statement that, one way or another, the Russian indigenous peoples living in the North are included in the general world objective laws is substantiated and proved by means of vast economic materials and analysis.

4. The project of research program on the study of the indigenous peoples of Krasnoyarsk North.

It is necessary to draw some cultural and anthropological conclusions, connected with the change of the main research approach, from this social and economic investigation.

1. It is necessary to refuse categorically and radically to study ethno-cultural groups of indigenous peoples of Krasnoyarsk North as some separate cultural minority groups, but the whole and dynamic process of acculturation is to be considered as a CULTURAL CONTACT

BETWEEN MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY AND A CONCRETE ETHNO-CULTURAL GROUP, NOT BETWEEN THAT GROUP AND THE RUSSIAN INDUSTRIAL URBANIZED ETHNOS.

2. This approach implies a special research program connected with: a) development of a model of the Large pluralistic society characterizing Russia at the beginning of the 21st century, including its form represented in Krasnoyarsk city; b) the study of the processes of acculturation inter-conditioned by the cultural contact of changes taking place both in the Large pluralistic society and in a certain ethno-cultural group (considering two levels of that process: group-and-cultural and individual-and-psychological); c) elaboration of methodical recommendations with respect to formation of the multicultural society in Krasnoyarsk region.

3. It is necessary to cooperate with Yale University in order to be able to use the data of the card-index Human Relations Area Files (HRAF) in our studies of indigenous peoples of Krasnoyarsk North.

5. Capacities of Human Relations Area Files (HRAF) for the cultural studies of indigenous peoples of Krasnoyarsk North

The history of HRAF starts on 26th of February, 1949 when the scientists of several American universities (Harvard University, Pennsylvania State University, Oklahoma State University, Washington University, and Yale University) gathered in the conference in New Haven (Connecticut) to declare their participation in a new non-commercial scientific research organization which would be based on Yale University. There was proclaimed the mission of the new organization: «to develop and spread the card index of organized information connected with human communities and cultures». The organization was called Human Relations Area Files (HRAF). HRAF form is a constantly growing card-file of comparative and indexed ethnographic data sorted and arranged according to geographic position and cultural characteristics.

According to the information given in 2006, HRAF includes 20 members – the authors taking part in filing and more than a hundred of associated members. Now the access to HRAF is available in the INTERNET.

HRAF databases have been worked out for the purposes of promotion of cross-cultural investigations taking into account the whole variety of human life in order to explain human behaviour from the point of cultural universals. The unique indexation system «The Outline of Cultural Materials» (OCM) has been worked out.

For instance, the researchers seek an answer to the question: how much do different ethnic cultures depend on supplies of food products? They evaluate the index «Keeping and conservation of food». The search in this subject will be connected with all the points describing desiccated, smoke-dried, salted, chilled, frozen, and canned food products as well as any other ways of food products keeping used by people of a certain type of culture.

HRAF was established for carrying out of various investigations, but, first and foremost, for comparative cultural studies (so-called cross-cultural studies). At present, there is a description of 350 cultures according to OCM indexes. It is necessary to mention that ethnic cultures of Krasnoyarsk North are represented extremely deficiently here: only the Samoyeds, the Yakuts, the Gilyaks, the Chukchee, and the Koryaks.

It seems that cooperation of Siberian Federal University and HRAF would promote both the further development of cross-cultural studies and inclusion of Krasnoyarsk scientists' cultural investigation in the world context.

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Индигенные народы Красноярского края: к вопросу о методологии культурных исследований

Н.П. Копцева
Сибирский федеральный университет
Россия 660041, г. Красноярск, пр. Свободный, 79

Статья посвящена методологическим и концептуальным основаниям культурных исследований народов Севера Красноярского края.

Автор рассматривает основные термины, которые приняты в современных научных исследованиях, и обосновывает применение термина «индигенные народы» применительно к коренным народам Севера, проживающим на территории Красноярского края.

В статье подробно обсуждаются возможности концепции аккультурации Джона Берри как основы для современных культурных исследований индигенных народов Красноярского Севера. Автор полагает, что в настоящее время имеет место не культурное взаимодействие двух достаточно обособленных этнокультурных групп (российского этноса и этноса, принадлежащего к народам Красноярского Севера), а «Большого» плюралистического общества и определенной этнокультурной группы.

Данный подход означает, что в процессе аккультурации обе стороны испытывают воздействие друг друга и изменяются. В настоящее время лучше других изучены изменения, происходящие в локальной этнокультурной группе, тогда как изменению подвергается и «Большое» плюралистическое общество.

Автор полагает, что в настоящее время Россия переживает определенный этап, характерный для мирового сообщества и связанный с переходом к новому типу социально-экономических отношений между государством и индигенными народами Красноярского Севера. Этот период характеризуется переходом от фиксации традиционного способа жизни, якобы характерного для этих народов, к поиску механизмов вписывания данных культурных стандартов в рыночную экономику.

Данная социально-экономическая реальность требует и новых культурно-антропологических подходов, связанных, в частности, с использованием возможности Human Relations Area Files (HRAF) для кросс-культурных исследований северных народов Красноярского края.

Ключевые слова: индигенные народы, народы Севера, Красноярский край, аккультурация, HRAF, методы культурных исследований, культурная антропология.