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УДК 304.444

## **Ethno-Formative Mechanisms and Forms of Self-Awareness of Indigenous Peoples Under Conditions of External Civilization Pressure (by an Example of the Yakut Ethnic Group)**

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Received 10.12.2011, received in revised form 1.02.2012, accepted 10.02.2012

*In the present situation of active development of resource-rich territories of Siberia and the North, the problem of self-preservation of their indigenous ethnos has become more urgent. The preservation of the indigenous ethnic groups and their cultures is complicated by strengthening external civilization pressure. However, self-reproduction mechanisms are inherent for any ethnic group, and they are the way of preservation, renovation of the indigenous peoples' ethnic identity, acting as forms of their national identity. At the present time people know both traditional elements of ethnic culture that contribute to its reproduction, and some phenomena of today that may also act as means of formation and preservation of the ethnic group. In today's practice of indigenous peoples these ethno-formative mechanisms are both preservation and development of the unique aboriginal religion and history of the ethnic group, and the legal instruments of society, the development of national cinematograph and animation, national mass media. The present article examines the opportunities of the mentioned cultural elements at their performance of the functions of formation and preservation of the nation by an example of the Yakut ethnic group. This article is the result of the analysis of effective practices of conservation and development of traditional Yakut culture under conditions of foreign civilization pressure.*

*Keywords: ethnic identity, indigenous peoples of Siberia and the North, ethno-formative mechanisms, legal instruments, national cinematograph, ethnos history, ethnic religion, national mass media.*

Consideration of the legal regulation of social and cultural development of indigenous smaller peoples as the ethno-reproducing practices under conditions of the civilization pressure from “developed” societies can provide

a number of problems in connection with the current state of its legislative framework. One of such problems is the crucial importance of such factor as small population, in determination of the specific rights of indigenous peoples and

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guarantees of the special protection of their areas of residence and traditional nature use. In this case, it would be productive to assign the existing rights to the category of “indigenous peoples”, as it is customary in international practice, and also to return this status to indigenous peoples who at certain times have been forced to change the area of their residence (who have been evicted), and therefore who have lost the places of their traditional nature use without any compensation for their loss. One of the most urgent issues today is the creation of territories of traditional nature use, as since the issuing of the Federal Law “On Territories of Traditional Nature Use of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation” no federal territory of traditional nature use has been established, but several appeals from the indigenous communities have been submitted to the Russian government. At the same time, the Federal Law “On Guarantees of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples of the Russian Federation”, arguing that indigenous smaller peoples and their representatives are entitled to compensation of losses that are caused by damage to the native environment of their habitat by economic activity of organizations and individuals, does not define any clear criteria of the losses or the mechanism of their compensation, as well as control over this process. Some laws still contradict each other, as, for example, the Law on the Territories which determines the rights of indigenous smaller peoples for the receipt of the ground lands in the territories of traditional nature use for free use, and the Land Code, which evens this right of indigenous peoples. There are inconsistencies in the way the powers of local authorities are determined by different federal laws specifically aimed at the regulation of the rights of indigenous smaller peoples, and the Federal Law “On General Principles of Local Government Organization in the Russian Federation”. The solution of these

problems should contribute to the implementation of ethno-formative opportunities of legal regulation practices.

From the point of view of reproducing traditional culture as a relevant and modern one, cinematograph and animated films are phenomena that are referred to the most relevant and effective practices of ethnic identity and self-identity of indigenous peoples in the context of global transformations of the tools offered by the project of modernity. By the example of the Yakut cinematograph, the article studies the main aspects of the way this phenomenon performs the function of ethnic determination: positioning of national cinematograph as a form of support of the national language and the preservation of the national originality, the specific “cultural zones” of the Yakut cinematograph, features of its operation as a national ideal forming system, which are the values developed by the cinematograph as the basic concepts of the Yakut ethnic group culture.

One of the traditional practices of ethnic group that act as forms of its self-reproduction and preservation, is the support and development of the national religion that is positioned as Shamanism for the Yakut ethnic and cultural group. Today Shamanism represents a wide range of phenomena among indigenous peoples, from those saved in a version that is close to the original one, the traditional Shamanism that evolved to the new-reconstructed ritual mechanisms and the involvement of traditional Shamanic practices as the elements of the ritual complex of other religions. The gradation of the indigenous peoples’ participation in these forms is wide: today they act both as real practitioners, tradition bearers (the Yakut Shamanism has positioned itself as preserved without interrupting the tradition), and as reconstructors of the shaman ritual practices and inventors of new forms (Neoshamanism that is typical for modern Yakutia). Demand for

Shamanism has rapidly risen with the collapse of the Soviet Union, when it was selected as a way of self-determination of the Yakut people as the specific one in relation to other national communities. The aim reconstructing the religious practices as a cultural phenomenon in this case was to reproduce the ethnic group in its independence and uniqueness, and thus the aggravating problem of national identity was solved. Shamanism is a surprisingly stable and non-conservative practice. It is ready for historical changes, and therefore, using mechanism of the new-reconstructed Shamanic practices as an ethno-formative component, reproduced ethnic groups, it is a new ethnic group with an inherited name and the base of traditions that is adapted to modern conditions and needs the determination of their own boundaries during the period of global transformations.

One of the most meaningful and effective practices of ethnic and cultural identity is inclusion of its own people into the world history and the development of national lines in the world science, the purposeful formation of national leaders in all fields of science. The indigenous peoples of the circumpolar areas have directed their efforts for revival of ethnic groups, some of them revive their traditions, language and culture in a rather closed way, within their historical homeland and within their ethnic group, adjusting to the historical conditions; by the example of the Yakuts, we see how the representatives of an ethnic group tend to do it in an open manner. They are reviving their culture, including it into the historical world context not so much as into a logically consistent, but as into a great and meaningful context, at which the basic research of the region where ethnic group are aimed at. To prove the dominant state of their culture, researchers turn to analysis of various data, such as archaeological, genetic, linguistic, etc. where they find the relationship with the most significant

processes of history, thus, in fact, these processes are more likely to be assessed as a creation of new history, the origin of which is associated with a particular ethnic group or original territory of residence that has an exclusive relationship with the concept of the new mythology of the people. The article considers the possibility of various forms of historicism in the reconstruction and the formation of ethnic identity of the nation.

One of the most relevant factors of ethnic identity and self-identification in the current situation is mass media. As a practice of modernity, current media culture is an intensive flow of information, methods people use for exploring the world in its social, moral, psychological, artistic and intellectual aspects. Due to mass media, the nature of the social and cultural changes can be defined as processes of globalization as well as processes of national identity actualization. This article considers the forms of reproduction and formation of ethnic identity by means of mass media.

Practices of conservation and development of the unique original religion of an ethnic group, practices of restoration and preservation of the history of ethnic group, correct legal instruments of society, development of national cinematograph and animation, national mass media are able and do act as ethno-formative mechanisms in today's practice of the Yakut ethnic group. This article considers the possibilities of these mechanisms of the formation and preservation of the nation by an example of the Yakut ethnic group, and in some cases the article comes up with recommendations for correcting their current forms in order to increase the efficiency of these mechanisms and to comply with the interests of other nations.

### **1. Law as an ethno-formative mechanism.**

It was necessary to start analyzing effective practices of conservation and development of a

traditional culture under conditions of foreign-civilization pressure from the legal regulation of indigenous peoples' social and cultural development. As a result, in connection with **the current state of legal regulation** of social and cultural development of indigenous smaller peoples under conditions of the civilization pressure by "developed" societies, the following problems can be pointed out:

1. One of the general problems that can seriously affect the future fate of these people, lies in the definition of indigenous peoples contained in the Federal Law "On Guarantees of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples of the Russian Federation" (hereinafter – the Law on Guarantees). The term "Indigenous smaller peoples" refers to people who live in the territories of traditional settlement of their ancestors, preserving the traditional way of life, housekeeping and crafts, numbering at least 50,000 people in the Russian Federation and identifying themselves as separate ethnic communities. Among other criteria, the legislator originally laid quantitative criterion of inclusion of indigenous peoples into the category of smaller peoples, thus outlining the boundaries of the Law implementation. The law has secured special rights for indigenous peoples, that count less than 50,000 people and has not provided any legal consequences for the people, the number of which fail to meet this criterion, i.e. reaches 50,000 people or more.

Following the logic of the current legislation, these people and their representatives, having ceased to be smaller, lose all the rights that were reserved for them. The environment and natural resources of the former territory of traditional nature use will also remain without any special protection. It is not clear, what in this case should be done by the public authorities and the local government that have created the territory of traditional nature use.

Consequently, it is advisable not to use the quantitative characteristic for determination of the entitled subject, but to use the concept of "indigenous peoples", as it is accepted in international practice, and assign special rights to indigenous peoples, in order not to cause conflicts related to the change of the people status in the future.

2. The second problem is also related to the definition of indigenous peoples that is laid down in the law. Article 12 of the Federal Law "On Territories of Traditional Nature Use of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation" determines that in case of confiscation of ground lands and other isolated natural objects that are within the boundaries of the territories of traditional nature use for state or municipal needs, persons belonging to smaller peoples, and communities of indigenous peoples are granted equivalent ground lands and other natural objects, as well as compensated for losses caused by such confiscation. Based on the meaning of this standard, it follows that it refers to cases where there is confiscation of individual ground lands, or isolated objects, or even the whole territory of traditional nature use, but we are talking not about the loss of communication with all lands that have been previously traditionally occupied by indigenous peoples, i.e. about migration.

It is necessary to think out a mechanism to prevent such a situation, for example, to indicate that indigenous peoples are not only the people living in the territories of traditional settlements of their ancestors, but also the people who are forced to migrate by the state from such territories or to provide additional compensation and guarantees for the peoples and their representatives who have lost the status of indigenous smaller peoples as a result of governmental activity.

3. One of the most urgent problems at this stage is the problem of establishment of

traditional nature use territories. It is particularly true for the territories of traditional nature use on the federal level. Since the issuing of the Federal Law “On Territories of Traditional Nature Use of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation” no federal territory of traditional nature use has been established, but several appeals from the indigenous communities have been submitted to the Russian government.

Moreover, according to the functional legislation, the territories of traditional nature use are a variety of specially protected natural territories that means that it is possible to use the general procedure of the establishment of protected territories that are fixed by the legislation on specially protected natural territories. The legal regime of almost all protected territories (except for the state nature reserves and national parks) is determined by the provisions about the certain protected territories. For most types of protected territories there is no acceptance of typical provisions, but they are established and operate successfully.

4. According to the Federal Law “On Guarantees of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples of the Russian Federation”, indigenous smaller peoples and their representatives are entitled to compensation of losses that are made as a result of damage to the native environment of their habitat by economic activity of organizations of all forms of property and individuals (Article 8, part 1, paragraph 8) [ibid]. The law does not determine where funds paid as compensation for such losses are specifically sent, who and in what way use these funds. The law also does not explain how interested representatives of indigenous peoples are involved in the distribution and control over the use of funds that are transferred as the compensation of incurred losses.

In practice, as a rule, these funds are sent to the accounts of local authorities that

are organized and operate on the relevant territories. Meanwhile, proper control over the implementation of transferred funds is not carried out. The funds that should be used for restoration and improvement of pastures, hunting territories and other needs, are often used for other purposes. It is still not clarified what kind of loss should be compensated to indigenous peoples and in what amount. It is important to establish clear criteria of losses, goals, defining the areas of expense of the funds, collected for compensation of losses, and the mechanism of compensation at the legislative level.

5. Part 2, Article 11 of the Law on territories stipulates that ground lands and other isolated natural objects that are within the boundaries of territories of traditional nature use are granted to persons belonging to smaller peoples and communities of indigenous peoples for free use. However, the Land Code levels this opportunity to get the ground land for free use. Representatives of indigenous smaller peoples and their communities have equal rights with other citizens and organizations to have ground lands.

The Code does not provide the right to receive ground lands within the boundaries of territories of traditional nature use for free use. Like other citizens, representatives of indigenous peoples and their organizations can obtain ground lands from the land that is state or municipal property by purchasing it on an auction or on the basis of the decision of the authority to give ground land for rent. This puts indigenous peoples in an unequal position, because the traditional way of life and traditional economy that is carried out by them often make it impossible to get the revenues that are sufficient for purchasing ground lands along with other bidders. If indigenous peoples carry out traditional nature use as entrepreneurial activity, such activity will immediately lose the status of traditional nature use, because indigenous people

traditionally use resources to ensure a certain standard of living, i.e. living for themselves.

Indigenous peoples, implementing their special rights, for example, carrying out traditional nature use, are able to provide the possibility of other citizens to implement their rights for land and nature use, as well as rights for a healthy environment, because they ensure the preservation of this environment and natural resources on the territories of their traditional residence and do not alienate the land and natural resources from the use by other subjects. It means that their traditional nature use is carried out along with other subjects. If the latter, in turn, do not deplete natural resources and do not destroy the natural landscape and environment, their rights do not cross each other.

6. There are inconsistencies in the determination of the powers of local self-government between the federal laws specifically aimed at the regulation of the rights of indigenous smaller peoples, and the Federal Law No. 131-Φ1 «On General Principles of Local Government Organization in the Russian Federation» issued on 06.10.2003.

For example, according to the Federal Law «On Guarantees of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples of the Russian Federation», the powers of local governments for the protection of original habitat, traditional way of life, economy and crafts of indigenous peoples include the establishment of general principles of “organization and activity of territorial public self-government in the places of their traditional residence and economic activity».

At the same time, granting the authority to establish the general principles of organization and operation of territorial public self-government of the given peoples to the local governments is not entirely consistent with the nature of the powers of local self-government that follows from the Federal Law No. 131-Φ3 «On

General Principles of Organization of Local Self-Government in the Russian Federation» issued on 06.10.2003. As the closest authorities to public, local authorities should determine not the general principles, but specific procedure of organization and implementation of public territorial self-government on the territory of the municipality, the conditions and procedure of allocation of the necessary funds from the local budget for the needs of local public authorities, also in respect to indigenous peoples. They should carry out these powers on the basis of general principles that are already included in the given Law (Article 27), and do not set these general principles by themselves.

## **2. The development of national cinematograph and animated films as an ethno-formative mechanism**

One of the most relevant and effective practices of ethnic identity and self-identity of indigenous peoples in the context of global transformations is the use of the tools that are developed and proposed in the project of modernity that are not denying the traditional culture, but reproducing it as relevant and contemporary. **And the first place among these practices, of course, is taken by cinematograph and animated films.**

The main national pride of the **Yakut cinematograph** is in the fact that most films are made in Yakut language. Cinematograph is largely oriented to the audience in the Republic, and not outside its boundaries. As a social and cultural practice, this approach draws us to conclusion that national cinema is an important mechanism of preservation of the language of the Yakut people. Moreover, the principle of making movies in Yakut language indicates the fact that ethnic group is developed according to the model of the simultaneous and incorporation into the “large” ethnic community and preservation of

national uniqueness. At this stage cinematograph serves as the practice of preservation of the national uniqueness.

Unique ethnic peculiarity of the Yakut cinematograph manifests itself in the following cultural “zones”:

1) visualization of epic and fantastic stories of Olonkho in animated movies and “transference in time” of the values of the national epos into the life stories of modern people;

2) traditional way of life in Yakutia: uluses, fishing, hunting, etc.;

3) works of national literature: works written by P. Oyunskiy are used in the movies as a basis for adaptation, folk tales are used in animated movies.

4) creation of national cultural heroes (intentional search for such cultural heroes who will be well known throughout the world), lifestyle and actions of whom are mythologized and transformed into the cultural ideal, even if it is wrong from the perspective of history.

Yakut cinematograph system is complicated and successfully developed according to the model of the major national cinematographic schools, where there are different niches. The niche of mainstream films with didactic adaptation of mentally “healthy” lifestyle of people in the Republic is occupied by “Sakhafilm”. The niche of genre films (thrillers, action movies, “black” movies, fiction, etc.), that is oriented in particular to export is occupied by the private film company “Almazfilm”. There are independent movies that could eventually become a platform for the emergence of film masterpieces in the Yakut cinematograph. There is beginning of the development of animated movies. Thus, at the structural level, the Yakut cinematograph is developing according to the successful models of national film schools.

Gradually, in addition to the originality of plots there is the beginning of the development

of specific character of the Yakut film aesthetics: the weakness of dramatic concept (unreliability of causal and logical relationships in the films), restrained acting (it is known that such physiognomic feature of the Yakut ethnic group as restraint of facial expressions does not allow actors to play emotionally, so it often creates heroic images). It is also characterized by stylistic orientation to the Asian cinematograph that is spiritually close to Yakutia and that has earned success on a global level.

Acting as a national ideal-formative system, the Yakut cinematograph forms the following values: national patterns of behavior in which ruse is put much higher than power; ideal of a hero both in the spiritual and physical aspects, the value of a family, involvement of the Russian nation in the history, tolerance in interethnic relations, but at the same time preservation of own cultural uniqueness, originality and independence.

### **3. Conservation and development of the unique national religion as an ethno-formative mechanism**

Such social and cultural practice as development of the national religion (including national variants of the world religions) has great significance as an extremely efficient one. **For the Yakut ethnic group, the role of such national religion is played by Shamanism.**

Today Shamanistic practice is represented by a wide range of phenomena among the indigenous peoples, from the ones preserved in the closest way to the original, evolved traditional Shamanism and recently reconstructed ritual mechanisms and merge of traditional Shamanistic practices into the ritual complex of other religions.

Just like the list of the kinds of today’s Shamanism, the gradation of participation of Siberian indigenous peoples is extremely wide. They act as real practitioners, tradition bearers (it refers to the kinds of Shamanism preserved in

the closest way to the original, as well as forms of Shamanism evolved with full or partial loss of traditional practice), as reconstructors of ritual Shamanistic practices (Neoshamanism, urban Shamanism, “no drum” practices), as inventors of their innovative forms (Shamanism as an ethnic and cultural practice), or as experts at adapting Shamanistic techniques by other kind of ritual practices (experiential Shamanism).

At the same time, it is wrong to claim that Shamanism traditions have never been interrupted, though for a long time Shamanistic ritual practices have been facing some resistance. So, despite of active Christianization of Siberian people that has been taking place since the 17<sup>th</sup> century (or, since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, for some territories), the ethnographers of the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> – beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century noticed the universal expansion of Shamanistic religious practices among the Northern and the Siberian peoples (expeditions of Mikhailovskiy V.M., Sternberg L.Y., Johelsson V.I., Bogoraz V.I., Popova A.I., Sokolnikov N.P., Vasilyev V.N., Rudenko S.I., Zelenin D.K.). For the first time, Shamanism phenomenon was mentioned in one of the chapters of the monograph “Description of the Peoples Habitat in the Russian State” by Georgi I.G. which is called “On the Pagan Law of Shamans”. Soviet ethnographers also paid much attention to studying cultural phenomena of Siberia and the North that concern Shamanism, that still existed and drew the interest of researchers despite of being prohibited (researches by Shirokogorov S.M., Dolgikh B.O., Smolyak A.V., Levin M.G., Potapov L.P., Popov A.A., Vasilevich G.M., Ivanov S.V., Pelikh G.I., Prokofieva E.D., Khomich L.V., Alexeeva N.A., Simchenko Yu.B., Gracheva G.I., Mazan A.I.).

The first wave of the dominating ethnos’ resistance against Shamanistic practices was the conversion of the indigenous population of the

Siberian and Northern territories to another belief (17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries). The second wave or resistance that occurred in the 19<sup>th</sup>- beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was caused by the point of view, widespread among ethnographer researchers, which regarded Shamanism as a physic anomaly. The ethnographic researches of that time described the phenomenon of Shamanism as a specific form of polar hysteria that has mass character, or as domination of shamans over other members of the community (18; 2; 22). During the Soviet era, Shamanism dramatically transformed itself under the atheistic policy followed by the state, which included several branches of measures: destroying and isolating professional shamans, educating work with the population, prohibition of traditional medical practices, destroying the part of traditional national culture that concerns religious or mystic knowledge. For this reason, during the Soviet era all three spheres of Shamanistic practices were transformed, and each of them restored itself later in its own way. The measures of the struggle against Shamanism as a phenomenon were the following: educational measures, that were building up a network of boarding schools where children were educated away from their traditional culture under the domination of the “bigger ethnos” culture; health measures, that were providing the indigenous peoples of Siberia and the Northern territories with professional medical assistance points in order to lessen the demand for traditional medical practices, compulsory medical treatment of practicing shamans; economic measures, that were forming up state deer farms (sovkhoz), the technologies of which would not accept applying any of the traditional Shamanistic practices connected with this economy field; legislative and executive measures, prosecution for breaking the official prohibition of the Shamanistic practices. At the same time, the process of marginalization of the representatives of the smaller indigenous



peoples played its role in interrupting the Shamanistic traditions. By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the professional niche of Shamanism had almost ceased its existence for the reason of the small number (or even absence) of initiate shamans. The reasons for this were both medical technologies and the marginalization process, the long-lasting prohibition of Shamanism during which even those shamans who did not undergo any medical treatment, forgot their traditional practices or lost the motivation for their practice. Everyday Shamanism, which is a less noticeable phenomenon, did not face such strong resistance of the USSR ideologists, so it remained in the rural areas and to a large extent, in cities as well. The proofs can be found in the field researches of many Soviet ethnographers of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that described the presence of Shamanistic practices in the Northern people's life under the conditions of prohibition. These descriptions can be found in works of Smolyak A.V., who took part in more than 20 ethnographic expeditions in the areas of Siberian indigenous peoples' settlements from the 1950-s to 1990-s, Kharitonova V.I., the head of the Medical Anthropology Group of the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Russian Academy of Science, who still carries out active researches of Shamanism in the life of indigenous Siberian peoples.

As a result of the processes that have been accompanying the indigenous peoples of the North during the Soviet time, Shamanism has dramatically transformed itself, as the number practicing initiate shamans has reached the critical point of extinction. Nevertheless, the extinction of the Northern shamans has been noticed before: in the end of the 19 century (year 1892 edition) Mikhailovskiy V.M. described the Shamanism extinction under the influence of Buddhism, Christianity and "Mahomedanism" (Islam). Concerning this, the ethnographer remarks that "even though the shamans are disappearing,

they are trusted and often asked for help" (28, P.62). This way, the "extinction" situation in Siberia and in the Extreme North is a long-lasting phenomenon, and it cannot be considered as something exclusive in the indigenous peoples' life, it is more of a rule, just like the dual faith situation. With the development of the relationships between the indigenous smaller peoples with the dominating Russian ethnos, Shamanism lost its status of the general outlook of their representatives; several generations of people who grew up in the conditions of foster homes and Soviet schools, apart from their original traditions, could not be their bearers anymore, though Shamanistic beliefs remained in their lives in the form of superstitions. At the same time, during the prohibition of Shamanism among the indigenous population of Siberia and the North, a phenomenon that researchers called "shamans without drums" started to spread, which means that representatives of indigenous peoples who had the "shaman gift" but could not undergo the ritual initialization, started their practice.

The process of Shamanism renewal began in the 1990-s, which was economically and culturally difficult time for the indigenous peoples of Siberia and the North. This period became the starting point for the vital self-identification, restoring the ethnic identification of the population as representatives of the indigenous nationalities, not as a mass of a "smaller Soviet people", as it was in the Soviet era. The long-lasting resistance against Shamanistic practices and the subsequent boom of Shamanism popularity caused various transformations of this tradition. Today's shaman environment is patchy, as shamans differ from each other in age, way of tradition heritage (those who inherited the knowledge naturally, but did not practice it during the prohibition, and neoshamans who have completed special training courses), in the practice character and their nationality: there

are not only representatives of the indigenous smaller peoples of Siberia and the North who know and practice Shamanism. The difference of motivation for practicing Shamanism for the indigenous population of Siberia and the North and for representatives of other nations (Russians or Ukrainians) has been published in the comparative research of biographies of the shamans from Moscow and Sayano-Altai region. The biographies of shamans were studied on the basis of a survey on their life episodes that could be connected to the respondents' being bred as shamans. The results prove that the value of belonging to Shamanism and attitude to it, along with solving issues on the inheritance of the gift by the respondents' children within shaman groups from Moscow and Sayano-Altai region, are totally opposite. The attitude towards Shamanism of Moscow respondents is always positive, while the representatives of indigenous people of Siberia speak of their gift as of an obnoxious burden, or hard labour. Considering that all respondents from Moscow wished their children to follow their path and become shamans, respondents from Siberia are totally against such heritage, but they realize that "it is their fate" and their children will "have to live such life". Integrated survey results showed, that unlike Moscow shamans, the shamans from the indigenous Siberian population take Shamanism as, first of all, a way of survival or getting rid of physiological and psychological suffering, and secondly, as support of ethnical identity (as the main way of supporting the family, as a way of being different from the other people, a way of solving psychological and emotional problems take further positions in the rating). This way, the indigenous peoples of Siberia and the North think of Shamanism as of a sphere of stating their ethnical identity and reproducing it. For this reason the demand for Shamanism grew rapidly with the collapse of the USSR, when every nation

living in Russia started seeking for means of self-identification as a special one towards all other national communities. The task of reconstructing religious practices as a cultural phenomenon was to reproduce the ethnos in its independence and uniqueness, which solved the urgent problem of national self-identification.

In this case the religious Shamanistic practices really do act as a modern mechanism of ethnos reproduction that is characterized by a high demand at the ethnic self-identification of the nation. It is also interesting that nowadays Shamanism performs a socially uniting function for the indigenous peoples of Siberia and the North by positioning the culture of the given ethnos as critically different, unique and distinctive from the dominating nation's culture, and in respect with this task new forms of Shamanistic practices emerge. At the same time such forms of Shamanistic practices as dual faith, carry out their function of ethnos reproduction. According to the surveys conducted by the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of Russian Academy of Science among some indigenous ethnos of Siberia and the North, dual faith is evaluated as a specific component of their national culture. This is what the survey of Buryatia about synthesis of Shamanism and Buddhism showed: the majority of the respondents called "Buryat Buddhism" and its practices, based on merge of Shamanistic and Buddhist rituals, a distinctive representative of their national culture.

Concerning this, the science of the last ten years expresses its own specific point of view towards the phenomenon of Shamanism as a regular outlook, the special status of which, its antiquity, its inhesion to "retarded" nations was created as a result of colonial approach domination in studying the indigenous peoples of the North. This point of view is typical for Northern peoples' culture and history researches of the post-Soviet period, which enabled them to re-evaluate

the character of the relationship between the dominating and smaller peoples of Russia. So, Hakkareinen M.V. studied Shamanism through the prism of the history of this phenomenon on the initial stage of Russian colonial project, when the symbolic border that separated the European part of Russia from the conquered Siberia was only beginning to establish itself (44): Shamanism did not initially exist as a separate religious institution, it formed itself in the process of the evolvement of the Russian Empire. The notion of Shamanism played a significant role in establishing the colonial order, as the observed phenomenon from the Shamans' life stated and proved social inequality of the peoples living in the West and the East of the Empire. It all resulted in the opposition between the East and the West. The author also believes in the important role of the peoples' researchers in creating cultural and social reality of the nations, when Shamanism emerged only as a result of generalization and conclusions drawn by researchers.

The latest historical and sociological researches regard Shamanism as a cultural phenomenon the special status of which was artificially formed. The Shamanistic practices today do act as ethno-formative components of a special national culture of indigenous peoples. The polarity of the modern views towards the nature and function of modern phenomenon of Shamanism is evident: Shamanism as a product of colonial approach and Shamanism as a nation tradition's component which is able to reproduce the ethnos. At the same time, even the Shamanism produced as a colonial product, pointing out the nonequivalence of the peoples is used by the peoples as something that states their national specificity, a means of the ethnos' reproduction, formation and reconstruction. So, Shamanistic practices are really demanded today as a means of forming the ethnos; in this respect, their modern kinds are not equally efficient.

So, experiential Shamanism is not an ethno-reproducing practice, as it has absolutely different tasks and only assumes applying Shamanistic techniques for solving some personal problems; and they are mostly aimed at Europeans. Such practices cannot be used as ethnos-reproducing concerning the indigenous population of Siberia and the North. Practices of Neoshamanism and urban Shamanism also do not totally comply with the tasks of outlining the borders of a certain ethnos, as they involve representatives of various nationalities, and, therefore, are more likely to aid overcoming ethnic borders and contributing into ethnos assimilation within one religious framework, forming up a specific confessional, not national, union of people. Shamanistic practices bear evolution character with various degree of transforming the tradition: Shamanism as a result of certain tradition evolution, "no drum" practices, Shamanism closest to its original forms, Shamanistic practices with total loss of the ritual complex and even Shamanistic practices on the background of dual faith, can be considered as wanted and able to reproduce the ethnos, separating it from other nations and giving its representatives an opportunity to identify themselves. Such artificially formed practice as "stage Shamanism" is also efficient. In this case, religious practices perform the task of forming an indigenous ethnos under the spontaneous reconstruction process, identifying their representatives. Shamanism is a surprisingly stable and non-conservative practice, which is open to historical transformations, so, it is essential to understand, that using the mechanism of newly reconstructed Shamanistic practices as an ethno-formative component today, the reproduced ethnic groups are not the ethnos that used to live in the Northern and Siberian lands a hundred years ago. This is a new ethnos which inherited the old name and the tradition base, an ethnos that is assimilating to the modern

conditions and needs establishing its own borders in the period of global transformations; the means of which are such cultural practices as the ritual side of Shamanism in the majority of its today's varieties.

#### **4. National history as an ethno-formative mechanism for Yakuts**

It is suggested that one of the most significant and efficient practices of ethnic and cultural identity is, on one hand, **including of the people into the world history**, and on the other hand, **development of national lines in the world science**, artificial and purposeful **“breeding” of national leaders in all spheres of science**, where it is possible.

For the past decades, the majority of the ethnos living in the territory of circumpolar zone started following the way of cultural “revival”. However, while some of them are restoring their traditions, language, culture in a closed way, within the borders of their historical motherland and within their ethnos, preserve the core of their ancient outlook, transform and assimilate themselves to the historical conditions (Innu, Evenki, Saami etc.), the others (Yakuts) prefer doing it in a more open way. Moreover, these ethnos revive their culture, including it into the all-world historical context not as a common one, but as something more significant and powerful. The main scientific researches of the region where the ethnos lives are aimed at that. To prove the dominating status of their culture, the researchers turn to analyzing various data: archaeological, genetic, linguistic etc., where they could find any connection to significant processes of history.

Thereby, some ethnos (Yakuts) today deny many existing historical data and start creating new history, the origin of which is connected with their ethnic group in particular or with the territory of their inhabitation. However, they are

much more likely to create their new mythology, because they take such knowledge about the world around them, about their ancestors and life of their people as real pages of their history, while in the world academic community it has not been accepted yet. Because the base for this history is often composed by the texts from the general folklore fund of the ethnos that were written by different people in different times, not historical documents. For the reason of stability of the religious beliefs in the ethnos conscience, they still keep archaic legends and stories, while today on the ground of old myths the new ones are being created.

The situation that emerges is contradictory. On one hand, the majority of ethnos that live within the circumpolar territory does not position themselves as peoples who have made a specific contribution into the development of the world history and have influenced it. On the other hand, there are some certain ethnos that pay excessively much attention to this. Thus, some misbalance in the lives of the indigenous smaller peoples of the North can be pointed out. The balance needs to be restored.

In this case, the main recommendation for the policy in respect of the indigenous peoples of the circumpolar territories is the following: **various forms of historicism expression of various ethnos should be accurately followed, in case of any deviations their analysis and timely intervention** should be carried out. Because in this case, the main thing is holding to some limits.

#### **5. National mass-media and their role in forming the ethnic conscience of the Yakuts**

There is no doubt that **mass media** is especially significant for ethnic identification and self-identification. **As a practice of modernity**, modern media culture is an intensive information

flow, a means of combined assimilation of the world in its social, moral, psychological, artistic, intellectual aspects. Just like the majority of the modern institutions, the mass media is an institutional and organizational entity that combines the characteristics of an institution and its organizational form. The mass media is the reason why the character of social and cultural changes can be determined both by the globalization processes when the mass media is included into the process of universalization and becomes a universal mechanism of social and cultural unification, and the process of national identification actualization.

1. In the project of future development of the national state, mass media is a combination of informational and communicative means that have been developed by the people in the process of historical and cultural growth, which aids forming national community conscience and socialization of a personality.

2. On one hand, mass media ties up the separate cultural worlds, and on the other hand, in the process of interaction with some certain cultures, it highlights their differences, creates

contradictions between globalization and localization of cultural samples, between the universal and the national in the modern culture.

3. National mass media plays crucial role in spreading and filling social and cultural samples with content. Mass media can perform propaganda, ideological, agitation, educational tasks.

4. It is necessary to develop projects aimed at assisting the implementation of the main principles of the national policy concerning the minorities and their languages, to define the best practice of the authorities concerning the rights of the minorities in the mass media sphere (the best website in the minority languages; best journalism training course for the journalists working in the minorities mass media; best publication in the minority languages; development of creative talents of children by means of publishing a newspaper in the national language).

5. National mass media performs a special unique function of forming the informational analogue of the society by means of creating a certain world outlook, along with covering the functions of other social institutions.

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Циркумпольярная цивилизация в музеях мира: вчера, сегодня, завтра» <http://arcticmuseum.com/index.html>

**Этнообразующие механизмы  
и формы самосознания коренных народов  
в условиях внешнего цивилизационного давления  
(на примере якутского этноса)**

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*В современной ситуации активного освоения богатых ресурсами территорий Сибири и Севера все большую актуальность приобретает проблема самосохранения этносов, исконно проживающих в этих регионах. Путь сохранения коренных этносов и их культур осложнен усилением внешнего цивилизационного давления. Тем не менее, любому этносу присущи механизмы самовоспроизводства, и именно они способны помочь сохранить, восстановить этническую идентичность представителей коренных народов – выступить формами их национального самосознания. В настоящее время известны как традиционные элементы культуры этноса, способствующие его воспроизводству, так и явления сегодняшнего дня, которые также могут выступить средствами формирования и сохранения этноса. Такими этнообразующими механизмами в сегодняшней практике коренных народов выступают как сохранение и развитие уникальной исконной религии этноса и история этноса, так и правовые инструменты общества, развитие национального кинематографа и анимационного кино, национальные масс-медиа. Данная статья рассматривает возможности перечисленных элементов культуры в выполнении ими функции формирования и сохранения нации на примере якутского этноса и представляет собой результат анализа эффективных практик сохранения и развития традиционной якутской культуры в условиях иноцивилизационного давления.*

*Ключевые слова: этническая идентификация, коренные народы Сибири и Севера, этнообразующие механизмы, правовые инструменты, национальный кинематограф, история этноса, этническая религия, национальные масс-медиа.*

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