

Research possibilities for studying the indicators of quality of life of indigenous peoples of the North (based on the study of indigenous peoples of the North of Russia)

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Abstract: The paper presents the main approaches to the concept of “quality of life”: the position of objectification; the position of subjectivity; and the position that combines objective and subjective approaches. Based on the experiment in researching and modeling ethno-cultural standard of quality of life of indigenous peoples of Russia, the study of reindeer herding as the main indicator of the quality of life of indigenous peoples is proposed. The analysis of the state of reindeer herding by the indigenous peoples of Krasnoyarsk Krai has shown that this type of activity, being an ethno-preserving one, is not that much of economic, but more of a symbolic nature. This fact should certainly be taken into consideration when developing measures to support the indigenous peoples of the North.

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1. Introduction

Modern science is devoting much effort to evaluation of the current social situation; one of the most important trends today is discussing quality of life. This topic is initiated and supported by the authorities that need to know how the country lives, as well as to have clear mechanisms of control of the state of society, no wonder the concept of “quality of life”, as it is often claimed today, first appeared in political terminology. Application of standardization to such seemingly general concept as quality of life contributed to emergence of regulatory mechanisms of evaluation and management of processes in socio-economic life.

The existing concepts and definitions of quality of life can be organized into three groups, basing on the specificity of their definition of the concept of “quality of life” and understanding of its structure (Zarakovskiy, 2009; Kiskurkin, 2010;).

1) The position of objectification of quality of life: quality of life is seen as an objective parameter that determines material conditions and means of livelihood of a person/ society. In this context the structure of quality of life includes such characteristics as quality of food, housing, quality of the environment, health care, education, service sector, etc. The basis for assessing quality of life is

statistical data, the methodology of obtaining of which aims at maximum objectivity – it operates facts in terms of numbers, eliminates personal assessment of these facts, basing on computation formulae for obtaining data. In the early 1970s, L. Levi and L. Anderson proposed the so-called Swedish version of the concept of quality of life: labor and working conditions, economic possibilities, political possibilities, schooling, health and use of medical care, family formation and family relationships, housing, food, leisure time and ways to spend it (Levy, 1979). Later the UNO experts developed HDI – Human Development Index, similar to a general indicator of quality of life of population. The concept of human development, which is the bases for HDI, formulated in the 1990s, is now accepted in the edition of 1995. HDI reflects the aspect of formation of human development potential: the process of increasing possibilities of activity in the following directions: 1) achieving long and healthy life, 2) acquisition of knowledge, and 3) gaining access to economic resources, necessary for sustaining a decent standard of living, but not the ways the acquired potential is used by a person (Zarakovskiy, 2009). In table 1 systematized indicator for calculating integral index of quality of life.

Table 1. The system of indicators for calculating integral index of quality of life

Components of quality of life	Indicators
1. health	1. average life expectancy 2. ratio of births and deaths
2. culture	1. coverage by education * 2. level of education (average) ** 3. share of employment in science, education, cultural services
3. labor	1. employment of working population 2. labor productivity according to GDP
4. consumer goods	1. Money income of population 2. Availability of housing
5. family	1. well-being of families *** 2. the proportion of children in the population (0-14 years)
Quality of life index	Satisfaction of the considered needs
* Population under 24 years	
** Population over the age of 24 years	
*** Families that have avoided extreme situations	

(Mstislavskiy, 2002)

2) The position of subjectification of quality of life: takes into account only subjective components of quality of life, represented by attitude of a person, assessing conditions of life and different material and cultural benefits. Key features: life satisfaction, completeness of realization of personal inner potential, etc., i.e. first of all, it concerns the perceivable quality of life. In this case researchers primarily base on the results of opinion polls and interviews. Understanding of psychological aspect as the central one in defining the discussed concept is reflected in the structure of subjective quality of life, proposed by the scientists of the Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences. This structure includes a number of substructures: subjective economic well-being, subjective ecological (environmental) well-being etc., i.e. peoples' comparative assessment of the actual well-being and their own expectations – comparison with subjective standard of quality of life (Davydova, 1993).

3) The position of the interpreting quality of life and its structure, which takes into account both objective and subjective characteristics: the study of this kind aims to take into account both statistical data and results from surveys and interviews as sources of data on the subjective assessment of various indicators of quality of life (Kirko and Zakharova, 2013; Koptseva and Kirko, 2014; Krivonogov, 2013). This approach is optimal because it allows correlation of the overall picture

with the detailed personal assessment; as well clarification of the «cold» statistics by the opinions of people, and also due to efficiency of understanding that assessing quality of life is connected with general social standards and personal expectations.

The concept of “ethno-cultural standard of quality of life” is just entering scientific terminology; since most of the detailed studies of regions in Russian practice are connected with quality of life of population of these regions without taking into account their ethnic composition, let alone evaluation of quality of life of members of a particular ethnic group in the region (Semenova and Bralkova, 2011; Koptseva, 2013; Kirko et al, 2013). Nevertheless, ethno- cultural standard of quality of life is the most pressing research issue today. For example, it is discussed in research, which states the necessity of combined studies of the problems of multi-ethnic space and its management with consideration for ethno-national and regional particularities, in connection with the need to understand the structure of quality of life of Russian people, taking into account ethno-national features and multi-ethnicity of the country (Mutalimov, 2004). At the same time, the adjacent concept of “social ecology of ethnos” is being developed, which is comparable with the indicators of quality of life, defining it within the bounds of a specific ethnic group, and which is necessary for development of adequate ethno-social policy in the regions: “Adding the concept of “ethnos” to the term “social ecology” we emphasize that what we have in mind is the socio-political, economic, moral and psychological environment that affects the ethnic group” (Abdullina, 2001). This study is focused not on developing assessment of quality of life, but rather on the possibility of identifying ethno-cultural standards, which guarantee comfortable existence of members of an ethnic group.

The Conception of Sustainable Development of Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples of the North, adopted in 2009 by the Government of the Russian Federation (The Concept of Sustainable Development of the Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation), involves development of a system of indicators / standards for the quality of life of the peoples of the North in order to monitor the local situation and the situation in the context of the nationwide state of affairs (Conception, 2009; Koptseva and Kirko, 2014). For this reason, in some regions of Russia programs for monitoring socio-economic situation and quality of life of different social groups are being developed. For example, in Khanty-Mansy Autonomous Okrug the law has been adopted “On the quality of life of population of Khanty-Mansy Autonomous Okrug –

Ugra” (from 10.02.2006), where quality of life is defined as a set of socio-economic criteria that reflect the level and degree of the achieved well-being of people.

Concerning the standards of quality of life of indigenous peoples, the concept of “quality of life” is most often discussed in Russian scientific community in the context of stating low quality of life of the vast majority of representatives of indigenous peoples in comparison to the national level, and pointing out the necessity to improve their quality of life. All existing support mechanisms for indigenous peoples are directed at it today, and such discussions are often aimed at clarifying, elaborating and developing such measures. The development of indicators in relation to indigenous peoples is possible due to the existing systems of state and departmental statistics (Mezhova et al, 2013).

2. Material and Methods

At the beginning of the XXI century quite varied and interesting experience in analyzing and improving the quality of life of indigenous peoples through various social and cultural practices and mechanisms has been accumulated in the regions of Russia (Palchin, 2013; Koptseva and Reznikova, 2009). Using regional models of ethno-cultural standard of quality of life and indicators of its improvement for indigenous peoples of Russia will allow revealing positive results – efficient practices and mechanisms of development of quality of life, as well as taking into account the possible negative effects of active interference into life of indigenous peoples and the most likely problem areas that require special attention and nontrivial approaches.

“Murmansk model”

“Murmansk model” includes the characteristic of standard of quality of life and indicators of its improvement with the indigenous peoples of the Kola Peninsula in the socio-historical and regional aspects. This model is the experiment in cultural approach to the analysis and modeling of the standard of living of the indigenous population of the northwest region of Russia basing on the semiotic method. Table 2 systematized indicators for analysis and improvement of quality of life in “Murmansk model”.

“Murmansk model” can be used for socio-cultural modeling and analysis of the state of the standard of quality of life and indicators of its improvement in other northern regions of Russia, having similar characteristics – location near the border, sea culture etc., as well as for developing ethno-cultural standard of quality of life and indicators of its improvement for the indigenous peoples of Krasnoyarsk Krai with the obligatory consideration for geographical, historical and ethno-

cultural differences (Koptseva and Kirko, 2014; Myglan and Vaganov, 2008).

Table 2. Indicators for analysis and improvement of quality of life in “Murmansk model”

Indicator	Characteristic
Urban culture	A city as a conceptual field, in which the process of cultural and ethnic identification of its citizens/inhabitants takes place
Intellectual culture	Intellectual culture as the space of transmission and formation of knowledge. Level and quality of intellectual culture fixates the level and quality of development of a person in the space of modern civilization.
Cultural identity of the region	Dual semiotic space: the state policy imposes its meanings on the region and its own meanings are often born spontaneously inside the region itself. (Fadeeva, 2012).
Material and industrial indicators	One of the most important traditional indicators of condition and improvement of standard of quality of life is the sphere of material culture, particularly material and industrial production.
Artistic culture	Inside artistic culture there should be distinguished traditional artistic culture (artistic values and techniques of creative work, which are passed down the generations for a long time) and folk artistic culture (forms of artistic creative work, connected with processes of self-identification of a person or a group of people, engaged in creative activity, with a certain people or ethnic group).
Museum culture	Museum can be considered as the element of cultural industries which are able to change the socio-cultural space of the region). (Hadson, 2001).

“Taimyr Model”

“Taimyr Model” examines the socio-cultural aspects of the analysis of the quality of life of indigenous peoples, indicators and mechanisms of its change and improvement, highlighting political and pedagogical factors as key ones. This model describes the experiment of ethno-pedagogical modeling of mechanisms of improving the standard of quality of life of indigenous peoples of Taimyr.

An important feature of the socio-cultural approach to the analysis and modeling of ethno-cultural

standard of quality of life is the desire to ensure the unity of traditions, typical for the traditional lifestyle of the indigenous peoples of Taimyr, and progress, associated with the necessity to include indigenous peoples in general industrial rhythm of the Russian state and the world at large. In this regard, each sphere of culture is analyzed from the perspective of identifying the problems of interaction of traditions and progress with the aim of designing such socio-cultural mechanisms that would allow to mitigate the gap between the traditional and modern ways of life and, if possible, to establish their union (Vorobyova, 2006). Table 3 systematized Indicators of analysis and improvement of quality of life in “Taimyr Model”.

Table 3. Indicators of analysis and improvement of quality of life in “Taimyr Model”

Indicator	Characteristic
Cultural and economic sphere	Viability of each member of the ethnic community is inextricably linked with the level of economic life and forms of social organization, nomadic and semi-nomadic ethnic way of life of the ethnic group.
Cultural and environmental sphere	The main feature of the relationship of indigenous peoples of the North to natural resources is their using them only when required by necessity and balanced use without damage to nature. The specific of nature space influences formation of family, community and religious customs and beliefs.
Cultural and legal sphere	Prior to joining Russia, self-government, based on patriarchic and tribal relations, was wide spread with the indigenous peoples of the North.
Cultural and spiritual sphere	Spiritual culture of indigenous peoples of the North, which was distinguished by a highly developed ritualism, has great stability and continuity. It is less dependent on economic and geographical conditions than material culture

The Model can be used for other northern regions of Russia with similar geographical, climatic and cultural conditions, as well as for the indigenous small-numbered peoples of Russia in general, as the basic principle of the model is typical for any traditional culture, which has undergone deformation as a result of interaction with man-made technology-related society and is in need of preservation and restoration.

3. Results

Reindeer herding as the indicator of ethno-cultural standard of quality of life of indigenous peoples of the North

Scientists usually divide all reindeer herding regions of Russia into three zones according to their geographical, ethnic and economic features: northwestern (Komi-Nenets, Saami types of reindeer herding), northeastern (Even, Evenki, Dolgan, Chukchi and Koryak) and taiga reindeer herding area in Siberia, which differ dramatically in the current state of the industry, its trends and prospects for its further development. By all parameters, the largest reindeer breeding regions are Chukchi and Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrugs, Yakutia, Koryak and Nenets Autonomous Okrugs. Russia ranks first in the world in domesticated reindeer population.

In the traditional economy of indigenous peoples deer have been used for three purposes: as transport, for family consumption and for production of meat for sale. Savvinova A.N. points out two most important factors, upon which depends maintenance and development of domesticated reindeer herding: the area of reindeer pastures and numbers of reindeer. Availability of pastures ensures the forage base for the development of the main industry of the traditional economy – reindeer herding. There is a clear dependence of reindeer population on the presence of reindeer pastures, but in almost all the regions, the number of deer is at the maximum for the project deer-feeding capacity of reindeer pastures.

Reindeer herding is a special kind of human activity in the Far North, which is associated with traditional use of land and has inherent stability in this region of extreme weather conditions. It is a kind of motivation mechanism of economic activity, which in modern conditions is significantly different from other economic systems. An important aspect of labor motivation in reindeer herding is that it is the basis of traditional cultures of reindeer herding peoples of the North. Reindeer is a major cultural symbol for most of them. Ethnic traditions are constantly manifested in the peculiarities of labor and distribution relations, binding people together within the reindeer team, and the team -- with residents of the central village (community). In this connection reindeer herding has become the only sector of agriculture in Russia termed as “ethno-preserving” sphere of activity (Yuzhakov, 2000; Koptseva and Kirko, 2014; Reznikova 2013; Libakova and Sertakova, 2013).

Recommendations for development of domesticated reindeer herding

Reindeer production is not only the major economic activity, but it is also the way of life of a

reindeer-breeder, which should be taken as the object of study by economic science. The following recommendation for developing of regional reindeer herding in the Far North can be given:

1. The degree of productivity of deer and their cost-effectiveness can be enhanced by improving the technology of grazing and rational improvement of technology of pasturage;

2. Regular veterinary measures should be taken to identify sick deer and put them in special quarantine and health-improving herds;

3. The study of reindeer economy (development of system of indicators), which can reliably and comprehensively reflect the state of the industry should be conducted;

4. Priority should be given to the use of herding, hunting and catching areas, flora and fauna by individuals, families (clans) of indigenous small-numbered peoples, including allocation of quotas and limits on hunting, catching and use of animal and plant life in the amounts sufficient for their subsistence and traditional economic activities;

5. Formation of the information base for determining the level of quality of life of indigenous small-numbered peoples of the North through development of domesticated reindeer herding is necessary; there is also the need for special surveys, providing the necessary information;

6. Professional training (training of reindeer herdsman) for understanding the basics of reindeer herding, reindeer production economy, as well as improving practical efficiency of herds' grazing (pasturage) should be provided;

7. Field research to determine the optimal number of livestock in the area, guaranteeing undamaged condition of pasture-land and providing livelihood for reindeer-breeding families should be conducted;

8. Every reindeer herder, professionals constantly working in the reindeer breeding, every family and team as a whole should be issued authorized equipment and stores, special clothing and footwear from federal and regional funds on protected expenditure; for sustainable economic development it is necessary to allocate funds for the construction and equipping of nomadic housing complexes for teams of reindeer herders, providing normal labor and living conditions for reindeer-herders and their shifting nomadically with their families.

Practical recommendations for improving the technology of breeding of domesticated reindeer that are most appropriate nowadays are: a) in order to completely and efficiently use forage lands and restore them, and also to find new reindeer pastures, it is advisable to conduct their comprehensive

assessment, registration, monitoring the state of food resources; b) in order to increase the productivity and safety of reindeer, as well as the most rational use of pastures it is necessary to bring the number of reindeer in line with the capacity of pastures; observe 3-year pasture rotation, inter-farm boundaries, routes and timing of grazing seasonal on pastures; organize surface grazing out of moss that can be achieved by timely change of seasonal pastures; and also grazing on a broad front in all weather conditions and on different pastures using daily controlled grazing.

Reindeer herding in Krasnoyarsk Krai

The main indicator of the positive evaluation of quality of life of indigenous peoples of the North is a traditional activity. With a number of ethnic groups living in the north of Krasnoyarsk Krai such activity is reindeer herding. In particular, we are talking about Nenets, Dolgans, Evenks, Essey Yakuts. Among Selkups and Nganasans reindeer herding is completely lost. In reindeer herding, the most important factor for the northern ethnic groups is the number of population of deer herds. The level of prosperity has long been measured by the number of deer. For example, one Nenets woman-respondent expressed this idea in the following way: "The standard of living of indigenous peoples is estimated by the number of reindeer: a person having 100 heads is considered to be person of modest means "neither poor, nor rich", having over 100-300 heads is so-so, people having 1000 and more heads are wealthy people". Number of reindeer in the North is reducing due to several factors: first of all because of environmental problems and illnesses. Local people say that pastures are ruined by industrialists (metallurgists, oil companies, gas companies), who «oust indigenous peoples from their ancestral lands ... development of the North being as active as it is now, there will be no reindeer breeding in fifty years. Perhaps it will survive but in dramatically declined form". The environment is being polluted by industrial emissions, oil and gas pipelines obstruct (block) historical reindeer routes, altering migration paths. According to Nenets, there are places where the pipe has been raised for 2-3 meters, but you cannot explain it to the deer that the pipe has been raised so that it could pass. In winter, when the pipe is covered by snow, the herd can walk, but deer mostly move in autumn (Seredkiva, 2014; Koptseva and Kirko, 2014; Bukharova et al, 2010).

For solving the existing problems, reindeer breeders rely solely on the state, saying that the detailed laws about the territory of traditional use of nature are necessary. Despite the fact that, for example, on Taimyr reindeer breeding is not is state-owned, but private, the state still supports reindeer

breeders: it mostly gives subsidies calculated on the bases of number of heads, provides veterinary care and so on. People on Taimyr give different assessments to the condition of reindeer breeding. Some experts talk about decline in numbers of reindeer and leaving of reindeer breeders (primarily to large settlements). Others believe that reindeer breeding continues to develop.

But even pessimistic respondents believe that deer will remain even if traditional way of life of indigenous peoples disappears; although in this case the concept of “reindeer breeding” will change. It will become not a traditional sphere of activity, but rather a profession. At present, while reindeer breeding is still a kind of economic activity, it is noted that the deer gives a person in the tundra everything (clothing, food, shelter, etc.), completely determining the life of people working in tundra (reindeer-herding families follow deer, migrating every three days). Considerable vocabulary of each of indigenous peoples is connected with reindeer breeding; with disappearance of reindeer breeding such words are no longer used, which can be exemplified by the Selkup and Nganasan languages. Representatives of indigenous peoples believe that to improve such an indicator of ethno-cultural standard of the quality of life as reindeer breeding, firstly, subsidies from the state should be increased; secondly, ecological problems connected with pastures should be solved; thirdly, selective breeding is necessary; fourthly, it is necessary to establish markets for products of reindeer breeding.

4. Discussions

Although the condition of reindeer breeding is one of the most important indicators of ethno-cultural standard of living of indigenous small-numbered peoples of the North, this area of activity cannot be assessed basing on the single set of values. This is due to the fact that in this area there is a collision of two types of economic systems. On the one hand, there is a system of traditional society, where deer have importance in themselves, outside the closed agricultural cycle. On the other hand, there is the state, subsidizing reindeer herding, which is guided in its actions by the laws of market economy, trying to get economic benefit from its investments. The aim of the first economic system is increasing the number of reindeer. In this system, product markets are separated from reindeer herding itself. Neither meat, nor antlers and hides are processed and sold in sufficient quantities. There are venison processing plants in Norilsk, a private company in Dudinka is starting to process reindeer meat (but only on a small scale), there are pavilions selling venison in small quantities in Tura and Krasnoyarsk. Hides

are mostly used for hand-crafted items, footwear, sometimes clothes. But in general, only a small fraction of the total number of bred and slaughtered reindeer is processed. Thus, reindeer herding is not considered in traditional economy as the sphere of economic activity that brings profit. Rather, it is considered “symbolic reindeer herding”, reindeer herding for its own sake. That is in this situation reindeer is important not as the source of material benefit, but as a symbol of indigenous small-numbered peoples of the North, the pivot point allowing them to consolidate their culture, their ethnic identity around it. According to one of the Nenets woman- respondents surveyed in December 2013, “the people will continue to exist as long as there exists its language, but to preserve the language, it is necessary to maintain traditional activities. Namely – reindeer herding, hunting, fishing. Reindeer herding is the main thing here. Because Nenets culture is fixated around reindeer, the culture of breeding and processing domesticated reindeer, its reproduction.”

If we are talking about consolidation of ethnic identity, the traditional culture of indigenous small-numbered peoples of the North around the reindeer (rather than about its economic significance for the herders themselves), the state, wanting to support certain ethnic groups by subsidizing reindeer herding, should proceed not from the market-economic component, which is doomed to failure in this case; but reorient to supporting reindeer herding in its symbolic essence. Consequently, it is necessary to radically revise subsidizing policy. In this case you should forget about economic benefits, as it is in the first place not a lucrative investment in one of the sectors of agriculture, but rather a support of an ethno-forming, ethno-consolidating element of lifestyle of indigenous all-numbered peoples of the North. That is, in the end, it is not economic profit that is important in this case, but preservation of the ethnic group, and hence, ethnic and cultural diversity.

Perhaps the structure of subsidies should be different. This issue should be given serious consideration, because the solution is not obvious. Indeed, on the one hand, we must shift from economic to symbolic nature of reindeer herding; but on the other hand, the most important indicator of the success of reindeer herders is still the number of deer. Thus, we should try to understand what parameters, characterizing reindeer herding, are no less significant for indigenous peoples than the number of deer, and provide support in these directions. For this we should first of all study the mythology of reindeer herding peoples, because it may contain the symbolic essence of the ethnic group, including the meanings connected with reindeer herding.

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