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## Indigenous minority peoples of Russia: the dynamics of national policy, transformation of family and marriage relations<sup>1</sup>

### Summary

The article deals with the dynamics of national policy formation in Russia with respect to the indigenous peoples of the North. On the basis of the juxtaposition of the consequences of the USSR protectionist policy and living conditions during the post-Soviet period one can see contemporary trends within the transformation of family–marriage values: family relations that affect the numbers of these peoples and the maintenance of their culture.

Based on a comparison of the data on fertility and marriage in Russia and the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) and the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District, among specific ethnic groups of indigenous peoples, researchers have drawn the conclusions that not only are questions about preserving the rights of indigenous peoples relevant, but it is also important to pay attention to the preservation of traditional gender roles, family traditions and the formation of responsibility towards the creation of marriage. As an example we present the data of the 1989, 2002 and 2010 censuses in Russia, as well as materials from a specific sociological study carried out in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) Grants RHF RHF N 12-03-00546a (2012–2013) “Socio-cultural youth types of modern Russia: ethnic and regional aspects”, RFH number 08-06-00613a (2008–2010) “Models of ethnocultural youth adaptation in terms of the intensification of industrial development in the North (The Republic of Sakha [Yakutia] )”, RFH 07-06- 18025e (2007) “The Youth of the Indigenous Peoples of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) in a modern industrial city: problems of socio-cultural adaptation”, RAS integration project 2006–2008 № 6.26 “The Socio-cultural adaptation of students in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) in the conditions of modern transformations (on the example of Yakutsk)”.

**Key words:** state national policy, indigenous minority peoples of the North (IMP/N) of Russia, demographic processes, family–marriage relations.

### Introduction

The aim of the paper is to analyse the changes in family–marriage relations of the indigenous minority peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian

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Federation as a result of changes in state national policy. We focus in particular on the following tasks:

- 1) analysis of the dynamics of forming national policy with respect to the indigenous minority peoples of Siberia, the North and the Far East of Russia during the pre-Soviet, Soviet and post-Soviet periods;
- 2) investigation of the impact of the state paternalist national policy on the transformation of family–marriage values as well as on that of the family–marriage relations of the indigenous minority peoples of Russia.

## The national policy during the pre-Soviet period

The history of the formation of the Russian state was associated with a rather motley ethno-cultural and ethno-linguistic picture. Like many other countries, Russia in the course of history repeatedly changed its internal policy towards its indigenous peoples. In general it can be noted that the ethnic groups in Russia have not been isolated.

The basic principle laid down in the model of government pursued by Russia, namely universalism, had been advanced in Byzantium. In accordance with this principle, anything that united people, but did not divide them, was considered important. That became the basis for the formation of the national idea. The fall of Byzantium and the feeling of continuity (in Russia), allowed Russia (Moscow) to call itself the Third Rome. That was actually borrowing the unifying idea of the “Roman” state based on Orthodoxy values. Thus, in Russia historically confessional identification was more important than ethnicity. Nationality as a category was not included in questionnaires during the first general census of the Russian Empire in 1897. It was first to appear in the 1920 census. Self-determination in pre-revolutionary Russia was expressed either by religion (“we are Orthodox”) or on a territorial basis (“we are from Tver”). But even confessional identification did not limit an individual’s identity to be the Emperor’s servant. It did not interfere with the preservation of a specific and unique culture and language by different ethnic groups.

At the moment, the Russian Federation is one of the largest multi-national states established on a federal basis. Russian peoples were historically formed mostly on its territory. Therefore, regardless of their size and habitat, they are the indigenous peoples (of Russia) that played a significant role in the formation of Russian statehood. During the formation of a special state policy towards ethnic groups which required special assistance, the category of minority indigenous peoples was created. Before the reform by M.M. Speranski (1822), the policy of the authorities in relation to indigenous peoples was limited mostly to indirect management and the collection of state taxes – *yasaka* (tribute). The 1763 ruling by the *Yassachnaya* (Tribute) Commission did not interfere in the internal life of “native” communities and the charter in 1822 legally confirmed this principle of non-interference.

The aliens statute devised by the Siberian Governor – General Earl M.M. Speranski, meant a change of policy in relation to indigenous peoples. The principles of paternalism and self-government were implemented towards these peoples. That allowed the gradual alignment of the rights and the status of indigenous peoples and the Russian population. The socio-economic development of the so-called

*yassak* (tribute) aliens was carried out differentially depending on their rank (“settled”, “nomadic” or “vagrant”) (Kryazhkov 1999). The government encouraged the development of commodity–money relations by providing indigenous people with the right to free trade, to the selection of generic areas of land for personal use, for unrestricted movement up to a distance of five thousand miles away from their place of residence. The empowerment of indigenous peoples occurred while adjusting the Russian relations with “aliens”. Import goods, such as “hot drinks” (spirits) were prohibited. The incomer population was banned from entering the domain of aboriginal communities and developing the mineral interests in these areas, as well as there being a ban on employment practised by aborigines. The result of this deliberate policy towards foreigners was the preservation of the ethnic identity of indigenous peoples. The tribal nobility was equated in status with the Russian agricultural management (elders and heads) and had the same powers in the administrative and legal spheres. “Foreigners” self-government carried out the function of control of the natives and defined the main directions of development with regard to their needs and interests. It was important that the founder came from the environment of the indigenous peoples. The Steppe Duma and foreign council, whose representatives were chosen directly by the indigenous population, basically functioned as self-governing bodies (Shtyrov 2012, p. 10–11).

Among the functions of “foreigners” self-government was the right to determine the property boundaries of communities based on the traditional concepts of aborigines, distribution of duties, collection of taxes, registration of the population, the suppression of the smuggling of prohibited goods, especially “hot drinks” (spirits). Civil cases were solved on the basis of common law, adapted by M. Speranski, and also came under the jurisdiction of local governments.

Thus, in relation to indigenous minority peoples, the Russian government pursued a policy of indirect rule: the state did not interfere in their everyday lives. The institution of the Governor-General was responsible for supervision over the steppe’s Duma and foreign policy. As a result of this policy by the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the indigenous peoples of the Russian Empire had managed to preserve their ethnic and cultural specificity, traditional ways of economic and social organization. This enabled the peoples to preserve their ethnic identity.

After the October Revolution of 1917 the policy of involvement in the construction of socialism was adopted towards the indigenous minority peoples and other nations. This was supported by the practice of a paternalistic relationship with the state. This step was formally defined as peoples overcoming the primitive communal system. From 1925 the government approved the list of “minority peoples of the North”, who received a special status, which meant that during the “socialist development” they had to achieve equality with the rest of the population of the USSR. Organizational and economic state action aimed to protect the indigenous peoples from predatory trading operations with newcomers from the “mainland”, therefore, economic assistance was provided to aboriginal communities in Siberia. In addition to the general census, a special Circumpolar census (1926–1927) was carried out. It took into account all the reindeer, hunting and other trade economies of the indigenous northerners. A statistical account of the minority peoples of the North had begun. And this account is still active (Stepanov 2004).

## Major changes of the state national policy during the Soviet period

The accelerated changes that were associated with the breaking of the traditional way of life had a negative impact on the original habitat of the indigenous population. However, it should also be noted that serious work took place in the field of education in order to preserve the culture and native languages of the Northern peoples. Thus, back in 1925 an institute was founded in Leningrad at the Leningrad Institute of the Northern State University. In the 1926–1927 academic year, the Northern branch of Leningrad State University (LSU) was transferred to the Central Institute of Existing Oriental Languages. Representatives of the Northern and Eastern nationalities of the USSR, as well as Mongolian and Tibetan students, were allowed to study at this faculty.

From 1929, the faculty began to prepare from the peoples of the North pedagogical staff for the northern national schools. Over the years, the Department of the Leningrad pedagogical Institute became known as the Department of the Peoples of the North and the Faculty of the Far North. From 1930, the Northern Institute became independent and received the name of the Institute of the Peoples of the North of the Russian Central Executive Committee (RCIC). The Institute conducted training for secondary and higher qualifications by soviet-party and cultural development, co-operative-farm work, industrial business for the North, as well as the training of researchers. The Institute of the North established a Research Association for the creation of a transcription system for the languages of the peoples of the North and the compilation of educational books in native languages. Currently, the institute is renamed the Hertsen RSPU Institute of the Far North. For more than 70 years the Hertsen RSPU has been the only institution in the world where teaching is conducted in 26 languages of the Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East.

During the period of the Soviet Union from the 1920s until the late 1980s, the state national policy towards the indigenous peoples underwent changes. Until the 1930s there was a state-legal development of the «peoples of the Northern suburbs». This included the creation of national-territorial entities and the introduction of ethnic self-government (Temporary regulation 1926). The solution of the problems of the peoples of the North was part of a national policy (Decree of the Central Executive Committee 1924). Later intensified «Sovietization» associated with the implementation of state protection and pressure over all spheres of life for the peoples of the North. The result has been a shift from government peoples of the North to the public administration of these peoples (Shtyrov 2012, p. 10–11). An important part of the paternalistic practices towards the peoples of the North was the policy of state benefits. This manifested itself in the absence of government and commercial taxes for hunting and fishing and crafts. Revenues from these activities were not included in income subject to income tax. Such a practice was not carried out in relation to other ethnic groups in the USSR. Indigenous minority peoples were exempt from stamp duty on all documents, from single agricultural tax, from property tax on inheritance. Cooperative organizations of all kinds, in which representatives of the Northern peoples constituted at least 50 percent of all members, were exempt from direct taxes, income tax, and stamp duty.

Paternalistic government policy towards the Indigenous Peoples of the North in economic relations included logistical and financial support of the main forms of

management – state farms, concessional loans for economic activities, subsidies for reindeer herding, fishing, hunting and the state procurement of the products of traditional economies. The state funded the industrial investment programmes of state farms and the social programmes in the villages by applying federal investments (the construction of schools, clinics, clubs, boarding schools and so on), subsidized the cost of food and manufactured goods (Shtyrov 2012, p. 10–11).

However, the movement to establish collective, state farms markedly influenced the accommodation and living conditions of indigenous peoples. The paternalism of state policy manifested itself in the practice of moving aboriginal children, the elderly and women from remote parts of the nomadic herding, fishing and hunting areas into larger settlements, weaning children from their parents for an education in boarding schools. The campaign of transferring the nomadic population into sedentary and consolidated settlements caused a change in the traditional lifestyle of the North. The government periodically adopted resolutions on measures to promote the culture and economy of the North, which were supported by the development of the legal acts of ministries and departments.

After the collapse of the USSR, in the conditions of transition to the new market economy and the privatization of state property, the attempt to commercialize the traditional economy and the creation of national enterprises (peasant) farms, without targeted state support was doomed to failure (Shtyrov 2012, p. 10–11). The national companies and indigenous communities created by indigenous minority peoples were ruined not only because of competition, but also largely due to the continuous expectations of state support. The practice of paternalism (which had been forming for centuries, ever since the Russian imperial period) was no longer implemented in the post-Soviet period. As a result, hunting grounds, reindeer herding, fishing grounds were quickly passed on to new owners as a variety of commercial structures. This process was accompanied by the collapse of the medical, cultural, commercial, residential and transport infrastructure of the indigenous peoples of the North, by a catastrophic decline in the living standards, life expectancy reduced to 45–50 years, rising unemployment (more than 50% of the working-age population), a decline of real household income by several fold. Thus, from the socio-economic point of view the indigenous peoples of the North were on the verge of physical extinction, demographically they were at the brink of active depopulation processes; from a political point of view it alienated them from power and deprived them of the opportunity to participate in their own development issues.

### **The state national policy during the post-Soviet period**

Changes in the state national policy during the course of market reforms in Russia contributed to the formation of a new understanding of the legal status of the indigenous minority peoples of the North. In the post-perestroika period the name “minority peoples of the North” was changed to “Indigenous Minority Peoples of the North”, and their number was increased from 26 to 30 (by Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the USSR and the RSFSR Council of Ministers 1991). The main goal of the state policy in relation to indigenous peoples at this stage was transition from paternalism to a partnership policy (From paternalism... 1998).

The Presidential Decree of April 22, 1992 № 397 “On urgent measures to protect the places of residence and economic activities of the indigenous minority peoples of the North” has allowed to engage (practice) in the issue of education (the establishment of territories) of traditional subsistence territories of the indigenous peoples of the North, which were the inalienable property of the people and were not to be alienated by industrial or any other development not associated with their traditional management. In the new Russian conditions the federal and regional legislation on the rights of indigenous minority peoples began to develop. In the 1990s an operational system for making legislative decisions in this area was created, which is still active.

One of the consequences, which was later officially recorded in the Constitution of the RSFSR, was the guarantee of the rights and freedoms of humans and citizens; rights and freedoms identified as the highest possible value (Article 2 of the Constitution), regardless of their ethnic or religious identity. Currently, a single list of the indigenous minority peoples of the Russian Federation includes 47 ethnic groups (IMP) (Resolution of the Government 2000), of which 40 have the special legal status of being Indigenous Minority Peoples of the North, Siberia and Far East of the Russian Federation (IMPN) (list of 2006). The indigenous minority peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East include the: Aleuts, Alyutors, Vepsians, Dolgan, Itelmens, Kamchadals, Kerek, Chum, Koryak, Kumandins, Mansi, Nanai, Nganasans, Negidals, Nenets, Nivkhs, Orok (Ulta), Orochi, Sami, Selkups, Soyots, Basins, Telengits, Teleuts, Tofalars, Tubalars, Tuva-Todzhu, Udege, Ulchi, Khanty, Tchelkans, Chuvans, Chukchi, Chulymys, Shor, Evenki, Evens, Entsi, Eskimos, Yukagirs. These peoples are settled on the territory of 28 areas of the Russian Federation (the Republic of Altai, Buryatia, Karelia, Komi, Sakha [Yakutia], Tuva, Khakassia, Altai, Transbaikalia, Kamchatka, Krasnoyarsk, Primorye, Khabarovsk Krai, Amur, Vologda, Irkutsk, Kemerovo, Leningrad, Magadan, Murmansk, Sakhalin, Sverdlovsk, Tomsk, Tyumen region; Nenets, Khanty-Mansiysk [Yugra], Chukotka, Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District).

According to the 2010 census the number of Indigenous Minority Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East amounted to a total of 257 895 people. The most numerous peoples of the indigenous minorities are the Nenets (44,640), Evenki (38,396), the least numerous being the Kerek (4), Entsi (227), Orok (295) (National composition of the population of Russia 2010).

The traditional lifestyle and preservation of the aboriginal environment requires the state to protect indigenous peoples. Obtaining the status of an indigenous minority people ensures special state support and legal protection.

This is guaranteed by the Constitution of the Russian Federation, which is guided in its relations to indigenous minority peoples by the generally recognized principles and norms of international law and international treaties of the Russian Federation (Article 69). With regard to the protection of the native habitat and traditional way of life of ethnic minority communities there are additional possibilities for the development of bylaws regulating citizens of the Russian Federation (item “m” of Article 72). But the development of all legislations should be made on the basis of paragraph 2 of the Constitution, which guarantees the protection of freedom and human rights, as enshrined in Article 18.

### **The effect of the state's paternalistic policy on the transformation of family–marriage relations within the indigenous minority peoples of the Russian North**

Of course, many people in Russia would evaluate positively the results of national policy towards indigenous peoples in the past twenty years. Also, judging by the number of laws aimed at improving the socio-economic status of this group within the population of Russia as a whole a lot of work has been done. But the hardest thing is that improvement of this status is almost impossible to be controlled by means of law, but can be achieved only through the preservation of the spiritual culture of the people – through the preservation of the family.

One of the factors in the preservation of ethnic identity is the knowledge of one's native language. But the effectiveness of the measures undertaken by the state-level regulation of the education system depends not only on the content of the educational programmes and ethno-cultural fullness of the educational environment.

One's native language, being the backbone of any ethnic culture, does not reflect all aspects of ethnicity. The restoration of native languages as a means of communication also involves the restoration of their ethno-cultural context, including the communicative environment of the family. In order to preserve the native language of the Indigenous Peoples in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), the Federal government standard for educational institutions of Indigenous Peoples was approved in 2011, which included the school subject "The native language of indigenous minority peoples and literary reading", which is obligatory. The training programme also includes academic subjects recommended for study as subjects which permit a consideration of regional and ethno-cultural features within the basic educational programme – "The Culture of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)", "Traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)". Other regions are also introducing subjects reflecting their ethno-regional specificity. In the schools of Kamchatka Krai, Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, Taimyr (Dolgan–Nenets) the municipal district of the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug (Yugra) children learn native language, about the culture and way of life of the peoples of the North, the history of their native land, the literature of the North, crafts (the basics of hunting, reindeer herding, fishing, dog sledding), arts and crafts, national sports. Along with this demand for exploring northern youth is also required to learn the dance and folk music of the North (Gashilova 2012).

It is important to note that in modern Russia the most important element in the ethno-regional systems of education should be multicultural education, involving introducing children to the culture of not only native, but also other ethnic groups, as well as the formation of communicative culture of tolerance. And in this regard the measures taken at the state level can affect mainly the socio-economic issues, but will not be successful without the awareness of the indigenous people of their responsibility for their own future.

Territories can be fixed. Government can subsidise traditional farming, thus giving it economic support. But no one can force the representatives of indigenous minorities to go back to their traditional way of life, if they no longer feel the need for it. For example, one measure of complexity in the demographic situation is the declining birth rate. Kharyuchi notes positive developments, "the population of the

Indigenous Minority Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East has increased by 2.7 percent from 2002 to 2010. But this growth has been very uneven across regions of Russia" (Kharyuchi 2012). Comparing this increase in the number of indigenous peoples (26 nations) with the period 1989–2002, we can see that it dropped from 15.1% to 4.3% in years 2002–2010.

This figure is an average. In the Russian regions there is continuous population growth, for example in the Republic of Buryatia, Sakha (Yakutia), Republic of Khakassia, Tyumen and the Magadan region, Chukotka Autonomous Okrug. Unfortunately censuses cannot identify what causes increase in the population number. The reason may be the increase in the birth rate, as well as the change of the ethnic identity of the descendants of mixed marriages. We can only say that the main reason for the change of ethnic identity is the creation of favourable socio-economic and cultural conditions in one region and their absence in the other.

Of course we can note, that the post-Soviet period was difficult for all groups in Russia, including ethnic groups. But we believe that the paternalistic practices against the indigenous peoples of the USSR period did not affect their socio-economic development as much as they damaged the demographic settings and preservation of family roles. Indeed, indigenous minority peoples are traditionally associated primarily with the preservation of family traditions, and a predisposition for having a large number of children.

### **The transformation of traditions and life values of the youth of the indigenous minority peoples of the North with respect to family**

Materials gathered from a survey conducted in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) in years 2008–2010 (Abramova et al. 2011), including indigenous representatives (the total number of people surveyed was 3642, aged between 15 to 30, of which 300 were representatives of indigenous minority peoples), revealed a trend amongst youth to move away from traditional notions of the need for a marital relationship, and the preservation of traditional family roles (tab. 1).

**Tab. 1.** Attitude of young people towards the preservation of traditions of indigenous minority peoples (IMP) in the family–marital sphere, %

Attitude towards traditions in the family–marital sphere	IMP		Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Keeping the traditional division of responsibilities in the family: a woman should be the guardian of the hearth and the man should be the earner	78	66	77	53
Preservation of traditional family values: to have a wife (husband), children, and have a registered marriage	60	46	55	49

Thus, the idea of a woman as the homemaker and a man as the provider is more typical for both men of the RS (Y), and the representatives of the indigenous peoples living in the republic. But women are already becoming more emancipated. For example, amongst the women of IMP only 46% said that it is important for them to have a husband, children and have a registered marriage.

We compared these data with the answers to more specific questions about the meaning of certain aspects of life for young people in the RS (Y) (tab. 2).

**Tab. 2.** Life orientation of youth in the RS (Y), %

Life orientation of youth	For the modern woman it is very important				For the modern men it is very important			
	IMPN		Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)		IMPN		Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
To have a family	83	72	84	78	96	81	77	63
To have children	79	69	81	79	87	60	72	55
To be married	66	46	68	50	70	44	59	40
To have a job	83	95	70	92	96	98	94	95
Profession	85	93	73	89	96	98	90	86
To have high earnings	76	87	69	87	91	100	96	98

With regard to the importance of having a family for modern men, only 63% of women of Sakha (Yakutia) agreed with this assumption. This fact probably reflects the perception of the actual situation with regard to marriage. Women also responded negatively about the desire of modern men to have children, only 55% suggested that it is very important. These findings echo the results of the survey of the modern man's desire to be married – only 40% of all women surveyed in RS (Y) and 44% of the indigenous minority peoples said that for men it is very important. At the same time, the high value of work, a profession and high earnings become more common for young men and women.

### Family–marriage relations

Of course the results of the survey could show a specific emerging situation, if it were not for the results of the last census in 2010 in Russia. These results showed that the trend for increasing numbers of men and women in wedlock is characteristic not only for “large ethnic groups”, but also for indigenous minority peoples (fig. 1) (Age and gender composition... 2004, p. 300–301; Indigenous minority peoples... 2005, Tab. 5, p. 142, 144, 148, 154, 156; Results census... 2010, T. 2, Tab. 5, p. 294; T. 4, Tab. 12, p. 814, 832).

In fact, they confirmed not so much the existence of this trend, but rather the existing consequences of the transformation of family–marriage relations.

As an example, to analyze the situation, we chose two regions of Russia – the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) (RS (Y)) and the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug (Yamal). For the research, we selected the Evenki and Evens from the RS (Y) and the Khanty and Selkups from Yamal.

Previously, from 1994 to 2002, there had been an increase in the proportion of people who did not have a registered marriage within the total number of married persons. In the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) it was from 7.5% to 13.1%, and in Russia as a whole – from 6.5% to 9.8% (Marital status... 1995; Age and gender composition... 2004). The growth rate of this indicator in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)

was 75% and in Russia as a whole – 51%. Among all young people aged 16–29 this indicator was higher in 2002 in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) when compared to Russia as a whole. Among men, the proportion of unregistered marriages among all marriages was 21.5%, among women – 21.2% (Marital status... 1995; Age and gender composition... 2004), and in Russia as a whole – 18 and 17.4% (Marital status... 1995; Age and gender composition... 2004) .

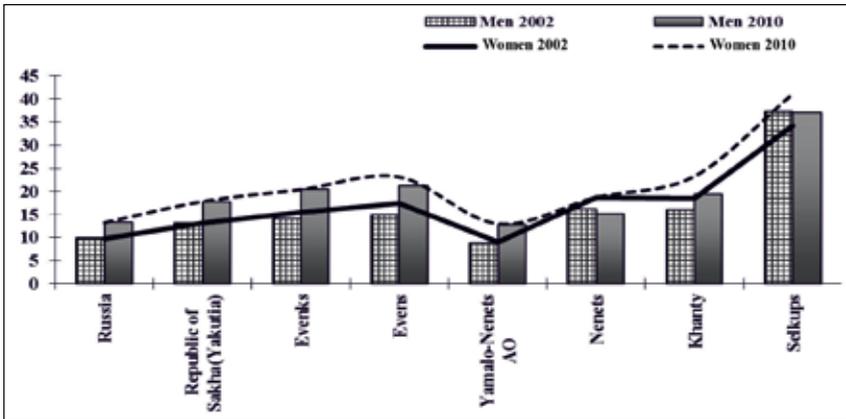


Fig. 1. In unregistered marriages, % of the married population

These results can be explained by the fact that the official registration of a marriage is uncommon among the indigenous minority peoples. But in that case how can one explain the tendency that is forming for a reduction in the number of unmarried men? (fig. 2) (Age and gender composition... 2004, p. 300–301; Indigenous minority peoples... 2005, Tab. 5, p. 142, 144, 148, 154, 156; Results of population... 2010, T. 2, Tab. 5, p. 294; T. 4, Tab. 12, p. 814, 832; National composition... 1993, p. 7, 38, 94; 1989 USSR Population... 1989).

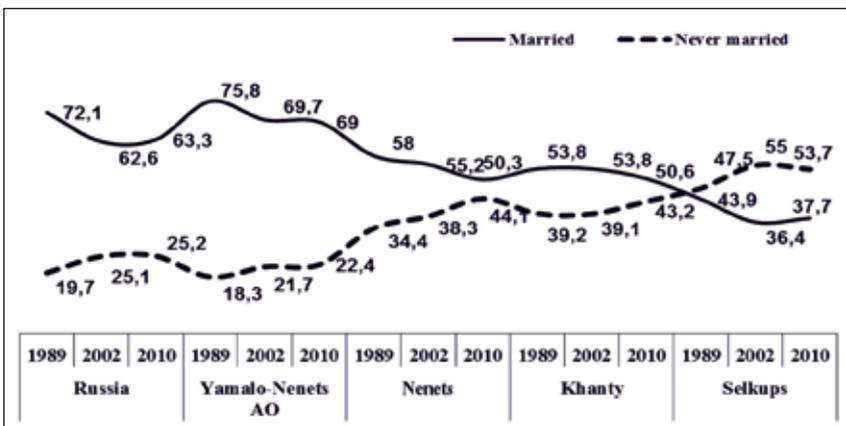


Fig. 2. Married and never-married men, Russia and the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District, the entire population, %

With respect to Russia as a whole, the proportion of unmarried men between 1989 and 2010 showed a positive trend to a level of stabilization from 2002. On Yamal the proportion increases, albeit slowly. If we consider a particular ethnic group, for example the Nenets and Khanty, it continues to grow.

For comparison, in the RS (Y) the trend is the same (fig. 3), despite the huge number of activities implemented by the government of the republic (Age and gender composition... 2004, p. 300–301; Indigenous minority peoples... 2005, Tab. 5, p. 154, 156; Results of census... 2010, T. 2, Tab. 5, p. 294; T. 4, Tab. 12, p. 832; The size and composition... 1993, p. 22–23, 48–49; 1989 USSR Population... 1989).



Fig. 3. Married and never-married men, Russia and the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), the entire population, %

Analysing the causes of the failure of measures to preserve the culture of indigenous minority peoples, the Deputy Chairman of the State Assembly (Il Tumen) of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), president of the Association of Indigenous Peoples of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) Krivoschapkin proposes the creation of an Ombudsman for the rights of indigenous minority peoples of the North, and also considers it necessary to draw in activists and social organizations of indigenous minority peoples, who would “at different levels consistently raise issues of improving legislation for the indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and Far East” (Krivoschapkin 2012). Thus again at the centre of the problem are raised the questions of RIGHT, but not RESPONSIBILITY.

Krivoschapkin also proposes the sharing of experiences with organizations (established on a voluntary basis) of Indigenous Peoples of the United States, Canada, Denmark (Greenland), and the other Nordic countries: “Special attention should be paid to the legislative support of land relations, compensation for natural resources, which is practiced in these countries” (Krivoschapkin 2012). But the question of the exchange of experience in culture preservation, does not raise the matter of family traditions somehow, although the tendency to revise the attitude towards family and responsibility in the upbringing of children in Indigenous Minority Peoples was the case not only for urban youth, but, alas, for villages too (fig. 4–5) (Age and gender composition... 2004, p. 300–301; Indigenous minority peoples... 2005, Tab. 5, p. 142,

144, 148, 154, 156; Results census... 2010, T. 2, Tab. 5, p. 294; T. 4, Tab. 12, p. 814, 832; National composition... 1993, p. 22–23, 48–49; 1989 USSR Population... 1989).

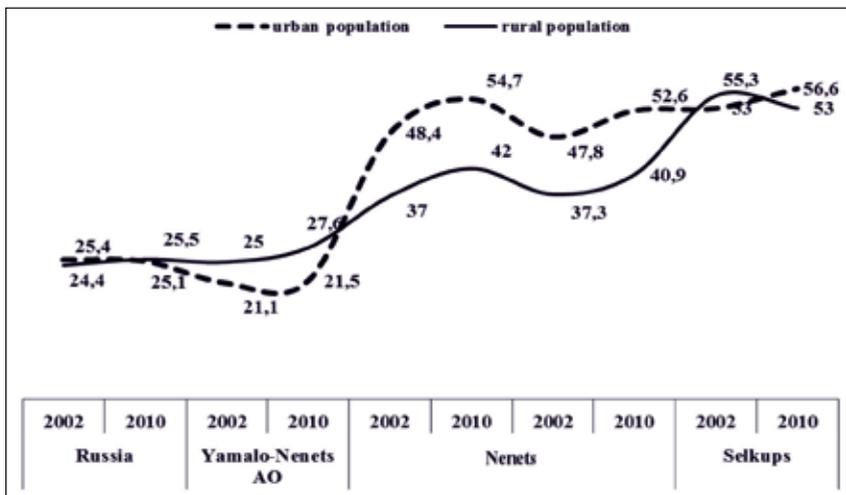


Fig. 4. Men who have never been married, from the urban and rural population of Russia and the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, %

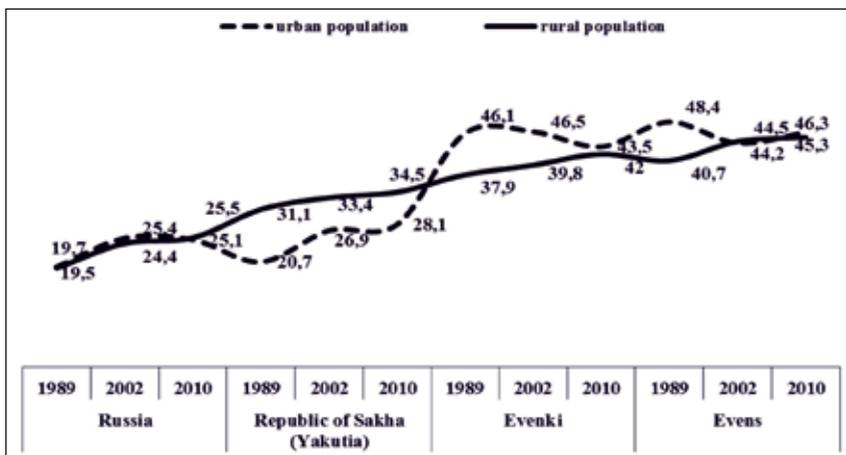


Fig. 5. Men who have never been married, from urban and rural Russia and the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), %

### Occupational employment and family values

Professional employment and education also cause for young people a change in family traditions. Thus, compared with 1990 the number of the indigenous

population employed in the RS (Y) decreased in 2009 by 32.7% among the Chukchi, by 17.5% among the Evenki, by 13.6% among the Evens, and by 10% among the Yukagirs. Receiving their education in a boarding school, many descendants of indigenous minority peoples do not want to engage in their cultural crafts. As noted by Gubarev, the member of parliament for the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), chairman of the Standing Committee of the State Assembly (Il Tumen) of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) on the Arctic issues of indigenous minority peoples, from 1990 to 2009 the number of employed representatives of Indigenous Minority Peoples in construction decreased threefold, in trade, public catering, material supply and procurement – by more than twice, in forestry (2.3 times), while in agricultural and fishing sector – by 36%. At the same time in 2009, compared with the previous year, the unemployment rate significantly increased in the Arctic encampments: Ust-Yanskiy – 16.5%, Even-Bytantayskiy – 15.3%, Oimyakon – 14.1%, Oleneksky – 13.7%, Anabarskiy – 13.3%. Overall, in these encampments, according to the Department of the Federal Employment Service, 3168 people applied to the unemployment agency, including young people aged 16–29 years (1531 people), or 48.3% of the total unemployed (Gubarev 2012, p. 122–123).

Gubarev sees the high demand for each declared vacancy as the main reason for high unemployment in the Arctic and northern encampments. The number of unemployed people in the indigenous encampments, as of January 1<sup>st</sup> 2012, amounted to 4440 people. The second reason is the imposition of tuition fees, the complexity of the financial situation of the parents, who are unable to provide for their children during their education at vocational secondary schools or university, as well as the lack of interest amongst industrial enterprises and agencies in the training of the indigenous population. In places of high population density of indigenous minority peoples, less than one-third of the total number of employees have received a professional education. In Northern settlements there are not enough specialists with higher education – teachers in core subjects, health workers, cultural workers, specialists in agriculture.

Thus, the possibilities for men to provide financial support for their families are lost, which immediately affects their attitude to their roles and the roles of their potential spouses, and generally leaves a marked effect on the desire to take responsibility, formalizing their marriage. Comparisons across ethnic groups of the share of unmarried men in censuses of 2002 and 2010 demonstrate a tendency for an increase in the proportion of the latter (fig. 6) among Yukagirs, Udeghes, Khanty, the Nenets, Chuvans, Dolgan, Selkups, Evens, Evenks, Ents, Chukchi and Orochs (Census results... 2010, T. 4, Tab. 26; Indigenous peoples... 2005, Tab. 4, p. 48–133).

Interestingly, the analysis of marriage for women revealed a discrepancy when compared to the above situation. So among these ethnic groups, only for Yukagirs, Nenets, Dolgan, and Chukchi Evens women – was the marriage situation similar (fig. 7) (Results census... 2010, T. 4, Tab. 26; Indigenous minority peoples... 2005, Tab. 4, p. 48–133).

As a result, we can conclude that either there are fewer Udeghes, Khanty, Chuvans Selkups, Ents and Orochs women than men, or they create ethnically mixed marriages.

Of course it is also possible that marriages without registration are becoming more common among the population, which is indirectly evidenced by the increased number of children born out of wedlock. For example, in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), the proportion of children born to women (regardless of their ethnicity), not

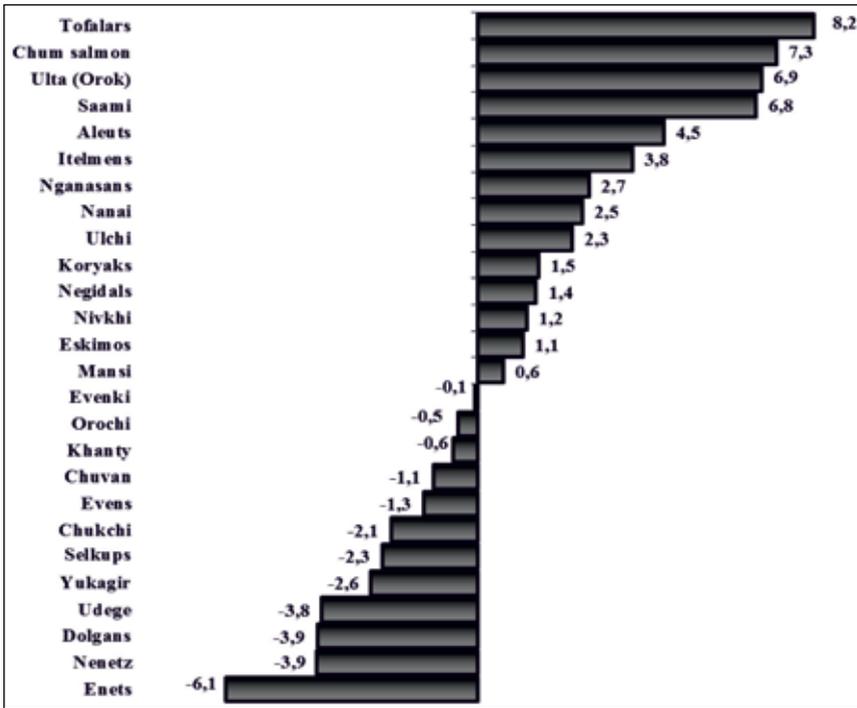


Fig. 6. Difference between never married men in 2002 and 2010 Censuses, %

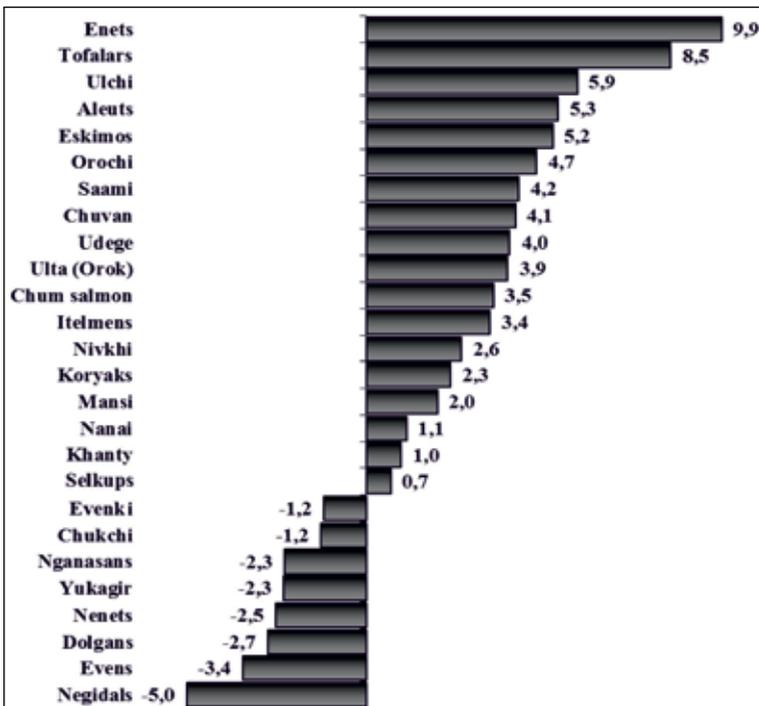


Fig. 7. Difference between never married women in 2002 and 2010 Censuses, %

in a registered marriage (the total number of births), for the period 1990–2009 increased by 2.2 times (from 17.9 to 38.6%), while in Russia as a whole, this index increased 1.8 times (from 14.6 to 26.1%) (Demographic Yearbook... 2010, p. 166, 171; Demographic Yearbook... 1995, p. 203, 211). It should be noted that the difference between the values of these parameters at the beginning of the period amounted to 2.3%, and at the end they already accounted for 12.5%.

## Fertility

An upward trend in extra-marital births is not the only one. The attitude towards the desired number of children in the family has also changed. Comparison of the number of children born to a woman from a group of indigenous minority peoples based on censuses showed that there is a downward trend in the number of women who gave birth to four or more children and increase in the number of women who gave birth to 1 child (fig. 8) (Results census... 2010, T. 4, Tab. 36, p. 2776–2797, 2842–2843; Indigenous minority peoples... 2005, Tab. 14, p. 494–556).

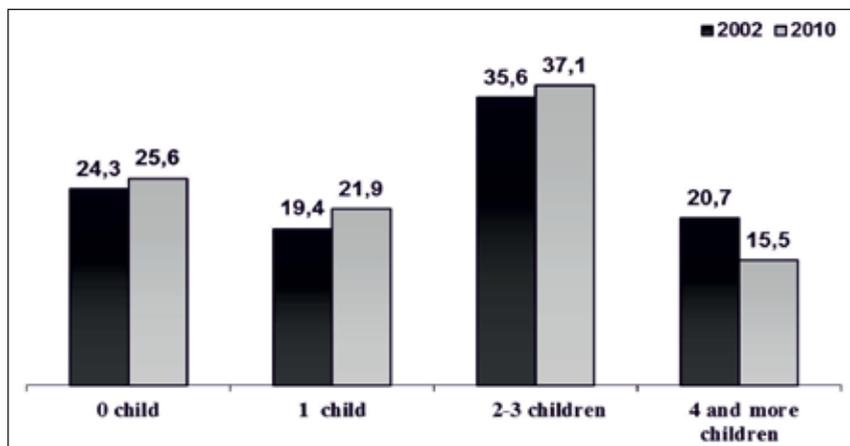


Fig. 8. Number of babies born to women of Indigenous Minority Peoples, 2002–2010 – the entire population, %

There are still exceptions in the groups of the Orochs, Ents, Aleuts, Orok and Chukchi. The maximum increase in the number of women who gave birth to 1 child (8.7%) is among the Ket (fig. 9) (Results census... 2010, T. 4, Tab. 36, p. 2776–2797, 2842–2843, 2798–2841; Indigenous minority peoples... 2005, Tab. 14, p. 494–556).

Let us note that the tendency towards a reduction in the number of children born to representatives of indigenous minority peoples is influenced by the type of settlement. In 2010 the number of children per 1,000 women for a given group was on average 1880. While in urban areas this figure was 1444 being 669 lower than in rural areas, it amounted to 2113. In urban areas there is a reduction in the number of women with 4 or more children (12.9%) and an increase in the number of those who have no children (by 8.4%) (fig. 10) (Results of census... 2010, T. 4,

Tab. 36, p. 2776–2797, 2842–2843; Indigenous minority peoples... 2005, Tab. 14, p. 494–556).

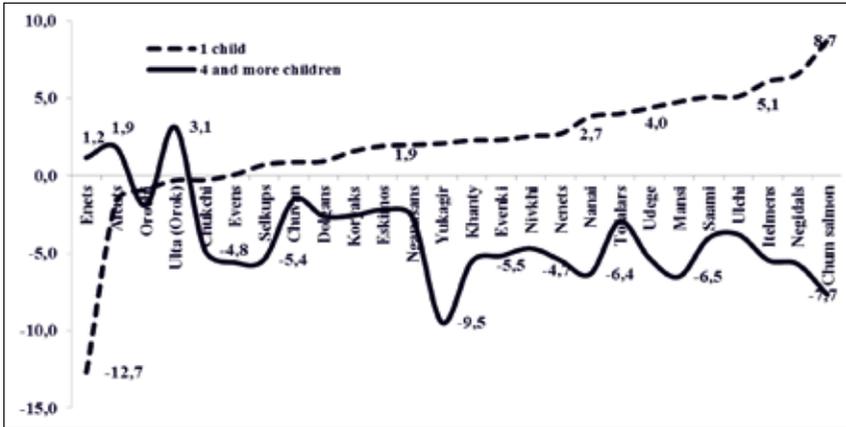


Fig. 9. Change in the number of women by number of children born during the period 2002–2010, %

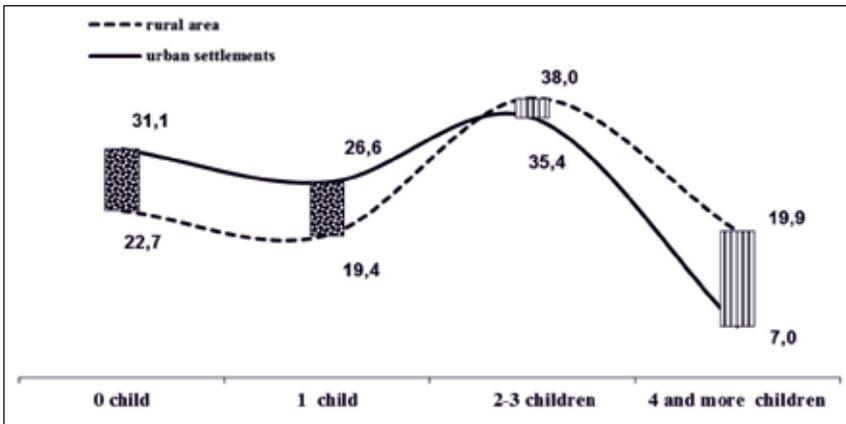


Fig. 10. Distribution of women of the indigenous minority peoples by the number of children ever born, depending on the type of settlement, 2010, %

## Conclusions

The analysis of the dynamics of the formation of national policy with respect to the indigenous minority peoples of the Russian North showed that the Soviet period was characterized by a paternalistic state participation in the life of ethnic groups, which was manifested in the following:

- the establishing of a boarding-school system of education for their children, while those who finished school were endowed with privileges to enter colleges and universities;

- the establishing of a system of additional payments and privileges to organize a life-support system within the conditions of a traditional mode of life.

The measures used to ensure the sustainable development of indigenous minority peoples had a negative effect on family–marriage relations because the separation of children from their families and their education in boarding schools did not allow them to internalize the values of living a traditional life from childhood as they were quite simply away. Transition to a settled mode of life affected not only economic fundamentals but also had an impact on the structural characteristics of families, which were in fact conditioned by the formation of two places of residence. In general, this fact also affected the revision of gender roles as well as family and marriage values. Changes in the socio-economic and socio-political situation in the country during the post-Soviet period, which were connected with the transition to market relations, complicated the continuation of the state’s paternalistic policy in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. But then the extension of the list of ethnic groups in need of the state support showed that the state’s paternalistic intentions in respect to these people remained the same. In this connection one can suppose that the negative trends in the transformation of family–marriage relations, the reduction of the values of family and marriage that are manifested in the growth of unregistered marriages and the decrease in registered marriages, as well as the growth in the number of men who were never married, and the growth of the number of children born out of wedlock, will only become aggravated.

Amidst the fierce debate about the protection of indigenous peoples’ rights to land, to a traditional way of life, preserving a record of ethnicity in their passports, tax benefits, it is important to realize that one of the main tasks of all these measures is to increase the number of indigenous minority peoples, creating conditions for maintaining the culture of the indigenous minority peoples. But neither the state, nor human rights organisations or the social welfare authorities can do this for them.

Preservation of the traditional way of life under the influence of global trends is of course difficult and to resist or reject these trends within the life-style behaviour of different generations of Indigenous Minority Peoples is extremely difficult. Many children who grew up in boarding schools, once acquainted with modern technology, no longer want to go back to the activities of their parents. At the same time, not all of the older generation considers this a tragedy. There are those who, on the contrary, seek to send their children to the town where they would live a different, “better” life. But no matter which future life model the younger generation chooses, it is important that a responsible attitude towards family, children and spouses is formed from childhood. And it is only by means of maintaining the spiritual culture of the ethnos, an important component of which are the traditional values of family and marriage, that this problem can be resolved.

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## **Rdzenne mniejszości narodowe Rosji: zmiany w polityce narodowej, transformacje w relacjach rodzinnych i małżeńskich**

### **Streszczenie**

Artykuł omawia dynamikę formowania się polityki władz Rosji w odniesieniu do rdzennych ludów Północy. Analiza konsekwencji protekcyjnej polityki Związku Radzieckiego oraz warunków życia w okresie post-sowieckim umożliwia zrozumienie współczesnych trendów w sferze przemian wartości rodzinnych i małżeńskich – relacji rodzinnych, które wywierają wpływ na liczebność omawianych ludów oraz zachowanie przez nich rodzimej kultury.

Na podstawie porównania danych dotyczących płodności i małżeństwa w Rosji oraz w Republice Sacha (Jakucja) i w Jamalsko-Nienieckim Okręgu Autonomicznym w wybranych zbiorowościach ludności rdzennej badaczki doszły do wniosku, iż istotne są nie tylko zagadnienia ochrony praw ludów rdzennych, ale także zachowanie tradycyjnych ról kobiet i mężczyzn, tradycji rodzinnych oraz tworzenie odpowiedzialnych postaw w stosunku do instytucji małżeństwa. Analizę ilustrują dane spisów powszechnych przeprowadzonych w Rosji w latach 1989, 2002 i 2010, jak również materiały z badań socjologicznych przeprowadzonych w Republice Sacha (Jakucja), grant RHF RHF N 12-03-00546a (2012–2013) „Społeczno-kulturowe portrety młodzieży we współczesnej Rosji: aspekty etniczne i regionalne”, RFH nr 08-06-00613a (2008–2010) „Modele etno-kulturowej adaptacji młodzieży w warunkach intensyfikacji procesów industrializacji na Północy (Republika Sacha [Jakucja]), RFH 07-06- 18025e (2007) „Młodzież ludów rdzennych w Republice Sacha (Jakucja) we współczesnym mieście przemysłowym: problemy adaptacji społeczno-kulturowej”, projekt integracyjny RAS 2006–2008 № 6.26 „Adaptacja społeczno-kulturowa studentów w Republice Sacha (Jakucja) w warunkach nowoczesnej transformacji (na przykładzie Jakucka)”.

**Słowa kluczowe:** polityka Rosji, rdzenne ludy Północy, procesy demograficzne, relacje rodzinno-małżeńskie