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## EXPERT ANALYSIS OF THE MAIN TRENDS OF NORTHERN SIBERIA'S INDIGENOUS SMALL-NUMBERED PEOPLES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Abstract.** Economic development of indigenous small-numbered peoples (ISNP) of Northern Siberia is currently undergoing global transformations, the specifics of which are determined by the general problems of modernization of the post-Soviet territory. The research objective was to give a long-term forecast of traditional economic activities, typical for indigenous small-numbered peoples of Northern Siberia. The study involved the methods of field research, Delphi-inquiry of the experts, analysis of statistic data on the economic development of Krasnoyarsk Krai and regions of compact settlement of indigenous small-numbered peoples of Northern Siberia, including Evenks, Dolgans, Nenets, Selkups.

Primary and mineral resources are being increasingly extracted by financial-industrial groups on the historic territories of settlement of indigenous peoples. The overwhelming majority of experts forecast extremely negative trends of traditional economic activities of indigenous peoples of Northern Siberia development, which have their special (unique) ecological ethics. The policy of administration of the territories of traditional settlement of indigenous peoples of Northern Siberia ought to be radically modernized. Equitable dialogue between indigenous peoples of Northern Siberia and resource and mineral extracting companies from financial-industrial groups will be successful if conducted on the basis of partnership, in which modern practices of decolonization of northern indigenous peoples will be realized to a greater or lesser extent.

**Keywords:** Northern Siberia; indigenous small-numbered peoples; forecasting; traditional economic activities; expert assessment.

**JEL Classification:** A13, C93, N55, O18, R58

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### ЭКСПЕРТНИЙ АНАЛІЗ ОСНОВНИХ ТЕНДЕНЦІЙ ЕКОНОМІЧНОГО РОЗВИТКУ КОРИННИХ МАЛОЧИСЕЛЬНИХ НАРОДІВ ПІВНІЧНОГО СИБІРУ

**Анотація.** У статті представлено результати довгострокового прогнозування перспектив розвитку традиційних способів господарювання, характерних для корінних малочисельних народів Північного Сибіру. Застосовувалися методи польових досліджень, Дельфі-опитування експертів, аналіз статичних даних з економічного розвитку Красноярського краю та регіонів компактного проживання корінних нечисельних народів Північного Сибіру, в тому числі евенків, долган, ненців, селькупів.

**Ключові слова:** Північний Сибір; корінні малочисельні народи; прогнозування; традиційне господарювання; експертна оцінка.

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**Аннотация.** В статье представлены результаты долгосрочного прогнозирования перспектив развития традиционных способов хозяйствования, характерных для коренных малочисленных народов Северной Сибири. Применялись методы полевых исследований, Дельфи-опрос экспертов, анализ статических данных по экономическому развитию Красноярского края и регионов компактного проживания коренных малочисленных народов Северной Сибири, в том числе эвенков, долган, ненцев, селькупов.

**Ключевые слова:** Северная Сибирь; коренные малочисленные народы; прогнозирование; традиционное хозяйство; экспертная оценка.

**Introduction.** Economic development of the post-Soviet space is non-uniform and multi-layered. Especially important in the age of globalization are the economic processes, taking place in the North and in Siberia, where indigenous peoples live in extreme climatic and ecological conditions, overcoming numerous new and old problems [1; 2; 3]. Despite immense difficulties of their existence, indigenous and small-numbered peoples of the North and Siberia in post-Soviet Russia preserve their unique culture and identity. Many researchers emphasize the importance of preservation of the unique economic and ecological culture of indigenous peoples, living in the North and in Siberia in circumpolar region.

The total number of indigenous small-numbered peoples of the North in Krasnoyarsk Krai is 16,222 people, about 4,000 of whom are engaged in traditional economic activities [4; 5]. 8

ethnic groups are officially recognized as indigenous small-numbered peoples of Krasnoyarsk Krai: Dolgans, Nenets, Evenks, Evens, Nganasans, Kets, Selkups, Chulymys [6; 7].

**Brief Literature Review.** Economic research concerning indigenous peoples is conducted in relation to all indigenous peoples in general, as well as in relation to separate ethnic groups. Anderson D. (2000a) [8] describes the features of the traditional Evenk economy. It is a unique «reindeer» economy, in which the inseparable coexistence of Evenks and reindeer allows Evenks-reindeer herders to preserve the ecological balance in tundra and taiga, and to survive in harsh climatic conditions of the circumpolar zone. W.Adamowicz, Beckley T., MacDonald D. H., Just L., Luckert M., Murray E., and Phillips W. (1998) [9] show that market economy is destructive for indigenous small-numbered peoples of the North and Siberia. The

authors rightly claim that these peoples are characterized by a special model of relations between nature, culture and the system of values.

Contradictory and negative effects of market economy for indigenous peoples of the North in post – Soviet Russia are revealed by Lashov B. V. [10]. It is impossible to understand current economic processes, characteristic of these peoples, without knowledge of their economic history [11; 12]. Modernization processes for such peoples should be conducted according to a special scenario. Politicians should take this uniqueness into account. New scenarios for indigenous peoples of Krasnoyarsk Krai are analyzed and proposed by modern researchers [13; 14; 15; 16]. The main economic conflict, observed by the researchers, – is the conflict between economic and cultural rights of indigenous peoples for traditional use of nature, and necessity for extracting natural resources on the territories of traditional use of nature by large financial-industrial groups. At present, it is difficult to determine the vector of development as economy of these peoples is connected at least with three economic systems: traditional use of nature, modernization of post-Soviet economy, and global economic and cultural processes. In this situation, which is difficult for analysis, field research and expert inquiries are of particular importance. With the help of these methods, several scenarios of economic and cultural development of indigenous peoples of the North and Siberia can be worked out.

**Purpose** of the present research is to give a long-term forecast of the main trends of economic and socio-cultural development of indigenous small-numbered peoples of Northern Siberia under the conditions of global transformations in post-Soviet space.

**Results.** The main research methods: field research on the territories of compact settlement of indigenous small-numbered peoples of Northern Siberia, including Evenkiysky Municipal District, Taymyrsky Dolgano-Nenetsky Municipal District, and Turukhansky District of Krasnoyarsk Krai of the Russian Federation; statistic research of economic indicators; experts' opinion survey based at Delphy method.

In 2012-2014, scientists and postgraduate students of Siberian Federal University conducted field research in northern villages (posyolki) Surinda (Evenkia), Essey (Evenkia), Karaul (Taymyr), Nosok (Taymyr), Farkovo (Turukhansky District). These northern villages are places of compact settlement of small-numbered peoples of Northern Siberia – Evenks, Evens, Dolgans, Selkups. Extensive data on economic, social, and cultural state of indigenous peoples were obtained. Based on the results of field research, expert seminars were held. The obtained data has been supplemented with the analysis of statistical materials of Krasnoyarsk Krai in the districts, where indigenous small-numbered peoples of Northern Siberia live.

A questionnaire was developed based at Delphy method and expert survey of 127 experts was conducted, including representatives of executive and legislative authorities, local government authorities, and representative of public organizations of indigenous small-numbered peoples of Northern Siberia. The preferential choice was made in favour of the experts, who have experience of living and taking important decisions in Northern territories of Siberia, in the areas of compact settlement of indigenous small-numbered peoples of the North. Special attention was paid to the expert opinion of the experts-representatives of indigenous small-numbered peoples of the North and Siberia. The proportion of such experts – Nenets, Evenks and Tuvans – was about 30%. The regions where the experts live are places of compact settlement of indigenous small-numbered peoples of the North, including: Tomsk Oblast, the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), the Tuva Republic, Khanty-Mansy Autonomous Okrug (Yugra), Krasnoyarsk Krai, Arkhangelsk Oblast, Zabaykalsky Krai, Chukotka Autonomous Okrug, Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug.

According to the rules of Delphy method, the topics for the expert interviews were selected in such a way as to allow distinguishing three scenarios, forecasting economic development of indigenous small-numbered peoples. These scenarios represent three possible vectors of this development. The optimistic

scenario is based on the forecast of «new renaissance» for indigenous northern peoples. It assumes that indigenous northern peoples will acquire positive ethnic identity, will be integrated into current economic processes, at the same time preserving their unique economic and ecological culture. The optimistic scenario is connected with the fact that future economic diversity of public activity by 2060 will determine unique ecologic outlook of indigenous northern peoples. The neutral scenario stands for preservation of the current situation of indigenous northern peoples without changes, big changes are not presumed by this scenario, the present situation will be prolonged for many years ahead. The pessimistic scenario indicates the possibility of ethnic identity loss and complete assimilation of indigenous northern peoples by 2060, when these peoples will disappear as unique ethnic groups. Their unique ecological and traditional economic practices can be completely lost. «Indigenous knowledge» of northern peoples will never be acquired by global community.

The experts assessed probability and possible importance (value) of various trends, risks and desirable political decisions, necessity and feasibility of certain events for the period up to 2060. The experts were offered a set of trends, reflecting the state of traditional activities. Besides that, the experts were asked to assess the influence of creation of innovative technologies, political and administrative decisions, and ethnic stereotypes, concerning northern peoples, on traditional forms of economic activity of northern peoples. The experts assessed possible risks and critical situations.

All the experts were offered a questionnaire where statements were given in three forms. The forms of statements corresponded to one of the scenarios: optimistic, neutral and pessimistic. The experts were asked to consider all the possible variants of development of the trends and the most important events of modern life of indigenous small-numbered peoples of the North and Siberia. Then an expert survey was conducted. The obtained results were systematized in the form of tables.

Each expert assessed probability and importance (value) on the five-point evaluation scale: 1 point – very low probability and importance; 2 points – low probability and importance; 3 points – medium probability and importance; 4 points – high probability and importance; 5 points – very high probability and importance. All the experts' answers were analyzed and summed up, average estimate of each probability and each value was calculated. Inside each set of answers the assessments of experts were arranged on the scale: from the most likely and most important to least likely and least important.

The experts' assessments of probability and importance of basic trends for indigenous small-numbered peoples of the North and Siberia are of the greatest interest.

The most likely (4.9 points) in the opinion of the overwhelming majority of experts is further increase in the resource and industrial development of the areas, inhabited by these peoples. In the period up to 2060, extraction and transportation of natural resources on traditional territories of settlement of ISNP of the North will continue.

Similarly high probability is forecast by experts for increase in negative consequences of industrial development of northern territories, destruction of ecological system of the North, deterioration of conditions of life of ISNP of the North.

Increase in the amount of «shift» work on the territories of traditional residence of indigenous peoples is highly probable (4.5 points).

The experts also forecast high probability (4.2 points) for the trend: decrease in the range of traditional use of nature by ISNP of the North due to the fact that traditional economy will be noncompetitive.

Breaking of ecological and geo-cultural balance, in the opinion of the experts, will most likely (4 points) lead to reduction in the number of deer, fish, berries, mushrooms, medicinal herbs.

Fairly likely (3.7 points) in the estimates of the experts is abandonment and destruction of nomads' camps and northern villages, where ISNP of the North reside, due to migration of young people to larger cities of the country and the world. Less

likely (3.5 points) is that the trend of migration outflow of young people will be preserved at the current rate.

Among the least likely trends are the following:

1) democratization of the state policy in northern regions, increasing economic and political independence of these regions (2.9 points);

2) separate development of ISNP of the North from Russian society and global world (2.8 points);

3) development of modern transport communications on the territories of residence of ISNP of the North (2.8 points);

4) improving quality of housing, communal services and utilities, cheapening of electric energy and fuel (2.8 points);

5) religious renaissance of ISNP of the North, adopting religious rituals and traditions of labor migrants (2.6 points);

6) reduction in pollution of environment in the areas of residence of ISNP of the North (2.5 points);

7) solution of the problems of indigenous peoples' receiving their share of economic benefits (rent) from exploitation of natural resources (2.5 points);

8) creation of vast territories of traditional use of nature, where economic and cultural rights of ISNP of the North will be fully realized (2.5 points).

The least likely trend (2.3 points) in the opinion of the experts is the «reduction in industrial resource development of the territories, inhabited by ISNP of the North, withdrawal of financial-industrial groups, extracting oil, gas and mineral resources from the territories, inhabited by ISNP of the North».

Experts' estimates, connected with higher or lower probability of factors determining future of traditional economy of indigenous peoples of the North and Siberia, are quite remarkable. These estimates mean that the experts believe the pessimistic scenario of economic development to be most likely.

For example, the most likely trend (3.9), as the experts point out, for ISNP of the North is increase in unemployment and alcohol abuse, resulting from idleness. This negative trend will be indirectly caused by stricter state regulations on hunting and fishing (3.7 points). Forced changes in economic activities will lead to extinction of ethno-cultural groups of ISNP of the North (3.6 points).

The neutral scenario is ascribed medium probability. The likelihood of preservation of the traditional economic activities (reindeer herding, hunting, fishing, picking berries and medicinal herbs) on the current level is estimated by the experts to be 3.4 points. The probability of the products of traditional economy being processed and earning income to the representatives of ISNP of the North as well as improvement of production and industrial infrastructure is a bit lower (3.1 points).

At the same time, it is preservation of traditional economic practices, which is most important (5 points), because they are the basis for existence of ISNP of the North. Similarly high importance (4.4 points) is given to creation of industrial and social infrastructure, with the help of which products of traditional economy will be processed and bring income to ISNP of the North. A bit less important (4.2 points) in the experts' opinion is increase in unemployment and alcohol abuse among ISNP of the North. Medium importance (3.2 points) is ascribed to stricter state regulations on hunting and fishing.

It is necessary to point out critical situations, which are most likely in the experts' estimates (4 points and more). They are four main critical situations for ISNP of the North:

1) loss of human capital, dying of people who preserved unique economic practices of ISNP of the North (2015-2060);

2) transformation of the territories, inhabited by ISNP of the North, into the arena for competition of Russian and foreign oil extracting companies, with negative consequences of this competition for ISNP of the North (2015-2060);

3) the status of a «resource colony» with extremely low level of investment into human capital to the areas of residence of ISNP of the North (2015-2060);

4) crisis of infrastructure, deterioration of transport connection, dilapidation and non-reparability of residential and administrative buildings.

The experts were also unanimous in their assessment of importance of these critical situations. Besides the above men-

tioned four critical situations, the experts consider most important (4 points and more) the following ones:

1) ideology crisis, absence of prospects and «vision of the future» for the traditional forms of economy of ISNP of the North;

2) cancellation of state funding, lack of own funds for investment into preservation of unique economic and cultural practices.

The experts' estimates of the trend of considerable decrease of population of ISNP of the North, resulting from assimilation, demographic decline and migration outflow of population are also quite high (3.8 points). Therefore, the pessimistic scenario predominates in the experts' opinions. The optimistic scenario is absent in the experts' opinions. The neutral scenario is connected not with the indigenous peoples of the North and Siberia themselves, but rather with preservation of hunting, fishing, reindeer herding at the current level. These extremely alarming experts' assessments call for urgent political decisions. The concrete «indigenous knowledge» of northern peoples, living in Krasnoyarsk Krai, is in real danger of complete disappearing. It is notably, that it is disappearing (extinction) of carriers of unique economic culture of ISNP of the North, that the experts believe to be the most dangerous trend.

### Conclusions

Post-Soviet period of economic and socio-cultural development of indigenous small-numbered peoples of Northern Siberia is characterized by increase of negative trends for traditional economic activities, which have worldwide importance due to the special ecological ethics of use of nature, practiced in the modern global world only by indigenous peoples.

The world experience, proving particular vulnerability of indigenous small-numbered peoples in the age of global transformations, is manifested in post-Soviet space of Northern Siberia with particular intensity. Traditional economic activities of indigenous peoples are being destroyed along with the unique culture of these peoples, some languages are disappearing, and the majority of languages of indigenous peoples of Northern Siberia are under the threat of extinction.

In the nearest future, conflict between economic subjects of reindustrialization of Siberia, resource extracting companies and indigenous small-numbered peoples of the Northern Siberia will intensify. The legal base, regulating economic relations between these two parties: financial-industrial groups and indigenous peoples, is in need of modernization.

In post-Soviet space the changing industrial relations lead to social stratification of indigenous peoples, neopatrimonialism is registered. There appear considerable differences between representatives of indigenous peoples, who preserved traditional economic activities, mainly nomadic reindeer herding, and those who got actively engaged into modern market relations.

The existing political models of economic development of indigenous small-numbered peoples of Northern Siberia are in need of considerable modernization and transition from the model of paternalism to the model of partnership. In order to achieve this objective, indigenous peoples need to receive rights for their lands and enter legal relations with resource extracting companies of different financial-industrial groups.

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