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THE CULTURAL CONTEXT OF DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL IDENTITY IN YAKUTIA

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Abstract

In a multinational state, the regional identity of national minorities is of dual nature. The development of an ethnical regional identity is akin to personal education. It depends on the degree of well-being, quality of the relationship. Scales of ethnical regional identity are complex formations dependent on the intensity of pressure of the national state and the level of claims of regional ethnic groups. The research subject is factors that form characteristics of ethnical regional identities of the peoples of Yakutia and Bretagne. Various cultural and social factors play a decisive role in forming ethnical regional identity of national minorities living in the multinational state, shaping its mobile dual character. The correlation of the influence of socio-cultural factors on personality creates a dual positive and negative ethnical regional identity. The shared experience brought many fraternal peoples together, determined the Yakut regional identity. The historical past, components of the complex ethnical concept “Yakutia” are the source of the positive part of the ethnical Yakut regional identity.

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1. Introduction

In the era of globalization, the formation of regional identity in the multinational state is becoming one of the important problems. Preserving one's own identity is a matter of preserving one's own face and survival in the conditions of cultural and linguistic unification. In a multinational state, regardless of the administrative and political status of the territory, regional identity of national minorities is related to ethnic identity (Borisova, 2012).

2. Problem Statement

An ethnical regional identity is an awareness of historical memory of a region and an ethnic group living there and united by cultural and moral ethnic values, regional belonging to this region and ethnic belonging to this people. The development of an ethnical regional identity is akin to personal education. It depends on the degree of well-being, quality of the relationship. Scales of ethnical regional identity are complex formations dependent on the intensity of pressure of the national state and the level of claims of regional ethnic groups. They can be positive or negative. The psychology of ethnic groups is similar to the psychology of personality. Inequality, a sense of inferiority, an attitude and policies of the national state distort the consciousness of individuals who live in the region or consider themselves representatives of the ethnic group. Components of positive and negative identities can be combined. At the same time, the economic and political situation are an objective background, which is not important for the majority of the population. The dual nature of an ethnical identity causes two opposite feelings. It is a characteristic feature of ethnic minorities within multinational state.

3. Research Questions

The research subject is factors that form characteristics of ethnical regional identities of the peoples of Yakutia and Bretagne.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to identify basic components, mechanisms for the formation of an ethnical regional identity of national minorities on the example of Yakutia.

5. Research Methods

The study used different research methods. To test the hypothesis and solve the tasks, a set of methods were used: an analysis of linguistic, psychological, cultural literature; observations, questionnaires and interviews, a cultural analysis and comments, associative experiment, the method of attributing qualities. The use of the deductive method made it possible to draw general conclusions.

6. Findings

The past of the people and traditional culture are of great importance for developing a regional ethnical identity. The historical past and history of development of the region is a subject of collective experience. Cattle breeding changed culture of the region. The ancestors of the Yakut developed handicraft (blacksmithing, jewelry, pottery, etc.), began to build permanent houses. By the beginning of the 17th century, the Yakut clans lived in the Indigirka and Yana basins, promoting cattle and herd horse breeding culture in the Arctic regions of Yakutia (Burnasheva, 2019). Years of shared history contributed to the development of the northern Yakut regional identity. In the Soviet era, the past of the northern ethnic groups was ignored. These psychological and sociological reasons caused the marginalization of some indigenous peoples. The phenomenon of marginalization is characterized by depression, hopelessness and antisocial phenomena. State ideology stated that the past is always worse than the future. Moreover, such an attitude towards the peoples inhabiting new lands was the same in the XVII–XX centuries. The period of Turkic expansion of the ancestors of modern Yakuts began in the XIV century. The short period of Soviet power, when systematic sovietization began, turned out to be especially destructive for the self-consciousness of the peoples. Therefore, the official propaganda said that true development of the peoples liberated from tsarism began and a “leap” from a “tribal” society to socialism took place, bypassing certain stages of historical development. Representatives of various nationalities with their ideology gave rise to relationships that contributed to the current state of small nations and the Yakut people (Coulouarne, 2016). Meanwhile, public consciousness, regional identity and the picture of the world were based on those stereotypes that developed over centuries. In the era of tsarism, non-Russian peoples of Siberia were called foreigners. Russian tsarism pursued a brutal colonial policy. At present and in the Soviet era, the era of bloody accession of Siberian peoples to the Russian Empire is a taboo subject. Yakutia experienced a lot of colonial hardships. Thousands of Cossacks, prisoners, peasants had a great influence on its history. Destruction, unequal fights, unfamiliar diseases, bloody collection of yasak, cruelty of Cossacks and prisoners reduced the population, caused the disappearance of clans, tribes, peoples. The resistance of the Yakuts and other peoples was broken (Ferréol & Jucquois, 2003).

Cruelty of the Cossacks and prisoners cannot overshadow changes. Under the onslaught of imperial policies, the traditional way of life of local peoples began to change. Having a great influence on the development of agriculture, industries, education, Christianity, newcomers assimilated in the linguistic space of the Yakuts. The Russians changed their national identity. The primordial housekeeping was a sign of backwardness. The construction of Russian houses, knowledge of the Russian language, household items were markers of elitism. Schools where children of the rich Yakut studied were opened. In socialist Yakutia, the majority of poor peasants enthusiastically accepted the Soviet power, the euphoria of the first years of Soviet power brought a sense of novelty and hope. In the 1920s and 1930s, new Russians came, they taught children, and treated patients. The Russians brought ideas of communism and internationalism. The rejection of the native language and culture came voluntarily out of a desire to be reckoned with the elite. Speaking the mother language became a sign of backwardness and rural origin. Moreover, native speakers of national languages, especially when moving to the city, sought to abandon their native language and culture, speaking Russian.

Mixed marriages were widespread among the national intelligentsia; their children spoke only Russian and despised the nationality of one of the parents. The level of education of local girls was low. During the “indigenosization,” a large number of young people left for the central cities. They got married Russian and Russian-speaking girls. Thus, in the first years of the Soviet era and up to the 1960s, educated Yakut men willingly married Russian girls. In the 1940s and 1950s, a large number of specialists came from central Russia, mixed marriages became very frequent. The Russian girls studied the Yakut language, spoke it. Their children were bilingual. The post-war years were characterized by universal glee from a common victory, consolidation and internationalization of society, an increase in the role of the Russian language and the Russian people. The arrival of specialists, the development of industries and geological explorations contributed to a change in the self-identification of local peoples. At the same time, the Russian-speaking population increased due to those released from the Gulag and Magadan prisons. Many Russian people wanted to start a new life. On March 27, 1953, the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the USSR adopted the Decree "On Amnesty" for all prisoners whose term did not exceed 5 years; after this amnesty, Yakutia was replenished with new Russian-speaking residents. These people lived quietly, settled in places where the industry was developing. Meanwhile, despite the heterogeneous characteristics of the Russian and Russian-speaking population, the Russian language continued to play a consolidating and enlightening role. The educational system was russified, the national population did not resist this. In the regional centers, Russian-language classes and schools were created. After the 4th grade, the Yakut language and literature are the only subjects taught in the native language. Northern languages are hardly studied; active yakutization and russification of northern peoples was underway. The Yakutization process, which had begun long before the Soviet era, continued during the Soviet period. The urban population, which was constantly replenished at the expense of the rural population, was quickly “russified” (Le Coadic, 2002).

Becoming urban residents, the former villagers spoke Russian with their children, most of them were skeptical of their native culture. This phenomenon is defined by the term "ethnonihilism." In relation to the northern peoples of Yakutia, this term was applied in the article by I. Alekseev and L. Unarova "Linguistic situation and national identity: the example of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)." (as cited in Vinokurova & Petrova, 2018). In general, the 1980s–1990s increased attention to the reasons of transformation of ethnic regional identity, its content and types (norm, ethnocentrism, ethnic dominance, ethnofanatism, ethnonihilism, ambivalence). The term ambivalence, coined by Eigen Bleiler, explained the psychological state of non-Russian peoples prone to voluntary russification.

Ambivalence often accompanies the complex process of incorporating a person into a new ethnic environment, the interaction of national psychological characteristics of an ethnic group with moral and social values and personality attitudes. This process is difficult, contradictory, and in the collision of various moral attitudes. Ambivalence is one of the prerequisites for the preparation and subsequent immediate start of the process of transformation of national psychological characteristics (Petrova & Vinokurova, 2018, p. 1301).

Despite the official declaration of positive national identity, ethnonihilism has become one of the concomitant reasons for a decrease in the number of Yakuts and northern peoples of Yakutia who know their native language. Ethnonihilism led to a complete loss of languages. In the Soviet era, some regions

lost their native language. Before the 1960s, the Russians who came to Yakutia were full of thirst for changes, romance of discoveries, and selfless help, but in the early 1970s and 1980s, their moral qualities changed. This was due to the worship of material values, aggravated by a general deficit, high northern allowances. Workers went to Yakutia to earn big money. Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Tatars, Ukrainians, Russians came temporarily to earn money to buy cars, apartments, etc. In those years, a general rebirth of moral qualities of children of disinterested communists, romantics of the post-war period was observed. The system of cultural values and relationships changed. The visitors did not try to know the language and culture of the indigenous peoples. People who came to earn money did not show respect for indigenous peoples. Everyday nationalism, disrespect for the customs and traditions of local peoples, were dissonant with the internationalism policy declared by the USSR. On the other hand, the Soviet globalization permeated the consciousness of representatives of national minorities of the USSR. The loss of their native language was spurred on by the contemptuous attitude of the newcomers. As before, the Russian language, the Russian people were associated with progress, a new life.

The Russian workers, peasants, the Soviet intelligentsia, which basically came out of the working and rural environment, were inspired by the exclusive role of the Russian people, the Russian language. The army had a great influence on the transformation of the regional flawed identity of the small and non-titular peoples of the USSR. For many years, humiliation of national and human qualities of young men of different nationalities was typical of the Soviet Army. The declared international policy did not coincide with aggressive ethnocentrism of the Russians. Russian ethnocentrism took ugly and repulsive features in "temporary workers" who came to develop industries and earn money. Over the years, there were clashes between students (1979, 1986), fights, etc. Interethnic relations remained calm due to the ambivalence of the national identity of the majority of the local population. Ethnic ambivalence is characterized by a negative attitude towards one's culture as a backward and hidden attachment and sympathy for one's people. The dual attitude to their own culture, language made them loyal to any manifestation of domestic nationalism, verbal and other aggression from the Russian population. The phenomenon of Russian ethnocentrism, ethnic dominance is a taboo subject. During the perestroika, there has been a surge in national identity and the development of regional identity.

In those years, some of the Russian-speaking people rushed to learn the Yakut language. The northern peoples of Yakutia began to realize their ethnic identity. Aggressive declaration of regional identity was whipped up by the policies of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) in the era of the first president M.E. Nikolaev (Carel, 2013). Extreme ethnonihilism was replaced by patriotism, ethnocentrism. The growth of national identity, which was accompanied by hostility towards Russians, accelerated the outflow of the Russian-speaking population. During the collapse of the Soviet Union, in the former Soviet republics, they started talking about Great Russian chauvinism, aggressive ethnocentrism and ethnic domination. The Russians began to leave the national republics. "Temporary workers" began to leave Yakutia, and entire mining villages became empty. Thus, a decrease in the number of Russians, Ukrainians, and Tatars is associated with a decline of the Soviet industry, mines, and a decrease in production, etc. Representatives of the nationalities who came to earn money, rushed back to their homeland. The national situation remained positive. Student unrest which was an emotional reaction to the situation in the 1970s and 1980s was evaluated as hooligan skirmishes. In the 1990s, the participants

in the 1979 and 1986 student events were blessed by new authorities, but were not rehabilitated. The beginning of the twentieth century was characterized by a total rise in ethnic self-awareness. According to the report of the President of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) Yegor Borisov (November 21, 2012), “sociological studies show that the situation in the republic is favorable. In 2007–2010, 69–74 % of the population of Yakutia positively assessed the situation. In 2011, there was a decline up to 63 %. In 2012, positive assessments reached 68%, which is a high indicator”. Thus, the shared experience brought many fraternal peoples together, determined the Yakut regional identity. The historical past, components of the complex ethnical concept “Yakutia” are the source of the positive part of the ethnical Yakut regional identity.

7. Conclusion

The following conclusions can be drawn:

1. In the multinational state, in densely populated regions where national minorities live, a double identity develops: a national identity and an ethnical regional identity.
2. The Yakut consider themselves Russians, but they wish to preserve their identity, language and culture.
3. Due to the fact that the psychology of ethnic groups is similar to the psychology of personality, inequality, a sense of inferiority, policies of the national state distort the consciousness of individuals who live in the region or consider themselves carriers of the regional identity.
4. The dual nature of a regional ethnical identity causes two opposite feelings. It is a characteristic of all ethnic minorities within the national state.

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