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Evolution and Transformation of Indigenous Fields Crafts Materiality in the Amur-Sakhalin Region

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Abstract. Materiality (from Latin “materia substance“), understood as materiality, objectivity, corporeity, occupies an important place in the system of traditional and modern crafts of indigenous peoples of the Amur-Sakhalin region. Crafts is an economic and technological activity aimed at the sustenance of a social group or an ethnic group. The crafts activity, like any other component of ethnic culture, is constantly changing in an evolutionary and transformational sense. Inevitably losing some aspects, most often traditional ones, this component of life-support, acquires new, often foreign-cultural ones, simultaneously transforming and evolving. Evolutionary changes in the food model, clothing, types of housing and transport are associated with the perception and firm introduction of new materials and technologies for their production and use. Thus traditional materiality acquires the character of a changing one.

Keywords: Amur-Sakhalin region, indigenous peoples, crafts materiality, transformation, evolution.

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Эволюция и трансформация промысловой материальности коренных народов Амуро-Сахалинского региона

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Аннотация. Материальность (от лат. «*materia*», вещество), понимаемая как вещественность, предметность, телесность, занимает важное место в системе традиционных и современных промыслов коренных народов Амуро-Сахалинского региона. Промысел является хозяйственной и технологической деятельностью, направленной на жизнеобеспечение этноса. Промысловая деятельность, как и любой другой компонент этнической культуры, постоянно изменяется в эволюционном и трансформационном смыслах. Неизбежно теряя одни аспекты, чаще всего традиционные, этот компонент жизнеобеспечения приобретает новые, нередко инокультурные, одновременно трансформируясь и эволюционируя. Эволюционные изменения в пищевой модели, одежде, типах жилищ и транспорта связаны с восприятием и прочным внедрением новых материалов, технологий по их производству и использованию. Таким образом, традиционная материальность приобретает характер меняющейся.

Ключевые слова: Амуро-Сахалинский регион, коренные народы, промысловая материальность, трансформация, эволюция.

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1. Introduction

Materiality includes, with appropriate ethnocultural features, a food model, a set of clothes and footwear, dwellings, household and industrial buildings, land and water transport. Fishing materiality is aimed at extracting natural resources providing people with the necessary means of life, with the use of materials, tools, knowledge, and technology (Vakhitov, 2017: 53). These activities are relevant to the fishing culture of the indigenous peoples of the Amur-Sakhalin region, who, despite societal transformations,

retain many traditional components of the subsistence system.

The study of evolution and transformation of craft activities, the world of things, technologies simultaneously means studying the system of social relations of the Amur peoples, processes of technological activity, production of things. Changes in material culture and the emergence of new technologies are connected with the influence of the natural environment, with ethnocultural contacts, with evolutionary changes in traditions and mentality, and

with the methods of research of these problems (Koptseva, 2012: 455; Koptseva, Pashova, 2022: 280–293; Koptseva, Reznikova, 2009: 491–506; Ivanova, 2012: 60; Kurlovitch, 2017: 166, 169, 173).

Materiality is also changing as a linguistic category, becoming enriched with new terms and meanings. The linguistic and phraseological characteristics of materiality are the result of the generalisation of historical experience in the process of knowledge of the world. The mechanisms of thinking and language are related to the attributes of substance as the essence of matter. The functions of materiality, materiality act as a modeling sign system, contributing to the reception, storage and translation of information (Borisova, 2009: 223–225).

The process of creation of material objects is two-way: man constructs things necessary for life, and their essence and functions have a powerful influence on culture, on man, on the process of transformation of values, traditions, and influence the evolution of innovations. People create things and are themselves products of the evolution and transformation of these things.

2. Theoretical framework

In methodological terms, the article is based on the ideas of P.G. Bogatyryov, S.A. Arutyunov, A. Leroy-Guran, F. Vannini and J. Ortega y Gasset, who were engaged in raising and solving problems of the objectification of human thoughts, comprehension of the structure, essence and functions of the material world. When studying clothes, food and dwellings, it is important to clarify their signification, the purpose pursued by the creator and user of these material objects and institutions, what they want to communicate about themselves to the people around them, to show their social status, identity, beliefs, mentality and values. Tradition strengthens and stabilises society, but it cannot exist without development, so there is stability and variability in every ethnos, the ratio of which is never constant. Innovations and innovations are essential, evolutionary and transformational changes in the livelihood system, which includes the

production and functioning of complexes of housing, clothing, food, transport. To some of these changes traditional materiality may have adapted, others resulted in structural and substantive deformation. When assessing the consequences of transformations, through the innovations introduced, one should consider the degree of their impact on the culture of the ethnos (Bogatyrev, 1971: 297–368; Arutyunov, 1982: 8–21; 2011: 7–8,12).

The “culinary triangle” of C. Lévi-Strauss presents his vision of the relationship between different types of food, the process of eating raw, cooked, as a result of treatment in the sun, fire, boiling water, smoke, etc., rotten food. This scheme is complicated by elements of mythology, the structure of social relations (Lévi-Strauss, 2000: 364–373). Food is not only a set of products, but also technologies of its preparation, rituals of consumption, with local and ethnocultural features (Arutyunov, 2001: 10–17; 2011: 7–8). A. Leroy-Guran developed the concept of development of human worldview, material and spiritual culture as components of the evolution of living matter. He wrote that each local ethnic culture has a specific form of material implementation of figurative thinking. At the same time, it is technology, an essentially universal phenomenon of culture, that gradually becomes the basis for ethno-cultural specificity and has a powerful influence on the transformation of ethnic societies (see Tokarev, 1973: 183, 185–187, 196, 200, 228; Krutkin, 2015: 187–190; Sokolovsky, 2021: 86–101).

People use technology to transform nature to meet their needs. As a result of these activities, new things and cultural institutions emerge that make life easier, improve fishing habits, enhance the human life system and the process of adaptation to nature (Ortega y Gasset, 1997: 169–171, 175, 179, 180; Bereznitsky, 2021: 110–111).

A. V. Golovnev used ethnographic materials from the indigenous peoples of the Arctic, the North and Siberia to show that while their life is impossible without mobility, with the accompanying processes of transformation of traditional forms, the disappearing ethnographic reality. No less important are his ideas about the polyfunctionality of the material world in

the system of nomadic technology. The materiality of the North undergoes strong changes and transformations, new technologies of production and movement of things, material objects appear (Golovnev, 2017: 6–15; 2018: 6–45; 2020: 163–173; Golovnev, Kukanov, Perevalova, 2018; Golovnev, Belorussova, Kisser. 2020; Davydov, 2023: 84–85, 80; Davydov, Davydova, Goncharov, 2022).

Thus, domestic and foreign scholars, at different times and based on different theoretical approaches, have generally come to a similar view of the mutual influence of people and things, sociality and materiality, the universal and local components of culture, and the mechanisms of stability and variability.

3. Statement of the problem

The specific problem of this study is related to the consideration of the essence, structure and functions of materiality in the culture of the indigenous peoples of the Amur-Sakhalin region and the problems of their further development. The first economic and cultural type, characteristic of them, is aimed at exploitation of natural resources, with inevitable transformation of the ecosystem. Using the theoretical developments of the above mentioned domestic and foreign scientists, the ethno-cultural specificity of the processes of evolution and transformation of the craft materiality of the region's indigenous peoples is investigated. For them, traditional crafts are a necessary economic and technological activity aimed at the stability of the subsistence system. The craft activities are subject to change in evolutionary and transformational senses, with the inclusion of new materials, technologies in the food model, clothing, types of housing and transport. It seems relevant to investigate the ethnocultural and social implications, perception and implementation of new aspects of the fishing culture, changing traditional materiality.

4. Discussion

Indigenous trades in the region include fishing, hunting, sea trapping, gathering wild plants, gardening, making clothes and shoes, souvenirs with ethnic symbols and ornaments, tourist trade: guide services to show scenic

sights, sacred landscapes, petroglyphs, habitats of rare animals and birds. The variation in the number and type of crafts is due to ecological, landscape factors, and the proximity of the sea, taiga, rivers, and mountain slopes. The worldview, ethical, mythological and folkloric component is of no small importance: landscapes are considered sacred and the taiga is inhabited by supernatural beings. The Nivkhs and Ulchis protect their settlements and fishing grounds with cultic sculpture.

4.1. Fishing

The most common fisheries are river, lake and coastal marine fisheries. Analysis of interviews with indigenous informants from the Amur, Sakhalin and Amur estuary revealed ongoing problems since the 1990s related to the imperfection of the Russian legal framework in the area of inability to provide indigenous peoples with territories for traditional fishing activities. They can only catch standard salmonid species (50 kg of fish per family member per year on average). However, even this fishery lacks fishing gear, metal boats with outboard motors, fuel and lubricants. The transformation of the fisheries of the second order should be emphasised: in the 1930–40s, traditional fishing gears and technologies were replaced by factory-made ones; offshore fishing was done with powerful fishing vessels, large size seines, crab traps, etc. Since the 1990s, these technologies have disappeared and private fishing companies have emerged.

The evolutionary breakthrough of recent years should be considered modern means of communication, smart phones and computers, through which, WhatsApp social media, people can instantly share news, solve important issues of modern life. First and foremost, in terms of choosing where to fish for the norm. It is done mainly in the Amur channels, where there are no big waves like in the Amur: *“Because the Amur has become too big for us now. We can't master it”* (AFM 2022).

Fishing is carried out all day in succession by individual families on their boats using oars, purchased Chinese nets with factory-made plastic floats and homemade lead sinkers. Usually each family manages to cast the net two or

three times. The Fish Inspectorate strictly controls the norm of catch, the correctness of the fishing register, under the threat of a large monetary fine. *“We are not the fishermen who will not be approached at gunpoint”* (AFM 2022).

If a family has no money to buy a factory boat, they make one themselves out of wood. Here the conclusions of A. Leroy-Guran concerning the technology of percussion, percussion-mechanical impact on various materials, which the scientist considered a new branch of ethnology, providing important materials for the study of the evolution of human culture, are interesting (see Tokarev, 1973: 189). In the trades of the region’s indigenous peoples this technique is still used: it is used by craftsmen to determine the thickness of boards and bottoms by tapping the knuckles of their hands during the production of chiseled boats.

Caught fish is salted in layers (an average of 50 carcasses) in plastic bags in iron barrels. It may not be eaten before two months of age due to the risk of helminth infestation. The fish is soaked for a long time in winter. If not eaten in spring, the fish is sun-dried and then smoked on alder wood. In most families, however, one barrel of salted fish is not enough until spring and whitefish, which is caught under licence, has to be added to the diet.

4.2. Hunting

In the mid-1970s, indigenous peoples in the Far East were engaged in hunting activities in state hunting organisations, which had extensive hunting grounds assigned to them. Hunters were licensed to harvest animals and gather wild foods. Overall, taiga and sea fisheries contributed more than 70 per cent of the total family income. Subsequent harsh reforms in the hunting sector abolished all previous forms, all positive experiences of the Soviet era, resulting in the inability of indigenous peoples to engage in hunting activities (Turaev, 2021: 12–14).

Today, hunting as a trade exists mainly among the Udeges people, some territorial groups of the Nanais, Negidals and the Far Eastern Evenks. Its expansion is hindered by bureaucratic barriers in obtaining permits for use of firearms, high cost of firearms, ammu-

munition, building materials for construction of hunting huts. So, only rich people, who can provide themselves with ammunition, special clothes and footwear, food, medicines, petrol for boats, snowmobiles and quadrocycles, materials for building of hunting huts etc. for half a year (from October till March), are engaged in hunting. Considering all the costs of hunting, the cost of wild meat is much higher than store-bought meat. *“Today hunting is not hunting, but for a husband to take a break from his wife and friends in the countryside from all domestic problems...”* (AFM 2022).

The sealing of seals is practised by indigenous people in conjunction with fishing. Seals are shot with guns by men and women. There is usually not more than one seal per family per season, due to the fact that young people increasingly refuse to eat seal meat and bacon because of the peculiar smell. Only some masters process the skin of seals and fish skin to make souvenirs. For this craft you need a lot of free time, know how to process skin. Lack of market, purchasing power of fellow villagers, interest of tourists also affects negatively. Today’s women, busy with children, husbands, housework and household chores, are genuinely surprised when they recall how their ancestors made not only clothes and shoes from fishskin, but even sails for boats. More often than not, the sail was sewn from catfish skin, using a special technique to make it airtight, otherwise strong gusts of wind would capsize the boat (AFM 2022). Today this sphere is undergoing drastic changes: nobody makes sails from fish skin, and clothes from fish skin and sea animals’ skins are made only on demand for folklore groups and museums. Although it is not uncommon for masters to make unique items for themselves in order to preserve, at least in this form, a link with traditional culture.

4.3. A modern nutrition model

The Nanais, Negidals, Nivkhis, Orochis and Ulchis put a variety of fish dishes at the top of the list. First of all, *talū* – thinly sliced frozen sturgeon with onions, pepper, salt, and other spices. This dish, which is not only tasty and high in calories, but also prestigious, they

are willing to eat several times a day for a year. The social and ethno-cultural prestige of sturgeon *tala* is determined by several factors. First of all, the preservation of the traditional food model, despite the fact that the sturgeon has been included in the Red Book since the mid-20th century. Its harvesting is associated with the risk of a large fine, but also with gaining the status of a farthing fisherman in the eyes of his relatives.

In second place, informants put a variety of dishes from kaluga, also included in the Red Book. Nivkh A. V. Putun (b. 1948) from the village of Ore Mif in the Amur estuary emotionally described his desire to catch a kaluga in the fishery: *“I have one last dream – to catch a kaluga. Either I will pull it out, or it will drag me to its world.”* According to him, Nivkh traditions today are associated only with memories.

In the past, the Nivkhis used to catch kaluga with big hooks. Sometimes such fish reached more than seven metres in length and was killed with a mallet made from the outgrowth of the ancestral tree, most often larch. Later on, the mallet was made of any kind of wood, as there were no elderly people left who knew the ancestral myths and preserved this knowledge. At the next stage of the transformation of fishing culture, the hammers were already finished with a paddle (AFM 2022). In all cultures, man tried to circumvent taboos, overcome taboos and achieve his goal. However, with each season, there are fewer and fewer opportunities to eat sturgeon.

The third place is firmly taken by the taimen. This is followed by dried salmon fish, fish dumplings and a special dish, which can be conventionally called Amur jelly. It is cooked from fish skins cooked to a suspension, with the addition of seal fat and berries, most often lingonberries. Once cooled, the dish is served to the table.

Thus, the top five in terms of prestige, taste, and energy content are fish dishes. Genetic food preferences are related to the peculiarities of the biospheric and local habitat of sturgeon species in the Amur basin. Meat dishes (from wild meat) are characteristic of the Udeges people, who better than other peoples

have preserved the status of a hunting ethnos. The Sakhalin Oroks and the Far Eastern Evenks prefer wild and domestic reindeer dishes. These examples confirm A. Leroy-Guran's concept of the important correlation between biological and social evolution, economy and material culture as mechanisms of ethnicisation of human groups. The traditional technology of harvesting large sturgeon was first transformed by the use of industrial catch, factory-made fishing gear, even the use of cranes to transfer the catch to shore and chainsaws to cut it up. These new methods no longer left time and space for magical rituals to extract spines from the sturgeon's spine in order to obtain further commercial catch. The practical extermination of the species made it impossible for subsequent generations to broadcast the fishery, which is what distinguishes the Amur ethnoses of the early twentieth century from those of today.

The people see the main reason for their troubles and hardships in the predatory activities of the fishing industry, which for many years now has been blocking the Amur estuary, due to which the spawning salmon do not rise up the Amur River. The most emotional representatives of the indigenous peoples call such activities genocide. The authorities at all levels are aware of the problem, but local and capital city businessmen always find a way to continue fishing. Many recreational fish farming experts are unanimous in their opinion that fish farms will not be able to produce young salmon for commercial fishing.

A certain role in the modern food model is played by the seasonal collection of wild fruits: berries, mushrooms, nuts, medicinal raw materials, seafood, etc. Those who have cars and motorboats in their farms take some of their wild crops to large settlements for sale.

The Liman Nivkhs borrowed a dish new to their culture from the Amur Nanais people: potato *tala* with finely chopped salted fish, ramsons and green onions. This dish is obligatory at all modern festivals and celebrations of the region's indigenous peoples. It is believed that earlier this dish was made of saran root on the Amur and then replaced by potatoes. Until the first third of the 20th century, the majority of the indigenous peoples of Amur and Sakha-

lin did not engage in vegetable gardening. Only the Nanais and Udeges people, who were in direct contact with the Manchus and the Chinese, tilled the land and grew vegetables, tobacco and poppies for opium production. The elders forbade tilling the land for worldly reasons, so as not to do harm to the master spirit. Besides, nature already provided man with all the plants he needed to live and eat. Gradually this system of views has transformed and evolved. Nowadays, indigenous peoples keep vegetable gardens and call potatoes a strategic winter food reserve. The land is fertilised with manure, which is purchased for fish from Russian neighbours and herring. *“When the fish is gone, all the Amur peoples will become farmers”* (AFM 2022).

Almost all school-age children and students are experiencing a radical transformation in their eating patterns. Young people have fallen under the powerful influence of advertising, eating crisps, croutons, marmalade and other surrogates with flavour enhancers. Many informants tell us that not only do their children and grandchildren not eat fish, they don't even like the smell of it. For students, the transformation of the indigenous food model is reinforced by the fact that they go to study in central Russian cities, where they switch completely to catering products. Some students report that they have to refuse even rare parcels of fish because there are representatives of other ethnic groups living in their dorm rooms, with their own food preferences.

4.4. Day labourers as a new form of trade

A wage earner who receives only in-kind payment, called a “day labourers “. Modern serfdom, as a new type of social employment, gradually emerged in the 1990s, as a consequence of the globalization in Russia, the domination of imported products, and the destruction of the system of agricultural. hunting and fishing collective farms and organisations, where indigenous people received a cash and in-kind income sufficient for a family and passed on the experience of hunting techniques to their children.

In modern territorial and even clan communities, relatives work without receiving

money so that the management does not have to pay taxes. The hired workers are paid for their labour with fishing clothes and shoes, fishing products (fish, sea animals), food, etc.

For many years another type of hired labour has been operating unofficially. The least socially protected people are hired by better-off people to do repair, agricultural work for a certain in-kind payment of food, clothes and shoes for schoolchildren, fuel and lubricants, etc. Many wage-earners also have no money. Their pensions are used to buy liquor, cigarettes, medicines, and to buy transport tickets to district and city health centres. Many labourers take a stoic and philosophical attitude to their situation.

Thus, labour cannot be called a kind of activity that generates a permanent income and provides, albeit a small one, the standard of living necessary for modern life. The main negative factors are the irregularity of kalyms, the lack of cash payments, and the minimal amount of food or the above-mentioned materials and items.

4.5. Amur dog breeding as a revival industry

Even rare cases of revival of traditional crafts show that some representatives of indigenous peoples of the region have a desire to engage in their native culture, in particular, sled dog breeding, which, as a traditional craft, has not functioned in the Amur-Sakhalin region since the middle of the 20th century, no breeding work on the reproduction of Amur huskies is carried out. Ethno-cultural contacts of fur trappers, fishermen and hunters, who used to swap products of their trades for making dog sledges, harnesses, etc., have practically stopped. The topic of the revival of traditional dog breeding is regularly covered in the media, in the press, on television and on the Internet (Kile, 2022: 1, 4; Lemza, 2023: 1, 4).

There is a big problem here, for example, in January 2022 Russian mushers from Blagoveshchensk organised a dogsled race from Khabarovsk to Komsomolsk-on-Amur, which lasted several days, and on average the dogs ran 50 km a day. Along the way, the racers stopped in Nanai villages, where children enjoyed riding the dogs. But the race received

harsh criticism online, with bloggers accusing the participants of violating dog-racing rules and for not treating the organizers as indigenous peoples. As a result, the race was halted after only 200 km of the route. Subsequently, the organisers showed their critics a video saying that the dogs were fine, full of energy and energy and both sides reconciled. The cultural programme of the race organically included a photo exhibition ‘Amuria. Land of the Dog Breeders’, performances by creative folklore groups of the Nanaysky and Amursky districts, tastings of ethnic dishes, contests, and traditional games.

Indigenous peoples also take part in the revival of their ancestors’ traditional crafts. In February 2023, a sled dog race was held in Khabarovsk Krai by mushers not only from Khabarovsk Krai, but also from neighbouring Russian regions under the name “Amuria. Sable Way 2023”. The race took place in Verkhny Nergen village of Nanai district. Participants overcame a 35 km long circuit along the channels of the Amur River. Almost all the villagers took part in the race: they provided food for the mushers and their dogs and warm tents. The results of the race and the cultural events connected with it were highly appreciated by the President of the Association of Khabarovsk Territory Indigenous Minorities, L. A. Odzhal. Andrey Beldy, one of the Nanais mushers, told about numerous problems of revival of dog breeding: revival of the Amur husky population, creation of the Federation of traditional sled dog breeding in Khabarovsk region, network of schools for children and adults in the municipal areas of Khabarovsk region on the example of school in Verhny Nergen village. If this initiative is supported by the oligarchs, Amur dog breeding could be revived as an innovation, with new types of dog breeding and training, a new set of clothes and shoes, a set of veterinary observations and actions.

Sakhalin Nivkh A. Yu. Nhirguk (b. 1983) works hard and hard to revive Nivkh sled dog breeding (Bereznitsky, 2022: 44–45). In 2007, Nhirguk established the Kenost (“Sunrise”) community on Sakhalin, in Lunsy Bay, to engage in fishing, and in 2016 he established

the family and clan community “Lunvo” to revive Nivkh dog breeding. He applied for grants for a long time and eventually purchased four husky dogs, two malamutes. The average price of a sled dog is 40,000 roubles. Dogs have to be properly maintained and raced regularly, otherwise the animals lose interest in running and courage. Nhirguk’s technology of raising and breeding sled dogs is based on patience and love for the animals. In this difficult and time-consuming process he has been helped by the nature of animals. Thus, Huskies love to pull a sled, they are speedy dogs who like to create a cheerful mood in a sled, and Malamutes are strong dogs, good at pulling loads but are nonchalant. A. Nhirguk’s narta is aluminium, as the traditional wooden one will cost 70 000 roubles (prices in 2019). He ordered polypropylene straps from the internet. In Nhirguk’s opinion, such harnesses are more comfortable than the traditional ones made of nerve leather, as they do not freeze up, do not “tear” in low temperatures, do not get wet and do not stick to dirt. Nhirguk came to understand what it takes to revive Nivkh traditional crafts and to make a man feel comfortable in his native culture: love for his people, for Sakhalin and the Amur, relying only on his own strength and wishes. He is convinced that in the future there is a prospect to engage in ethnic eco-tourism and take tourists to eagle’s nesting grounds on dog sledges. No noise is allowed there, so it is impossible to use a motorboat or snowmobile, and dog sledging is the best option.

Other informants highlighted another important detail related to the revival of sled dog breeding – the availability of sufficient fish to feed the sled dogs. In earlier times, such a problem did not exist, since during the spawning season enough yukola was stocked for the whole year for people and dogs. With the arrival of Russian settlers to the Amur, salt was introduced into the food ration. Dogs cannot eat salted fish and that, together with development of new technologies and means of transportation, caused a gradual disappearance of dog breeding as a kind of hunting. In addition, not every dog is suited to coordinated sledging. A special selection is required for a dog handler

who should differ from other dogs not only by his physical strength but also by his appearance, his article, his charisma to subdue other dogs, be very smart and understand kayura commands and the dogs' moods. According to informants a musher has intuition, can anticipate and avoid dangerous places on ice, holes or sharp boughs under the snow etc. *"A packmaster can be like a telepath, giving commands to other dogs and being optimistic. But the dogs need to be very well fed. The Nivkh used to feed the dog first and then eat it themselves"* (AFM 2022). In traditional culture, apart from dried fish, sled dogs were fed with bacon of seals, sea lions, which have a lot of energy.

Special craftsmanship is required to make a dog sled, which must be both strong and lightweight. The sturdiness of the structure is needed to withstand the heavy loads when travelling over rocks and hummocks. The lighter it is the less tired the dogs will be. The minimum number of dogs in a sled is seven. But for longer distances, twelve dogs are needed.

One Nivkhis informant recalled how in her childhood, in the 1990s, her grandmother travelled from Puir village to Makarovka, about seven kilometres, on a sled of five dogs. This Nivkhis woman's relatives had a car, but she used the sled because communicating with the dogs in the Nivkhis language gave her pleasure, warmed her soul, and once again reminded her of the differences of her culture.

On the whole, for the indigenous peoples of the region, sled dog breeding is still a dream, despite the fact that many Nanais, Udegeis, Ulchis, Nivkhis, and Negidals want to revive it.

5. Conclusion

Thus, the study has shown the dependence of traditional and contemporary crafts of indigenous peoples in the Amur-Sakhalin region on the natural resource base, on the specificity of geographical landscapes, on the intensity and nature of ethno-cultural contacts and on contemporary global challenges that pose risks to the sustainability of society. Ethnographic materials confirmed in general the paradigm about one of the features of indigenous peoples' crafts: sparing attitude to the fragile northern nature, careful use of its gifts, wild fruits, ani-

mals, birds, fish, etc. A complex of mythological and cosmogonic beliefs, trade cults, beliefs and rituals confirm the stable existence of this stereotype. However, ambivalent features can also be detected in this complex of industrial culture. Society strives to bring up a successful hunter who is able to feed his family and relatives who are not able to hunt: the elderly, sick, disabled, widows, orphans. On the other hand, traditional hunting ethics forbade taking animals, birds, fish, marine animals, edible or medicinal plants beyond the required norm (Bereznitsky, 2020: 44–45). The indigenous peoples of the Amur-Sakhalin region can be divided into two roughly equal groups in terms of the nature of the impacts of non-cultural influences on traditional fishing practices. "Optimists" believe that modern life has all the necessary ethnic components, despite the listed problems with the transformation of the food model, crafts. They consider the main criterion to be the territory where their ancestors always lived, fished, hunted, bore children, composed songs and fairy tales for them. Others, "pessimists", are convinced that the native culture, with all its indicators, is a thing of the past, and it is pointless and unpromising to revive it, as it has been transformed definitively. One of the Nivkhis informants emotionally recounted her thoughts on this matter, which are also typical of many of her relatives and fellow villagers. *"In general, nothing is being done to revive the Nivkh culture on the Amur River. The main thing now for the Nivkhs is to feed their children, help them find a good place in life, help them get into a good university, find a good job, help them get married. Well, that's what all parents do in the world. What does Nivkhis culture have to do with it? Yes, at festivals, girls, women and sometimes even boys dance in supposedly Nivkhis costumes. And what are they made of? Factory fabric. This cloth is woven somewhere in Samarkand. There is nothing bad in it, but the soul of a Samarkand weaver is not Nivkhis, and who lives in Samarkand? Yeah. They sew this dressing gown on an electric machine, no one will ruin their eyes and sew with a needle. There is no Nivkh soul here either, only a mechanical one. I have already said about patterns and ornaments. No*

one knows their true essence for a long time. But one can dream up a lot. Just have time to write it down” (AFM 2022).

Another informant also succinctly and figuratively expressed the problem of reviving indigenous culture: “...there are many plans, but no money...” (AFM 2022). It is due to the lack of finances that the peoples have not yet been able to revive traditional dog breeding, hunting, creating a network of workshops for ethnic clothing and footwear, musical instruments, and souvenirs. It is necessary to solve the problems of increasing the number of clan communities, and even better, of territorial communities, which can be recruited not only by relatives. The trades need modern technologies, equipment, communication facilities, transport, and a reliable market for products. Practically none of the modern Nivkhs, Negidals, Orochis, and Far Eastern Evenks are technologically capable of building traditional economic structures correctly. There is another important factor hindering the development of society and technology: people’s opinions in private conversations without a tape recorder and at general meetings are radically different.

Predation by industrial fishing campaigns of salmonids in the Amur estuary has a negative impact not only on the transformation of the food pattern of indigenous peoples, changes in decorative art, ornaments due to the lack of fish skins, but also on the mentality in general, on the legal culture and the character of inter-ethnic relations. Changes in the materiality, infrastructure, things, constructions, materials, technologies of their processing, tools, instruments, means of transport have a noticeable influence on the nature of social relations and communications between people and animals, especially game animals. Together with the transformation of materiality, there are global changes in the entire environment of the indigenous peoples of the region, to which they are forced to adapt. Evolutionary and transformational development promotes innovation in established patterns of natural resource use and subsistence systems. The set of technological techniques represents an important part of the material culture of the ethnic group, a system of adaptation to the surrounding world, which is both stable by tradition and changeable by innovation.

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