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Modern Practices of Foresight Research of the Future of Social-Anthropological Systems, Including Ethnical Cultural Populations

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In the given article we consider principles of modern foresight research running. In the introduction we define the place of the foresight-research within the circle of other operations, involving future forecasting, such as: forecasting, science fiction and planning. We recollect the advantages of foresight research in comparison with other methods, as the most scientifically-correct approach to forecasting of future scenarios of certain phenomena development in the life of humanity.

The second part of the article is dedicated to description of modern methodologies of foresight research running. Here, we present the statistics of the most frequently used methods of foresight according to the data of the 2007 European research, give a short description and the sphere of usage of the most frequently used methods – literature review, bibliometric analysis, Delphi-interrogation, critical technologies, method of expert panels running, brainstorming, future scenarios development, SWOT-analysis and others. We also give the scheme of the most traditional combinations of methods for a complex foresight research carrying.

The third part of the article concerns the building of a strategy of foresight research methods application in order to study social-anthropological systems and ethnical cultural populations. In the given part, we fix the fact that at present time cultural studies foresight researches are on the stage of their becoming, and formulate some basic principals of methodological strategy of cultural studies foresight researches. Moreover, in the given article we present a spectrum of existing methods of foresight researching, which should be applied in the course of ethno-cultural systems study. In particular, we underline the significance of civil panels running, what differs foresight researches of ethno-cultural systems from other spheres of its application (politics, industry, economics and so on). Besides, in the article we present a range of themes for experts' panels for the purpose of study of the ethno-cultural systems' future.

Keywords: ethnos, social system, cultural researches, Foresight Research, methods of Foresight Research.

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Introduction:

On the whole, it is typical for human's nature to try to look into the future. Practically, every person has addressed to the folk fortunetelling, in order to know his fate or has tried to imagine the image of his personal ideal future in order to move regularly to its achievement. In the history of humanity there are known great prognostic phenomena, which defined not only one's personal fate, but the future of the whole social system. They are Delphian oracle, which foretelling formed the development of the Greece polis, and Christian conception of Apocalypse, which programmed the values of the European society for many centuries ahead and so on. In the result of such processes, there have been formed several strategies of contemplation of the future. Firstly, it is an attempt of future foretelling, foreseeing, which is based on mystical revelations, which have allowed some people to look into the future of the mankind: the Christian revelation of St. John the Evangelist, the alchemist prophecies of Michael Nostradamus and so on. Secondly, along with the acceleration of technological development, it has become possible to make fantastic assumptions for creation of the future image – thus, in science fiction they suppose most impossible variants of humanity development. Thirdly, XX century knows the practice of image programming of the ideal future and systematic movement to it – for example, the program of communism achievement in the Soviet Union. The given strategy has gained the naming of future «planning» and it already differs from two previous ones, as in its basis it contains not the humanity future telling, but systematic movement to a desired future, being regulated by people. But the most important phenomenon in the sphere of futurology in the midst of XX

century has become the appearance of a strategy of future study, its scientific cognition, which has been named «foresight research». In the present article we shall consider in detail the formed practice of the foresight research carrying, as far as this method possesses doubtless advantages over the recollected ones: forecasting, science fiction and planning.

Forecasting is the method of future predefinition, which was formed in the first part of XX century. It was applied for forecasting of states' economical development. Its main difference from the foresight-researching is the following: experts, who are invited for the forecast running, do not obligatory use scientific methodology and scientific data, more often the forecast is made in the form of an essay. In the result, the forecasting turns out to be rather subjective. Advantages of the given method are the following: forecasting allows to reveal a personal genius of the author and at the end, the research very often presents a spectrum of untraditional forecasts of the future, while other types of future researching and, in particular, foresight researching, represent a spectrum of rather traditional forecasts of the future, because of their strict scientific approach.

Futurology or science fiction is by its essence not exactly a scientific method of future researching. The main results of futurological contemplations are science fiction literary compositions, wherein the share of personally genius and fantasy of the author much prevails over the real forecast of events development.

Planning represents quite a strict methodological approach, when it is planned a row of events and actions, which presumably can make the image of the desired future become true. Planning is pre-oriented to organize the

events and measures for future realization and solves research problems to a lesser degree.

In the spectrum of strategies of future researching, foresight research can be characterized in the following way: in his article «Foresight Research: a Look into the Future» A.V. Sokolov informs that, foresight research was applied for the first time in 1950-s by the corporation RAND, later this idea was developed in Japan, where every five years they have been carrying wide-scaled researches of long-term perspectives of technologies development since 1970. At the beginning of 1980-s, the USA started a national project of «critical technologies» development. And to the midst of 1990-s many countries of Europe, Asia, Latin America and also transition economy countries joined the search of priorities of the innovative development. [10, p. 9]

Foresight research is dedicated to study of the perspective future of social phenomena 20-30 years in advance. Originally, it was used for political, industrial, and economical forecasting. In the last decades, it has become obvious that foresight research can be also applied for comprehension of any social phenomenon perspectives development – in particular, it can be used for social systems and ethno-cultural systems. Foresight research is often realized as a multi-leveled experts' work (according to the latest data, two-leveled experts' research is considered to be quite enough, as far as at the best case all the other levels of experts' communication improve the accuracy of the results, or sometimes even make them worse, because the opinion of one expert starts dominating over the others) on compilation of the researched social phenomenon development scenarios. At present moment, there are already more than 20 methods of foresight research realization, and foresight research practically always represents a synthesis of necessary practical methodologies. Foresight research is oriented to present scientific results

to as many people as possible and to compile scientific recommendations for important political structures, i.e. it presupposes scientific-popular approach.

This way, advantages of foresight-researching over the other methods of future research are the following:

- *Multi-leveled and inter-disciplinary work of experts.* The main achievement of the foresight research is considered to be a formation of the anonymous multi-leveled work of experts, when every scientist can correct his own research after having exchanged opinions with other experts. Exchange of opinions among the experts, who represent different scientific disciplines, allows avoiding of subjectiveness in estimations and forecasts.
- *Scientific research participates in the political life of the social system on equal terms.* Foresight research is, first of all, a research instrument, being applied in science, but not in politics. But the results of the foresight research are formed, firstly, as recommendations for the organs of social entity, being able to take into consideration these forecasts of the experts in future. In the ideal case, foresight research plays a role of «a bridge» between science, being able to step over the stereotypical notions of social goods and oriented to creation of favorable conditions for the life of humanity as a living organism of this planet, and politics, building, first of all, a skillful management of economical resources.
- *The team of experts.* Foresight research presupposes not only development of image of the desired/undesired future, but also a proposal of certain measures

for successive movements to this future. Moreover, collaboration of powerful and talented researchers makes other people become interested in realization of the project of the future.

Methods and Instruments of Foresight Research.

At present time, we know more than 20 methodologies and instruments, which are applied for foresight-researching. Some methodologies (about 10) are used wider, than others. Traditionally, foresight-researching presupposes a synthesis of some methods and instruments for making a fully-valid research.

Today, in the course of foresight research running they use more than twenty methodologies. In 2007, in Europe, P. Popper, M. Keenan, E. Miles, M Butter, and G. Sainz de la Fuente carried out mapping of the foresight methodological techniques under the title «Global Foresight Outlook 2007: mapping foresight in Europe and the rest of the World» [3]. The result of this research was a complete notion of the modern foresight research: what kind of methods were used for such studies, which ones were preferable, and which methods had been already realized in the countries of Europe, Asia, America and others as at 2007.

As it has been mentioned earlier, scientists use more than 20 various methodologies in order to realize a modern foresight research. Below, we present a list of those methodologies, which exist at present time. Methodologies are given in the list according to frequency decrease of their usage in the modern foresight researches. [3, p. 18]: 1) literature review; 2) experts' panels; 3) scenarios; 4) workshops of the future; 5) brainstorming; 6) trends extrapolation; 7) interview; 8) questionnaires / observations; 9) Delphi; 10) critical (key) technologies; 11) mega-trends analysis; 12) SWOT-analysis; 13) road

mapping; 14) surrounding situation analysis; 15) modeling and simulation of various variants of the future; 16) essay; 17) retrospective analysis; 18) mapping of the involved parts; 19) citizen panels; 20) structural analysis; 21) analysis of the mutual influence; 22) multi-criteria analysis; 23) bibliometric analysis; 24) play modeling of situations; 25) morphological analysis; 26) correlations tree.

Let us consider some of the above mentioned methodologies of foresight research in detail – those ones, which are most popular or have been gaining more significance in the recent years.

Literature review rightfully takes the leading position almost in every foresight research, as far as it presupposes collection and analysis of the already existing experts' opinions in the literature concerning the future image of the researched theme. Traditionally, such a literature review is done by researchers and scientists, but the results of the review are usually presented by a professional journalist, who is invited to give a «literal foresight study» in a good journalistic form. Generally and as a rule, before being published, foresight researches are transformed professionally into a publicistic text, as far as one of the most important criteria of a well-performed foresight research is the criterion of accessibility to a very large audience: from legislative authorities to a wide public.

Literature review correlates to a certain degree with **bibliometric analysis**, which frequency of use has been recently growing. The given analysis presupposes content estimation of literature concerning the researched theme according to its quantitative data. In particular, bibliometric analysis studies if there is enough literature being published on this or that theme in comparison with other topics. What does it mean? What is the number, what are the kinds of articles, and who are the authors being published in the leading scientific journals, and what does it

all mean? And so on. Bibliometric analysis results are formed in tables and diagrams.

The method of «experts' panels». In his article, being published in the «Foresight» journal [10, p. 11], A.V. Sokolov gives some information concerning specifics of the method of experts' panels, which is one of the most spread methods of foresight-researching. The given method is considered to be a basic one and is used almost in all the foresight projects. Groups of experts, consisting of 12–20 persons, are suggested to think over possible variants of the given theme future in the course of several months, using the newest analytical and informational materials and implementations. An inevitable condition of experts' panels running is a development of the adequate thematic directions (panels), which will be worked upon by the experts. The method of experts' panels provides an openness of the foresight process for hundreds of people. Its main advantages are presence of experts in all the course of the research work, interaction of representatives of various scientific disciplines and spheres of activity, which is difficult to achieve in other conditions. The method can complement other approaches, being applied in the foresight technologies. Moreover, in some cases it is necessary to form panels in order to develop the original information, to interpret the obtained results or to apply the method on the whole. Most active members of the panels become «conductors» of the foresight.

Development of scenarios presupposes creation of scenarios of these or those technological spheres, political and social spheres development. Scenarios are based on analysis of future possibilities and alternative trajectories of development, being worked out by the experts. Scenarios are most efficient as an addition to researches, being realized by means of other methods – SWOT-analysis (evaluation of weak and strong sides, opportunities and threats),

brainstorming, bibliometric analysis and so on. Creation of scenarios is very often organized in the course of play modeling of various future situations.

Workshops of the future (futuristic evaluations working conferences). By their essence, they represent a variant of scientific-practical conferences, symposiums, forums and so on. They can take one or several days. Within the frames of these conferences all the participants make reports and presentations concerning their vision of future of this or that branch development, then they ask questions and discuss. Meetings can be run according to some precise program or in a free way, in any case at such conferences there is a group, which reflexes the occurring events and forms one common picture of the experts' opinions.

Brainstorming is quite a well-known research technology, which presupposes a collective «drafting» of an idea on the given theme by all the members of the brainstorming.

Delphi. Delphi method is the most spread and well-known, and a separate article is devoted to it in the «Foresight» journal [8]. It has become most popular in the recent years. The basis of the method is questioning of a large number of experts, up to 2–3 thousands, and organization of the so-called feed-back (by means of running of the second round of questioning). The method presupposes a selection of highly qualified experts, creation of experts' panels on the separate branches of science and technologies; working out the list of themes of potentially scientific-technological achievements, which are expected in a long term (up to 25–30 years) perspective, including fundamental and applied research works, innovative goods and services, being created on the basis of these new technologies. Experts estimate the topicality of each of these themes for development of the economy, society, presence of recourses and potential barriers

for their practical realization. Research results contain summarized estimations on each theme and also analytical reviews concerning the most important branches of science and technologies.

Method of «critical technologies» or «key technologies» is mainly applied for researching of the future of industry branches. A group of experts defines the spectrum of industrial spheres and technologies, estimate their stage of development on the level of the state or on the level of some particular enterprise in order to describe the row of measures, being necessary for the most efficient industrial development.

Abbreviation of the method of *SWOT-analysis* is expanded as strengths (strong points), weaknesses (weak points), opportunities and threats. Experts are suggested to work out several scenarios of the researched phenomenon development – a scenario of the negative future, wherein all the weak points will be strengthened and possible treats will be realized, and also a positive scenario, wherein the development will run in accordance with the reveled strong points and perspective opportunities.

The set of approaches, being applied in foresight projects is constantly added and today it embraces tens of methods – as qualitative ones (interviews, literature reviews, morphological analysis, «co-relations trees», scenarios, role plays and others.), so quantitative ones (cross-impact analysis, extrapolation, modeling, analysis and forecast of methods indictors and so on). Some methods have a synthetic character, and the mentioned above Delphi method, road mapping, critical technologies and also multi-criteria analysis, patent analysis, play modeling and others are in their number. The problem of choice of an adequate set of approaches to be used in this or that project has many solutions. Nevertheless, there are some combinations of methods, which are more popular than others.

According to the data of Global Foresight Outlook 2007 [3, p. 24] the following combination of the key foresight methodologies is the most spread one:

If the central selected methodology is the methodology of «experts' panels», then it is combined with the methodology of «brainstorming» in 27 % of cases; with the methodology of «workshops of the future» in 34 % of cases, with literature review in 65 % of cases; and with scenarios in 34 % of cases.

If the central selected methodology is the methodology of «workshops of the future», then it is combined with the methodology of «brainstorming» in 32 % of cases; with «experts' panels» in 64 % of cases; with literature review in 61 % of cases; and with scenarios in 41 % of cases.

If the central selected methodology is the methodology of «literature review», then it is combined with the methodology of «experts' panels» in 57 % of cases; with the methodology of «workshops of the future» in 28 % of cases; and with scenarios in 41 % of cases.

If the central selected methodology is the methodology of «SWOT-analysis», then it is combined with the methodology of «brainstorming» in 52 % of cases; with the methodology of «experts' panels» in 66 % of cases; with the methodology of «workshops of the future» in 33 % of cases; with «literature review» in 70 % of cases; with questioning and observation in 28 % of cases; and with scenarios in 42 % of cases.

If the central selected methodology is the Delphi method, then it is combined with the methodology of «brainstorming» in 42 % of cases; with «experts' panels» in 61 % of cases; with «workshops of the future» in 25 % of cases; with «literature review» in 61 % of cases; with scenarios in 38 % of cases; and with key technologies in 28 % of cases.

Thus, upon realization of a foresight research one should bear in mind the practice of combining of the methodologies with each other.

**The sphere of foresight research
application for ethno-cultural systems,
and for ethno-cultural systems
of circumpolar territories
and Yakut ethnos.**

As far as the method of foresight has appeared for forecasting of development variants, first of all, of political and industrial future, for defining prior directions in these spheres, but it has gained its wide popularity only in XXI century, so at present moment there are almost no analogues to this method, which would give us an opportunity to study ethno-cultural systems. There are only some rear articles, which have just started to appear, and which have an indirect relation to the theme – for example, the article of M. Roue, D. Nakashima [4] concerning the perspectives of knowledge application of the native small-numbered peoples for formation successful interaction with the environment.

May be, possibilities of foresight research concerning some cultural situations, social and ethno-cultural systems are just revealing. Thereat, it is important to understand that foresight research is one of such scientific methods, which is able to bring the cultural study to the level of practical application. The problem of necessity of the practical benefit of science and necessity to use applied approaches is discussed in the article of N.P. Koptseva: «However, there has appeared deficiency of practice-oriented specialists in cultural studies in Russian scientific and educational spheres. There is a great danger that cultural studies basic research will bring about the most undesirable scholastic level rather than formation of «cultural studies» as specific nationally-limited science». [1, p. 31] on the whole, the modern foresight researchers of ethno-cultural

systems face the task of definition of spheres of foresight application for such researches.

We should also mark that any modern cultural study demands an interdisciplinary approach, while in order to understand the main object of the research – a cultural system – we are to apply knowledge of other scientific spheres. This way, the cultural studies method of concept analysis has been formed and it is presented in the article of A.A. Semenova: «Concepts study allows us to integrate methods of the humanities (etymology, history, sociology, psychology, philosophy, linguistics, philology, art criticism, etc.) as a whole to investigate the problems of cultural studies» [5, p. 244]. In the case of ethno-cultural system foresight research we shall need integration with such scientific spheres as, for example, biology, economy and others. Thus, we can formulate one of the key methodological principals of the ethno-cultural system researching, which is concluded in the following: ethno-cultural system research must be run in the synthesis with the specifics of natural resources of the territory, whereon the ethnic group lives, taking into account their economical situation and so on. It means that in the given case culture is understood as one of the components of a complicated synthesis of the ethnic peculiarity. And cultural research must be organized that way, that on one hand, it must be interdisciplinary, and on the other hand, interaction among the disciplines should go under the control of the ethno-cultural approach, as far as the central problem of the research is the problem of preservation and reproduction of the ethnic group. And such a problem can be solved only within the context of ethno-cultural studies.

What concerns the forecasting of future threats, connected with the future disappearance of many of ethnic groups, foresight research is very topical especially at present time, when there is a possibility to work out top-priority approaches to preserve most of the peoples. Thus, let us address

to those methods of foresight research, which can be used for ethno-cultural system study.

As it has been described earlier, foresight research is a method, which has been formed as an experts' discussion of the inevitable and possibly-desired future; and that is why it is logical to apply one of the methodologies involving experts' interaction in the course of ethno-cultural systems researching.

We suppose that the Delphi method - the method of multi-level experts' analysis, can be used as a central one. So, let us see, how we can carry out the foresight research of ethno-cultural systems, in particular, ethno-cultural systems of the native small-numbered peoples of the North and Yakut ethnoses.

According to the world practice, the first stage of such an analysis should be a review of the literature on the given theme.

The second step is the method of experts' panels, being very often combined with the method of Delphi. In order to carry out the experts' panels it is important, first of all, to work out the spectrum of thematic panels, being topical for the ethno-cultural research. The following panels are supposed to be singled out:

1) A legislative panel, as far as there is a whole row of laws, which have been specially created for ethnic groups. Thereat, foreign laws of the given sphere much differ from the modern Russian legislation – consequently, we are to foresee the impact of the foreign laws on the Russian legislation; and to suggest a possibility of some new unique laws, connected to ethnic group and, in particular, the native small-numbered peoples of the North or circumpolar territories.

2) A language panel, as far as ethnic groups' problems are very often connected with the problems of their native language. It is especially topical for the native peoples of the Krasnoyarsk Region North, and also for Yakut ethnoses. Experts

of the given panel can answer the questions, related with the necessity of the native small-numbered peoples' language preservation, and they also can suggest various means for these peoples' languages preservation.

3) An ethno-cultural panel, as far as representatives of these ethnic cultures have most often a peculiar world outlook and relation, which can be revealed only by means of study of their ethnic culture concepts, specifics of their cultural phenomena, and so on.

4) A natural resources panel. The life of ethnic cultures and ethno-cultures of circumpolar territories flows very often in a close interconnection with the local nature. And consequently, research of the natural resources of the given territories will allow forecasting perspectives of the ethnoses development, and also their interaction with industrial companies, situated on their native lands. It is most probable that exactly in this panel we shall be able to apply the quantitative method of analysis of the parties, being concerned in the natural resources of these areas.

Each panel needs at least 10 experts to participate in the given theme. Beside creation of scenario of the perspectives development, each expert must be suggested to calculate Weak and Strong points of development of these or those activity directions within the frames of the given ethnic culture i.e. carry out a SWOT-analysis of the ethno-cultural systems – in particular, the Yakut ethno-cultural system.

Specifics of the ethno-cultural foresight also dictates the necessity of citizen panels – i.e. questioning of citizens (representatives of this or that ethnic culture), as far as understanding of the problems of each ethnic culture from the inside is very important for such a research, it is very important to comprehend the points of proud in order to foresee further development of the given peoples.

So, on the first stage of the research, we carry out literature review, experts' panels, and SWOT-analysis. Afterwards, the researchers process the obtained material and present it in the form of a report to each of the experts to study.

And as for the last stage of the ethno-cultural research, it can be the method of «workshops of the future», as far as after having studied the report, each expert will finally comprehend his own opinion – he will leave his original position or will stick to it.

And then, on the stage of the workshops, there should be a conference or a seminar, devoted to the future of the ethno-cultural systems of the small-numbered peoples of the North and the Yakut ethnos.

The scheme of the foresight research of ethno-cultural systems is almost the same for all other systems. Specific of ethno-cultural systems of the North and of Yakutia is in the following: the method of observation and expeditionary research are of high importance.

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Современные практики форсайт-исследования будущего социально-антропологических систем, включая этнически-культурные популяции

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В настоящей статье рассмотрены принципы проведения современного форсайт-исследования. Во введении определено место форсайт-исследования в кругу других операций с прогнозированием будущего, таких как: прогнозирование, научная фантастика и планирование. Перечислены преимущества форсайт-исследования перед ними как наиболее научного и достоверного подхода к предвидению будущих сценариев развития определенных явлений в жизни человечества.

Второй раздел статьи посвящен описанию современных методик проведения форсайт-исследования. Приведена статистика наиболее употребляемых методов форсайта согласно данным европейского исследования 2007 года, представлено краткое описание и область применения наиболее используемых методов – обзора литературы, библиометрического анализа, Делфи-опроса, критических технологий, метода проведения экспертных панелей, мозгового штурма, разработки сценариев будущего, SWOT-анализа и др. Приведена схема наиболее традиционных сочетаний нескольких методов для проведения комплексного форсайт-исследования.

Третий раздел статьи посвящен построению стратегии использования методов форсайт-исследования для изучения социально-антропологических систем и этнически-культурных популяций. В данной части фиксируется то, что в настоящее время культурологические форсайт-исследования находятся на стадии становления, формулируются некоторые базовые принципы методологической стратегии культурологического форсайт-исследования. Помимо этого в статье выделен спектр существующих методов форсайт-исследования, которые должны быть применены для изучения этнокультурных систем. В частности, подчеркивается значимость проведения гражданских панелей, что отличает форсайт-исследование этнокультурной системы от других областей его применения (политики, промышленности, экономики и т.п.). Также в статье предложен спектр тем для проведения экспертных панелей по изучению будущего этнокультурных систем.

Ключевые слова: прогнозирование, планирование, форсайт-исследование, методология форсайт-исследования, сценарий будущего, метод Делфи, критические технологии, библиометрический анализ, экспертные панели, swot-анализ, форсайт-исследование в культурологии, форсайт-исследование этнокультурных систем.
