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Is the Extraction of Fossil Mammoth Bone a Form of Traditional Nature Management? *

Olga V. Vasileva ¹✉, Cand. Sc. (Polit.), Senior Researcher

¹ Institute for Humanities Research and Indigenous Studies of the North–Siberian Branch RAS, ul. Petrovskogo, 1, Yakutsk, 677007, Russia

¹ ovasileva.igi@mail.ru ✉, *ORCID*: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9992-4163>

Abstract. This article is devoted to solving the question of whether it is possible to consider the extraction of mammoth bone as one of the types of traditional nature management of the indigenous peoples of the North. The solution to the problem is considered on the part of three criteria — the formation of a tradition of economic activity within an ethnic group, the focus of economic activity on use for their own needs, a balanced approach ensuring sustainable environmental management. As a result, the author concludes that the extraction of mammoth bone is a type of activity that cannot be called fully consistent with the criteria for traditional nature management. At the same time, in the article, the author proposes to consider broader the concept of traditional nature management in the modern capitalist world, supplementing it with a view from the world-system analysis of the dichotomy of traditional and capitalist society.

Keywords: *extraction of fossil mammoth bone, Yakutia, traditional nature management, indigenous peoples of the North*

Is it possible to consider mammoth bones gathering as a type of traditional nature management? The question is ambiguous and, moreover, it raises a wide range of topics for discussion. In this article, we aim not only to explore this aspect of life in northern communities and come to a certain conclusion, how reasonable is the opinion that mammoth bones gathering should be attributed to one of the traditional types of nature management, but also to clarify what is the traditional use of nature in the modern capitalist society.

The relevance of this issue is undoubtedly associated with both applied and fundamental scientific problems. On the one hand, there is a need for the authorities to provide a scientific basis for the managerial decisions regarding national policies as well as the development of the Arctic, affecting the life of the population, and this concerns first of all the sphere of applied ethnology. Broader theoretical points concern the need to solve fundamental questions about the prospects for traditional forms of nature management of indigenous peoples, the optimal pathways for human development and for halting the degradation of the natural environment, as well as about approaches to analysing the evolution of societies. Thus, a seemingly applied topic opens up a wide field for discussion.

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In order to understand the issue, we started by clarifying the modern institutional framework of the concept of traditional nature management, first of all, by determining the position of the state, as reflected in the Russian legislation. Thus, the Federal Law No. 49-FZ dated May 7, 2001 “On the territories of traditional nature management of indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation” states that traditional nature management is historically established and ensures sustainable nature management methods of using objects of flora and fauna, other natural resources of the indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation¹.

In our opinion, this wording is rather vague and emphasizes that traditional use of natural resources is ethnic — it is typical only for a certain category of peoples. It should be noted that, in contrast to this interpretation, there is a concept of traditional nature management, which emphasizes its economic and territorial component. However, the law already states that ethnicity is one of the criteria, on the basis of which an activity can be classified as traditional. Further, we will notice that such an approach causes some problems in determining the prospects for the development of the indigenous peoples of the North. In addition, this definition leaves the possibility for different interpretations when trying to classify mammoth bones gathering as a traditional activity.

Ethnic definitions are based on several theoretical premises. Firstly, this is the principle of the staged development of societies, and, secondly, the idea of the homogeneity of an ethnic group in its cultural manifestations. The foregoing gives rise to certain attitudes with regard to traditional nature management. Thus, there is an opinion in the scientific discourse, such as in the work of Klimova D.S. and Belyaeva L.M. [1], the essence of which is reduced to the fact that in the past there were certain mechanisms of interaction in the system “man — the natural environment”, allowing to avoid crisis phenomena in it. At the same time, people from the past and modern representatives of ethnic groups belonging to the indigenous peoples of the North of the Russian Federation are identified. In our view, this is due to the tradition of defining these peoples as backward and at an earlier stage of the development of society. The argument therefore is that, being “backward”, indigenous peoples still reproduce the mechanism of interaction between “man and the natural environment”, which is characterized by a respectful attitude toward the latter. They are supposed to be the keepers of certain knowledge of how to use the land and nature properly. Developing this theme, however, one sooner or later comes to a certain cul-de-sac related to the fact that in Russia, the small-numbered indigenous peoples of the North are not fully excluded from the dominant society. Moreover, much was done during the Soviet era to integrate them into the social structure, to eradicate the signs of so-called “backwardness” — the no-

¹ O territoriyakh traditsionnogo prirodopol'zovaniya korennykh malochislennykh narodov Severa, Sibiri i Dal'nego Vostoka Rossiyskoy Federatsii (s izmeneniyami i dopolneniyami) [On the territories of traditional nature management of the indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation (with amendments and additions)]. URL: <http://base.garant.ru/12122856/#ixzz6Qp4mv6Bu> (accessed 18 August 2020).

madic way of life, the traditional economy as a basis of life, and to perform the professionalization of labor. Much has been written about this, in particular, by S.V. Sokolovskiy [2].

Many people continue to romanticise the image of small-numbered indigenous peoples of the North, giving a mystical character to the ecological knowledge that has been developed in the course of human adaptation to the natural environment. At the same time, there is an idea that these peoples would not exist without certain economic practices. There is also a tendency to consider any economic activities of indigenous peoples as traditional use of natural resources, even if they are of a purely commercial nature.

It should be mentioned that at present, the traditional economic activities include the following activities:

- livestock husbandry, including nomadic one (reindeer breeding, horse breeding, yak breeding, sheep breeding);
- processing of livestock products, including gathering, preparation and dressing of skins, wool, hair, ossified horns, hooves, antlers, bones, endocrine glands, meat and by-products;
- dog breeding (breeding reindeer, sled and hunting dogs);
- breeding, processing and realization of products of fur-farming;
- beekeeping;
- fishing (including sea fur hunting) and sale of aquatic biological resources;
- commercial hunting, processing and sale of hunting products;
- farming (gardening), as well as cultivation and processing of medicinal plants;
- harvesting timber and non-timber forest resources for own needs;
- gathering (procurement, processing and sale of food forest resources, collection of medicinal plants);
- extraction and processing of minerals for own needs;
- handicrafts and folk crafts (blacksmithing and ironworking, production of utensils, inventory, boats, sleds, other traditional vehicles, musical instruments, birch bark products, stuffed animals and birds, souvenirs from deer furs, hunted animals and birds and other materials, weaving from herbs and other plants, knitting nets, bone carving, wood carving, tailoring of national clothes and other types of trades and crafts related to the processing of fur, leather, bone and other materials);
- construction of national traditional dwellings and other buildings necessary for the implementation of traditional types of economic activity ².

² Rasporyazhenie Pravitel'stva RF ot 8 maya 2009 goda N 631-r «Ob utverzhdenii perechnya mest traditsionnogo prozhivaniya i traditsionnoy khozyaystvennoy deyatel'nosti korennykh malochislennykh narodov Rossiyskoy Federatsii i perechnya vidov traditsionnoy khozyaystvennoy deyatel'nosti korennykh malochislennykh narodov Rossiyskoy Federatsii» (s izmeneniyami na 29 dekabrya 2017 goda) [Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation of May 8, 2009 N 631-r "On approval of the list of places of traditional residence and traditional economic activities of the indigenous peoples of the Russian Federation and the list of types of traditional economic activities of the indigenous peo-

The list of these activities suggests an idea that is often already presented in scientific papers on traditional nature management. According to it, the cultural and economic adaptation of a person to the natural environment proceeds in two directions: a person either adapts to natural conditions, or changes them for himself. It is believed that traditional nature management is associated primarily with the first direction. It is therefore harmoniously intertwined with the natural landscapes.

Thus, if not emphasizing the ethnic character of the economic activity, it can be noted that when determining traditional nature management, the following main criteria are distinguished: 1) the historical nature of the formation of nature management practices within the ethnic group, 2) the sustainable nature of the exploitation of natural resources. The third criterion of orientation towards own needs rather than towards the market is more controversial. However, the last two points have a strong connection with each other, so in this case we consider it important to note.

In the following step, let us consider sequentially which criteria of traditional nature management are satisfied when it comes to the extraction of mammoth bones.

Gathering mammoth bones is currently one of the most important sources of income in the North of Yakutia. This informal business is a seasonal work, when men in groups of 10–15 people, without formal labour relations, go to the tundra in the summer to collect mammoth bones.

According to the legislation of the Russian Federation, gathering of mammoth ivory can be carried out exclusively for scientific, educational and informative purposes. This means that only single samples can be collected without mining and other types of special work. Limiting the collection of fossil mammoth bones to “single samples” has resulted in the collector applying for 10–20 licenses over 10–20 small sites, on which the declared volume can't be gathered. Licenses are issued for some areas, but raw materials are extracted in other ones.

Since the commercial collection of paleontological material is not regulated, there are no tax payments from this type of activity. More than 100 tons are extracted annually, estimated at 1.5 billion rubles, not including smuggling. In addition, as mentioned above, the use of technology is not allowed. Collectors, however, often use it to extract tusks outside licensed areas. Soil erosion with powerful water pumps is a very common practice. Thus, despite the fact that the legislation regulated the collection of mammoth fauna, its individual points are at odds with current practice. Since the collectors can dispose of the remains at their discretion only if the state does not buy them back as of scientific and cultural interest, sawing tusks have become frequent.

As a result, during the raids of the environmental and law enforcement agencies of the Republic, numerous violations of the law are constantly being established. It entails both administrative and criminal penalties. Nevertheless, the number of persons requesting licences to collect mammoth fauna is increasing year by year.

ples of the Russian Federation" (as amended on December 29, 2017)]. URL: <http://docs.cntd.ru/document/902156317> (accessed 13 December 2020).

The lack of legal compliance, as well as the unregulated labour relations entered into by business participants (labour contracts are not formalised), result in the development of this type of activity as part of the informal economy. The basis for this is also the former social experience of the population. Business in the Arctic settlements is largely based on informal personalized relationships, where kinship and mutual assistance play an important role. Both villagers and reindeer herders are engaged in gathering mammoth bones. For reindeer herders, who wander a lot and are well oriented in the tundra, the opportunity to earn money on mammoth tusks is also attractive, while a relatively small number of reindeer owned by a reindeer family (on average 20–70 pieces) minimizes commercial use of this resource [3, Kaduk E.V.].

Currently, it is possible to hear the opinion that the collection of mammoth bones for sale can also be considered a traditional economic activity. This opinion is expressed both by some representatives of regional authorities and in the scientific community. At the same time, the main justification for this is the duration of this type of economic activity.

A number of researchers place this type of activity back in the depths of centuries and claim that the indigenous population of Eastern Siberia mined and sold mammoth tusks long before the development of the northern lands by Russian industrialists [4, Potravniy I.M., Protopopov A.V., Gassiy V.V.]. Researchers tend to draw such conclusions on the assumption of the text by A.F. Middendorf, who, based on the opinion of Olferst that the throne of the Tatar Khan of the Golden Horde, seen in 1246 and described by Plano Carpini, made of ivory and decorated with carvings, gold and precious stones, the work of the Russian goldsmith Kozma, makes an assumption that it was made of mammoth bone [5, Middendorf A.F.].

Is it possible, on the basis of this thesis, to say that the indigenous peoples of the North of Yakutia were also involved in trade? It would seem that they were not. In fact, the text reports nothing about the role of the indigenous peoples of the North in the social life of the material from which the throne was made.

Furthermore, one should probably not equate the economic relations that exist today with those of the past. As ethnographers convincingly show in their works, the meaning of the Cossack and Indigenous interactions in Siberia was originally ambiguous for both sides. On the part of the indigenous peoples of Siberia, offering of a gift in the form of available resources symbolised the establishment of peaceful relations with a stronger opponent on terms of equal partnership, rather than trade relations or even tribute obligations [6, N.V. Ssorin-Chaikov].

As I. Wallerstein notes, we do not get into the trap of identifying any exchange activity with the system of trade relations, if we consider that the components of the capitalist world-system (whether it is a mini-system or a world-system) can be associated with limited exchanges with elements located outside the system, in the “outer zone”. At the same time, the forms of such exchange are very limited, and the exchange of “luxury goods” is above all. In this case, each of the parties can export to others what is socially assessed in its system as having little value, importing in exchange something that is considered very valuable [7, Wallerstein I.]. If the exchange takes

the form of tribute relations, as it happened to the indigenous peoples of Yakutia quite soon after the reclamation of Siberia and the North by the Cossacks, one can talk about their involvement in the world economy as a peripheral, resource zone.

In this regard, a more moderate interpretation of the tradition of conducting economic activities for the extraction of mammoth bones, which is available in the “Concept for the development of gathering, study, use, processing and sale of paleontological mammoth fauna materials in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)”, approved on August 13, 2018 No. 649-RG, looks more adequate. It states that “these resources (mammoth bones) have been the object of traditional nature management for 300 years by the indigenous peoples of the North of Yakutia, who, in the course of historical economic activity, collected tusks for delivery to merchants and industrialists”³.

Indeed, active mining of mammoth tusk in Yakutia is associated with the events of the second half of the 18th century. However, as G.P. Basharin specifies, mammoth ivory was originally procured mainly by Ustyansk and Nizhne-Indigirsk Russian and Yakut industrialists on the shores of the Arctic Ocean, especially on the Lyakhovskiy and Novosibirsk Islands [8]. The state encouraged fishermen and merchants to extract mammoth bones and trade, which was not the subject of a poll tax charge. At the same time, the state pursued a restrictive policy with regard to fur trade with the yasak population.

However, as the share of yasak in the treasury revenue decreases, the state policy in the sphere of trade changes from prohibitive to free, which provokes penetration of trading capital into the local economy, involving the “foreign” population into the mammoth ivory trade. Most of them were in gathering mammoth bones in the coastal part of tundra. References to this can be found in the works of V.M. Zenzinova [9] A.F. Middendorf [5]. The fact is that in the conditions of the exchange nature of trade, the clerks of trading houses, carrying out trading activities in the Northern regions, sold goods to the local population almost exclusively for furs and bones [10, Gogolev, p. 259], which forced the indigenous population to collect mammoth bones.

Thus, for some period of time, the indigenous peoples were really engaged in gathering of mammoth bones, but this is rather a fact of forcing the population to certain types of activities. The indigenous peoples, faced with the world-system, were involved in a global division of labour, in which their specialisation became fur trade and mammoth ivory extraction. Tributary acted as a form of labour control.

The development of the global fur market had a considerable impact on drawing indigenous peoples into the capitalist world system. At the same time, the state acted as both capitalist in foreign markets and as exploiter and collector of taxes within its borders. Using non-market

³ Rasporiyazhenie Glavy Respubliki Sakha (Yakutiya) ot 13 avgusta 2018 goda №649-RG «Kontseptsiya razvitiya sbora, izucheniya, ispol'zovaniya, pererabotki, i realizatsii paleontologicheskikh materialov mamontovoy fauny na territorii Respubliki Sakha (Yakutiya)» [Decree of the Head of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) dated August 13, 2018 No. 649-RG "The concept for the development of the collection, study, use, processing, and sale of paleontological materials of the mammoth fauna in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)"]. URL: <http://docs.cntd.ru/document/550166534> (accessed 13 November 2020).

ways of exploitation, the state gained super profits, and in the best years, income from fur filled up to a third of the Russian state's treasury. Mammoth ivory was one of the three commodities exported from the region, along with furs. Being drawn into the capitalist world-system as an exploited periphery, indigenous peoples were already changing their practices of social interactions and nature management. Thus, Z.V. Gogolev points out that the exchange trade in furs and mammoth ivory had a significant impact on the transformation of social relations in the North. Instead of collective hunting, individual hunting and extraction of mammoth ivory appeared, old tribal customs and traditional tribal economic unity were losing their force [10, p. 121]. Thus, even then, the extraction of mammoth ivory not only coexisted with traditional economic activity, but rather transformed it. It cannot be said that the collection of mammoth bones was a tradition that originated within some ethnic group. It was rather a trade imposed by external circumstances on the entire population of the north-east of Russia.

Thus, if we consider the centuries-old, historical origin of the traditions of economic activity within an ethnic group as a criterion for attributing gathering of mammoth ivory to traditional nature management, then the extraction of a mammoth tusk does not apply to it.

The second criterion is that traditional nature management is finely balanced with the resource that it uses and does not lead to its destruction or reduction⁴. It is believed that the traditions of nature management of various indigenous ethnic groups are united by a common property — careful attitude to nature [1, Klimova D.S., Belyaeva L.N., p. 138].

If we talk about the sustainable use of the natural environment, it seems to us that J. Scott was close to the correct assessment of the relationship between man and the natural environment in traditional society. He studied the motives of the peasants' behavior and came to the conclusion that most of the specific manifestations of the agrarian organization, as well as the direct manifestations of the mechanism of interaction between "man and the natural environment" are based on the principle "safety – first" [11, Nikulin A.M.]. We believe that these principles are also applicable to the traditional economic activities of the indigenous peoples of the North, which are highly dependent on extreme climatic conditions, the value of collective action in which increases dramatically. The dependence of human life on the animal world creates a sacred attitude towards it.

K. Polanyi also provides historical and anthropological evidence of this practice, almost universal in traditional society, which is the main difference between it and the modern market economy. He concludes that "the absence of the threat of individual hunger in a certain sense makes a primitive society more humane in comparison with the market economy, but at the same time, less economically efficient". It also determines the careful attitude to the natural environment [12, Nureev R.M.].

⁴ Goryashko A. Traditsionnoe prirodopol'zovanie: mify i real'nost' (na primere gagi obyknovennoy) [Traditional nature management: myths and reality (on the example of the common eider)]. URL: <https://goarctic.ru/society/traditsionnoe-prirodopolzovanie-mify-i-realnost-na-primere-gagi-obyknovennoy/> (accessed 20 March 2021).

The capitalist society is somewhat different. Its peculiarity is the presence of a center and a periphery. People of the periphery find themselves in difficult conditions of the need to produce those goods that are in demand by the world-system, while the manufacture or extraction of goods for sale in a market economy is determined by the motive of profit, income from this activity. The connection of a person with the goods he makes is no longer regulated by a myth, as in a traditional society, the place of the myth gradually begins to be occupied by the culture of consumption, and accordingly, the attitude towards the biosphere also changes.

In modern Russia, difficult economic conditions, a high level of unemployment, as well as the operation of the laws of capitalism are changing the attitude of the population to the biosphere. The practice of soil erosion with the help of motor pumps has become widespread. Despite the legal prohibition, miners deliberately destroy soils with the help of powerful water pumps. This can cause rockslides, environmental pollution of water courses with mud, fuel, and destruction of the fertile soil layer. The constant noise of the engines scares away fish, birds and mammals [13, Keremyasov N.V., p. 15]. Certainly, not all mammoth ivory miners are engaged in fishing using prohibited equipment. However, the ban on the commercial collection of paleontological materials, which is contrary to reality, the inability to comply with the law, as well as unregulated labour relations (employment contracts are not registered) lead to the fact that this type of activity develops as part of the informal economy.

It is worth noting that the development of such non-respectful nature management practices is a collision course with the development of the capitalist world-system, in which nature is only a source of economic profit.

Let us use the following examples to illustrate this statement. It is known that the motive of the rapid rush through Siberia, when 4 thousand km from the Urals to the Pacific Ocean were covered in half a century (Okhotsk was founded on its coast in 1647, 56 years earlier than St. Petersburg), was Russia's participation in the development of the global fur market [14, Savchenko A.B., Treyvish A.I.]. Yasak, a tribute that was imposed on the local population, had to be paid in sable furs. Since then, sable hunting has firmly entered the economic activity of the indigenous population of Siberia. The systematic overhunting of sable under pressure of tribute payment led to the formation of mosaic habitat, and to the almost complete extermination of this species in some places. The sable gave the Russian treasury up to a third of its income, until the systematic extermination reduced hunting of it. In the 18th century, Russia's fur exports were supported by the hunting of sea animals, arctic foxes, and squirrels [14, Savchenko A.B., Treyvish A.I.]. Thus, the global fur market led to such ecological disasters already in the 16th–17th centuries.

More recent consequences of the inclusion of indigenous peoples of the North in capitalist relations are new trends in reindeer husbandry in Yamal, where because of profit from the sale of antlers, the number of deer is increasing, exceeding the reindeer capacity of pastures, which leads to the exhaustion of scarce Arctic landscapes, which simply have no time to recover.

In areas, where reindeer herding does not bring any commercial benefit, the development trends of the indigenous peoples of the North have been characterized by the lack of interest among young people in this economic activity. Thus, O.N. Gurova explains this phenomenon by the fact that the ancestral labour culture and ethnic norms of economic behaviour have been lost. Children and grandchildren of reindeer herders, hunters and fishermen have partly abandoned traditional occupations and are affected by the syndrome of indifference, contempt for the tedious, labour-intensive and economically unprofitable occupation of their ancestors. At the same time, they desperately strive to survive as free children of the tundra and taiga, living off the gifts of their native land [15, Gurova O.N.]. Of course, it is possible that all these radical transformations in the labour culture and ethnic norms of economic behaviour are related to the above-mentioned circumstances and the loss of fishing skills, but it is also important to mention the increasing involvement of people in the capitalist system. It transformed traditional society, in which people's lives were in retrospect, back to the days of creation, when the world was perceived as created in one act and existed without any changes from its beginning. Capitalism has transformed human attitude to life. A person is no longer turned to his past, once already created, he begins to live his indefinite future, which he has to create independently and together with the co-creation of people united by the common life plan of the national state [16, Fedotova V.G., Kolpakov V.A., Fedotova N.N., p. 150]. Thus, the transition from a traditional to a capitalist society also has sociocultural consequences.

In a traditional society, nature management is regulated by a myth; in a capitalist society, the place of myth is gradually replaced by the culture of consumption. In a traditional society, goods (deer meat, skins, wild plants, antlers) are rather a part of nature, borrowed from its circulation in order to return to it again, but in a different form. After all, the environment of a person living a myth is always alive and full of mythical meanings. When people ate plants or animals, they received their power, but they had to follow complicated rituals in order not to disturb the cycles of nature that produced their food. By contrast, under capitalism, things made by nature become commodities, since they are produced within the framework of agriculture, organised as a commercial enterprise. A person loses the connection between what he consumes and the place where all these products are produced [16, Fedotova V.G., Kolpakov V.A., Fedotova N.N., p. 150]. Thus, capitalist development, aimed at extracting the maximum benefit, expansion of capital, cannot be sustainable a priori.

Finally, the third condition for classifying an activity as traditional nature management says that the vast majority of production should be used for own needs. As R. Sulyandziga points out, "The Law on the Fauna allows traditional peoples to carry out their traditional activities without any restriction in order to support their families, not for commercial purposes"⁵. However, it is

⁵ Teplyakov S. Russkim nel'zya, vepsam mozhno, evenkam ne dayut: kak rabotayut l'goty dlya malochislennykh korennykh narodov [Russians are not allowed, Vepsians are allowed, Evenks are not given: how benefits work for small in-

quite clear that mammoth ivory is not a resource extracted for their own use, but solely for the purpose of sale. The business has a pronounced export character. The resource is in demand in the segment of the elite economy. 80% of the materials found in Yakutia go abroad, mainly to China, Hong Kong, and the USA.

If we are talking about the population of the Far East, its orientation towards those resources that are demanded by the world market is gradually taking place. This includes activities that intersect with traditional types of economic activity — gathering of wild-growing plants. This activity is not ethnic in nature. In the Far East, berry picking is predominantly carried out by the unorganised population. Seasonal work in this area has become an opportunity for the population to replenish household income. Ethnic boundaries do not allow people to understand that the commonality of their social status is more important.

Thus, we can say that gathering of mammoth bones only partially meets the criteria of economic activities that can be classified as traditional nature use. It is clear that supporters of the opinion that the collection of mammoth ivory is one of the types of traditional nature management are well-intentioned due to the fact that in post-Soviet Russia the state is increasingly reducing its social functions and practically “leaving” the North and countryside. Centrifugal forces in migration cause more and more people to move to the cities. Jobs are being eliminated, which raises the question of finding new sources of livelihood for the local population. The combination of this with the spread of industry to the North and Arctic, and the threatening removal of parts of the land from traditional agriculture, forms the protective position of a number of ethnologists. It is assumed that if the collection of mammoth ivory is included in the list of traditional activities, then in the case of industrial development of territories, indigenous peoples could receive larger compensation through the Institute of Ethnological Expertise. Perhaps, this would indeed increase the amount of payments in some special cases. However, it is unclear how else its inclusion in the list of traditional economic activities would have affected the traditional way of life.

On a practical level, there is another important point to be made. Currently, there is no tax on the collection of mammoth ivory, as it is forbidden to collect it commercially, which is completely at odds with the realities of the extraction of this resource. However, in case of legalisation of this type of activity, the situation will change. In this case, the indigenous peoples of the North could be used as a kind of cover for people to avoid tax liability. As noted above, in accordance with the current version of Article 217 of Chapter 23 of the Tax Code of the Russian Federation, the incomes that are not liable to the personal income tax, include only the incomes (with the exception of the wages for the hired labour) received by the members of duly registered clan, family communities of small northern peoples practicing traditional economic activities, from the sale of products obtained in the result of traditional trades⁶. Classifying mammoth ivory extraction as a

digenous peoples]. URL: <https://mbk-news.appspot.com/suzhet/kak-rabotayut-lgoty-dlya-korennyyx-narodov/> (accessed 22 December 2020).

⁶ Tax Code of the Russian Federation. URL: <https://nalog.garant.ru/fns/nk/> (accessed 15 November 2020).

traditional activity would result in tusk mining not being taxed. Consequently, it may lead to abuses with regard to the registration of the communities of indigenous minorities of the North. The latter could trigger a new wave of identity change. After all, group rights make intergroup boundaries more rigid, forcing people with multiple identities to make a choice in favor of one of them when interacting with the state. It is no coincidence that, according to the latest Russian population censuses, the number of some groups of indigenous peoples of the North has grown so much that it was no longer possible to talk about natural or migration growth. This is how the identity change manifested itself under the influence of the new legislation.

Another, more theoretically profound question is how to study the social evolution of different societies. We believe that traditional societies of the non-capitalist past should never be equated with contemporary indigenous societies of the North. Modern indigenous people are culturally and socially well integrated in the Russian society, and now it is not correct to emphasize their cultural differences by adding the features of biological predetermination to certain activities. The traditional society cannot be reproduced at the present time, when these people are surrounded by the dominant capitalist society and are dependent on it. The development problems of indigenous peoples lie precisely in this; youth do not want to continue the economic traditions of their ancestors.

In these circumstances, the main object of protection should be the way of life of people involved in these economic practices; at the same time, all their other rights and specifics (language, religion, culture) are protected by the legislation on minorities and the norms of general civil law.

Based on the above, it should be noted that mammoth ivory mining is an activity that cannot be considered fully compliant with the criteria of traditional nature management. In addition, the consequences of the decision to consider mammoth tusk collection as a type of traditional nature use are unknown, both in terms of the organization of this business and in relation to the transformation of the identities and lifestyles of the indigenous population of the North of Yakutia. However, given the gaps in legislation, as well as the high level of corruption in this sector, it is predictable that abuses in the sphere of registration of communities of indigenous peoples of the North. However, the question of whether gathering of mammoth bones is one of the types of traditional nature management raises more important and broader questions about what traditional nature management is in the modern capitalist world.

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