

The Karelians: securing the right to preserve traditional habitats (experience of the republic of Karelia)

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Abstract. The article is devoted to the problem of preserving the places of traditional residence of Karelians in modern conditions of significant reduction in the number of Karelians and dispersed residence in the Republic of Karelia (RK). As one of the tools to solve this problem the method of creating the List of Settlements of Traditional Karelian Residence (STKR) in the Republic of Karelia (RK) is considered. The article presents the current regulatory framework of the Russian Federation on the issues of indigenous minorities, including legislative acts and other regulatory documents concerning the development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation (AZRF), which includes six municipalities of the Republic of Karelia, inhabited by, among others, Karelians. Historical documents that illustrate the connection of specific territories with the Karelian tradition, including the arctic territories are used. The principles underlying the creation of the List of Settlements of Traditional Karelian Residence and examples of using the List to determine the boundaries of economic activities of logging and fish farming enterprises are listed. application of the List is aimed at creating conditions for sustainable development of Karelians in the Republic of Karelia. One of the important factors is the cultural continuity of the way of life. Violation of the principle of gradualness when introducing innovations, the lack of an adaptation period to build a balance with traditions can lead to unpredictable consequences for society.

1 Introduction

The stated topic may cause confusion to an inexperienced reader. What is the meaning of the existence of such a List of Settlements of Traditional Karelian Residence? [1]

The notion "List of places of traditional residency and traditional economic activity of indigenous minorities of the Russian Federation" is one of the main concepts in the field of legislation related to the protection of the rights of indigenous minorities to their native habitat. The law "On guarantees of the rights of indigenous minorities of the RF" understands as the ancestral habitat "the historically established area within which indigenous minorities carry out their cultural and household activities and which influences their self-identification and way of life" [2]. The Constitution of the RF classifies the "-protection of the original habitat and the traditional way of life of small ethnic communities" as the joint jurisdiction of the Russian Federation and the subjects of the federation (Article 72, item "m"). Therefore, the List is approved by the Government of the RF on the basis of documents submitted by the authorities of the constituent entities of the RF, where indigenous minorities live.

The main source for the preparation of such materials by the RF subjects is census data on the settlement of

indigenous numerically small peoples of Russia in the regions with justification of their traditional habitation in administrative districts, municipalities, and settlements. The consolidated list of places of traditional residence of indigenous peoples is approved by a decree of the Government of the Russian Federation [3]. Ethnological expertise at the federal level is entrusted to the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Russian Academy of Sciences. When forming the List of places of traditional residence of small indigenous peoples (hereinafter referred to as the Federal List), the criterion of their numbers in administrative units is not established; the substantiation of their primordial habitation in these territories is of decisive importance.

2 Research

The definition of territories of traditional residence of indigenous minorities is fundamental for the implementation of the collective rights of these peoples: from the protection of their ancestral habitat and control over industrial activities on their territories to claims for compensation for damage caused to the ancestral habitat as a result of industrial activities. Representatives of indigenous peoples who live in such territories are provided with a number of benefits and state support measures.

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Article 72, paragraph "m" of the RF Constitution speaks of the joint authority of the federal centre and its subjects to "protect the native habitat and traditional way of life of indigenous ethnic communities living in the territories of these subjects", without specifying that only the indigenous minorities of the Russian Federation included in the list established by the government of the Russian Federation may be considered as such. The Karelian people may be rightfully considered an indigenous ethnic community, whose native habitat is partially located in Karelia. While the total number of Karelian population in the country is 60.8 thousand people according to the 2010 census, 45.6 thousand of them live in Karelia, which is below the benchmark (50 thousand) established by the federal law "On guarantees of the rights of small indigenous RF peoples of Russia" to classify peoples as indigenous minorities of the RF.

An additional reason for the special legal regime in places of traditional residence of Karelians is the inclusion of six municipalities of Karelia into the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation (AZRF). In 2020, the law "On state support of entrepreneurial activity in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation" [4] was adopted, and the Ministry for the Development of the Far East and the Arctic by order of the Russian Government prepared a standard of accountability for interaction between the residents of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation and indigenous peoples. The authorities of Karelia, relying on the Karelian public initiative, may start developing a legal act "On the special legal regime of the places of traditional residence of Karelians in the Russian Arctic." Currently, the Ministry of the Russian Federation for the Development of the Far East and the Arctic is working on the "Program to support the economic activities of the small indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation living in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation (2021-2024) [5]. The Government of Karelia may come up with an initiative to extend its effect to the Karelian population of the regions included in the Arctic zone. In this regard, in 2020, the necessity arose to create a regional List of Settlements of Traditional Karelian Residence (hereinafter referred to as the STRK List or the List), which turned out to be not quite a trivial task. Below we will elaborate on the essence of the problems that have arose.

The current number of Karelians, the indigenous population of the Republic of Karelia, has significantly decreased. According to the 2010 census, their share was only 7.4%, while in the 1920s they accounted for 37.4%. Compared with the 1989 map of the settlement of the peoples of Karelia, (Figure 1), only three districts remained - Olonetsky, Pryazhinsky and Kalevalsky.

Karelians are characterized by dispersed living on the territory of the republic, which developed quite a long time ago. If we look at the ethnic map of the 1920s. (Figure 2), we can see that Karelian settlements gravitate to the western borders of the republic, which partly remains to this day.

The post-Soviet formation of three national regions (Kalevalsky, Olonetsky, Pryazhinsky) did not lead to a

concentration of the Karelian population in these regions, and the dispersion remained.



Fig. 1. Settlement of the peoples of Karelia defined by the ethnic majority (according to the 1989 census)

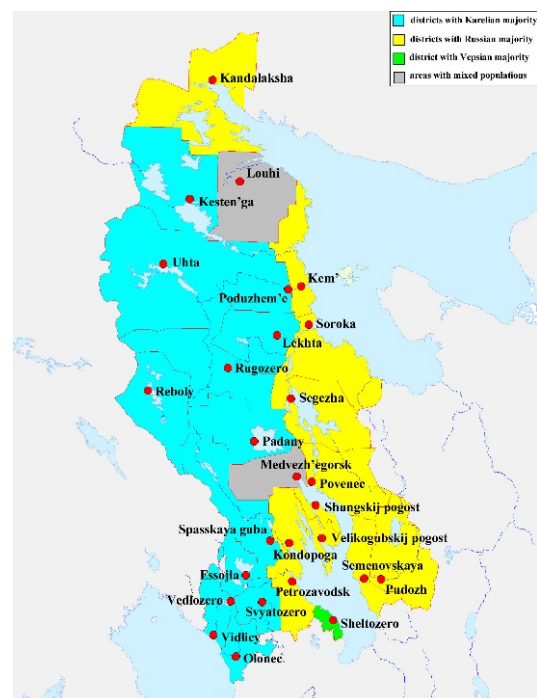


Fig. 2. Settlement of the peoples of Karelia defined the ethnic majority (according to the 1926 census)

The percentage of interethnic marriages among Karelians in the Soviet period was quite high. This was due to urbanization processes, resettlement (e.g., eviction of Karelians from border areas; evacuation during the Second World War; recruitment of workers to the timber

industry enterprises in Karelia, etc.), unstable national and language policy, which experienced waves of internationalization and return to ethnicity [6].

The above-mentioned circumstances led to the fact that Karelians lost their linguistic competence. Their status as the titular ethnic group in the republic had to be defended. An example of this is the activities of the Congress of Karelians of the Republic of Karelia, and the fact that within the period of its 30-year existence (1990-2020), the issue of the state status of the Karelian language in the republic was not settled [7].

These conditions have formed real threats of loss of Karelians' ethnic identity. Research data preceding the 2021 population census show a high probability that the number of Karelians in the Russian Federation will be less than 50 thousand people. In this case, in accordance with the law "On guarantees of the rights of small indigenous peoples of the Russian Federation" of 1999, they would be entitled to the status of an indigenous small-numbered people. These peoples include those living in the territories of the traditional settlement of their ancestors, preserving their traditional way of life, economy and crafts [8] and distinguishing themselves as independent ethnic communities. Ethnos, once titular for the republic, will change its status to that of an indigenous minority, whose rights are subject to special protection in accordance with international and Russian legislation.

The preferences related to the status of an "indigenous minority" can be implemented provided that their allocation is targeted. This determines the need to create the List of Settlements of Traditional Karelian Residence.

Historical conditions of the formation of Karelian population in the republic, briefly described above, prove that solving the problem of creating the List of STRK is complicated. Along with the dispersion of residence, it is problematic to assess the current situation of Karelians settlement, since ethnicity is not currently documented and estimates of the ethnic composition can only be made on the basis of census data. Regulatory documents include the term "traditional residence", i.e., it is not about identifying the places of current COMPACT residence of Karelians, but about the existing TRADITION linking the place and the people.

These difficulties, as well as the practical significance of solving these issues, determined a wide range of historical sources used for compiling the List. Thanks to their informative value, the materials used in the zoning of the republic in the 1920s turned out to be the most useful for the solution of this problem. In Karelia, the preparations for the censuses of 1920 and 1926 were very thorough. The head of the republic E.A. Gylling directly participated in it. He established close ties with D.A. Zolotarev, who was responsible for the work of the European Department of the Commission for the Study of the Tribal Composition of the USSR Population. A unique reference book "The List of Populated Areas of the Karelian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic" was prepared based on the results of the census, which, in its turn, became the foundation for

the project of zoning of Karelia and fully represented the ethnic composition of the regions [9].

In the process of its creation the results of the 1926 census materials were recalculated (since they had been collected according to the old administrative division – "uezd" and "volost") according to the newly formed in 1927 administrative districts, which allowed obtaining data comparable with the subsequent censuses.

The information in the reference book is structured by districts, village councils and settlements. Types of households, occupation, gender, and ethnicity were taken into account (only the major ones: Karelians, Finns and Russians). The List is unique as it reports the names of the settlements of the republic, both official and those used by the local population, with maximum completeness. The complexity of documenting the names of settlements in the so-called nesting type of settlement was also taken into account.

In total, 26 districts were identified. Twelve districts were considered as ethnically Karelian (Kestensky, Ukhtinsky, Kemiretsky, Rugozersky, Rebolsky, Tungudsky, Segozersky, Petrovsky, Syamozersky, Svyatozersky, Vidlitsky, Olonetsky), one Vepsian (Sheltozersky), eleven Russian (Pronezhsky, Povenetsky, Pudozhsky, Segezhsy, Soroksky, Kemsy, Kondopozhsky, Kandalakshsky, and two mixed (Loukhsy and Medvezhyegorsky). This historical source became the foundation for the formation of the STRK List, which was approved by the Order of the Government of the Republic of Karelia in July 2021.

On the basis of this document the settlements (places) where the share of the Karelian population exceeded the republic's average of 37.4% (1926) were identified. Those settlements were included in the 2021 STRK List, regardless of whether Karelians were still a significant group there. The 1928 reference book [10] included villages and isolated farmsteads, which for various historical reasons ceased to exist, which did not allow them to be reflected in the List-created on the basis of the currently existing settlements. However, given that their boundaries on modern cadastral plans also cover adjacent territories, in most cases the disappeared villages also happened to be included in the STRK number.

Thus, several principles were used when compiling the STRK List in the Republic of Karelia.

1. combination of principles of inclusion of both indigenous regions and specific places of traditional residence of Karelians

2. consideration of the information about the primordial residence of Karelians within specific settlements in the 1920s, when Karelia received its own statehood.

3 Conclusions

We believe that the approval of the List will become the initial measure aimed at creation of conditions for sustainable development of Karelians in the Republic of Karelia.

The List may be used to regulate the protection of the linguistic and cultural rights of minority peoples a (Constitution of the Russian Federation: Articles 68, 69, 71, 72); to protect human and civil rights and freedoms; to protect the rights of ethnic minorities (Article 72, paragraph "b"); to protect the original habitat and traditional way of life of ethnic minority communities (Art. 72, paragraph "m").

Inclusion of a number of Karelian municipalities in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation, where STRKs are also allocated in accordance with the List, will enable entrepreneurial activities, regulated by Federal Law No. 193-FZ "On state support for entrepreneurial activity in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation" dated July 13, 2020, to be conducted in these areas more responsibly and taking into account the interests of the local population. By now, the List has already become the legislative framework for delimitation of economic activities of logging and fish farming enterprises.

In conclusion, we note that although the connections of territory, tradition and identity are important, they change over time. Currently, borders are losing their former meaning. Everyone becomes a migrant in a virtual sense, exposing the instability of cultural values that have developed in a particular territory. Even though the List, considering the peculiarities of the regulatory situation in the Russian Federation, is intended to establish territorial and ethnic ties, it is important to understand its relativity.

Contemporary researchers note the fallacy of an approach, when identity is studied only in the context of a specific place where certain groups of the population happen to be [11]. When discussing this issue, the concepts of "hybrid identity" and "third space", arising from the mixing of two or more cultures, are increasingly used. In this case, a completely different quality and ratio of traditions and innovations may arise in the third space. The sustainable development of society depends on many circumstances. One important factor is the historical and cultural continuity of the way of life. Radical cultural change, violation of the principle of gradualism in the implementation of innovations, the lack of an adaptation period for their launch and building a balance with tradition can lead to unpredictable consequences for society.

The research was carried out within the framework of the grant of Russian Science Foundation, (RSF) <https://rscf.ru/en/project/22-28-20318/>.

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