Introduction

Traditionally, the idea of violence evokes the use of brutal force against one or many individuals. Often, however, brutal conduct originates far from the actual site of violence. Domestic and sexual violence, violence among and against youth, and violence upon oneself are usually consequences of other factors. Scholars refer to these indirect factors as *structural violence*. They examine the effects of institutional bureaucracies and normative institutions that sustain the systematic denial of rights to citizens. Historical records indicate that structural violence is an effective form of long-term population oppression by means of laws and societal norms. Structural violence supports privileged positions among the elite, who use it to prioritize their own political agendas and sustaining ideologies. Its effects are manifested in disparities in political opportunities and social standing.

1. I am very grateful to Elsa Stamatopoulou for encouraging me to focus on this subject matter by providing an opportunity to share the findings from my research with Columbia University students and the Columbia University community, and for inviting me to contribute to this publication. I am also thankful to my great colleagues Dan Haley and Pamela Grieman for their help in editing this work. Finally, I would like to thank the UCLA American Indian Studies Center for supporting my research.

Legitimized by public policy and legislation, structural violence supports cultural beliefs and legitimizes myths fostering inequality. It creates hostile attitudes among authorities and citizenry toward its victims, who in response may turn to violent resistance. The consequences of structural violence are no less destructive than those caused by direct use of brutal force.

Structural violence remains a fundamental property of the Russian state. It stems from the separation of state functions from the aspirations, needs and hopes of its citizens. The degree to which structural violence affects Russian citizens depends on a variety of factors, and varies greatly within different subgroups. Indigenous communities are among the most vulnerable and affected targets of this kind of violence. They are part of political, economic and legal systems that are not of their own making. Indigenous views and perceptions of rights, freedoms and justice historically have not served as the basis for the laws and resulting policies to which most Indigenous communities have been subject since the Soviet era. The federal government remains the main voice in deciding which rights and privileges are accorded to Indigenous Peoples. As a result, Russian-born Indigenous persons are subjected to violence from the day they are born.

This work emphasizes that structural violence toward Indigenous Peoples, as enacted through the workings of contemporary institutions of governance of the Russian state, recreates the oppression characteristic of the Soviet era. This study reveals continuity between Soviet treatment and political opportunities of the “small Peoples of the North,” as the official terminology goes—the original 26 communities who would gain Indigenous status with the establishment of the Russian state—and the legal and political institutions defining indigeneity in contemporary Russia. Further, it argues that the question of Indigenous rights stemmed from and remains a part of nationality policies, a state-wide set of measures focused on the political rights of the non-Russian groups within the multicultural federal system of Soviet and post-Soviet Russia. These policies institutionalized the notion of inferiority of (now Indigenous) communities as dependent on the guidance and financial assistance of the state. The notion of inferiority shaped the consciousness of Soviet and post-Soviet authorities who continue to
administer these Indigenous communities as populations dependent upon the state. And yet, the opportunities to participate in the state system of administration since the Soviet times shaped Indigenous politics in post-Soviet Russia; and the fact that Indigenous activists are able to envision their communities as “Indigenous Peoples,” or communities with a right to self-determined existence, signifies a step forward, despite increased oppression against non-Russian minorities today in response to the current use of nationality policies as a means toward centralization of the state.

This essay develops these claims in three interrelated essays, aimed at disseminating findings from Russian and western scholarship, and at stimulating more research in the areas examined. The first essay, “Legal and Institutional Framework Concerning Indigenous Rights,” reviews legal developments in the area of Indigenous rights and draws primarily from legal scholarship. The second essay, “Means of Resistance to Structural Violence: Indigenous Politics,” theorizes means of Indigenous advocacy, drawing upon studies of Soviet and post-Soviet political institutions supporting rights of Indigenous and other cultural minorities. It also investigates the history of post-Soviet Indigenous mobilizations. The final essay, “Consequences of Structural Violence,” examines the effects of structural violence and draws from the studies of Indigenous demographics and socio-economic conditions of Indigenous populations, and the recent 2010 census data. The essay advocates for the widening of political opportunities for Indigenous Peoples at the regional and local levels of the contemporary Russian state.

Use of terms and structure of this essay

There is no formal definition of the term “Indigenous Peoples” in international law and the prevailing view today is that no formal universal definition of the term is necessary. According to the fundamental right to self-determination contained in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and other human rights instruments, Indigenous status is through self-identification. Article 9 of UNDRIP stipulates that Indigenous Peoples and individuals have the right to
belong to an Indigenous community or nation, in accordance with the traditions and customs of the community or nation concerned.

The Soviet state did not ratify the International Labour Organization (herein ILO) Convention 107 (1957), arguing that it was relevant only to the post-colonial states’ settings. Furthermore, during Soviet times, the question of Indigenous rights was a “taboo.” The Russian state did not ratify the Convention either, and abstained from the vote during the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007. At the same time, based on the right to self-determination and self-identification enshrined in UNDRIP, it is possible for Indigenous communities to claim Indigenous status, even in cases when the government of the state where these communities are located does not recognize the relevant international instruments, as is the case in contemporary Russia. The underlying logic behind the application of the term “Indigenous” in this essay emerges from that very assumption: the term signifies communities that might claim the rights recognized in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, including the right to autonomy. Further, the term specifically refers to groups classified as korennie malochilenie narodi by the Russian legislation.

Indigenous issues are part of larger policies in the Russian context, which focus on the relationship between the federal government and its subjects, and are termed nationality policies. Nationality policies in Russia consist of the set of norms and measures that have historically focused on the rights and privileges of non-Russian communities composing the Soviet and now the Russian federal state. Nationality (in Russian, natsional’nost’), which was part of the Soviet legal vocabulary, currently captures the formally (i.e., by the state) accepted cultural identity of a group or of a citizen. Such is the meaning of the term “nationality” within the context of this essay.

The difference between a “nationality” and a “nation” (people) within the Soviet and Russian contexts lies primarily in the political might of a group. A “nation” (Soviet nation) is a group with a right to govern its affairs in accordance with its cultural and historical specificities. Since the establishment of the Soviet Union, the characterization as “nation” would be assigned to groups who resided in a territory and were elevated to the status of “federal subject” (in Russian, sub’ekt).
The hierarchical structure of the Soviet Union remains in the Russian federal state. Non-Russian communities with larger demographics enjoy a greater degree of autonomy, with the republics being at the top of the hierarchy, while groups with smaller numbers fall within the administrative rule of the larger subjects (okrug, oblast, rayon). The okrugs are the only territories whose status as subjects originated in the recognition of these territories as historical homelands of communities currently recognized to have Indigenous status. The okrugs are among the most vulnerable entities in the asymmetrical arrangement of the Russian Federation, and are subordinate to a larger “host” unit to which they belong, administratively, as constituents. Republics, on the other hand, are defined by the Russian Constitution as states within a state, as they have the right to grant citizenship and institute their own language as the official language of the territory.

Today, the number of “nationalities” composing the Russian state is different from the number of “subjects” of the federation: the total number of “nationalities” registered in the last (2010) census was 193, while the number of “subjects” was 83. Only a little over one third of the “subjects” are recognized as such because of the nationality of the group living in the territory of the “subject,” namely 22 republics and four autonomous okrugs. The meaning of the terms “subject” and “nationality” within the context of this essay derives from this note.

I. Legal and Institutional Framework Concerning Indigenous Rights

This essay investigates the origins of structural violence affecting Indigenous communities of contemporary Russia. It argues that the treatment of Indigenous rights in contemporary Russia remains, at the core, similar to the Soviet approach to the rights of the groups currently recognized to have Indigenous status. It develops this argument by establishing the genealogical lineage between the Soviet idea of indigeneity, which originated in early nationality policies, and the current treatment of Indigenous communities as dependent on state aid and political guidance. It illustrates how contemporary Russian laws grant communities with Indigenous status benefits and political
privileges unavailable to other nationalities. At the same time, it emphasizes that Indigenous individuals cannot realize their fundamental right to self-determination. Wide geographical distribution and small demographics of Indigenous communities further contribute to the structural inequality they experience. The lacking means of realization of Indigenous rights in Russia is a feature of the overall system of governance, where the means of administration of the state were not designed to accommodate the political rights of cultural minorities.

a) Indigeneity in the Russian Context

Russian laws recognize only an extremely small fraction of the state’s multi-ethnic population as deserving of the status of Indigenous Peoples. The legal term that signifies this status is koreniemalochilennienarodi (herein KMN) or “native small-numbered Peoples.” The term emphasizes the ruling that only groups consisting of 50,000 persons or less are eligible for state aid and privileges guaranteed to groups with Indigenous status. This limitation primarily serves to prevent other ethnic groups from benefitting from the government-given privileges and political rights associated with the status.3 In addition to this quantitative criterion, geographical limitations are applied to determine a group’s eligibility for the designated status. Only communities whose historical homeland is registered in the regions of the Russian North, Siberia, and Far East are entitled to the full benefits associated with Indigenous status.4 As a result, Indigenous communities constitute a very small portion of the state population. In 2010, the Indigenous communities accounted for about 250,000 persons, comprising less than 1% of close to 143 million of the total population of the state at


the moment of the latest census data collection.\textsuperscript{5} The groups, eligible for the full benefits associated with the status, constitute 40 distinct communities. An additional seven groups are recognized as Indigenous (i.e., they are classified as KMN), yet lack some key rights, since they are located in regions other than the North, Siberia, and the Far East.\textsuperscript{6}

The Russian criterion of indigeneity and the very term \textit{korennie} originated during the early Soviet era. The current number of 40 distinct Peoples stemmed from the original listing of 26 Peoples, termed \textit{malie narodi Severa} and commonly translated as “small Peoples of the North,”\textsuperscript{7} which was a term created during the late 1920s when the Soviet Union was established.\textsuperscript{8} The category “small Peoples of the North” became the instrument to calculate the demographics of the Northern communities, beginning with the first Special Polar Census of 1926–27, which registered all reindeer herders and hunters living in the North. From 1926 to 1993, the number of these communities accounted for the original 26 groups; after 1993, it was extended to include 40 current communities under the new status of the “native small-numbered people” with new political privileges.

\textsuperscript{5} See Table 1 of this work.

\textsuperscript{6} All communities are listed in the Act No. 255 of 2000 “On the Common List of Numerically Small Indigenous Peoples of Russia.” The seven groups with the status of KMN that are registered on this list but live primarily in other areas are the Abazin (North Caucasus), the Nağaybäk (Chelyabinsk oblast), the Bessermian (Udmurtia), the Vod’, the Komi-Izjorts (primarily Leningrad oblast), the Seto (Pskov oblast), and the Shapsugs (Krasnodarskiy kray). See Table 1 for the listing of these Peoples and a historical account of their demographics, from 1926 until 2010.

\textsuperscript{7} Scholars tend to use the term “small Peoples of the North,” hence the use of the established term in this work. At the same time, a more precise translation of \textit{malie} would be “minor”; the term in part was designed to capture an inferior (in comparison to demographically larger groups) positioning of Indigenous communities within an overall Soviet hierarchy of nations.

\textsuperscript{8} This number changed with each census: for 1939 it was 62 (with 101 categories unpublished in census data); for 1959 it was 109; for 1970 it was 122; for 1979 it was 125; for 1989 (last Soviet census) it was 128. See S. Sokolovsky, “Indigeneity Construction in the Russian Census 2002.” \textit{Sibirica} 6, no.1 (2007): Addendum; and also Table 1 of this work. The 2002 census accounted for 182 categories (142 groups and 40 sub-groups); while the 2010 census had 193 (145 groups and 48 sub-groups), or nested within groups recognized as separate, see Federal State Statistical Service, “Metodologicheskie Poyasnenia,” [Russian: Методологические Пояснения] (2010), http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/perepis2010/croc/Documents/Vol4/metod4.pdf
The numerical limitation of 50,000 or less people also originated with the small demographics of the first 26 groups. During Soviet times, the demographics served as what was then perceived to be evidence of these groups’ eventual extinction. While this perception of Indigenous demographics justified the need for state aid to these communities, it also institutionalized the “small number” characteristic of indigeneity into these groups’ ascribed identity. Hence, there came into being the descriptor of “malie” (in different contexts translated as “minor” or “small”) in the original “small Peoples of the North,” and “small-numbered” in the current designation, signifying indigeneity. Sergei Sokolovskiy observes that the numerical criterion was adapted in part for practical purposes: it helped contemporary policy makers to justify their decisions on assigning the status to some communities while denying it to others.9

Finally, the descriptor korennie originated in early Soviet nationality policies, particularly those classified as korenisatsiia (from the Russian noun koren’ or “root”). The engineers of the Soviet Union envisioned the state as a federal system of governance based upon a principle of self-determination of all nations. The nationality policies addressed the question of ensuring the rights of non-Russian groups to self-govern the lands considered and, often in the past, existing as their historical homes. Korenisatsiia provided political opportunities for non-Russian leaders to participate in the state administration of their communities, thus establishing the foundation for the development of an Indigenous elite in the Soviet political system.10 A significant part of these policies also targeted social living. Ethnic languages and cultural practices were promoted for the non-Russian groups that joined the Union. In the Soviet republics, the native language of a group became the official language of the territory. The state sponsored the development of native-language education and presses; these linguistic policies helped to

10. See part II of this work for a discussion of the set of policies targeting the development of political rights. For a detailed examination of korenisatsiia, see T. Martin, The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001). A cultural element of these policies was abolished during the late 1930s; yet some projects were resumed during the later Soviet years.
create written languages for oral-culture communities, including some Northern groups. The “small Peoples of the North” considered to be at an economic disadvantage also received state aid in support of bringing “socialist development” to ease their integration into the Union.\footnote{S. Sokolovskiy, “Russian Legal Concepts and the Demography of Indigenous Peoples,” in *Indigenous Peoples and Demography: The Complex Relation between Identity and Statistics*, eds. P. Axelsson and P. Sköld, (New York: Berghahn, 2011), 242.}

The contemporary Russian legal conception of indigeneity thus originated in Soviet assumptions about the Northern communities as vulnerable populations and inferior nationalities in comparison with demographically larger groups constituting the Soviet Union. Despite the changes in the regime of governance, this notion persisted, informing the contemporary approach to Indigenous issues in Russia, as the following sections demonstrate. Russian authorities continue to deny Indigenous Peoples the right to self-determine their political and economic affairs, forcing these groups to depend on state aid and guidance in their social and political affairs.


The current laws supporting the rights of Indigenous communities in Russia are a product of complex and ongoing events. The history of these developments is complex given the amount of changes, some unexpected and some ongoing, which continue to affect implementation of the main principles protecting Indigenous rights in Russia. This history began in the late 1980s- early 1990s as a part of the larger
project of constructing the institutions of democratic governance. In the area of nationality policies, that moment may be characterized by the notorious phrase of the first Russian President, Boris Yel’tsin (1991–1999), who, in 1992, offered to the leaders of the subjects of the transitioning Russian state to “take as much sovereignty as they could swallow.” President Vladimir Putin, who succeeded Yel’tsin in 2000, reversed the federal approach to the nationality policies. In many ways reactionary, Putin’s focus remains on stabilizing and strengthening the power of central authorities. As a result, the post-Soviet development of Indigenous legislature can be characterized as exhibiting “extreme” oscillation between decentralization and centralization depending on the degree of political power of the central government.14

1990s-Early 2000s

Regulations in the area of Indigenous rights fall within three general categories: the federal acts defining the political rights and privileges of Indigenous communities; regional acts corresponding to federal regulations in the same area, given that Indigenous issues are administered by the joint federal-regional powers; and laws dealing with the management of and access to natural resources that exist on federal and regional levels. The federal acts regulating Indigenous affairs are based on two Articles of the Constitution: Article 69 recognizes the international legal principles and norms of protecting Indigenous rights; and Article 72(1.1) places the responsibility for protecting the traditional lifestyles of Indigenous communities and their traditional environments on state institutions. In addition, and in respect to international law in general, Article 15(4) provides for the recognition and application of international norms, treaties, and agreements as a component of the state legal system.15

15. Prior to the enactment of the Constitution in 1993, the 1991 tentative decree assigned KMN exclusive rights for the use of natural resources located in the territories of

These two laws define land use for communities with Indigenous status: the former legalizes kinship-based economic cooperatives, or *obshchinas*,17 as legal entities with privileges in managing designated

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16. The Russian term *territorii traditsionnogo prirodopol’zovania* is translated in this work as “territories of traditional nature use.” Scholars also translate this term as “territories of traditional/historical inhabitancy” or “original homelands.” These territories extend over the Arctic and sub-Arctic territories, embracing the lands from the Kola Peninsula in the West to the Bering Strait in the East. In the South, these lands stretch to the Amur River and Sakhalin Island. They mark the territories considered traditional areas of settlement of Indigenous groups; the boundaries are defined in the legislature. However, these territories do not necessarily comply with the existing areas of residence of Indigenous communities.

17. The term *obshchina* (from the Russian “commune”) captures forms of historical organization of traditional economies of Indigenous Peoples. These economies relied on the principle of kinship as the key norm for managing property and land. Today, ventures registered as an *obshchina* are formed around family and/or kin ties and focused on traditional forms of subsistence. The members of an *obshchina* do not pay taxes, since their ventures are not registered as commercial entities. The changes to the laws, however, placed some communities in the position where they
lands; the latter reserves lands for traditional subsistence activities of Indigenous communities administered by their members. In addition, a number of federal codes protect the rights of KMN to use natural resources for subsistence, including: “On Fauna” of 1995 (in Russian, O Faune), “On Fishing and the Preservation of Aquatic Biological Resources” of 2004 (in Russian, O Ribolovstve i Sokhranenii Vodnikh Biologicheskikh Resursov), and “On Hunting and the Preservation of Hunting Resources and on the Introduction of Revisions into Several Legal Acts of the Russian Federation” of 2009 (in Russian, Ob Okhote i o Sokhranenii Okhotnichikh Resursov i o Vnesenii Izmeneniy v Otdelnie Zakonodatelnie Akti). With the changes introduced by Vladimir Putin’s government, all main federal laws were amended: articles and whole clauses were removed from the original laws, and so were the codes in particular areas of law. These changes limited and in some cases annulled the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

2000s–Today

The changes to Indigenous rights legislation happened as a part of more profound modifications to the mechanisms of governing federal-regional politics. Since the moment of Vladimir Putin’s ascendancy to power, the administration of political rights of nationalities have been increasingly defined within the parameters of state security. While initially, the move was a response to the waves of nationalism during the 1990s, with time the federal decision to consolidate

should rent the lands they use for their traditional subsistence practices registered as obshchina since 2009. For more on this, see Yakel, supra note 12, at 10.

18. In some regions, the members of the economic enterprises who register their venture as an obshchina may receive regional subsidies. Likewise, economic ventures located on the lands designated as the “territories of traditional nature use” may receive support from the regional government to maintain their traditional practices. These practices primarily consist of agricultural activities, fishing and/or hunting, and reindeer herding. Please see the part III of this work for a discussion of the degree to which these measures support the economic wellbeing of communities.

19. A history of struggles between the federal government and nationalist leaders during the early years of transitioning Russia contributed to the political course taken by the current Russian president. The events of the 1990s revealed the fragility of the central government to the pressures of regional ethnic leaders in the moments of transition. These struggles also demonstrated that the ethnic leaders would place
political authority transformed into what appears today as the federal government’s desire to “drive ethnicity out of politics,” as one scholar described it.\(^\text{20}\) Moreover, the structural arrangements of the Russian federal state were initially supportive of centralization. Graham Smith, for example, in his 1996 examination of the governing system of the new Russian state, saw it as a “highly centralized federation.”\(^\text{21}\) Smith was particularly concerned with the problem of lacking social commitment to accommodate diverse and at times conflicting interests of the different nationalities composing the Russian state. Smith envisioned a turn to autocracy, which would be supported not only by structural arrangements of state governance, but also by the very attitude of the political leaders toward managing relations between different cultural communities.

The question of security over resource revenues, an especially prominent issue after the 1998 financial crisis, was also of prime significance to the federal decision to centralize political power.\(^\text{22}\) In fact, evidence suggests that in the area of Indigenous issues, the government’s interest in profiting from the use of natural resources located on the lands of Indigenous groups had informed the core changes in the policies governing Indigenous rights. The fundamental role of hydrocarbons

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\(^{22}\) Federal government officials secured control over economic production, particularly in the areas of oil and gas. They issued provisions that helped to control the levies on exports of oil and gas, and non-ferrous metals. See: H. Oversloot, “The Homogeneity of Russia, or the Remains of an Empire (Federalism and Regionalism),” in *Managing Ethnic Diversity in Russia*, eds. O. Protsyk and B. Harzl (London: Routledge, 2013), 93; M. Olsen, “The Future of National Oil Companies in Russia and How They May Improve Their Global Competitiveness,” *Houston Journal of International Law* 35 (2013): 620–621, 645. This move helped the federal authorities to exert control over the operation of major national oil companies and thus secure their independence from the regions that are rich in resources.
in the Russian economy explains why the federal government strives to control these profits. In 2015, for example, revenues from oil and natural gas accounted for more than 40% of federal budget revenues. At the same time, the government’s interest in profiting from industrial development in Indigenous territories has exposed Indigenous communities to the dangers associated with industrial developments. The changes to the Forest, Land, and Water codes, which specify the principles for using forests and water resources, placed Indigenous groups in a position where they have to rent the territories allocated for their traditional subsistence and cultural practices (i.e., those designated as “territories of traditional nature use,” herein TTNU), and at times compete with companies who also have a right to license the land where Indigenous Peoples reside. These provisions are valid even on the lands designated for the communities’ traditional forms of subsistence. For example, in Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug—homeland to Indigenous Khant and Mansi—industrial developments are taking place on almost half of the territories designed as TTNU, with hundreds of extraction licenses issued to dozens of companies.

23. Some of the developments in this direction were visible in the original laws. For example, the federal law “On Subsoil” (1992) is designed to protect the interests of both Indigenous communities and the commercial parties involved. Given that the law does not guarantee priority of Indigenous communities to extract resources located on the territories they inhabit, the law primarily protects the interests of industries. The federal law “On Production Sharing Agreements” (1995) further specifies that the use of lands with a status of “a territory of traditional nature use” could only be possible with the permission of the authorities of a region.


26. In 2006, for example, 673 licenses were given to 61 companies. See L. Alferova, “Legal Provisions for Safeguarding the Rights of Indigenous Minorities of the North in the Khanty-Mansiisk Autonomous Region (Yugra), in Relation to
Further, the current laws also free companies from the responsibility to secure the wellbeing of communities whose lifestyles and subsistence practices may be disturbed by the proposed and/or ongoing industrial projects that may cause environmental degradation.\textsuperscript{27} Initially, two measures were created to ensure environmental safety of Indigenous communities—one involving ethnological and the other addressing ecological kinds of expertise. The ethnological expertise, created as an instrument to implement the provisions of the federal law N 82-FZ, guaranteed equal representation of interests by involving Indigenous Peoples in the scientific assessment of the potential consequences of economic development to their home communities. This kind of expertise, as the Russian legal scholar Yulia Yakel stresses, is practiced for the most part voluntarily and is not considered a requirement.\textsuperscript{28} The development of ecological expertise originated in 1995 as a means of implementing the federal law “On Ecological Expertise.” The measure lost its power in 2006; the law no longer stipulates that expert involvement is necessary in possible prevention and/or assessment of the socio-economic changes emergent from industrial projects.\textsuperscript{29} In the cases of environmental damage resulting from the use of territories registered as TTNU, responsible parties must pay compensation to the communities living on these territories.\textsuperscript{30} However, the compensation often cannot cover the damages done to the land, which communities may no longer use for subsistence practices after the company leaves. Given a history of industrial companies’ environmental rights violations against Indigenous communities,\textsuperscript{31} scholars express concern over the

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\textsuperscript{27} Yakel, supra note 12, at 18.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 10.
\textsuperscript{30} Alferova, supra note 26, at 157.
\textsuperscript{31} For an overview on this history, consult J. Agyeman and Y. Ogneva-Himmelberger, \textit{Environmental Justice and Sustainability in the Former Soviet Union} (Cambridge, United States of America: The MIT Press, 2009). Elena Dubinina gives a suggestive case study of the violations of environmental rights of Indigenous communities living in the Nenets Autonomous Okrug. See E. Dubinina,
future of Indigenous groups, particularly those located in the Arctic, the core territory targeted for current and future industrial developments by the Russian government.\textsuperscript{32} This area is also home to about one third of the entire Russian Indigenous population, or close to 82,500 people.\textsuperscript{33}

The recent changes to federal means of administration of Indigenous issues further impeded possibilities of implementing Indigenous rights by elimination of the federal agencies dealing directly with the issues of Indigenous Peoples and budget cuts. In 2000, the Goskomsever (State Committee for the North of Russia) was abolished. In 2011, the North and Indigenous Peoples Issues Committee of the Council of the Russian Federation also ceased to exist.\textsuperscript{34} Until 2014, Indigenous issues remained under the management of the Ministry of Regional Development, which was also abolished that year. Since 2015, the Federal Agency for Nationalities Affairs (in Russian, Agenstvo po Delam Natsional’nostey), created that year, oversees Indigenous issues as a part of the Agency’s work on the nationalities issues.\textsuperscript{35} The Agency is an executive body that administers and enforces existing laws and is directly subordinate to the president. Igor Barinov, previously the Federal Security Services colonel, heads the Agency. Some Russian scholars believe that Barinov was chosen for this position partly in response to the core purpose of contemporary nationality policies to eliminate influences of “ethnic” leaders on the

\textit{Impact of the Oil and Gas Industry on Human Security: Relation Between the National and the Human: Case Study: the Nenets Autonomous Okrug, Russia, Master’s thesis in Peace and Conflict Transformation, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tromsø, (2008).}


\textsuperscript{34} Kryazhkov, \textit{supra} note 12, at 148–9.

\textsuperscript{35} V. Putin, \textit{Ukaz Presidenta o Federal’nom Agentstve po Delam Natsional’nostey}, [Russian: Указ Президента о Федеральном Агентстве по Делам Национальности] N 168 (March 15, 2015), http://www.consultant.ru/cons/cgi/online.cgi?req=doc;base=LAW;n=177296#0
state governance. A brief analysis of the proposed distribution of the Agency’s budget suggests that Indigenous issues are not a priority of its work. Out of about 40 billion rubles the Agency requested to finance its programs for 2017–2025, less than 7% of the budget, or about 2.7 billion rubles, have been allocated for Indigenous issues. By comparison, the Agency plans to spend 4.2 billion rubles, or 10.5% of the total budget, for measures on the “prevention of extremism” (Russian: profilaktika ekstremizma), and 11.2 billion rubles, or 28% of the total budget, for the development of a state-social partnership (in Russian, gosudarstvenno-obschestvennoe partnerstvo). The Agency’s relative disregard of the needs of Indigenous communities corresponds to the larger position of the federal government on Indigenous issues, given that the amount of funding allocated for this area has been declining since 2009. Then the amount allocated for the management of Indigenous issues was 600 million rubles or about 20 million dollars. The current sum, in comparison, is about 337.5 million rubles annually, or a little over 5.6 million dollars, which is a little less than the amount allocated in 2016 of 390 million rubles, or about 6.4 million dollars. Given that since 2008, the federal government directly subsidizes the regions with Indigenous populations instead of using the targeted program approach utilized previously (which is no longer active due in part to corruption), the Indigenous residents

36. Some Russian scholars define the core of these policies as a strategy of “permanent intervention at the actor level [federal appointments to the power positions], with zero tolerance for ethnic violence; prosecution of ‘unauthorized’ nationalist movements, organizations, and leaders; and a ban on ethnic political parties.” See A. Shcherbak and K. Sych, “Trends in Russian Nationalities Policy,” Problems of Post-Communism, 63 (2016): 15.


39. The Chairman of the Federation Council at the Federal Assembly of Russia, Vyacheslav Shtyrov, for example, reports that the three federal funding programs
of the subjects that directly depend on federal funding to support Indigenous communities—such as the Tuva and Komi republics—will likely continue to experience severe poverty. In part, the cuts express a critical attitude of federal authorities to the programs supporting Indigenous traditional activities, since these programs bring no profit.40

The changes to the federal laws and means of administration of Indigenous affairs influenced the governments of the Russian subjects to amend their legal provisions, thus limiting the rights of Indigenous groups guaranteed to these communities by the legislation of the subjects. One of the measures that affected Indigenous communities most was the termination in 2004 of the right of federal subjects to create representation quotas for Indigenous communities in the subjects’ governments. The system of quotas, which originated in the Soviet era, supports political opportunities of non-Russian nationalities living in the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic. In the 1990s, it ensured Indigenous representation in the regional governments in a number of post-Soviet subjects: Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug (herein KMAO), the Sakha Republic, Nenets Autonomous Okrug, Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, the Republic of Buryatia, the Altai Republic, and also in Dagestan.41 The governments of these targeting Indigenous issues since 1991 have been implemented inconsistently in part due to corruption. See Vyacheslav Shtyrov, “Gosudarstvennaya Politika v Oblasti Obespecheniya Ustoychivogo Razvitiya Korennikh Malochislennih Narodov Severa, Sibiri i Dal’nego Vostoka Rossiyskoy Federatsii,” [Russian: Государственная Политика в Области Обеспечения Устойчивого Развития Коренных Малочисленных Народов Севера, Сибири и Дальнего Востока Российской Федерации.] in Sovremennoe Sostoyanie i Puti Razvitiya Korennikh Malochislennih Narodov Severa, Sibiri i Dal’nego Vostoka Rossiyskoy Federatsii. [Russian: Современное Состояние и Пути Развития Коренных Малочисленных Народов Севера, Сибири и Дальнего Востока Российской Федерации], Vyacheslav Shtyrov ed. (2012), 17–8.


subjects used a system of single-member electoral districts to ensure representation of Indigenous politicians in the regional legislative assemblies. For example, in KMAO, six out of 23 deputies in 1996 were Indigenous; five out of 25 deputies in 2001 were selected by this principle to the KMAO government. In Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, three out of 21 deputies were Indigenous in both 1996 and 2001, and three out of 22 were Indigenous in 2005. In Nenets Autonomous Okrug, five out of 15 deputies were Indigenous in 1994, 1996, and 2001. Likewise, in Sakha, the single-member electoral districts originally designated 12 out of 70 seats in the legislative assembly of the republic to the Indigenous Evenks. The new norms of regulating the subjects’ parliaments led to the electoral districts becoming larger. To form single-member districts in the areas designated as traditional homelands of the KMN became, according to one Russian scholar, impossible. In the Nenets Autonomous Okrug the quota system was annulled in 2005 by the decisions of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, which found the provision invalid. Likewise, in Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, the changes happened in 2009, and in KMAO this happened very recently in 2015. In other subjects, the governments also no longer guarantee quota-based representation to Indigenous politicians in their institutions of governances.

42. Ibid.
44. Ibid., 25–26.
46. See respectively Filippova, supra note 43, at 24; Gosudarstvennyaya Duma Yamalo-Nenetskogo Avtonomnogo Okruga, O Vnesenii Izmeneniya v Zakon Yamalo-Nenetskogo Avtonomnogo Okruga, [Russian: О Внесении Изменения в Закон Ямало-Ненецкого Автономного Округа “О Выборах Депутатов Государственной Думы Ямало-Ненецкого Автономного Округа”
The final factors which affect political and legal rights of Indigenous Peoples stem from measures targeting the limitation of political autonomy of the Russian subjects, particularly from the creation of the regime of law enforcement and the policy on mergers. The regime of law enforcement, constructed to secure federal powers on the regional levels, focused primarily on placing federal control over the appointments of prosecutors, judges, and, to a lesser degree, police officials.47 As Moscow-appointed administrators took control over a number of the subjects of the Russian Federation, the regionally elected leaders were removed from their positions in the governments of the subjects as well as from the upper house of the Parliament. Today, the majority of the highest-ranking officials in the subjects are, as a rule,

47. The move was a response to the preceding post-Soviet measures of regulating federal-regional political relations. Thus, with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, governing powers were passed to the chairmen of the regional executive committees (ispolkomi), functioning as parts of the Councils of People’s Deputies who were elected in 1990. In 1991, the new position of “head of administration” was created, which became the governor position in all regions except for republics, whose leaders called themselves presidents. In 1992, President Boris Yel’tsin appointed governors in all regions except for seven republics, who had elected their presidents. By the late 1990s, President Yel’tsin had to yield to the pressures of the regional leaders and allow direct elections for the first time in most regions of Russia. This occurred between the fall of 1996 and the spring of 1997. The 1999 federal law established rules for electing regional governors, and eliminated the right of the president to remove or appoint governors. President Vladimir Putin cancelled this ruling in 2004. The current system of appointing governors, first to be nominated by the President, was then instituted. In addition, the president appointed special representatives to oversee governance of each of the seven Federal okrugs of the state; wherein okrugs are mere units of administration created in 2000 in support of strengthening the powers of federal authorities. For a detailed discussion and analysis of the professional backgrounds of the elected and appointed governors for this period (1992–2010), see N. Buckley, et al., “The Political Economy of Russian Gubernatorial Election and Appointment,” Europe Asia Studies, 66 no.8 (2014): 1218–1220. For an analysis of centralization measures, consult Oversloot, supra note 22, at 93–103. For the discussion of the implications of centralization on the regional and local governance, see B. Krug, and A. Libman, “Commitment to Local Autonomy in Non-Democracies: Russia and China Compared,” Constitutional Political Economy 26, no. 2 (2015): 221–245.
born outside of the area they serve; the appointed governors, likewise, tend to come from the federal bureaucracy. Given the professional background and the personal aspirations of these officials, they tend to use the instruments of governance to serve the interests of federal government while advancing their own careers. The interests of the people, whose lives they administer, are thus not their first priority; often federal appointments create barriers for non-Russian and local leaders to implement the existing provisions that support minority rights. At times, the implementation of these rights, especially in regions rich with oil, jeopardizes the government’s interest in profiting from industrial development in Indigenous territories. These changes led to the increasingly pervasive abuse of Indigenous rights by regional and local administrations.

The policy on mergers (in Russian, *uplotnenie*) further stripped Indigenous communities of political opportunities. The representation of subjects in the Russian federal structure remains predominantly territorial. While a little over one third of the 83 subject territories of Russia are defined by ethnic criteria—the 22 republics and now four autonomous okrugs—only in okrugs are groups with Indigenous status recognized as those residing on their homeland territories with a formal right to govern these territories. Until 2007, the number of okrugs was seven; that year, three autonomous okrugs originally created as homelands for Indigenous groups, were abolished: the Koryak, the Taymyr (Dolgano-Nenets), and the Evenk okrugs were merged into the Russian-dominated Krasnoyarsk and Kamchatka Territories. Despite that, this right has, in essence, not been actualized given the structural difficulties and the current means of administering the state. Reducing the number of okrugs from seven to four lessened the already limited

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48. What is noteworthy here is that the share of non-Russian nationalities among the governors remains at a high 80%. See Buckley et al., *supra* note 47, at 1214, 1229. This 80% signifies a trait of continuation of the Soviet practice of appointing leaders of the non-Russian Peoples from the nationalities whose interests they were to represent. At the same time, the nationality alone is not a sufficient condition to guarantee that a leader would support the interests of the Peoples of the region.

49. This number does not include the contested territories in Ukraine.


51. These are Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug, Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug (both okrugs are constituent parts of Tumen’ Oblast), Nenets Autonomous Okrug
political choices of Indigenous politicians. The possibility of further mergers in the near future is real.\textsuperscript{52}

c) Structural Factors Contributing to Inequality

The effects of structural violence on Indigenous communities were made more severe by the structural factors that have historically contributed to the political and social inequality of Indigenous groups, with the wide geographical distribution of Indigenous communities being the primary factor. The widely-dispersed patterns of living, prominent among many Indigenous communities today, historically prevented Indigenous persons from relying on instruments of state administration to solve problems in their communities. Despite the original vision of the Soviet leaders to create a state based upon the principle of self-determination of all nations, Soviet Indigenous communities were forced to adapt to the Soviet system of governance. The territorial-administrative division of the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic did not correspond to the geographical locations of diverse and politically autonomous Indigenous groups. The forcible Soviet resettlement projects further contributed to a situation in which members of one people became demographical minorities living in different administrative units of Soviet Russia, governed by the members of the associated political party.

Today, members of Indigenous communities are located in 27 of 83 subject territories of the federation. They do not constitute a majority in any of the regions of the Russian Federation, including the autonomous okrugs: Indigenous populations comprise less than 4\% of the total population of the northern regions.\textsuperscript{53} Only in Koryak Okrug, whose

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item[(a)] A part of Arkhangelsk Oblast and Chukotka Autonomous Okrug. Chukotka Autonomous Okrug (created in 1930 as a homeland to the Chukchi, native to Chukotka) was a constituent part of Magadan Oblast since 1953. It gained independence from the Oblast in 1992 and since then remains only one of four okrugs of the Russian Federation with no subordinate host region.
\item[(53)] Tishkov, Novikova, and Pivneva, \textit{supra} note 33, at 279. This number remains relatively steady for the 26 original Indigenous communities: Kozlov and Lisitsyn report that in
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
autonomous status was recently abolished, and in Chukotka Autonomous Okrug, does the population of KMN exceed 25% of the total, with the share of KMN being 40.3% and 30.7% respectively. These data, however, signify that these regions are overall sparsely populated. Even on the lands designated for traditional subsistence practices, Indigenous populations are frequently a demographic minority. For example, in Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug, Indigenous communities constitute only 11% of the total population residing on lands with TTNU status. Further, Indigenous persons sometimes find themselves as residents of homelands designated to a group to which they do not belong. For example, some of the Even, the Dolgan, the Chuckchi, and the Yukagir historically resided in the lands of what is now the Sakha Republic. With the institution of the Soviet system in Sakha (Soviet Yakutia), they found themselves under the administration of the ethnic Sakha people and Russian authorities, which remains the case today.

These widely dispersed patterns of living resulted in Indigenous communities being under the control of administrations that are not of their own choosing, as a rule. While this was the case during the Soviet era, the Soviet means of governance ensured some uniformity in the ways in which Indigenous persons were treated with no regard to the place of their residence as long as they were Soviet citizens. Further, with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the new subjects of the transitioning Russian state found themselves free to construct their own laws and tools of governance for most of the 1990s. As a result, different subjects constructed their approach to protecting Indigenous rights according to the degree to which this new body of laws supported the interests of those who found themselves at the helm of the new subject’s government. Formally, all subjects of the

1989, the share of Indigenous persons in the northern regions was 4.4%, resulting in part from a continuous migration to the North since the 1930s. See A. Kozlov and D. Lisitsyn. “Arctic Russia,” in Health Transitions in Arctic Populations, T.K. Young and P. Bjerregaard, P. eds. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 86.


Russian Federation had to comply with federal regulations. However, the interpretation of these regulations at the regional level depended, among other factors, on the priorities of the regional government. As a result, the situation of Indigenous groups often depends on the ways in which regional authorities treat the question of Indigenous rights. To illustrate, in Tuva (home to the Tuvan-Tozhin communities), and the Komi (home to the Khant, the Mansi, and the Nenets), no mechanisms designed specifically in support of Indigenous rights are available. In Sakha, on the other hand, a number of measures were created, including the designation of seats for Indigenous persons in the State assembly. Given how small and widely dispersed Indigenous communities are, it is very difficult for Indigenous leaders to institute changes to the ways in which their lives are administered at the regional and federal levels today, as the next part of this work demonstrates.

To conclude, the current approach of the Russian government to Indigenous issues reflects the values and interests of the authorities currently in positions of power. Despite the changes in the regime of governance, the present modes of federal services to Russian Indigenous communities remain similar to those offered to these communities during the Soviet era. The treatment of Indigenous issues stemming from the Soviet approach to the rights of the groups currently recognized to have Indigenous status, does not focus on the creation of politically and culturally autonomous communities. Instead, Indigenous groups remain dependent on federal aid and services and are subject to a range of rights violations. To change this situation, the Russian government must support the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. It must create measures that would formally and systematically address political, economic, cultural and social interests of Indigenous communities on all levels, and would enable Indigenous leaders to make decisions about the future of the communities who elect them. Indigenous issues must be addressed as an integral part of Russian nationality policies, and as an integral part

56. To make this estimation, the author consulted the texts of the Constitutions of these republics available at the website of the consortium Kodeks at http://docs.cntd.ru/document/906705011. The author also used official webpages of the governments of these republics to examine administrative structures of these republics’ governments.
of the opportunity to construct a system of governance based upon values of multiculturalism.

II. Means of Resistance to Structural Violence: Indigenous Politics

This essay examines the political upheavals among Indigenous communities during the post-Soviet period. It argues that despite a somewhat prevalent scholarly perception of these struggles as elements of a movement, these upheavals never developed into an organized statewide set of actions in support of Indigenous rights. Nor did the leaders of these upheavals pursue goals that would allow one to characterize their mobilizations as components of a unified Indigenous struggle, given that the core element of indigeneity signifies a right to self-determined political existence of a group. These upheavals, by their consequences, were abortive struggles primarily focused on amending a local situation, economic conditions and/or political opportunities of particular communities. At the same time, these struggles supported the development of Indigenous professional politics, which remains the main form of Indigenous advocacy today. This essay reviews cases of rural protests, Indigenous mobilizations focused on recognition of a community to Indigenous status, and struggles for greater political opportunities for Indigenous leaders. It uses a socio-historical perspective to analyze these political upheavals and to demonstrate that the abortive character of these upheavals a) resulted from the specific historic circumstances within which these upheavals took place; and b) reinforced contemporary forms of violence against Indigenous communities.

a) Indigenous Political Mobilizations in Post-Soviet Russia: Cases

Political upheavals took place in numerous Indigenous communities during the 1980s and 1990s, in parallel with other political mobilizations of ethnic groups living in Russia. A number of factors generated these upheavals. First, they originated in the overall political climate of the
Soviet Union during the late 1980s. This was the time of liberalization reforms, initiated by the last General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Michael Gorbachev. The decisions of the 1989 September Plenum session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in particular stressed the development of programs to ensure equal cultural and political rights to all nations and nationalities. The economic instability of this period also contributed to the political climate in the country, as did changes in Soviet foreign policies. These factors instigated criticism, primarily in the popular press, of the cultural and ecological rights abuses occurring against Indigenous Peoples, which in turn found a response across many communities in the form of political unrest.

The political climate of the late 1980s also liberated the voices of Indigenous leaders who, during Soviet times, might have been charged with nationalism and imprisoned for their advocacy. These leaders sometimes found themselves in the position of being the alternative to the party officials, representing the interests of their people at the levels of local, regional and, in a few cases, federal governance. This position allowed them to participate in the development of Indigenous rights legislation during the time of transition, influencing the transformation of Indigenous mobilizations into professional advocacy. While instances of political events among Indigenous communities are not well studied, a few documented cases provide some understanding of the character and the outcomes of these protests. Three different kinds of mobilizations, classified by the goals of these


58. For example, Severnye Prostori, an all-state journal published annually since 1985, became one of the main sources to which Indigenous persons would write to share their grievances. In 1994, another all-state journal, *Zjivaya Arktika*, was established; in 1999, it became the main journal of RAIPON.

59. For example, most of the Shors intellectuals were charged with nationalists’ crimes and their work was destroyed. Other forms of discrimination included forced assimilation, hate crimes, and the ecological war against these groups in the form of industrial developments of their lands, which led to the destruction of their traditional lifestyles and falling numbers of their reindeer. See N. Vakhtin, “Native Peoples of the Russian Far North, in Polar Peoples: Self-determination and Development,” in *Polar Peoples: Self Determination and Development*, Minority Rights Group ed. (1994), 67, 52.
mobilizations, are chosen for this study: rural protests, targeting needs and grievances of particular village communities; struggles focused on gaining Indigenous (i.e., that of korennie malochisliveennie narodi) status for communities not included in the original list of the 26 small-numbered peoples of the North; and political activities intended to expand political and legal rights of Russian Indigenous Peoples.

i) Rural protests

A number of Indigenous protests took place in rural areas during the 1980s and 1990s. A few cases are particularly demonstrative of the abortive character of these struggles: a protest of the rural Koryak against the liquidation of their village, Paren’, in Kamchatka in 1986; the Nanai villagers’ campaign against building tourist establishments on the land of their village, Sikachi-Alyan, Khabarovskii Kray, in 1989; and an appeal of the Itelmen from the Kovran village, in Kamchatka, to the United Nations to help restore electricity in the village in 1993.

In the case of the Koryak villagers, local officials found the village costly to sustain because of its location, accessible only by helicopter, and proposed the villagers relocate to a larger settlement. The villagers refused. They contacted local press and, having publicized their grievances, won their case and were left to decide their future for themselves.60 However, the village continued to deteriorate; the place remains in squalid conditions to this day.61 The protest, while generating a response to a particular problem, did not initiate substantial changes in the lives of villagers.

The second 1989 case saw the Nanai villagers of Sikachi-Alyan lobby the regional administration in opposition to the building of private vacation homes and tourist establishments on the territory of their village

60. Ibid., 70–71.
61. In the 2000s, the situation of the village became catastrophic: the village, which at that time consisted of little over 60 people, had not received any food supplies for some time; electricity was available for only a few hours a day; the village had scarce means of communication; and the village had no doctors. The appeal to the Indigenous rights organization RAIPON and to the regional press and television helped the villagers get food supplies and medical assistance. See T. Efremenko, “Agonia Parenya,” [Russian: Агония Пареня] on Lenta.ru. (2010), https://lenta.ru/articles/2010/07/02/paren/. The village still maintains its existence.
and the surrounding grounds. They demanded the return of lands taken from the village in the 1960s. The villagers organized a Soviet-style committee, selsoviet (village council), to govern their affairs and refused to follow decisions of local officials. Since then, the council remains the main decision-making body at the village. Yet, no larger changes to the lives of villagers have taken place since 1989 apart from the work on the protection of a heritage site located close to the village. This site, which has petroglyphs dated between 12,000–9000 BC, is now included in the tentative list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Today, the head of the village would like to establish a tourist center in the village to support the village economy and to care for the site.

In the 1993 case, the Itelmen of Kovran village of the then-Koryak Autonomous Okrug appealed to the United Nations asking for help in sustaining their lives, as they had been left with almost no electrical power and severe food shortages. Local and regional administrations disregarded their problems, and were difficult to contact because of poor means of communication. The local teachers tried to alleviate their situation by appealing to the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva. Supported by foreign scholars working in the village, they composed a letter in which they described their difficulties. In a few months, local authorities restored the electrical power in the village, which suggests that their pleas were heard. Today, the village is known primarily for its cultural events revitalized in part by activists and cultural leaders. Similarly to the other two cases, the struggle was brief, did not spread outside of the immediate site of protest, and targeted only local problems. Thus, all three protests helped their respective situations as short-term interventions. They supported the development

62. Vakhtin, supra note 59, at 70.
of institutions of self-governance (such as village councils) and helped to spread awareness about the difficulties Indigenous communities faced. At the same time, they did not constitute elements of a larger organized action, were short-lived and did not focus on instituting changes to their position in the state political system.

ii) Struggle for Recognition: Indigenous Mobilizations in the Altai Republic and Karelia

A more organized form of mobilization took place in urban areas. The leaders of these upheavals were professional politicians, intellectuals and scholars who worked at different levels and engaged communities in building institutions of Indigenous governance as parts of the state system. A number of these protests were struggles for the attainment of Indigenous status for the communities not included in the original list of 26 peoples in 1993. Among these were mobilizations of five Turkic communities residing in the Altai Republic and in the neighboring Altai Kray and Kemerovo Oblast’, namely the Telengit, the Teleut, the Kumandin, the Chelkan, and the Shor; and a struggle of a Finno-Ugric community, the Veps, residing in the Republic of Karelia and in Leningradskaya Oblast’.

The struggle of the Turkic communities demonstrates how political privileges associated with status become obstacles to a larger organized political movement; it also shows that the attainment of status influences social conflicts and produces confusion in the ways people perceive their group identity. The specifics of the struggles of these communities are defined by the history of their relationship with the Altai people, a larger people historically considered an ethnos to which four of these communities (all but the Shor) belonged as sub-groups. During its initial stages, the struggle was combined in

67. The year of 1993 marks the time of the adoption of the Russian Constitution, which confirmed the Indigenous status and rights of the original 26 “small peoples of the North.” Article 69 of the Constitution “guarantee[s] these communities the rights of the Indigenous peoples (i.e., korennie malochilseennie narodi) in accord with generally accepted international principles, the norms of the international law and the international treaties adapted by the Russian Federation.” See Russian Federation, Constitution of Russian Federation, (1993), http://www.constitution.ru/
solidarity with the members of a larger Altai community; during later stages, it led to disunity, which intensified with these groups gaining the status of *korennie malochislennie narodi* in 2000. These events began with the late 1980s regional protests against the construction of the Katun’ hydroelectric power plant, which endangered ecological conditions and cultural practices of many communities living in the Altai Republic. The protests were successful: not only did they help to stop the construction, but they also unified members of different Altai groups, even those who were historically estranged. This early 1990s sense of unity among different communities across the Republic was also marked by the revival of traditional family structures as a part of an overall cultural revitalization of the Altai peoples. Among the communities historically residing in Altai, traditional extended family structures maintained their social role during the Soviet period, but only unofficially. During the transition period, these structures regained their significance in regulating relations among different communities (i.e., extended families, or *seok* in Altai). Representatives of different *seoks* began meeting at unified Soviet style conferences (in Russian, *s’ezdi*) to solve the problems of sustaining the economy, ecology and culture of their communities. The *seoks* ’leaders increasingly began turning to political means to defend the wellbeing of their lands, primarily by demanding that the local authorities respect the rights of communities to manage sacred sites and mountains. Some of these *seoks* initiated the creation of organizations to facilitate political mobilization for the Altai people. The recognition of the extended family as an institution of social organization among different Altai communities found its recognition in the republican legislature; and thus, is evidence of some success of *seoks* ’-based mobilizations in Altai.

69. One of the primary goals of the *seoks* 'programs was revitalization of the ceremonies of respect for the forests, mountains or fauna considered sacred keepers of the family. See N. Tadina, “Ekologia i Kul’turnyi Landshaft Altaya v Kontekste Mezjetnicheskoy Kommunikatsii,” [Russian: Экология и Культурный Ландшафт Алтая в Контексте Межэтнической Коммуникации.] in The Izvestia of the Altai State University 3, no. 4 (2009): 211–2.
In parallel to these activities, Indigenous leaders of particular communities, most prominently of the Teleut, the Tubalar, and the Chelkan, initiated campaigns in support of the needs of their specific communities, which had been historically marginalized economically and culturally within the larger Altai community. Since the 1990s, their leaders have demanded larger political representation for their communities, similar to the seoks’-based activism, as a part of a larger unified movement. These intentions defined the strategies the leaders used, the primary one being the formation of organizations and the creation of strategic alliances. The first republic-wide organization, Ene-Til, was created in Gorno-Altaisk in 1989 to include representatives of all Altai communities along with scholars, intellectuals and journalists. What unified the leaders at that moment was the goal of gaining autonomy for their territory, then existing as an oblast’ subordinated to the larger Altai Kray. When the region was officially recognized as a republic in 1992, the sense of solidarity dissipated as the leaders of different communities focused on advancing the political and economic positions of their particular communities against other groups residing in the region, primarily the Altai people. Thus, in 1992, the Northern groups—the Tubalar, the Chelkan and the Kumandin—formed the Association of the Northern Ethnos of the Altai as a way to strengthen their political presence in the region. This organization became the first legally registered entity in the region. While the changes in its goals and composition influenced some changes in its activities, it remained a body representing interests of more than one peoples. The leaders of some communities also united with representatives of their people living outside of the Altai

71. Other examples include the Association of the Chelkan and the Association of the Tubalar formed in the 1990s. The members of these organizations also belonged to Ene-Til. The leaders lobbied local authorities for recognition of their communities in the status of a disappearing ethnic group; demanded means of protecting the lands and their communities used for cultural practices and traditional forms of subsistence; and requested financial support. One proposal demanded that industrial companies, working on community lands, support the communities by paying 5% of their revenues to the local Indigenous Peoples. See Chemchieva, supra note 57, at 23.


73. Ibid., 34, 43, 47.
Republic. For example, the Teleut of the Altai collaborated with members of Ene-Bayat, a Teleut organization of the Kemerovskaya Oblast’. Similarly, the Altai-based members of the Kumandin and Shor communities worked in solidarity with political activists representing interests of their people living outside of the Altai. The leaders appealed to international standards, particularly the ILO Convention 169, demanding recognition of the political and cultural rights of their communities. They even attempted to approach federal authorities: for example, in 1992, they wrote a letter to President Boris Yeltsin. However, the key demands were cultural and language revival, economic and political opportunities for their communities, and better education for Indigenous children. In 1999, the republic government recognized the Tubalar and the Chelkan in the status of *korennie malochislennie narodi*, which in turn influenced recognition of these communities in this status at the federal level in 2000. The Shor, the Kumandin and the Teleut also gained the status in 2000, the moment that marked the conclusion to their initial political project.

The attainment of this status resulted in little substantive change to the situations of Altai Indigenous communities. Scholars report a loss of political aspirations among Indigenous activists, and a pervasive lack of trust among Indigenous men and women toward the authorities administering Indigenous issues and the instruments designed to support Indigenous wellbeing, as well as toward organizations that came to represent Indigenous interests in the post-Soviet Altai. Gaining the status also intensified disunity among the population of Altai. Many individuals of Altai nationality feel disfranchised, since they frequently face conditions similar to those of Indigenous men and women, yet are unable to enjoy the benefits associated with the Indigenous status. Further, formal separation of the communities with the status of *korennie malochislennie narodi* from the Altai people affected demographics of

76. *Ibid.*, 82, 94.
78. *Ibid.*, 123. Indigenous organizations remain a part of the Altai political landscape today, primarily focusing on the ecological rights of Indigenous groups.
the Altai, which in turn may have political implications endangering the status of Altai as a republic. This factor further increased a sense of hostility among some Altai persons toward their Indigenous neighbors. Indigenous persons, in turn, experience a pronounced sense of dual identity. While they remain members of the polity of the Altai Republic, they feel alienated from the larger Altai community since they remain unable to govern their own communities autonomously from the Altai authorities. Thus, attaining status for the Altai communities resulted in an increase in the social vulnerability of these peoples.

The Veps, in contrast with the Altai communities, formally existed as a separate people since the creation of the Soviet Union, and even had their own national territory from 1927 until 1956. Since 1956, the Veps remained under the jurisdiction of the Republic of Karelia with two other main peoples living in the republic: the Karelian and the Indigenous Saami. The Veps gained the status of korennie malochislennie narodi (KMN) in 2000, and the status of KMN living in the areas of the North, Siberia and the Far East in 2006. While the Veps, similar to the Altai activists, formed organizations as the key means to lobby for their status, their recognition as KMN was primarily the result of the work of one establishment: the Society of Vepsian Culture (Obschestvo Vepskoy Kul’turi), which engaged international instruments supporting Indigenous rights to buttress its political campaign. The Society was formed in 1989 with the primary goal of maintaining and reviving Veps culture and language. In 1994, a founder of the Society and its prominent leader, a Veps scholar named Zinaida Strogalschikova, became a deputy to the first convocation of the Karelia Legislative Assembly (Zakonodatel’noe Sobranie), which formulated the instruments of self-governance of the post-Soviet Karelia. In 2002, she represented Russian Indigenous communities as a member of the United Nations Permanent Forum on

80. Ibid., 179–182.
Indigenous Issues. The prominent position of Strogalschikova and her knowledge of international principles supporting Indigenous rights led her to engage the international community in support of the Veps’ case as a way to attain status for her people. In the early 1990s, she lobbied the government of Karelia for the right of her organization to represent the Veps at the Working Group of Indigenous Peoples of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC). In 1997, Strogalschikova represented the Veps at the Working Group, where her participation in the work of the BEAC signified that the BEAC members recognized the Veps as Indigenous peoples. Strogalschikova observes that this recognition was an important factor influencing the Karelia and federal authorities to recognize the Veps as korennie malochislennie narodi. The members of the Society continued to collaborate with the BEAC, and applied for international grants in the 1990s. Since 2005, the Society has also been supported by funds provided by the authorities of the republic and the Saami Parliament of Norway.

The degree to which attaining this status changed the economic, social and political situation of the Veps communities remains a subject of further research. Current findings provide a rather bleak picture of the economic situation facing these communities (see part III of this chapter for details). At the same time, this case suggests that collaboration between the Veps and international Indigenous rights bodies might have strengthened the political positioning of the Veps activists at the republican and even federal governing bodies. This collaboration may gain prominence in the future, given the significance of the Arctic in the global economy, and the relatively prominent position of Indigenous politicians in the governance of the Arctic.

83. Ibid., 58–59.
85. The history of Indigenous activism at the Arctic Council is particularly promising. The Council, created in 1996, is a body supporting cooperation of the Arctic states: the United States of America, Canada, the Russian Federation and the five Nordic states, regarding the development of the Arctic. See Arctic Council, Ottawa Declaration: Declaration on the Establishment of the Arctic Council, (1996).
As these cases demonstrate, political mobilizations among communities whose leaders focused on gaining the status of korennie malochislennie narodi for their people were more organized and sustained in comparison with rural protests. While in some cases these struggles might have resulted in creating greater economic and social opportunities for the members of these communities, their outcomes did not substantively change the political positions of Indigenous leaders at the levels of regional and federal governance. Nor did they compose elements of struggle at the all-state level, while—as the case of the Altai communities suggests—the instances of mobilizations among Indigenous politicians living in different territorial administrative units took place for as long as their participants were unified by a similar set of interests and goals, but were short-lived and focused on the aims of immediate significance to the participants.

iii) Okrug-Level Struggles: The Case of KMAO

The struggles at the level of okrugs remain by far the most prominent and sustained form of Indigenous mobilizations. In the okrugs, activists looked for opportunities to join the governments of the subjects where they lived; created professional organizations to represent Indigenous interests to the local and federal governments; and worked with international human rights activists and scholars. Such form of struggle was particularly prominent among leaders of the communities of the original 26 peoples. A case of activism of the Khant and the Mansi from Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug (herein KMAO) is particularly demonstrative here, while it is also exceptional. The KMAO government was the first to pass regulations supporting Indigenous rights to lands in 1992, surpassing similar developments at the federal level. The government was also among the most active in resisting federal limitations of Indigenous rights in the early 2000s. The KMAO Assembly of Representatives of Indigenous Peoples, role of Indigenous politicians at this forum evolved from the status of observers to permanent participants. It guarantees them the right to veto a specific proposal should they reject it. See T. Koivurova and L. Heinämäki, “The Participation of Indigenous Peoples in International Norm-Making in the Arctic,” Polar Record 42, no. 2 (2006).
created in 1996 as a part of the KMAO Duma (Parliament), remains the body responsible for drafting legislation in support of Indigenous rights. In comparison to similar entities created by politicians in the other okrugs, the KMAO Assembly enjoys a greater degree of political power: it convenes separately from the Duma and the Chairman of the Assembly, elected by the members of the Assembly, simultaneously serves as one of the Vice-Chairmen of the Duma. The KMAO politicians also instituted a quota system allocating initially six seats out of 23 total seats at the Duma to deputies representing the interests of Indigenous communities. While similar provisions also functioned in other okrugs, most prominently in Nenets Autonomous Okrug (herein NAO) and Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug (YNAO), only in the KMAO had the provision lasted until 2015. In other okrugs, it was annulled in 2008 (NAO) and in 2009 (YNAO). Finally, the government has also been supporting Indigenous communities primarily from the okrug budget, with little support from federal subsidies.

The two crucial factors that shaped political activities of KMAO activists are the history of Indigenous activism in the okrug, and the location of oil industries in KMAO. Since KMAO was created in 1930 as a homeland territory for the Indigenous Khant and Mansi, Indigenous resistance in the okrug was, while sporadic and for the most part unsuccessful, ongoing. The oil development that began in


The Kazim war (1931–1934) is the most well known and most well organized struggle led by joint forces, primarily the Khant and the Nenets. For the chronology of these struggles and analysis, see respectively: S. Piskunov, Kazimskie Vosstaniya 1931–1934 gg., [Russian: Казымские Восстания 1931 - 1934 гг.] (2004), http://www.hrono.ru/sobyt/1931sssr.html and A. Leete, “The Role of Young people in Resistance Against the Soviet Rule Among the Northern Peoples in the 1930s–1940s,” Folklore: Electronic Journal of Folklore 41 (2009). Other groups
the 1960s left many communities landless, leading Indigenous rights struggles to take the form of ecological resistance. Intellectuals and scholars supported the Indigenous cause, protesting against ecological degradation in the region. During the late 1980s, the protests against industrial developments in the area were numerous. Some took the form of blocking railroads, pipelines or roads projects near or leading to the sites of industrial development. Others, in urban areas, targeted local administrations. Among the most well known were “chum” protests, where activists used a chum, a tent of animal skins representing a traditional Indigenous house, to symbolically bring Indigenous voices into these protests. A famous 1990 protest took place in the Varyogansk area. The activists used a chum to block the rail and road construction leading to Yamal, a key area of the energy complexes. Organized by Yuri Vella, a Nenets writer, and supported by known Indigenous politicians including Evdokiy Gaer, it received statewide news coverage, bringing attention to the consequences of ecological degradation for Indigenous communities. A similar protest took place in 1993 in the Nizjnevartovsk area, where oil developments led to severe ecological damage to the Russkinskie community lands. Activists blocked the traffic with a chum, placed on the bridge over the Tromuygan River. The protest was supported by the oil company drivers, and helped to bring about compensation to Indigenous and non-Indigenous inhabitants of the affected community. An urban site chum picket took place in 1993 in the KMAO capital of Khanti-Mansiysk, organized by members of the organization Spasenie Ugri (Association for the Salvation of the Ugra). The activists placed a chum in front of the KMAO Duma, demanding recognition of their rights to lands and political representation in the KMAO government.89 While these protests were helpful in raising awareness of Indigenous problems though the media, as a rule, they brought little substantive change to communities.

During the next stage, Indigenous activists turned to the development of legal instruments as the main strategy to ensure their rights. Some of these endeavors originated at the community level and were later supported by Indigenous deputies in the KMAO government. The history of creating the instruments on the protection of Indigenous rights to land, which—by their scope and proposed means of protection—were unprecedented at the time, provides a relevant example here. This work began with the Council of Elders of Ugut village (in the southern part of KMAO). The Council was formed in 1989 to resist industrial developments on a nearby site. Its members, having little success with approaching regional and federal officials, drafted an instrument on a “green zone” that would help protect community lands by legal means. The Council members approached officials of the Tyumen Oblast, then a governing body of KMAO, with no success. The activists turned to the Khant delegates at KMAO Okrug Council of People's Deputies next. The delegates helped develop their proposal into two laws and saw them adapted in 1992. The reasons why the KMAO government adapted these instruments demands further research. The move might have been to ensure support of Indigenous voters during a moment of transition and political unrest. It may also have been meant to demonstrate to their host region, Tyumen Oblast, KMAO’s determination and ability to self-govern, given that the KMAO leaders were struggling to gain autonomy from the Oblast’. In 1994, these laws would be nullified but, by then, KMAO had gained its autonomy from Tyumen. Despite this disappointing beginning, in 1996, the KMAO government created the Assembly of Representatives of Indigenous Peoples. This Assembly was, as a part of the Duma, initially composed of

90. These instruments were the “Polozheniye o Statuse Rodovyykh Ugodiyy Khanty-Mansiyskom Avtonomnom Okrue” [Regulation Concerning the Status of Kinship Communities in KMAO], and “O Mekhanisme Vnedreniya Polozheniya o Statuse Rodovyykh Ugodii v Khanty-Mansiyskom Avtonomnom Okrue” [Concerning the Mechanism for Applying the Regulation Concerning the Status of Kinship Communities in KMAO].

five deputies, elected by single-mandate electoral districts. The Assembly adopted a number of regulations to advance Indigenous rights to lands, resources, and culture. In response to the changes at the federal level instituted by President Putin’s administration, the Assembly developed 40 acts supporting Indigenous rights to land from 2001 to 2006. Today, however, Indigenous participation in the okrug government is primarily a matter of consultation.

Given that overall, KMAO governing officials were reluctant to advance Indigenous causes, which factors might have influenced these changes? One may surmise that the move was a united response by both the Assembly members and members of the okrug government to withstand measures of centralizing federal rule, particularly regarding distribution of revenues from oil and gas developments. In fact, the KMAO government had aligned with the industrialists. These alliances might have been beneficial since they allowed governing officials to become intermediaries between industries and Indigenous communities, and thus benefit to some degree from the industrial work on Indigenous lands. This supposition is also supported by scholarly reports on the changes in the position of industrial companies in the area. In the 1990s, these companies expressed little interest in

92. The provision did not stipulate that deputies elected in this district must be Indigenous. In fact, in 2001, two deputies were Indigenous, and one was Russian. At the same time, the right to choose deputies was given to organizations and, since 2000, to the KMAO Congress of Indigenous Peoples of the North to ensure that elected deputies would indeed represent interests of communities. See Panov, supra note 86, at 56. The KMAO Congress of Indigenous Peoples of the North, a gathering that by form and function resembled Soviet type party conferences, became primarily a gathering where candidates to this position would be elected. See V. Kryazhkov, “The Example of the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug,” in An Indigenous Parliament? Realities and Perspectives in Russia and the Circumpolar North no. 116, K. Wessendorf ed. (2005): 68–73. From 2001 to 2011, the number would drop to three deputies.

93. For a list of these laws and detailed discussion of the work of the Assembly, consult Ekspertnoe Mnenie, “Politicheskaya Istoriya Korennikh Malochislennikh Narodov Severa Popolnyayetsya Novymi Stranitsami,” [Russian: Политическая История Коренных Малочисленных Народов Севера Пополняется Новыми Страницами] (2016), http://expert.or86.ru/articles/view/12

94. Ibid.

negotiating compensation with Indigenous communities.\textsuperscript{96} In the 2000s, many companies set up foundations to support Indigenous communities and created departments to negotiate cooperative agreements with organizations that represented Indigenous rights in KMAO.\textsuperscript{97} Attending to Indigenous rights at different moments of the post-Soviet history of KMAO, thus, might have been a strategy for the KMAO governing officials to secure the legitimacy of their own interests. When the interests of the governing officials no longer aligned with Indigenous causes, their interest in supporting them diminished, as the recent history of the Assembly suggests.\textsuperscript{98}

In addition to working at the level of the government, KMAO advocates, similar to the Altai and Veps activists, created public organizations as a means of representing Indigenous interests. The leading and the oldest organization in the region is still \textit{Spasenie Ugri}, formed in 1989 by seven women.\textsuperscript{99} Members of these organizations worked in conjunction with Indigenous politicians at the level of the government, and also joined the government.\textsuperscript{100} They have lobbied the okrug authorities on three key issues: ecological concerns and wellbeing of Indigenous communities; relationships between communities and industrial companies; and political representation of Indigenous Peoples in the administrative structures of the okrug.\textsuperscript{101} \textit{Spasenie Ugri}, which grew to become an umbrella entity for the okrug with a number of branches functioning in different parts of the okrug, is among the key organizations working with the KMAO

\textsuperscript{96} Wiget and Balalaeva, \textit{supra} note 91, at 24–25.
\textsuperscript{97} Alferova, \textit{supra} note 26, at 155.
\textsuperscript{98} Most of the Assembly’s legislative proposals to the Duma have been rejected. See Duma Khanti-Mansiyskogo Avтономнogo Okruga – Ugri, \textit{Perechen’ Zakonodatel’nikh Initsiativ}; [Russian: Перечень Законодательных Инициатив] (n/d), http://www.dumahmao.ru/assemblyofherrepresentativesofthenorth/initiatives/
\textsuperscript{99} Balzer, \textit{supra} note 89, at 149.
\textsuperscript{100} Tatiana Gogoleva, the president of the organization from 1989 to 1997, joined the KMAO government in 1990. Current president of the organization Aleksandr Nov’ukhov is also a member of the KMAO government. See Duma Khanti-Mansiyskogo Avtonomnogo Okruga – Ugri, \textit{Sostav Assamblei}, [Russian: Состав Ассамблеи] (n/d), http://www.dumahmao.ru/assemblyofherrepresentativesofthenorth/sostavAssamb/.
\textsuperscript{101} G. Wilson, “‘Matryoshka Federalism’ and the Case of the Khanty Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug,” \textit{Post-Soviet Affairs} 17, no. 2 (2001): 175.
government. The work of professional Indigenous politicians with access to federal and international institutions dealing with Indigenous issues was likewise a supporting factor.

The history of Indigenous activism in KMAO suggests that the ability of Indigenous politicians to make strategic alliances with government officials and maneuver interests of government officers and industrial companies, has been vital in supporting the success of some of their campaigns. Knowledge of international Indigenous rights norms was also significant, given that in the 1990s and early 2000s, Indigenous rights legislature was drafted in Russia, and much collaboration occurred between activists and scholars from outside of the okrug. While similar activities have taken place in other subjects of Russia, it would be difficult to characterize these


103. For example, Yeremey Aipin, a well-known Khant politician from KMAO, was working at the federal level in the 1990s on regulations protecting Indigenous rights prior to joining the KMAO Assembly in 2001. Aipin might have influenced developments at the okrug level by appealing not only to federal officials, but also to international partners.


105. In the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug, the new government also fought successfully to secede from their host region, the Magadan Oblast, as a way to manage their affairs with a greater degree of autonomy. Indigenous politicians in this okrug had to lobby non-Indigenous post-Soviet administrative officials who were “hostile” to the Indigenous cause. See P. Gray, “Chukotka’s Indigenous Intellectuals and Subversion of Indigenous Activism in the 1990s,” Études/Inuit/Studies 31, no. 1/2 (2007): 152. Today, professional politicians affiliated with RAIPON seem to lead activism in Chukotka. Similarly to Spasenie Ugri, the organization coordinates traditional economic activities of Indigenous communities in Chukotka and the work of smaller Indigenous organizations in the okrug. See Assotsiatsia Korennikh
mobilizations as elements of a unified all-state action. As the KMAO case suggests, the particularities of the groups’ location within the administrative system of the transitioning Russian state significantly shaped the political wants and interests of Indigenous politicians. Many politicians aimed to gain access to political and economic resources; their wants precluded their mobilizations from gaining the character of an organized action which would spread outside of the okrug’s boundaries, despite the fact that collaboration among politicians from different administrative units of Russia did take place. These factors also help explain the transformation of Indigenous mobilizations of the 1990s into professional activism in Russia, which remains the main form of Indigenous advocacy today.

b) Development of Professional Activism

The moment of transition of the Russian state also marks the rise of Indigenous professional activism. Two main forms of professional advocacy developed in post-Soviet Russia: professional politics, characterized by the top-down activism approach, where mobilization took place at different levels of the government; and advocacy by means of creating non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which existed through funds other than membership fees, becoming a form of vocation for their leaders.

The professional work of activists on the levels of the federal and regional governments became possible due to already existing Soviet
institutions supporting ethnic minority politics. The Soviet minority officials—often appointed by the party, and necessarily being members of the party—functioned as key components in controlling the political life of their communities, and as keepers of peace in the state during the Soviet era. Ironically, many of these officials became leaders of nationalist movements during the transition; the fact that they had exclusive access to political resources explains their prominence during the early period of self-determination campaigns.  

106 A number of Indigenous politicians who would participate in drafting Indigenous legislation came from the Soviet system of state administration, including officials working at the federal level of government.  

107 These leaders extended Soviet instruments of political organizing to support their activities in the environments of the new state. For example, not accidently, the event marking the beginning of professional advocacy in Russia was an all-state Indigenous conference in Moscow (March 1990) organized by Indigenous intellectuals in conjunction with the Soviet government. While it was attended by high-level federal officials, including Michael Gorbachev, the key decision of the conference was the establishment of an Indigenous-led organization that would regulate the development of Indigenous issues. Thus was formed the Association of Small Peoples of the North (Assotsiatsiia Malochislennykh Narodov Severa), which would later become the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON). First presided over by Vladimir Sangi, a Nivh writer, RAIPON would grow to become the leading organization defending Indigenous rights in Russia.  

108 Another key outcome of this conference was the creation of Goskomsever (the State Committee for the North of Russia), which coordinated Indigenous issues on the federal level until 2000, when it was annulled. The next significant event was a May 1991 s’ezd of deputies representing Indigenous communities, with more than 100 deputies attending. Among key outcomes of this conference was the creation of the Assembly of the Deputies of the Small-Numbered Peoples of the North (Deputatskaya Assambleya Malochislennykh Narodov Severa). Envisioned as a parliament for Indigenous politicians, with Eremei Aipin chosen as its first chairman, this body primarily dissimilated international norms regarding
Soviet politician of Nanai nationality, represented Russia at the UN Working Group on Indigenous Issues in Geneva for the first time.  

These Indigenous politicians relied on their Soviet-style training and experience to conduct their campaigns and to work with government officials to create Indigenous rights laws, and/or institute change to existing provisions. For example, the means of political organizing that Indigenous professional politicians chose were strikingly similar to those supporting the functioning of Soviet political institutions. The main form of the high-level Indigenous political conference became s’ezd, which by its function and meaning was an evolved form of a Soviet party conference. Similarly to the Soviet s’ezd, the Indigenous s’ezd became the highest decision-making body, where delegates, officially elected to represent their communities, made decisions and elected representatives to political structures and/or organizations. With RAIPON growing into a leading body that would coordinate legal and political developments of Indigenous rights in Russia, all-state Indigenous s’ezds would be organized under RAIPON auspices once every four years. The latest conference, VIII s’ezd, took place in March 2017 in Yamal. In parallel with these all-state events, there emerged congresses and conferences organized at the level of the subjects of the Russian federation, and/or by major Indigenous rights organizations, functioning similarly to the all-state Indigenous s’ezd. These events brought together representatives of diverse communities, often belonging to one ethno-linguistic group, as well as Indigenous politicians, scholars, and administrative officials. Another form of human and Indigenous rights and published regional legislature and documents of organizations of Indigenous peoples until 1995, when it was closed. See Z. Strogalschikova, “Korennie Malochislennie Narodi Rossii v Politike Gosudarstva: Formirovanie Zakonodatel’stva i ego Realizatsiia v Postsovetskiy Period,” [Russian: Коренные Малочисленные Народы России в Политике Государства: Формирование Законодательства и его Реализация в Постсоветский Период] Finno-Ugric World, 1 (2008): 50.


110. Thus, members of Finno-Ugric communities (regardless of their status) organized into an Association of Finno-Ugric Peoples of Russia. Since the 1990s, they have convened by means of both s’ezdi and congresses, with congresses since 1994 taking on an international character given that members of some Finno-Ugric communities come from outside of Russia (Saami and Hungarians). See V. Tishkov, Pravovoy Status Finno-Ugorskikh Yazikov I Etnokulturnie Poterbnosti
gathering has been congresses, which, while also functioning as a means for Indigenous scholars and politicians to convene, operated and continue to operate as forums that sometimes have an international scope.

In many ways, Indigenous politicians’ choice of political tools and ability to employ institutions of state governance for their needs manifests their adaptation to realities of a new state, which in turn was adapted from the Soviet system of governance to prevent the fragmentation of Russia during the time of transition. The prominence of professional Indigenous politicians in fostering change also signifies that forms of traditional leadership within communities have lost their significance as instruments of community governance, which in part resulted from the seventy years of Soviet rule.

What emerged was a relatively new form of politics within post-Soviet Russia: NGO-based activism, where the functioning of the NGO depended on transnational and domestic resources. Not all Indigenous organizations that emerged in the 1990s were strictly means for their leaders to advance the interests of their communities while also advancing their professional careers. A large number of organizations that evolved from Soviet public organizations functioned on a volunteer basis, and as a means to support social ties among community members. What is significant for this study is that a number of NGO


111. Smith, supra note 21, at 391.

112. The Soviet system of centralized governance and the territorial-administrative division of the new state did not correspond and, at times, contradicted local Indigenous systems and means of governance. See Vakhtin, supra note 59, at 24–27. It introduced new ways of managing community issues and stripped many traditional leaders (especially the shamans) of their powers. While in many communities, particularly remote ones, traditional structures of governance were partly retained, traditional leadership increasingly could not manage economic development, forced resettlement of their people (especially in the 1950–1960s), and migration of other persons to their historical homelands. For example, in the 1960s, more than 40 Shor settlements were abandoned as a response to the forced resettlement projects by the federal government of the Russian Republic. The Shor’s economic enterprises were recognized as unprofitable and were closed with many people losing their jobs; the state-supported housing projects in rural areas were also stopped, leading the Shor to move to urban areas to survive. See Vakhtin, supra note 59, at 53. With the Soviet system developing, many Indigenous communities fell into dependency on local and regional administrations.
leaders simultaneously participated in the state political institutions. In Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug and Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrugs, for example, NGOs became the key legal entities to propose Indigenous candidates for the regional government. Thus, these organizations became instruments to voice Indigenous concerns within a larger polity of the Russian state, yet outside of the official institutions of state governance (i.e., by providing Indigenous politicians with an alternative means to conduct their campaigns, at times engaging with international partners). Activities of these organizations differed depending on the expertise of the leaders: some focused on culture and language revival (which seems to be a particularly prominent area among NGOs of Finno-Ugric communities); many—as is particularly visible in the case of Altai organizations—lobbied against environmental degradation; and many helped rural dwellers appeal to local and regional administrators regarding injustices committed against them. Some organizations, like LIENIP, used the means of legal education to help communities resist the abuse of rights on regional and local levels by creating educational events and materials which explained laws to the local communities and assisted in appealing their cases to the regional and federal administrations. Some activists, most visibly members of RAIPON, also represented the Russian Indigenous cause at international fora on Indigenous rights, primarily at the United Nations. What ensured the success of these organizations, as research on this subject matter suggests, is the ability of their leaders to determine how to gain funding and allies; and, especially during the past decade, their skills, power and willingness to respond to the changes in the political climate of the state, given the adoption of measures that severely restricted the activities of non-state actors since 2011. Today, the major NGOs in Russia are funded

113. Ivanchenko, Kinev, and Lubarev, supra note 41.
115. Among several provisions adopted on the federal level in this area, the most drastic measures include the 2011–2012 revisions to the Federal Act “On Non-Profit Organizations” which now requires NGOs accepting grants from international institutions to register as “foreign agents” if they are involved in political activities. Since then, the government has been conducting campaigns of checks and audits, leading many NGOs to stop functioning or to limit their activities. See Rohr, supra note 25, at 34–35.
by regional governments and/or industrial companies (especially if an organization functions as a liaison between industries, government and communities as, for example, with Spasenie Ugri; and/or they function in partnership with research and cultural establishments as, for example, does the Society of Veps Culture).

Despite a rather promising beginning of professional activism in Russia, since the mid-1990s, Indigenous politicians began losing their political privileges at the federal and regional levels. The number of Indigenous representatives working with federal and regional authorities went down. In the Duma of 1994–1996, there were only three deputy representatives of KMN; from 1996–2000, there were two; from 2000–2004, there was one; and in 2008, there were no representatives working as deputies on the federal level. The number of Indigenous deputies was also decreasing at the regional levels as was, for example, visible at the level of autonomous okrugs where the quota systems ensuring Indigenous political participation were abolished. Gradually, the role of Indigenous politicians in Russian politics transformed into that of consultants to authorities with little power to influence law making or to make decisions regarding their communities. Today, the involvement of Indigenous politicians in the management of Indigenous issues is conducted primarily by means of advisory bodies, or councils on both federal and regional levels. The two Advisory Councils on the Issues of Small Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia, and the Far East of the Russian Federation were established in the Siberian federal okrug of Russia (2002), and recently in the Northwestern Federal Okrug (2013). These Councils are consultative bodies that coordinate the work of regional Indigenous organizations and their relationships with regional and federal authorities. The work of each council is overseen by a polpred, or presidential envoy, who is nominated by the president to administrate the work of an okrug. The other members of the council include presidents of regional Indigenous organizations, scholars, members of the executive branches of the government, and federal inspectors to

117. This date is estimated, given that the Council convenes twice a year, with the third meeting taking place in May, 2014.
the region. The Council of the Siberian okrug, for example, consists of 37 members, with 16 leaders from regional Indigenous organizations among whom two hold positions as deputies. Of the rest of the members, nine are scholars, and the others are representatives of government authorities. The Council of the Northwestern okrug consists of 23 members with 11 leaders of regional organizations, many of whom are also scholars and professionals in the area of Indigenous cultures, with the rest being members of the government. The current President of RAIPON, Grigorii Ledkov, is a federal deputy and a member of both Councils, yet was appointed by the president (versus being elected by Indigenous politicians). While the Siberian Council provides expert advice to the authorities, many recommendations, particularly those related to the political opportunities of Indigenous communities, remain unaddressed by regional authorities. Similar expert bodies have also been created at the level of the subjects. In KMAO, for example, a recently created body to handle Indigenous affairs—the Council of the Representatives of Indigenous People of KMAO at the Government—supports Indigenous political participation by inviting members of Indigenous organizations to discuss means of regulating Indigenous communities with municipal administrations and higher-level government officials. The Council is headed by a Vice-Chair of the KMAO, a governor responsible for internal affairs with no legislative powers. Similar bodies were also created in the Altai Republic in 2014, and in Sakha in 2012. The power of creating laws—a power that KMAO Indigenous politicians used to have—has now been replaced by Indigenous politicians’ roles as experts, advisors


119. Chemchieva, supra note 57, at 151.

or liaisons between communities, administrators and, in some parts, industrial companies.

Thus, post-Soviet Indigenous professional advocacy evolved from Soviet political institutions. Given the difficulties Indigenous professional activists faced, the most they were able to gain—especially during the early stages of activism—was compensation to overcome political and cultural marginalization within the state system. This took the form, primarily, of political opportunities for Indigenous leadership mostly at the local and regional (i.e., subject) levels. Frequent dependency of Indigenous leaders on the interests of the authorities and/or donors, as well as competition for funds, contributed to the lack of solidarity among Indigenous politicians. Furthermore, their work was often separated from political upheavals at the level of communities: local struggles did not generate events of professional politics, although the work of Indigenous activists at the federal level might have shaped mobilizations at the local levels and brought some changes to the communities.

At the same time, this form of advocacy cannot be considered an instrument that supported the continuation of Soviet-style treatment of Indigenous communities. Today, the function of advocates is reduced to that of consultants and experts at best. Evidence suggests that professional Indigenous advocacy in Russia was, from the very beginning, shaped by the key goals of the international Indigenous movement—the affirmation of Indigenous sovereignty. First, the work of these politicians signifies something more than amending local and regional conditions, given their contribution to the development of laws and policies in the federal and international arenas. These politicians went beyond the immediate needs of their home communities and lobbied for a change of the state treatment of groups with Indigenous status. Furthermore, a number of unprecedented developments took place at the regional, federal, and international levels, where Indigenous advocates, who became professional politicians, participated in revolutionizing the area of Indigenous rights as the KMAO example demonstrates in particular. This work, supported by collaboration with Indigenous rights advocates from other countries, has helped shape a new understanding of indigeneity within the Russian context, despite
all of its structural limitations. This is supported by the development of a new form of consciousness among Indigenous activists, who forged a new collective identity as a means to defend their position and to define their claims and vision of rights using the international human rights tools and system. International support for the Indigenous cause, particularly from Scandinavia, Canada, and the United Nations, as well as collaboration with scholars and rights advocates, supported the work of Indigenous politicians and helped maintain advocacy actions. Thus, professional Indigenous politics led to the transformation of the concept of “indigeneity” as both a legal idea and a part of the political identity of the activists, from an idea signifying a dependency status toward a notion of a free people with a right to their self-determined existence.

c) Analysis: Abortive Indigenous Movement

A number of scholars refer to the events of post-Soviet Indigenous advocacy as a movement. These scholars imply that these mobilizations took the form of an organized all-state sustained action, which involved a significant number of participants united on a volunteer basis by common aims, and which in turn shaped their group identity and created a sense of solidarity among the participants. While the Indigenous struggles in the post-Soviet Russian state could be characterized by the similarities of the aspirations of Indigenous leaders, by the instruments they used and the political and legal marginalization of Indigenous groups, a careful analysis of specific historical circumstances of each struggling community would demonstrate that these struggles never developed into an organized all-state sustained form of mobilization. On the contrary, a number of factors influenced disunity among the struggles’ participants and, as some evidence suggests, even created competition among participants with opposing interests, given the scarcity of resources they were able to obtain. Despite complementing efforts of politicians defending Indigenous positions on the international and, to a degree, federal

121. See Rohr, supra note 25; Stoyanova, supra note 12; T. Köhler and K. Wessendorf. Towards a New Millennium: Ten Years of the Indigenous Movement in Russia, IWGIA Document 107, (Copenhagen, Denmark: IWGIA, 2002).
levels in post-Soviet Russia, Indigenous struggles remained non-sustained local forms of resistance that were destined to fail.

The primary factors that contributed to the abortive character of the Indigenous movement in post-Soviet Russia were structural, stemming from the wide geographical distribution of Indigenous communities. Wide patterns of living historically prevented Indigenous persons from gaining access to power by means of election, given that they were (and remain) a demographic minority. This factor also contributed to Indigenous underrepresentation in the power structures of their regions. During the transition, they had to negotiate their interests with the interests of other leaders and/or rely on these other leaders in the representation of their interests; this therefore contributed to the scarcity of resources these activists could use. This factor gains further significance given a correlation between the position of the Indigenous territories (as federal subjects) in the hierarchical structure of the post-Soviet administrative system and the amount of political resources Indigenous activists could use. In most situations, they found themselves either as residents of the subjects existing in this status with no connection to the nationality of the subject’s residents, or as residents on the territories designated as homelands to other nationalities, and this significantly limited their political opportunities. Even in the okrugs rich with natural resources, as is particularly evident in the case of Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug, they were underrepresented in the okrug governing structures. Thus, these activists had to join federal and/or regional governments, which led to their dependency on the interests of the regional and/or federal authorities. As the KMAO case particularly suggests, the

122. This claim rests upon the findings of studies on ethnic mobilizations in post-Soviet Russia, whose authors demonstrate that the status of a territory in the hierarchy of the Soviet territorial-administrative system determined how much resources activists and politicians would have to mobilize during the 1990s. Scholars who study ethnic movements during the late 1980s-1990s emphasize a correlation between the status of the region within the overall Soviet system of administration and the intensity of resistance during the time of transition. The higher the position of a region within the federal system, the more intense and focused became the movement to secede, in part because the new leaders could access political resources in support of their struggles. See D. Gorenburg, Minority Ethnic Mobilization in the Russian Federation, (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2003); and Roeder, supra note 106.
success of political campaigns of Indigenous leaders in the subjects of the transitioning Russian state depended significantly on the degree to which the Indigenous cause corresponded to the interests of the new political leaders, and the success of the cooperation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous politicians.

The lack of adequate communication and transportation also contributed to the difficulties in cohesively organizing. The legal illiteracy common among Indigenous communities contributed to the abortive character of Indigenous protests: the majority of Indigenous persons living in Russia remained unaware of the state and regional norms to which they could appeal (and of the international treatment of Indigenous Peoples). The poverty that many groups experienced during the time of transition and the insufficient means of transportation and communication during the late 1980s and early 1990s were additional factors that prevented these leaders from effectively organizing.

These factors were reinforced by the socio-historical circumstances of Indigenous groups. Indigenous communities, even within the boundaries of one peoples, tended to be decentralized; the communities confined their affairs, including the ownership of land, to the kinship structures, where leadership powers were vested with leaders of extended families. These specifics of Indigenous existence contributed to the difficulties of political organizing among these groups since the moment of the first dissent in the early times of the Soviet Union. The members of communities classified as one peoples and/or as Indigenous individuals did not perceive themselves as belonging to one community (and/or one polity), and thus could not act as one during the time of political change (while the instances of Indigenous leaders combining resistance forces did take place).

**d) Conclusion**

To conclude, the system of governance of the Russian state recreated forms of structural violence against Indigenous persons inherent in the Soviet ways of treating these communities, and contributed to both the abortive character of Indigenous upheavals at the regional levels in the 1990s, and to the downfall of professional Indigenous activism
in the 2000s. One of the key features that made Indigenous groups vulnerable to the pressures of structural violence in Russia stemmed from the wide geographical distribution of their communities. This lack of correspondence between the geographical location of Indigenous groups and the patterns of territorial administration of the state historically prevented Indigenous persons from using the state’s administrative apparatus in support of their political interests. Further, this factor prevented Indigenous struggles from becoming an organized movement and contributed to the internal competition among Indigenous activists, which weakened their potential to support the rights of their communities. Local Indigenous activists were not united by their commonality of interests such as private ownership of land and resources that they would be willing to come forth to defend (despite that they appealed to the norms of self-government). Neither did they have membership in one political organization so as to form or even envision a unified statewide effort as a means of gaining access to political power. In many ways, they acted similarly to the leaders of larger ethnic upheavals whose struggles, likewise, despite diversity of their duration, strength and outcomes, were fragmented events. At the same time, Indigenous politics remain the main force that led to the transformation of indigeneity from a property signifying the dependency status of these groups to a notion of free people with a right to self-determined existence. Supported by the waves and discourses on nationalism within post-Soviet Russia as well as international developments in support of Indigenous rights, Indigenous activism in Russia signifies a step forward despite the current rights abuses against Indigenous communities.

III. Consequences of Structural Violence

The final discussion examines the effects of structural violence. It uses evidence from studies of Indigenous demographics, and provides socio-economic indicators to demonstrate how the infringement on the political rights of Indigenous communities affects the Indigenous lifespan by shaping difficulties of economic survival for these communities.
Indigenous demographics

a) Data Inconsistencies

Traditionally, demographic characteristics of a group remain the basis for assessment of quality of life experiences of the population examined, despite controversies surrounding this hypothesis.\(^{123}\) Growth is interpreted as evidence of life conditions that are favorable for the wellbeing of a group; whereas a decline signifies that a group experiences difficulties that negatively influence birth rate and the mortality of its members. When applied to the analysis of the population trends of the Russian Indigenous communities, this approach, however, yields paradoxical results. A census-based examination of Indigenous demographics suggests a recent slight growth experienced by these groups: the number of persons who self-identified as Indigenous increased by about 3%: from 252,261 in 2002 to 257,895 in 2010 (Table 1). The growth also seems to be continuous, at least for the original 26 groups: the number of individuals registered as members of these 26 communities increased by 13.3% since the last Soviet census of 1989: from 184,448 in 1989 to 208,980 in 2002 (Table 1). Given that the overall Russian population has been decreasing by 1.5% from 1989 to 2002, and by 1.7% from 2002 to 2010, these findings suggest a seemingly optimistic forecast for Indigenous groups (Table 1). This forecast though, contradicts the projections of the population trends that would account for the actual conditions Indigenous individuals face given their underrepresentation in the political and economic structures of the state. Why?

Further research into the subject matter reveals that factors other than increasing birth rates and decreasing mortality have influenced the state official statistics on Indigenous populations. One of the key factors is the inconsistency of census data: census data contradict statistics on Indigenous populations collected by Russian scholars, and findings from the studies of Indigenous demographics. Zoia Sokolova and Valeriy Stepanov report that Indigenous populations were steadily

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declining throughout the 1990s.\textsuperscript{124} The demographical studies of births and deaths also suggest that the number of Indigenous individuals has been decreasing since the late 1980s.\textsuperscript{125} The Russian census is not designed to be an instrument of illustrating population trends; it merely summarizes citizens’ responses to the census questionnaires. Given that Article 26(1) of the Russian Constitution recognizes the right of a person to choose his or her nationality, Russian citizens are free to decide to which community they believe they belong. The reasons why people choose a particular group during the census data collection vary, which leads to the census reports being only a partially accurate source of data on Indigenous populations and the overall ethnic composition of Russia. Nevertheless, the census continues to function as the main source of information for federal agencies and, often, for scholars.

The discrepancies of the methods of census data collection, and post-Soviet changes in the mechanisms of registration of a person’s nationality, remain the leading factors influencing the inaccuracy of the census-based projections of Indigenous populations trends. Specifically, the census-based population growth among many Indigenous groups is influenced by changes in the ways that people self-identify.\textsuperscript{126} Andrew Kozlov, for example, reports that during the post-Soviet period, a predominant number of children from inter-ethnic


families of the Saami and the Nenets—from 80% to 90%—chose the identity of an Indigenous parent over a non-Indigenous one.\textsuperscript{127} Given how historically different the Saami and the Nenets are, this similarity suggests that the trend could be common among other Indigenous communities.\textsuperscript{128} The changes in self-identification might have influenced the post-Soviet population increase of the Khant living in the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug.\textsuperscript{129} Elena Pivneva, for example, reports that in some parts of the okrug, the share of persons who might have changed their identity may be as high as 17% to 28%.\textsuperscript{130} From 1989 to 2002, the population of the Khant living in the okrug increased by 40%: from 22,521 to 28,678. From 2002 to 2010, it increased again by 9%, reaching 30,943 in 2010.\textsuperscript{131} Natural factors cannot account for this unusual population growth. Likewise, a relatively steady increase in the number of the Dolgan in the Sakha Republic since the late 1980s might be due to identity change.\textsuperscript{132} These processes might have affected the demographics of a number of other Indigenous communities, scholars suggest, given how visible the decline appears among Nganasan, Chuvan, Aleut and Shor between the 1989 and 2002 censuses; and how significant the growth is (20%–30% increase) among the Mansi, the Ket, the Yukagir, the Itelmen, the Selkup, the Evenk and the Tofalar during the same period.\textsuperscript{133}

\textsuperscript{127} Kozlov, \textit{supra} note 126, at 100.

\textsuperscript{128} The Saami demonstrate the highest share among all Indigenous Peoples living in Russia of mixed marriages, reaching 90%–95% in 2010. They tend to reside primarily in the Murmansk region of the Kola Peninsula, and have a high percentage of urban dwellers: more than 40%. The Nenets, on the other hand, are spread out across nine different administrative units. Some reside in urban areas (the average for urban dwellers across all the Nenets is 21%) while others are nomads involved in reindeer herding. The Nenets tend to marry among themselves, with inter-ethnic marriages fluctuating between 10%–11%, which is again an average for all the different Nenets communities. All data are from Federal State Statistical Service, “Vseroiskaya Perepis Naselenia. Tom 4. Natsional’niy Sostav,” [Russian: Всероссийская Перепись Населения. Том 4. Национальный Состав] (2010), http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/perepis2010/croc/perepis_itogi1612.htm

\textsuperscript{129} Bogoyavlenskiy, \textit{supra} note 126, at 58–9.

\textsuperscript{130} Pivneva, \textit{supra} note 55, at 86.

\textsuperscript{131} See respectively, Sokolova and Stepanov, \textit{supra} note 124, at 78; and Pivneva, \textit{supra} note 55, at 84. Also consult Table 1 of this work.

\textsuperscript{132} Bogoyavlenskiy, \textit{supra} note 126.

\textsuperscript{133} Sokolova and Stepanov, \textit{supra} note 124, at 77–78.
The changes to the categories defining indigeneity further influenced the inaccuracy of the census records of Indigenous demographics. These changes are related to the recent “carving” of separate peoples (i.e., those with the status of KMN) out of larger nationalities to which these peoples used to belong as sub-groups during the Soviet era: by the year 2000, the number of communities with Indigenous status was expanded from the original 26 groups to the current 40 groups. In some cases, a sub-group was created out of a larger group with an Indigenous status. For example, the Enets and the Taz, prior to gaining Indigenous status in 2000, were registered as sub-groups of the Indigenous Nenets and the Udege respectively. Similarly, the Kerek and the Alutor, who gained their status in 2000, were until then considered to be sub-groups of the Indigenous Koryak. This method of creating new communities affected demographics of the original groups that exhibited negative changes. While the separation of the Enets from the Nenets did result in changes in the Nenets demographics, the number of Udege went down as the Taz were registered as a separate group, from 2,001 in 1989 to 1,657 in 2002; and the number of the Koryak decreased from 9,242 in 1989 to 8,743 in 2002. Likewise, the demographics of the Indigenous Oroch decreased with the recognition of the Orok, historically registered as a sub-group of the Oroch, as an Indigenous group in 2000.134 Similar processes affected the demographics of the Altai, which decreased more than 10% from 69,400 in 1989 to 62,100 in 2002 with the recognition of the Altai sub-groups as having Indigenous status.135 Given that for the most recently added groups, comprehensive statistics are available only for the Shor and the Veps, it is difficult to grasp the actual processes within Indigenous communities by examining census data alone.

134. Ibid., 77. Table 1.
135. See respectively D. Bogoyavlenskiy, Perepis’ 2010: Etnicheskii Srez, [Russian: Перепись 2010: Этнический Срез] (2010), http://www.perspektivy.info/history/perepis_2010_etnicheskij_srez_2013-04-28.htm, and Chemchieva, supra note 57, at 178. The five Altai communities who gained the status of KMN in 2000, were until that moment considered sub-groups of the larger Altai nationality: the Tubalar, the Chelkan, and the Kumandin were registered as the northern Altai sub-groups, while the Telengit and the Teleut were considered the southern Altai sub-groups (see Part II of this chapter for more).
To conclude, the data on Indigenous populations are fraught with inconsistencies. In addition, the deterioration of the Soviet statewide system of documentation of socio-economic indicators and Indigenous demographics further influenced this situation. Today, the regional administration is responsible for gathering these statistics, but in some regions the administrators are reluctant to collect this data and/or have stopped doing so.\textsuperscript{136} This situation is particularly grave for the Indigenous persons living in urban areas, since the administrators tend to focus only on the areas registered as TTNU while gathering their data, and these areas are primarily the rural territories.\textsuperscript{137} Consequently, the analysis of Indigenous demographics must be approached with great care, particularly when constructing a comparative study.

b) Analysis of the Demographic Processes

Studies of the demographic processes among separate Indigenous groups provide a more reliable picture of the population trends among Indigenous communities. In his examination of the natural factors influencing Indigenous demographics between 2002 and 2010, Dimitrii Bogoyavlenskiy reports a continuous decline. Among the peoples with a history of assimilation, the Veps, the Shor, the Saami, the Chuvan and the Aleut, the decline is particularly pronounced. Only seven peoples—the Nenets, the Dolgans, the Evenk, the Even, the Khant, the Mansi and the Yukagir—demonstrate relatively steady positive population dynamics, he reports. However, just among the Nenets living in Yamal and Taymir and involved in reindeer herding, the population growth can be explained by natural factors. Among other people, Bogoyavlenskiy concludes, changes in demographics must be attributed to factors other than those influencing natural growth.\textsuperscript{138} A closer look at the demographics supports Bogoyavlenskiy’s projections.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{136} N. Novikova and D. Funk, \textit{Sever i Severiane} [Russian: Север и Северяне] (2012), 5.
\item \textsuperscript{137} Sokolova and Stepanov, \textit{supra} note 124, at 75.
\item \textsuperscript{138} Bogoyavlenskiy, \textit{supra} note 126.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
As Figure 1 demonstrates, the individuals of Indigenous origin tend to be much younger than the overall population of Russia: 46% of all individuals registered as members of Indigenous communities in 2010 are younger than 25 years old, whereas for all Russia this number is 29%. The estimated median Indigenous age range is between 21 and 29, with the average being 28 despite variations within the Indigenous populations, while the average age of the population of Russia is 38.\textsuperscript{139} The fact that Indigenous communities tend to be younger than the overall Russian population is explainable by a relatively high birthrate among Indigenous women, which has historically been the case.\textsuperscript{140} In 2010, the average number of children per 1,000 Indigenous women was 1,914 or 30% higher than that for the overall Russian population, which amounted to 1,469 children, as calculated using the data from the 2010 census. At the same time, the lifespan of an Indigenous person is much shorter than that of an average Russian: only 10% of Indigenous individuals are older than 55 years old, whereas for all of Russia this number is 25% (Figure 1).

Mortality rates among the youngest (0–15 years) and oldest (60 years and older) Indigenous groups tend to be higher than the average

\textsuperscript{139} These numbers are calculated using the data from the Federal State Statistical Service. See Federal State Statistical Service, \textit{supra} note 128.

for all Russia.141 Thus, Indigenous persons face a much shorter life span than that projected as an average for a Russian citizen. These estimations are consistent with a recent IWGIA study, whose author reports that only 37.8% of Indigenous men and 62.2% of Indigenous women in Russia reach the age of 60.142 Given that these trends have remained consistent since the late 1980s, one could safely project that Indigenous populations in the Russian state have been steadily decreasing.

c) Socio-economic conditions

Among the main factors that contribute to the high mortality rates among Indigenous populations are poverty and poor health services. The diversity of the economic conditions of the regions of the Russian Federation makes it practically impossible to assess the socio-economic situations facing Indigenous groups in different parts of the state within the scope of one essay. Thus, a few characteristic estimations are proposed instead to illustrate the situation. Poverty is a common problem for most Indigenous communities, yet it tends to be particularly prominent for rural inhabitants who constitute about two thirds of the total Indigenous population.143 The rural Indigenous residents must be engaged in the economic practices that would resemble their traditional means of subsistence: agriculture, hunting, and forestry, as these practices appear in the census. These occupations are among the lowest paid, generating about three times less money than an average income in Russia. Given that an average income for 2010 was also rather modest—10,668 rubles or about $365—a rural Indigenous worker would remain at the bottom of the economic ladder. Yet extreme poverty results from a lack of jobs, which in turn directly contributes to the short lifespan among Indigenous groups.144 Unemployment remains a key problem across all Indigenous communities, where among some groups (for example, the Veps) the level

141. Rohr, supra note 25, at 33.
142. Ibid., supra note 32.
143. These calculations are based on the data from the 2010 Russian census data, with the following estimations: 174,338 of Indigenous persons are rural dwellers while 87,134 live in urban areas, or 67% and 33% respectively. See Federal State Statistical Service, supra note 128.
144. Kozlov and Lisitsyn, supra note 53, at 88–89.
of unemployment reaches over 50% of the entire working population, or among those 15–72 years old. One of the key factors contributing to unemployment is the history of limited education opportunities for many communities, especially those located in rural areas.

The other main sources of income, apart from subsistence farming, are pensions and federal subsidies. The amount of a pension differs from one region to another in correspondence with the overall federal estimation of living expenses in the Russian regions. In 2016, in Karelia, for example, the monthly pension was 14,670 rubles (or about $195); in Komi it was 9,250 rubles (or about $123); in Chukotka it was 23,100 rubles (or about $308), with an average amount of pension in Russia being 12,400 rubles per month (or about $165). Living in the North, though, is characterized by a higher cost of living, which contributes to historically pronounced poverty among the majority of Indigenous communities. For example, in 2016, the average prices of food in the North were much higher when compared with the pensions: a loaf of bread may cost between 30 cents and a dollar; a liter of milk is about 80 cents; meat prices may be between $2.50 and $5 per kilogram, and fish could be about $7 per kilogram. Fruits and vegetables are costly, as well as cheeses and grains, particularly if they are imported. Prices of alcohol and tea, highly consumed among Northerners, are also relatively high. In addition to the cost of food, one must pay for communal services, which are rising in cost, and at times must also pay for rent and health services. Thus, the majority of Indigenous persons in the North face extreme poverty.

Poor health services, especially in remote areas, further influence high mortality rates among Indigenous communities since this factor contributes to high rates of illnesses. Johannes Rohr, in his 2014 report for example, estimates the percentages of death from infectious diseases among Indigenous communities is three times the national

146. Stoyanova, supra note 12, at 171.
147. These numbers are calculated in accordance with the data obtained from Pensionniy Ekspert, a Russian independent information project on the pension system. The rate of conversion used was the one valid as of May 2016.
average, causing 60 deaths per 100,000 individuals. Heart diseases, hypertension and cancer are also common across Indigenous groups. Death from unnatural causes, including suicide, is also an acute problem, particularly among men. While in Russia, on average, about 15% of all deaths are from unnatural causes (injuries, suicide, homicide), among Indigenous persons this number tends to be higher. For example, in 2013, the rates of suicide in Nenets Autonomous Okrug, Chukotka Autonomous Okrug, and the Archangelsk Rayon were 1.5–2.5 times higher than the Russian average. Andrew Kozlov and Dmitry Lisitsyn report that in 2008 in some regions it was three or even four times the national average; Komi Republic and Koryak Autonomous Okrug, according to these researchers, were the areas with the highest rates of reported suicide for that year. Russian scholars estimate that overall, Indigenous individuals inhabit regions with a relatively unhealthy suicidal climate despite the decrease in the numbers of suicide in Russia. A number of suicides occur while people are intoxicated; Kozlov and Lisitsyn estimate the number to fluctuate from 24% to 55%. They suggest that in many Northern communities, alcoholism is a serious problem, and is particularly grave for the Chukchi. Today Chukotka is the leading Russian region by rate of alcoholism, with 7.3% of the total population affected by the disease. Given that death from unnatural causes tends to affect more men than women, there is a pronounced gender imbalance, particularly in the populations over 30. According to the 2010 census, among all Indigenous communities but the Aleut, the number of women

149. Rohr, supra note 25, at 33.
152. Kozlov and Lisitsyn, supra note 53, at 96.
153. Ibid., 96–89.
exceeded that of men. This situation seems to be the worst among the Even and the Saami: for every 1,000 Even men there were 1,416 Even women in 2010, while for every 1,000 Saami men there were 1,300 Saami women.\footnote{155}

Some regional governments responded to the difficulties experienced by Indigenous communities, and provided subsidies to these communities in addition to the state-sponsored benefits. For example, the government of the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug subsidizes traditional forms of subsistence; supports cultural and educational developments of Indigenous communities; and provides help with housing and social services.\footnote{156} The level of grants and subsidies is not significant, given that KMAO is the largest region of oil development in Russia: for example, an Indigenous family receives 2,000 rubles when their child is born, or about $267.\footnote{157} At the same time, this support is due in part to the history of Indigenous politics in this region. In the Sakha Republic, the government helps Indigenous families by subsidizing reindeer herding, hunting, and fishing. The nomad families receive grants to support a reindeer herding lifestyle, to buy equipment and movable housing. These families also pay less tax. High school graduates also receive paid training if they join a reindeer herding team. Similarly, the government of the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, home to 60% of the country’s nomadic population, provides support to Indigenous communities (primarily the Nenets) to maintain their nomadic lifestyles and traditional subsistence practices. Young men can choose to switch their military service to do alternative work in the territories registered as TTNU.\footnote{158} The degree to which regional benefits, particularly in the form of grants, support economic survival of Indigenous communities in the long run, demands further

\footnote{155. Federal State Statistical Service, \textit{supra} note 128.}
investigation. Some scholars suggest that promotion of the traditional forms of subsistence works when the authorities financially support it. For example, these measures encouraged reindeer herding in the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug and were supported by regional grants. One can observe a nine times increase of ventures supporting traditional forms of subsistence in the same okrug, from 42 in 2011 to 378 in 2014.\textsuperscript{159} In the Sakha Republic, likewise, the number of \textit{obshchina} has been increasing since 2009; these ventures, thus, also seem to support agricultural practices of Indigenous communities in the republic.\textsuperscript{160} In Altai Republic, on the other hand, the traditional forms of subsistence seem to be secondary to the economic survival of Indigenous groups and might be substituted by contemporary economic practices in the near future.\textsuperscript{161} While in Altai Republic, 40 \textit{obshchinas} were registered in 2012, no conclusive evidence suggests that these ventures help improve the economic situations of those using them. At times, the land registered as a TTNU is employed for other means by local administration and businesses.\textsuperscript{162}

Finally, Indigenous women and men often face social discrimination. One of the most commonly reported forms of discrimination is that of the local and regional administrative officials, who deny benefits to Indigenous individuals and/or are reluctant to help Indigenous persons to realize their rights. This problem is complicated in part by the requirement for an Indigenous person to present an identity proof of their Indigenous nationality prior to being considered for benefits. In addition, when applying for support for a family, the applicants must establish their social status as living under the poverty line. This requirement creates difficulties for many Indigenous individuals who are unaware of how to apply for the benefits or complete the registration process, and/or do not have any official documents to establish their nationality. In contrast with Soviet documentation practices, where a

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{159} As reported by Pivneva, \textit{supra} note 55, at 88; and by the Government of Khanty-Mansi Okrug, \textit{supra} note 87, correspondingly.
\item \textsuperscript{160} E. Romanova, A. Evodokia, and V. Ignatieva, “Respublika Sakha (Yakutia).” [“Russian: “Республика Саха (Якутия)”] in \textit{Sever i Severiane} [Russian Север и Северяне], Natalia Novikova, and Dmitriy Funk, eds. (2012): 104.
\item \textsuperscript{161} Chemchieva, \textit{supra} note 57, at 135.
\item \textsuperscript{162} \textit{Ibid.}, 100, 115–120.
\end{itemize}
citizen’s nationality was recorded in their passport, the contemporary documentation system does not stipulate information on nationality to be recorded on state-issued ID. While the governments of the Sakha Republic, Buryatia and Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug created regional instruments that help to record information on a person’s nationality, in many other parts of Russia this problem is not solved. Thus, some individuals cannot realize their rights, and must appeal to court to establish their belonging to an Indigenous community.¹⁶³

To conclude, structural inequality facing most Indigenous people remains the central factor of the premature deaths of many Indigenous men and women living in contemporary Russia. The very fact that most Indigenous persons never achieve their full potential as citizens of the Russian state—meaning, as members of the political and economic systems which have never been of their own choosing—signifies that most of them survive life situations characterized by violence for which it is often difficult to identify a perpetrator. Social agents contribute to perpetuating the unfair treatment of Indigenous individuals by being reluctant to respond to the difficulties many Indigenous men and women face, and/or having little understanding of the connections between Indigenous lifestyles and the wellbeing of Indigenous communities. The fact that Indigenous cultural practices and forms of subsistence are supported only by some regional governments and are often supported unevenly, suggests that many officials find assimilation to be a necessary accommodation that Indigenous individuals must make to survive. This attitude is particularly visible in the federal approach to the issues of Indigenous rights. The federal measures devised to support Indigenous communities resemble more a set of paternalistic strategies to maintain vulnerable populations of the state rather than a means of reforming relations among culturally diverse collectives (i.e., nationalities) of the economically unstable and potentially volatile state. Such an attitude helps to justify persistence of poverty among Indigenous groups; invisibility of Indigenous leaders in positions of power; lack of adequate education and job opportunities for Indigenous youth; and other evidence of connections between the functioning of state institutions and the social and cultural destruction

of Indigenous communities. At the same time, supporting the assimilation of Indigenous communities happens at the cost of the security and stability of all Russian citizens, given that accommodation of needs of cultural minorities remains a precondition for maintenance of the internal security of Russia as well as of a legitimate international order.

IV. Concluding Thoughts

Democracy is an “incomplete struggle” using the rule of law, legislative power and the state as the engine for social welfare. One of the main premises of this work is that the functioning of democratic forms of government is rooted in social consciousness, allowing different groups to realize their aims through social and political practices. Democratic forms of governance—which may enable Indigenous peoples to exercise their rights as part of a state system—embody ongoing social struggles by which Indigenous women and men are able to participation in state politics. The actual actors of political change might, at times, conduct these struggles without the full realization of their meaning and impact. At the same time, these struggles are nascent forms of Indigenous governance in development, shaping the political consciousness of the groups involved and effecting political change.

This study demonstrates that the contemporary Russian state system remains highly conducive to structural violence against Indigenous communities, who remain at the margins of the system. Most Indigenous persons face harsh life conditions and are discriminated against by authorities who deny or limit their rights. These consequences are not unique to the Indigenous communities in the present Russian state; oftentimes their non-Indigenous neighbors survive poverty and harsh living conditions on a similar scale without being beneficiaries of any special policies. These similarities suggest that within the settings of everyday living, indigeneity (or ethnicity) per se does not play a significant role in the degree to which processes of structural violence affect a person. At the same time, indigeneity—unlike nationality—contains a potential political inherent in the legal notion of “Indigenous

Peoples”; this notion developed at international forums, and it is a tool that Russian Indigenous politicians may deploy to continue their struggle toward self-determined existence.

This study reveals that Indigenous politicians lack the direct means with which to withstand the unfair treatment of federal and often regional governments; yet they may collaborate and use an existing framework to improve conditions and widen political opportunities for Indigenous communities. The experiences of KMAO, in particular, suggest that the joint federal and regional legal powers over Indigenous issues allow regional authorities to exercise a degree of autonomy from the central government in areas rich with natural resources. The collaboration between Indigenous and regional leaders—when common interests unite them—may provide a tool of resistance to the centralization measures instituted by federal government, and thus lessen the current effects of structural violence on Indigenous Peoples. Further research in this area is needed. It may illuminate the actual practices of Indigenous resistance to federal oppression and, by so doing, improve the scholarly understanding of the historical influences of regional politics on the contemporary workings of the federal political and legal systems.

TABLE 1: Population Count of the Small-Numbered Peoples of the North/Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East 1926–2010

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Common List of Small-Numbered Peoples of the North</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nenets</td>
<td>17,566</td>
<td>24,053</td>
<td>23,007</td>
<td>28,705</td>
<td>29,894</td>
<td>34,665 (34,190)</td>
<td>41,302</td>
<td>44,640</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evenk</td>
<td>38,746</td>
<td>29,666</td>
<td>24,151</td>
<td>25,149</td>
<td>27,531</td>
<td>30,163 (29,901)</td>
<td>35,527</td>
<td>38,396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khanty</td>
<td>22,306</td>
<td>19,160</td>
<td>19,410</td>
<td>21,138</td>
<td>20,934</td>
<td>22,521 (22,283)</td>
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<td>12,286</td>
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<td>11,727</td>
<td>13,597</td>
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<td>507</td>
<td>442</td>
<td>615</td>
<td>835</td>
<td>1,142</td>
<td>1,509</td>
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<td>705</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>(534)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1,511</td>
<td>1,087</td>
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<td>586</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>763</td>
<td>731</td>
<td>837</td>
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<td>748</td>
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<td>1,278</td>
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<td>782</td>
<td>1,089</td>
<td>1,198</td>
<td>915</td>
<td>686</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negidal</td>
<td>683</td>
<td>n/d</td>
<td>(350)</td>
<td>537</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>622</td>
<td>567</td>
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<tr>
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<td>335</td>
<td>421</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>546</td>
<td>702</td>
<td>540</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orok</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>n/d</td>
<td>(300)</td>
<td>n/d</td>
<td>(317)</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>346</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enets</td>
<td>(476)</td>
<td>n/d</td>
<td>n/d</td>
<td>0*(sub-group of the Nenets)</td>
<td>(317)</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>237</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL (26 peoples)</strong></td>
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<td>153,247</td>
<td>158,959</td>
<td>184,448</td>
<td>208,980</td>
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<tr>
<td>% from the total of RSFSR</td>
<td>0.13 % of 100.9 million</td>
<td>0.13 % of 108.4 Million</td>
<td>0.11 % of 117.5 million</td>
<td>0.11% of 130.1 million</td>
<td>0.11% of 137.6 million</td>
<td>0.12 % of 147.4 million</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% from the total of the country (Soviet Union)</td>
<td>0.09% of 148.7 million</td>
<td>0.085% of 168.5 million</td>
<td>0.06% of 209 million</td>
<td>0.06% of 241.7 million</td>
<td>0.06% of 262.4 million</td>
<td>0.06 % of 286.7 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Groups Added to the Common List after 1993</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shor</td>
<td>12,600</td>
<td>(16,044)</td>
<td>15,300</td>
<td>16,500</td>
<td>16,033</td>
<td>15,745</td>
<td>13,975</td>
<td>12,888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veps</td>
<td>32,785</td>
<td>29,700</td>
<td>16,374 (15,300)</td>
<td>8,281</td>
<td>8,094</td>
<td>12,142</td>
<td>8,240</td>
<td>5,936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Todja</td>
<td>n/d</td>
<td>n/d</td>
<td>n/d</td>
<td>n/d</td>
<td>n/d</td>
<td>0* (sub-group of the Tuva)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumandin</td>
<td>6,327</td>
<td>(7,000)</td>
<td>n/d/</td>
<td>n/d</td>
<td>n/d</td>
<td>n/d</td>
<td>3,114</td>
<td>2,892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soyot</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0*(other nationalities)</td>
<td>2,769</td>
<td>3,608</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teleut</td>
<td>(1,000)</td>
<td>n/d</td>
<td>n/d</td>
<td>n/d</td>
<td>n/d</td>
<td>2,594</td>
<td>2,650</td>
<td>2,643</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2,398</td>
<td>3,712</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kamchadal</td>
<td>2,997</td>
<td>(3,704)</td>
<td>n/d</td>
<td>n/d</td>
<td>n/d</td>
<td>n/d</td>
<td>2,293</td>
<td>1,927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tubalar</td>
<td>n/d</td>
<td>n/d</td>
<td>n/d (7000)</td>
<td>n/d</td>
<td>n/d</td>
<td>1,596 (1,565)</td>
<td>1,965</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chelkan</td>
<td>(1,000)</td>
<td>0* (calculated as Altai)</td>
<td>n/d</td>
<td>n/d</td>
<td>n/d (700-800)</td>
<td>855</td>
<td>1,181</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chulym</td>
<td>n/d</td>
<td>n/d</td>
<td>n/d</td>
<td>n/d</td>
<td>n/d (560)</td>
<td>656</td>
<td>355</td>
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<td>Taz</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0* (sub-group of the Udege)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alutor</td>
<td>n/d</td>
<td>n/d</td>
<td>n/d</td>
<td>n/d</td>
<td>n/d</td>
<td>0* (sub-group of the Koryak)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kerek</td>
<td>n/d</td>
<td>n/d</td>
<td>n/d</td>
<td>n/d</td>
<td>n/d</td>
<td>0* (sub-group of the Koryak)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL (40 peoples)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>% from the total of the country (Russian Federation)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>0.17% of 145.2 million</td>
<td>0.18% of 142.9 million</td>
</tr>
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</table>

The numbers in brackets are estimations created using data from the sources consulted. Those in 2010 marked with an asterisk are calculated as part of larger peoples.