Impact of ethno-cultural component on the development of agricultural land use of Russian Germans living in the Altai Territory

A V Korneeva¹ and T A Kosacheva²

¹Altai State University, 68, Sozialistitcheskij Ave., Barnaul, 656049, Russia
²Altai State Agricultural University, 98, Krasnoarmeyskiy Ave., Barnaul, 656049, Russia

E-mail: korneevaalyona1@rambler.ru

Abstract. The scientific interest in the problems of ethnicity and the ethnic culture is reasoned by the process of globalization and the development of intercultural communications. The studies of ethnic groups and cultures are extremely relevant in connection with the formation of ethnic groups at different levels of development, of intra-ethnic cultural differences, including territorial ones, as well as inter-ethnic cultural similarities. The transformation of ethnic culture occurs under the influence of various factors, including geographic location, landscape, and neighborhood with other ethnic groups, mutual compliance. Global political and economic changes influence the ethno-cultural differentiation. The article analyzes the current socio-cultural situation in rural areas with compact residence of the Russian Germans in the Altai Territory, discusses the factors influencing the development of the ethno-cultural component.

1. Introduction

The globalization process embraced the modern development of the world community. It concerned all the spheres of human activity, blurred the lines between different countries and peoples, and brought the humanity closer to becoming one. The erasure of linguistic, ideological, political barriers led all the diversity of cultures to “leveling” and homogeneity. Such universal human uniformity was especially destructive for original national cultures, which by the 21st century had been weakened and had lost their “vital force”. Meanwhile, each ethno-cultural organism was unique and valuable in itself. Multilateralism, the diversity and depth of the human culture were formed of the features of ethnic cultures. Oblivion, destruction, and sometimes the abandonment of ancestral cultural bases, enshrined in the age-old tradition, in favor of general cultural ones led to the “death” of the individual culture. For various reasons, the ethnic culture of the Russian Germans living in rural settlements on the territory of the Altai Region was also subject to such danger; therefore, the need to influence the revival, preservation and the development of the ethnic culture of the Russian Germans had arisen as a valuable component of the total human culture.

The study, preservation and the development of national cultures, including the culture of the Russian Germans, contribute to the culture of inter-ethnic communication, which is a prerequisite for the peaceful coexistence of people in a multi-ethnic society and the formation of which occurs through upbringing, education and introduction of the individual to the culture.
Socio-economic difficulties, especially occurring in agricultural areas, have exacerbated the problems of emigration, primarily of representatives of qualified segments of the population from among the minorities who have their own national-state formations outside of Russia. This noticeably weakens the intellectual potential of the country, the possibility of its reproduction, since a significant number of Russians are leaving abroad in this stream.

The ethnoculture of the Russian Germans is one of the elements of the all-Russian culture, and the processes taking place in the culture of individual ethnic groups are not only important for themselves, but also have a significant impact on the sociocultural situation as a whole. The extent of this influence was different over the more than two centuries of history of the German ethnos. At the moment, the relevance of studying the German ethnos, the characteristics of its culture is primarily due to the problem of the preservation of this ethnos. The share of the German population in the population of the Altai Territory over the past decades has been steadily declining as a result of external migration, which has a negative impact on the socio-economic development of the region.

The ethnicity is often identified with the society, although it is a completely different concept. The society along with cultural heritage has its own political and economic structure. Ethnic groups are just groups of the population of a society. Therefore, they obviously cannot have economic or political structures. In principle, members of the same ethnic group can live in completely different territories and belong to different economic communities [1].

The ethnic culture includes tools, morals, customs, values, buildings, clothing, food, vehicles, housing, knowledge, beliefs, and all kinds of folk art. The main component of ethnic culture is the language. The language reflects the general knowledge about the traditions established in the given culture; the historical memory is indirectly materialized in it. The ethnicity, or the ethnic community, is a totality of people who have a common culture, speak the same language, have a common self-name and are aware of both their community and their difference from the members of other similar human groups, and this community is most often recognized as a common origin.

The characteristic features of any ethnic culture are respect for traditions, adherence to accepted life patterns in the field of behavior, thinking, etc. In any ethnic culture, a special psychological structure of the ethnics is formed, which can be defined as a specific way of relating to the surrounding reality and shaping attitudes towards it through the prism of established traditions, values, patterns and behavioral stereotypes. They appear in different ways. This can be reflected in the ethnic character and the ethnic temperament. They do not always depend on the psycho-physiological characteristics of a particular person, but are culturally mediated and sustainable [2].

The ethnos and the ethnic culture are not a frozen organism, but a dynamic one with the whole set of attributes, the reality that represents ethno-cultural spatial-temporal continuum in the conditions of the modern interconnected world [3].

2. Materials and methods
On the territory of Russia, including the Altai Territory, a significant number of representatives of the German ethnos are still living. The topic of the ethnic identity of the Russian Germans is extremely relevant in the context of the growth of the general scientific interest in issues of interethnic relations and their potential conflict.

The Germans of Russia are a special historical phenomenon. In recent years, the term “the Russian Germans” has become widespread, knowingly that the Russian Germans have been and are one nation. In fact, the situation before 1941, that is, for almost 180 years of the residence of the Germans in Russia, was somewhat different. The Germans in that period had never represented a single people. The formation of various groups of the German population took place over several centuries in different parts of the vast Russian Empire. The contacts and the mutual influence were limited, and in most cases absent. The reason for this was social, confessional and territorial differences [4].

In connection with the global political and economic events in our country, the increased migration of large groups of people, it has become very important to study the specifics of the ethnic development
of groups separated from their ethnic group, as well as the factors determining it, namely the Germans living in Siberia.

The Germans, of course, were among the first settlers in Siberia, they actively participated in the colonization of the Siberian region, along with the Russians. So, for example, a lieutenant Colonel Ivan Bukholts, who came from Saxony, founded the Omsk fortress in 1716 [5].

The first scientific descriptions of the Siberian Region belong to German scientists and travellers: Daniel Gottlieb Messerschmidt, Gerard Friedrich Miller, Peter Simon Pallas, Friedrich Wilhelm Radlov. A lot of Germans were among the Siberian officials and officers, priests and teachers, architects and musicians, merchants and artisans. By the end of the eighteenth century Lutheran parishes existed in Barnaul, Tomsk, Tobolsk and Omsk [6].

However, the bulk of the Germans in Siberia were the rural German population, the so-called German colonists. They played the main role in the formation of the Siberian German groups.

The first German settlements in the Altai appeared in the 1890s. The main reason for the resettlement of the Germans in the Altai was a lack of land and the high cost of land in the Volga Region and in the Ukraine. The mass relocation to Siberia began in the late nineteenth-early twentieth century. On September 19th, 1906, the law “On the Transfer of Cabinet Lands in the Altai District to the Directorate General of Land Management and Agriculture for the Establishment of Resettlement Areas” was passed. On November 9th, 1906 a decree was issued on the land reform in Russia [7].

After the adoption of these documents, the resettlement process took an organized character. In the Kulunda steppe, the government allotted about 60 thousand tithes of land to accommodate the immigrants. The immigrants received a cash allowance and a loan; they were exempted from taking state obligations for three years and from taxes for five years. The availability of free and inexpensive land and the benefits attracted a large number of people willing to move to the Altai. In the Slavgorod District in 1907, 14 German settlements were founded; in 1908-1909 the number was 16. By 1914, the German population in the Slavgorod District was more than 17 thousand people. So the village of Ananyevka was formed in 1912 by the Germans immigrants from the Ukraine. By religion, the first settlers were Mennonites. The village of Kusak was formed in 1908 by immigrants from the Kherson Province and the Tauride Province and from Sevastopol. By religion they were also Mennonites. In 1894, the village of Podosnovo was founded by settlers from the Volga Region. These religious settlers were Lutherans. The village of Orlovo was founded in 1908. Among the first inhabitants of the village were people from the Mennonite colonies on the Molochnaya River in the Ukraine. The village of Protasovo was founded by the Mennonites who came from the Molochanskaya Colony, the Khortitsa Colony and the Ufa Colony in 1907. The village of Redkaya Dubrava was formed by the Mennonites from the Ukraine. The village of Shumanovka was founded in 1911 by the Ukrainian Mennonites. A little later, the Germans moved here from Orenburg [8].

In Kulunda, on the “land of a thousand lakes”, the Germans settled on a religious basis from the end of the 19th century. Those were immigrants from Germany, Holland, and Austria. Exploring new lands, the settlers brought the names of the former settlements with them. Thus the villages of Alexanderkron, Libental, and others appeared [9], [10].

Unlike the material culture, the spiritual one is more traditional in its development. For the Germans, rural settlements are characterized by a high degree of religiosity compared with the surrounding population. The religion traditionally plays a significant role in the spiritual life of the German village. After the resettlement, the German peasants first of all built the building of a church or a prayer house. During the years of the Soviet power, despite persecution by the authorities, it was not possible to eradicate adherence to religious faith and traditions among the Altai Germans. In many families there was a Bible which was passed from generation to generation. The family tree was made. The current situation in the ritual sphere of the spiritual culture (especially in calendar rituals) can be assessed as an adaptation to the existing conditions while preserving the most stable elements of the rites and customs of the Germans living in rural areas [11].

The resettlement and allotment of land took place under the state control. In 1927, when the German District was created, the newspaper Rote Fahne began to appear. Teachers, agronomists, doctors were
sent from the Volga German Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. Fiction and textbooks in German came to schools, libraries. But in the 1930s everything changed, the German Region ceased to exist and the years of repression came. During the Great Patriotic War most people were in the labor army. The men were sent to the Kuzbass, to the Tula coal mines, the women to the Mikhailovsky soda-making plant and logging [12].

The structure of the German National District included village councils: Steppe, Grishevsy, Khortitsky, Zheltensky, Kusaksky, Shumanovsky (from the Slavgorod District), Podosnovsky, Evstafyevsky, Kamyshinsky, Martyanovsky (from the N.-Aleksyevsky District), N.-Romanovsky, Podnezhny, Petrovsky, Orlovsky, Chestovsky, Dvorsky, Nikolsky and Malenky (from the Znamensky District), with the center in the village of Halbstadt. In 1937, the German National District was liquidated, and later restored to its former borders in 1991.

On June 18th, 1991, the Executive Committee of the Altai Regional Council of People's Deputies made the decision No. 258 “On the restoration of the German National District in the Altai Territory”, and on July 1st, 1991, the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR “On the formation of the German National District in the Altai Territory” was signed [13]. The administrative center of the district was the village of Galbstadt. At the time of the creation, 16 rural settlements were located on the territory of the German National District (GND) for 1,400 km², where 20,700 people lived, 60 to 70% of which were Germans by nationality. The restoration of the area, along with the Azov German National District in the Omsk Region, was a way out of the prevailing by the early 1990s, when the chance of restoring the republic in the Volga Region was missed, and the emigration of the Russian Germans increased every year. The creation of national-territorial rural formations in areas densely populated by the German population would make it possible to concentrate funds and efforts for a concrete and quick solution to the problems of preserving the Russian Germans as an ethnic group.

The global political and economic changes in our country, the increased migration have a significant impact on the course and direction of modern ethnic processes among the Germans. So far, in the territory of the Altai Territory there have been still preserved rural areas where various German dialects speakers live. The villages of the German National District have been affected by the emigration processes: if after the formation of the German National District in 1993, the share of Germans in the total population was 60%, then according to the 2010 census, there was 31.8% left [14].

The agricultural territory of the German District is called the modern ethnographic and historical landmark of the Altai. Here the national traditions, culture and life are carefully preserved. The locals have not lost their national love for accuracy and cleanliness, due to which the German District looks like an unexpected corner of Western Europe in the middle of the Altai steppes. The layout of the local villages is interesting: the streets are wide and straight, with obligatory lawns on the sides of asphalt roads. The attention is drawn to large well-kept houses with flower beds behind elegant fences. All outbuildings are under the same roof. Behind them there are large gardens, not separated by fences.

In the Altai land, which had become the second homeland, the Germans preserved their national culture, namely the customs and holidays previously unknown in Siberia: a mass celebration of Christmas (but not New Year), the Winter Feast of the Three Kings. As to rites, the tradition of setting a maypole under the window of the girlfriend as a symbolic proposal of marriage on the Trinity is especially curious. Some national holidays are widely celebrated even now, for example, the traditional summer festival “Zommerfest” celebrated at the end of July [15].

The Altai Territory is a significant agricultural region of the Siberian Federal District. The German National District (GND), being a structural unit of the Altai Territory, is one of the most significant regions of our region. GND is located in the northwestern part of the Altai Territory; its area is 1,450 km². The geographical position of GND has had a direct impact on the development of the real economy and entrepreneurship on the whole [16].

The main activity of the district is agriculture, namely the production of grain, sunflower, milk and meat. The territory of farms of the district, which is 133,949 hectares of agricultural land, is located in the Kulunda steppe, which is considered to be a zone of risk farming. At the beginning of 2018, the area
of arable land amounted to 115140 ha, among them 60,170 ha in agricultural organizations, 54,970 ha in farms.

There are 11 agricultural enterprises in the German National District, such as the Stepnoy farm in the village of Grishkovka, SHKPZ (Agricultural Cooperative Breeding Plant) n.a. K. Marx in the village of Redkaya Dubrava, SKHPZ n.a. Kirov in the village of Podsosevno, “Eco-Product” Ltd. in the village of Shumanovka, and others. Agricultural enterprises, including KFH (Peasant’s Farm Enterprise), are concentrated in the settlements of the municipal district. The main specialization of farms in the district is the production of plant products, mainly grain crops and meat and dairy cattle breeding [17].

The farms of the region have developed cultivation of fodder and vegetables. The region produces durum wheat, buckwheat and fodder crops for dairy farming. The raw material base allows developing the production of meat, butter and cheese. In GND there are oil mills for processing sunflower seeds, mills, cheese factories, mini meat plants, sausage shops and brick factories [18]. Meat and dairy products of Brukke Ltd of GND are widely known not only in the Altai Territory, but also beyond it. The investments in the main capital are growing at a high rate, there is a steady positive trend in the increase in the production of agricultural products and foodstuffs.

In recent years, a complex of various types of state support for agricultural sectors has been adopted in the region, and a number of major investment projects have been launched.

The German National District occupies a worthy place in the number of producers of high-quality agricultural products.

There is a significant influence of German culture. It is necessary to appreciate moneyed assistance provided by Germany to the centers of the German culture of Siberia. In the Altai, over the past few years, the situation of preserving one’s identity for young German people has been modeling. One of such ways or forms is various public associations. Getting into the body of a national public organization, representatives of the younger generation have the opportunity to “feel and understand” the culture of their ancestors from the inside, learn the facts from the history of their people and offer a different way of existence in society - not assimilation, but integration [19].

The youth’s partners in the organization of work on preserving the national culture have become the Ethnological Center for the Preservation and Study of the History and Culture of the Peoples of Altai, the Altai Regional National-Cultural Autonomy of the Russian Germans, the Altai Regional Russian-German House, the Russian-German Polycultural Scientific and Educational Center and some others.

3. Conclusion
A significant role in the formation of the modern material and spiritual culture of the Germans living in rural areas is played by the process of adaptation to local natural conditions. The problems of ethnic groups and minorities in different countries have remained and remain the most difficult in understanding and finding solutions that require comprehensive consideration and a full assessment of the proposed actions to overcome them.

The measures financed by the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany to support the Russian Germans focus on preservation of the German identity and culture. Supporting the multidisciplinary activities of the numerous centers of the German culture makes not only a contribution to the preservation of identity, but alongside this, unites the centers into an important network for the creation and further development of the self-organization of the Russian Germans as a central element of the support policy.

The Altai Territory is one of the regions where a significant group of the Russian Germans has been formed in terms of size and influence on the socio-economic situation in the region. The analysis of the current economic situation in the rural areas of the German District has showed that the national-state and ethnic factors play an important role in the formation and existence of the culture. Each representative of a national and ethnic culture receives a series of attitudes from his culture in the form of fundamental values. These attitudes center on all spheres of the human activity. An important role here is played by the dialogue of cultures, in which people take part, not the cultures themselves. In this context, the culture is a stabilizing factor on which its stability is based. This demonstrates the positive
sociocultural and economic dynamics of the development of agricultural territories of the Altai Territory, where the Russian Germans live.

References
[1] Mathis D V 2004 Stages and factors of transformation of the image of the world in a change of socio-cultural situation. Siberian Psychological J. 19 44–48
[2] Lipets E Yu 2014 Ethnicity and ethnic culture; traditional and modern forms of existence Historical, philosophical, political and legal sciences, cultural studies and art history. Questions of theory and practice. 1(39) part II 113–116
[3] Gerasimenko T I 2015 Ethnos and culture: the interpretation of concepts and approaches to the study. Bulletin of Orenburg State University 6(181) 178–184
[4] Pleve I R 2000 German colonies on the Volga River in the second half of the 18th century. (Moscow) pp 8–11
[5] Petrov I P 2004 In the footsteps of Ivan Bukholts Omsk Regional Historian 2
[6] Tunkina I V, Savinov D G Daniel Gottlieb Messerschmidt: At the origins of Siberian archeology. St. Petersburg: Elekksis LLC, 2017. (Ad. Fontes. Materials and studies on the history of science; Supplementum 6) 168 p.
[7] Stolypin P A 2011 Program reforms: documents and materials: in 2 parts. (Moscow: ROSSPEN) part 1
[8] Tregubov A L 2003 Kulunda Steppe and Slavgorod Past Days 1 34–38
[9] Mertens U 2001 Handbuch Russland-Deutsche. Ein Nachschlagewerk zur russland-deutschen und deutsch-russischen Geschichte und Kultur (Ortsverzeichnis ehemaliger Siedlungsgebiete)
[10] Slavgorod (Slavgorodskoe) Siberian Trade and Industry Yearbook 1914-1915 2004 Past Days 2 23–26
[11] Volobueva M 2002 Ethno-confessional self-identification of Germans in the Altai Territory: historical-religious analysis. History and culture of the Germans of Altai. Issue 2 (Based on ethnographic expeditions) (Barnaul: Barn Publishing House. state ped. Univ) pp. 89–101
[12] Fast A A 2012 German district in Altai, 1927-1938 [Text]: documents and materials (Barnaul: Altai) 407 p.
[13] Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR "On the formation of the German National District in the Altai Territory" dated July 1st, 1991 – No. 1507-1
[14] Moskalyuk L I 2014 German "linguistic islands" in the Altai Territory. Questions of linguistics 3 55–66
[15] References to the article: // Humanitarian scientific research. 2013. № 3 [Electronic resource]. URL: http://human.snauka.ru/2013/03/2460 (appeal date: 03/26/2019)
[16] SME Corporation [Electronic resource]. Access mode: https://corpmsp.ru/razvivite_selkhozkooperacii/materialy-obucheniya/ (circulation date 23.09.2018)
[17] On approval of the state program of the Altai Territory "Development of small and medium-sized businesses in the Altai Territory" for 2014–2020 (as amended on May 24, 2018) [Electronic resource ]. Access mode: http://docs.cntd.ru/document/460272888 (the date of appeal September 20, 2018)
[18] Official website Altai Krai [Electronic resource]. Access mode: https://www.altairregion22.ru/territory/regions/doushrain (appeal date 21.09.2018)
[19] Matis V I 2015 Justification of the principles of a multicultural approach in the implementation of the cultural policy of the region. Scientific journal "Cultural Heritage of Russia" pp. 6–9