Socio-cultural development of the Altai region as a cross-border region of Russia

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Abstract. The article discusses some results of sociological research conducted on the sociocultural development of the Altai Region, taking into account the specifics of a cross-border region. The article continues a series of publications devoted to the study of the socio-cultural situation in a particular region of Russia.

Keywords: socio-cultural portrait, financial situation, study, sociological study

1. Introduction
At present, conducting empirical sociological research, which allows to obtain objective knowledge about the socio-economic situation in a particular region about results of ongoing social reforms, is highly relevant. This makes possible to determine the prospects for further development in the interests of particular individuals, families, and the state, ensuring their social security. Such studies are also important for identifying regional characteristics, studying and comparing them in the conditions of contemporary transformation in Russia.

2. Materials and Methods
At the beginning of the 21st century, empirical sociological studies of the regions began to be actively pursued. A typical methodology for the study of the socio-cultural development of the region, developed by a team of authors, became the theoretical basis for them [1]. In the Siberian Federal District, Krasnoyarsk, Novosibirsk, Altai Regions and Tyumen became such regions. The results of this work were included in the “Atlas of Russia’s modernization and its regions: Socio-economic and socio-cultural trends and problems” [2].

A number of studies conducted at the Faculty of Sociology of the Altai State University were devoted not only to the study of the specifics of the Altai Region and the compilation of its socio-cultural portrait, but also the social well-being and safety of the population of the region in the monitoring mode in 2009-2014. In the research process, contemporary theoretical approaches were studied, and the anthroposocietal approach of N. I. Lapin formed the basis of the study. Also, analysis and generalization of the scientific works of contemporary authors on this subject were carried out (S. V. Tumanov, L. A. Belyaeva [2], V. G. Nemirovsky [3], H. Peretz, Y. Fried [4], E. Krau [5] and etc.). Objective and subjective characteristics of social well-being and safety of the population (which ultimately resulted in a socio-cultural portrait of the Altai Region) are analyzed.

Sources for making the Portrait of the Region were: (a) statistical data; (b) media materials; and (c) sociological research data. Survey research methods were used (ordinary survey and expert survey).
representative survey of the population was conducted by quota sampling, taking into account demographic characteristics by gender, age, education, place of residence (cities and rural areas were selected based on the level of urbanization). Quotas are calculated on the 2010 census. In an expert survey, representatives of regional government bodies and local governments, business elites, state and budget organizations, journalists, university professors, leaders of public organizations, political parties, etc. were in the focus of attention.

3. Results
The practical result of the research subject was the compilation of a socio-cultural portrait of the Altai Region: its general characteristic as a border agro-industrial region is highlighted; ethno-cultural and socio-economic characteristics of the population, the level and quality of life, social security and social well-being, the use of cultural capital, labor motivation and economic activity, population migration, mobility and social stratification, government regulation and self-government in the social life of the population of the region are considered. In addition, we studied the impact of various socio-economic variables on the studied components of the socio-cultural space, relationships existing between culture and social relations as being localized by the territory of their subjects: individuals, social groups, ethnic groups, territorial communities.

The scientific novelty of the work done was to identify the main stages in transformation of the concept of “socio-cultural space”; criteria were determined, on the basis of which various forms of capital forming a social space (social, economic, cultural, prestigious, etc.) were deeply considered. The existence of a close relationship between the heterogeneity of the social structure and social space has been studied. This made it possible to use the ideas of P. Bourdieu and E. Giddens in the development of the scientific apparatus used in our research. In particular, we focused on “the formation of social classes, groups, strata, competitive relations between them with the unequal distribution of these capitals” [6].

Since 1991, the Altai Region has been a border region of Russia. It is located in the south-east of Western Siberia, on the border of continental Asia, 3419 km from Moscow. The territory of the region is 168 thousand km², occupies the 24th place in the Russian Federation and the 10th place in the Siberian Federal District by area. In the north, the region borders with the Novosibirsk region, in the east with the Kemerovo region, the south-eastern border passes with the Republic of Altai, in the south-west and west with the state border with the Republic of Kazakhstan with a length of 843.6 km [7].

One of the most important components of a sociocultural portrait of regions are the income and standard of living of the population. Socio-economic transformation of the Russian society led to significant changes in the standard of living, affecting people’s incomes as well. The population of the Altai Territory, as an agrarian region, has a low level of income. “In 2010, according to the results of self-assessment of their financial situation, 13.4% attributed themselves to the poor and 1.7% to the very poor. 74.1% of the region’s population assessed their financial situation as average, and about 9% thought that they were well off, i.e. according to their inner conviction, the majority of respondents rated their standard of living as average” [8].

At the same time, social mood characteristics, satisfaction with different living conditions give a general assessment of the situation. In 2014, 54% of respondents were “fully satisfied” and “rather satisfied” with their lives in general. 4.6% and 21.7% of the population are completely dissatisfied and partially dissatisfied with life. These research results indicate an increase in the subjective satisfaction of the population of the Altai Region with their lives. “The results obtained in the studies of 2010 and 2014 were about the same: a quarter of the population answered negatively to this question. With regard to satisfaction with life in their region, the main indicator was “in general, we are satisfied, but we are not completely satisfied.” Although, these people do not want to leave their homes. Among those being surveyed, more than a third are confident optimists. In other words, those who are quite and rather confident in their future; those experiencing some anxiety are in a state of confusion because they cannot say for sure whether they are confident or not sure about their future” [9].
Along with these traditional assessments of the present and the future, in many respects, respondents associate their dissatisfaction with their place of residence: 44.4% think that “in our region people live worse than in neighboring regions, and 39.6% note that compared with some regions, people live better here and worse than others” [10]. Dissatisfaction with the place of residence may partly indicate a potential protest activity of the population. In particular, on the basis of previous assessments, we can say that the protest potential lies in almost half of the respondents (43.5% positive ratings). Almost the same 42.6% were not ready to take part in protest actions. The 2014 study found no significant changes.

An important aspect for assessing social well-being includes indicators of social optimism in retrospect and development perspective. As our previous study clearly indicates, “A third of the respondents felt that their financial situation had improved over the past year. Rural residents are more optimistic in their assessments: more than a third of respondents noted an improvement in the financial situation of their family in recent years. These estimates are significantly higher than those of urban groups. This category of respondents believes that there are more families among them whose situation has deteriorated in their own opinion. If compared to the other groups, young people showed the most optimistic estimates of retrospectives. In comparison to representatives of middle and older working age, young people have almost 2 times more optimistic estimates of the future of their family. In comparison with persons of pre-retirement and retirement age, young people have 2.5 times more optimistic estimates. Despite the fact that the rural population is more optimistic in their retrospective estimates, there are no significant differences between rural and urban residents in determining prospects” [10].

With the support of the Russian Foundation for Basic Research, we conducted a sociological study “Migration of rural youth in the Altai Region: analysis of the dynamics and reduction mechanisms based on a comprehensive measurement of social status and activity” in 2017-2018. According to the results of this study, we found that “among the rural youth, 39.2% of respondents were confident in the present and optimistic about the future” [11]. At the same time, “32.9% of them were not sure about the future and were experiencing some anxiety; 8.7% experienced severe stress; 11% of respondents felt indifference and apathy; 8% found it difficult to answer” [11].

4. Discussion
Sociological studies are designed to play an important role in clarifying the characteristics of regional development. These studies integrate a set of approaches based on various theories and concepts, the synthesis of which will allow to highlight “the conceptual and methodological basis for assessing contemporary development features for further improving population’s living conditions” [12]. At the same time, the region as a sociocultural community remains largely unknown for Russian sociology. It should be noted that the existing theoretical work and empirical studies are devoted to certain aspects of research on regions, being highly fragmented and not taking into account contemporary complex changes, as well as key factors and mechanisms affecting them. In this connection, it is highly important to conduct monitoring sociological studies in order to supplement the created socio-cultural portraits of the Russian regions and to introduce changes into the standard methodology that reflect the specificity of the studied region is important.

5. Conclusion
We have reviewed some research results on constructing a socio-cultural portrait of the Altai region as a border region of Russia and its monitoring comparison based on the Typical Methodology. While further studying the results of regional development, it is necessary to compare them, highlighting common features and peculiarities.

References
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