



IBSU

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AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAM

**Dynamics of Social and Cultural Challenges Faced by Native
Americans (XVII-XXI Centuries)
The Case of the Cherokee Ethnic Group**

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Extended Abstract of Doctoral Dissertation in American Studies

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INTRODUCTION

Most Americans, which may not know much about Indian culture or Indian Treaty rights, express special sentiments toward American Indians. This attitude is not held in other minority groups in America. It is difficult to determine whether this is a dim recognition of the fact that Indians were there the first, or it is merely an American notion. It is quite difficult for the American public to believe that injustices continue to be expressed upon Indian people because, they assume that the sympathy or tolerance they feel toward Indians is somehow transferred to the government policy that deals with Indian issues.

The history of Native Americans is very appealing and exciting to general readers. Since the 1960s many historians, authors and scholars have studied American Indians and written thousands of books and articles chronicling the lives of different tribes in North America.

The reason why historians and scholars have started studying Native Americans particularly since 1960s, is connected to the fact that the 1960s witnessed a significant shift in how the United States viewed its past. The civil rights movement (in 1964 ;President Lyndon Johnson signed into law the historic Civil Rights Act that outlawed discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex or national origin) drew attention to the ethnic minorities in America. It was a breakthrough for the ethnic minority rights.

Between the early seventeenth century and the early twentieth century almost all the land of the present United States was transmitted from American Indians to non-Indians. The important questions are to understand how this happened? Did Indians sell their land, or was it taken from them by conquest? Does the truth lie somewhere in the middle?

The period of Indian removal in the United States history dates back from 1820s to the early 1840s, (The Removal Act was passed in 1830). During this period of time, under the presidency of Andrew Jackson, who was one of the most enthusiastic advocates and proponents of Indian removal, most of the remaining eastern Indians were forced to migrate west of the Mississippi River. Years from 1828 till 1838 was a period when more than eighty thousand Indians were removed from the east to the west (Banner, 2005).

For decades, the federal government of the U.S. had attempted to force Indians to adopt the lifestyle of white Anglo-Americans, the government supported Indian people to settle in

permanent towns, to build churches (to adopt Christianity) and schools, to make long-term investments in farm animals and equipment to help them to be civilized. The Cherokee people were one of the first ethnic groups gradually adopted a lifestyle similar to that of their white neighbors (Banner, 2005).

In 1832, the federal government of the United States signed a treaty with a group of dissident Cherokees, according to which the United States alleged to purchase all of the tribe's land in exchange for land in present-day Oklahoma. The Cherokees' journey to Oklahoma, the Trail of Tears, is one of the most remembered today, but many tribes suffered through the actual process of removal.

By the middle of the nineteenth century the eastern Indians had ceded up virtually all their land. By that time, the process of land purchasing was accelerated; if in 1820s the land transactions was 1.7 per year, by the 1830s land transactions reached to 5.5 (Banner, 2005).

This condition resulted in the creation of Indian reservation – “an island of Indian Territory within a sea of white settlement” (Brown D. , 2005, p. 228). According to Banner, reservations were created during a time of very rapid federal land acquisition (Banner, 2005). By 1880s, the pattern of land acquisition in the West had been totally transformed, virtually the Indians possessed no land that was not part of a reservation.

Native Americans played very important role in the history of the United States of America. One of the most important issues regarding the Native Americans struggle for landownership occurred during the Civil War (1861-1865). By the upheaval of this conflict, many American Indians, including the Cherokees (whose nation was the largest among other civilized tribes: the Creeks, the Choctaws, the Chickasaws and the Seminoles and it controlled an estimated forty thousand square miles of land in the southeastern United States) expressed their commitment to the Union or Confederacy. They assembled armies and participated in battles. Their alliance was important for both sides of the war (the Union and the Confederacy) as they recognized that American Indians' involvement in this conflict could influence the outcome of the bloody conflict.

Native Americans' participation in the Civil War occupies the central role in America's historical consciousness. During the period of 1861 to 1865, American Indians all over the continent were struggling for autonomy as peoples with their own organization, culture and lifestyle. However, they turned out to be the losers in this conflict. The premises and treaties regarding

the landownership were broken by the U.S. government; Native Americans were removed from their homelands and their identity was deprived.

Before the arrival of white settlers, Native American people educated their children according to their typical traditional manner, consistent with their culture, customs and traditions; they were adapted to their specific surroundings. Accordingly, Indian children had the information about their origin, their way of life; they knew how to support themselves and how to preserve their culture, languages and rules of order (Fletcher, 2008).

With the arrival of white people (European settlers), challenges which they faced with them and later with the government of the United States, had a devastating impact on these indigenous people, their culture and traditions.

Native Americans were rich with natural resources, fertile land, food and labor; white settlers realized the advantages of this wealth and did their best to appropriate it. As Fletcher points out, “the Europeans and Americans benefited from a wide variety of factors, including their superiority in military technology and resistance to certain kinds of disease, as well as a will to destroy, terrorize, mutilate and conquer that most Indian communities found foreign and even incredible” (Fletcher, 2008, p. 1).

However, the U.S. government chose to assimilate Native Americans rather than exterminate them. As campaigns of extermination are quite expensive and difficult to maintain, the reason of this decision was connected to some economic and financial factors, U.S. government officials considered that more beneficial in this condition would be to initiate a long-term program of incorporating and assimilating Indian people into mainstream American society (Fletcher, 2008). The advantages of this program were the following: first, it was cheap and would not cause the loss of their lives and property; besides, by assimilating the Indian people into mainstream society, their cultures, traditions and languages would disappear gradually. Secondly, religions and philosophies of white people were able to justify mass extermination of Native Americans, however, it would be difficult for any religion or philosophy to survive on this basis.

During the 19th century, American social activist groups such as, the Friends of the Indian and the Indian Rights Association arose; they were dedicated to the acculturation of Native Americans. They were supporting the idea of assimilating the Native Americans into the mainstream culture in order to save them (Fletcher, 2008). The federal government of the U.S. intended to start this process through the education of the Native American people.

Throughout history, treaty negotiations between the federal government of the U.S. and the Indian people often included provisions for educating Native American children. Moreover, it is important to note that many of these treaty rights sought to educate Indian children, in exchange for Indian lands. American policymakers considered that it would accelerate the incorporation and assimilation of Native children into the dominant society. Government officials sent Christian Protestant and Catholic priests and nuns to conduct much of the education in Native American society. By implementing this policy, the government would be able to take away Native American cultures, customs, traditions and religion.

Those Indian families which did not sign a treaty (these treaties were actually signed by Indian tribes) with an educational component, the Congress and the President of the U.S. would reach them in all circumstances (Fletcher, 2008).

The policymakers of the United States predicted the destruction and disappearance of the Native American culture and traditions; the issues of reservation and separateness would be vanished (Fletcher, 2008).

The system of American Indian education, which existed from the early treaty times through the 1970s, included the boarding schools, which were established by the secular and religious organizations. The boarding school experience for Indian children began in 1860 when the Bureau of Indian Affairs established the first Indian boarding school on the Yakima Indian Reservation in the state of Washington. The Indian boarding school system stands as one of the most offensive examples of the attempt to assimilate the Native American people into the dominant, white American society.

Some components of the Indian education system still exist, for example, the Haskell Indian boarding school which is located in Lawrence, Kansas; though, such schools are now operated by the Indian people and their organizations; however, American Indians don't possess the full authority to establish and control a certain type of the education system and it will continue to be a crisis until they take the full responsibility for educating their own.

We cannot neglect the issue of social construction of this indigenous nation. One of the predominant principles of the Cherokee society was the concept of egalitarianism; it had an outstanding impact on the traditional Cherokee government. According to their perspective, all the people were regarded as equal, however, the importance of justness and conformation in their

community was clearly highlighted. If they attempted to persuade people, it was only because of their will to achieve prosperity and common good for everyone (Ojibwa, 2011).

In the Cherokee Matrilineal society, each member of their culture worked together in order to have the society function, “each gender and age group had their particular tasks that needed to be accomplished and did so as a way of stabilizing the society” (McGeever, 2015, p. 31). This approach ensured a mutual trust within the society, each group and each representative of the Cherokee community was imposed with a certain responsibility and understood that they could rely on the others to maintain their obliged duties. This type of leadership was very successful for the Cherokees, but with the arrival of white settlers, it was quickly usurped.

Nowadays, as one of my interviewees admitted, Native Americans, including the Cherokees are more assimilated to the dominant society and are more ‘Americanized’ than they were forty years ago.

The last chapter of thesis provides a detailed information about present challenges and obstacles which are faced by the Cherokees and Native Americans in general, and the policies (targeting Native Americans) which are initiated by the federal government of the U.S. and which are in the process of implementation.

As it is admitted in one of the reports, nowadays, the U.S. government tries to have a unique nation-to-nation relationship with Native American Nations and owes a trust responsibility towards them, which is based on treaties, agreements, statutes, court decisions and executive orders. Despite this, there is a history of troubling and destructive federal policies and actions that have hurt Indian communities, provoked severe inequality and hastened the loss of tribal cultural traditions.

Young generation of Native Americans still face barriers in terms of education, socio-economic issues, health care, etc. Federal government of the United States has an important tool in terms of improving everyday life of Native youth. Key factors in this regard are: strengthening partnerships and sustained engagement that will help to bring the necessary resources and improve the quality of life for future generation of Native Americans.

Problem Statement

To get a realistic impression of an ethnic community and particularly of the Cherokee ethnic group, it is absolutely necessary to look at its seamy side and analyze its problems. Due to the fact that the reservations in the U.S. are on a different level of development, their problems vary and are of different graveness. However, in many cases one problem produces the next, so there is definitely no shortage of worrying aspects among the American Indians in the reservations as well as outside.

The goal of this research is to investigate the impact of historical colonization on the Native American population and the loss of culture with a particular focus on the Cherokee ethnic group. The research intends to explore and evaluate long-lasting effects of the U.S. Federal government's mistreatment towards Native Americans.

Particularly the study will discuss the Cherokees' importance as a distinct social group, its early relations with the United States government, fight against removal in the Supreme Court and eventual forced removal from their territory. The study reviews present policies and attitudes of Barack Obama administration toward Native American Issues.

Research Questions

The research developed the following research questions:

1. Why are the Cherokee people significant as a distinct ethnic and sovereign nation?
2. Is the current socio-economic condition of Native Americans the result of their historical discrimination?
3. What has been the goal of U.S. Federal government's policies towards Native Americans?
4. Do Native Americans (including the Cherokees) experience conflict between exercising their Native ways and adapting to modern American life requirements/conditions?

Hypothesis

In case the U.S. Federal government policies towards Native Americans has not been exclusive and discriminatory, sovereign nation of Natives would have developed more successfully and would have avoided socio-economic degradation.

Novelty and Actuality

Compared to other minority groups in the U.S., the issue of Native Americans is not studied thoroughly in Georgia. As those people were the first inhabitants of the American land, they represent an important part of the American culture and occupy very important place in American history.

During the soviet period, the U.S.-Native American issues were highlighted in extremely negative way due to political reasons. During the Cold War Indian problem was one of the important bases for acute criticism towards U.S. government. In Georgia those problems regarding indigenous people have not been highlighted since Soviet Period. So, from this point of view, the scientific issue is new and actual.

In 2016 Mikheil Barnovi from Tbilisi State University defended his dissertation on the leader of Native American Apache tribe – Geronimo. As for one of the largest Native American nations – the Cherokee, their historical and current social and economic development has not been studied in Georgian academia.

Practical and Theoretical Value

The problems of Native Americans discussed within the theoretical framework are viewed from the 21st century notion of human security issues and evaluations are made from the XX-XXI century theories of an ethnic minority rights.

As for the practical value, it is important to note that the discourse on Native American issues is relatively neglected when compared to other minority groups in the U.S. (e.g. African Americans). It is important to actualize the discourse on Native Americans in Georgian academic and public spheres, particularly, extensively used by the American Studies students throughout Georgia.

The problem has been viewed from the perspective of Georgian nation (which at some point was perceived as similar to Native Americans) as being a small nation within the Soviet Empire. Georgia has witnessed the same problem in terms of the attempt of cultural assimilation.

Research Methodology and Methods

Due to the nature of the research it is more appropriate to use a qualitative research methodology. However, the quantitative data is also implied in the thesis. As a research method the study will employ an online and face-to-face interview with open-ended and close-ended questions.

It is a historical research (focused on historical dynamics) and it can be considered as a descriptive research as well, with a strong focus on identifying the inconsistencies between causes of historical decisions and their results.

Furthermore, the research approach will involve thorough review and analysis of scholarly peer-reviewed literature on the history and effects of European colonization in the U.S., racism, and injustices American Indians have been subjected to historically and continuously to this day. The goal of the study is to explore the Cherokee nation from the sociological and cultural perspective (culture, values, religious beliefs, language, education); determining the type of the society and the level of integration with the mainstream American culture.

The respondents of the research were the professionals working in this specific field, as well as the actual subjects of PhD dissertation - Native Americans, the Cherokees.

Limitations of the Dissertation

Our aim was to study and describe Native Americans in the context of nation's political and socio-economic development from the late XVII century to the XXI century, with the strong focus on the Cherokee ethnic group.

Dissertation did not aim to provide the study on the roots of Native Americans from ethnological perspective.

Sources of the Dissertation

Theoretical basis of the research is built on the following sources: books, scientific articles, media sources, monographers, government reports.

Primary sources are mainly obtained from: U.S. government decisions, archives (court decisions which have been retrieved from free internet web-sites), correspondence, and personal interviews.

Ancient (original) sources which date back from 1609 to 1839 were found in different paid internet archives.

Besides the American sources, there were used some outside sources as well, particularly, the scientific works of Georgian scholars (Assist. Prof. Dr. Mikheil Barnovi, interview with Prof. Dr. Tamar Shioshvili), which depict the problem of Native Americans from the outsider's perspective.

Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation includes the following parts: Introduction, 3 chapters, conclusion, recommendations and 5 appendices. It involves 5 tables and 15 figures.

CHAPTER 1. Literature Review. Historical Overview on How the Native Americans Lost their Land

The period of Indian removal in the United States history dates back from 1820s to the early 1840s. During this period of time, under the presidency of Andrew Jackson, who was one of the most enthusiastic advocates and proponents of Indian removal, most of the remaining eastern Indians were forced to migrate west of the Mississippi River. Years from 1828 till 1838 was a period when more than eighty thousand Indians were removed from the east to the west (Banner, 2005).

For decades, the federal government of the U.S. had attempted to force Indians to adopt the lifestyle of white Anglo-Americans, the government supported Indian people to settle in permanent towns, to build churches (to adopt Christianity) and schools, to make long-term investments in farming and help them adapt to modern life requirements. The Cherokee people were one of the first ethnic groups which gradually adopted a lifestyle similar to that of their white neighbors (Banner, 2005).

As it turned out, American Indians were among the many losers in the conflict with the federal government of the U.S. The promises and treaties by the U.S. government were roughly broken. The promises regarding the land, independence, freedom and representation within their houses of leadership were pushed aside. American Indians were removed from their homelands and their identity was deprived (Josephy, 1989).

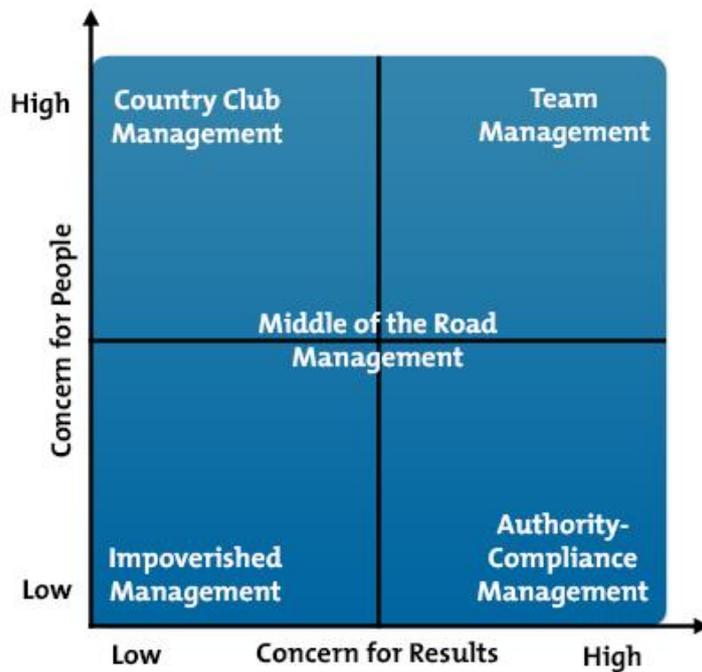
CHAPTER 2. Social and Cultural Characteristics and Way of Life of the Cherokee Society: Historical Perspective (XVIII-XIX Centuries)

Before the arrival of white settlers, the Cherokee community exercised Matrilineal Clan System. To describe the organization of their society we should stress on the Managerial Grid Model, which was developed by Robert R. Blake and Jane Mouton in 1964. This is a style leadership model which originally identifies five different leadership roles based on the concern for people (how a leader attends to the people in the organization, who are trying to achieve their goals) and the concern for production (how a leader refers to how a leader is concerned with achieving organizational tasks) (Northouse, 2013).

By using this grid, Blake and Mouton identified five types of leadership styles: country club, team management, middle of the road, impoverished and authoritarian. If we use this power grid to identify the Cherokee leadership style, we can say that before the arrival of white settlers (Europeans), the Cherokee people occupied Team Management position of the Leadership Grid.

According to the team management style, people in an organization are committed to the work that needs to be accomplished and end up developing relationships of trust with each other (Northouse, 2013). This style clearly depicted a matrilineal society of the Cherokee people, where each member of their culture worked together in order to have the society function. “Each gender and age group had their particular tasks that needed to be accomplished and did so as a way of stabilizing the society” (McGeever, 2015, p. 31). This leadership was provided to spread a mutual trust within the society, each group and each representative of the Cherokee community was imposed with a certain responsibility and understood that they could rely on the others to maintain their obliged duties. This type of leadership was very successful for the Cherokees, but with the arrival of white settlers, it was quickly usurped.

Power Grid 2-1



The Leadership Grid (Robert R. Blake, 1991).

Eventually, the European settlers managed to change the Cherokee culture and balance of power. Accordingly, in Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid (1964), they occupy the Authority-compliance corner.

This management ranks as high concern for results and low concern for the people, it does not emphasize communication and involves managers who are often controlling and over powering (Northouse, 2013).

CHAPTER 3. Social and Economic Policy of the U.S. Federal Government towards Native Americans: Challenges of Colonization Process and its Negative Effect

This chapter provides a detailed information about present challenges and obstacles which are faced by the Native Americans (including Cherokees) and the policies (targeting Native Americans) which are initiated by the U.S. federal government and which are in the process of implementation.

The report of 2014, provided by Obama Administration clearly emphasizes that young generation of Native Americans still face barriers in terms of education, socioeconomic life, health, etc. Federal government of the United States has an important tool in helping to improve everyday life of Native youth. Key factors in this regard are strengthening partnerships and sustained engagement that will help to bring the necessary resources and improve the quality of life for the future generation of Native Americans.

Research Methodology

Due to the nature of the research it was more appropriate to use a qualitative research methodology. However, the quantitative data was also implied in the thesis. As a research method the study employed face to face and online interview with open-ended and close-ended questions.

The respondents of the research were the professionals working in this specific field, as well as the actual subjects (representatives) of PhD thesis – Native Americans, the Cherokees.

On February 10, 2016 in Tbilisi I met a Cherokee origin Judy England-Joseph. Mrs. Joseph is an adjunct professor at George Mason University, she works at the National Academy for Public Administration in Virginia, USA. She delivers seminars on Leadership Management and Public Administration at GIPA, Georgia.

During the meeting (interview) with Mrs. Joseph we discussed many issue concerning Native Americans and particularly the Cherokees. She touched upon some social issues/problems, e.g. alcoholism within Native American communities; as she asserted, this problem is caused by a domestic violence, however, there is still no exact (sufficient) data to identify specific factors which put Natives at risk for alcohol problems. However, it is revealed that four out of the top ten

causes of death among Native Americans are attributable in large part to alcohol abuse, such as, accidents, suicides, homicides. Alcoholism is one of the causes (results) of gambling within Native American communities.

To the question what are the benefits and/or disadvantages of engagement in gambling business for Natives, Mrs. Joseph made emphasis on the gambling side which always asserts that tribal gaming has advanced the lives of these indigenous people economically, politically and socially, while the other (non-Indian) side contends that Indian gaming has exposed both the Indian and non-Indian communities to crime and corruption.

Gambling business generates billions of dollars in revenue each year, this results in the creation of many jobs and employees of tribal governments; besides, Indian gaming brings pride back to the reservations, Native languages are brought back to life and assimilated by Indian society; Indian culture experiences a rebirth. The influx of commerce from the non-gaming communities build up the reservation infrastructure from goods and services generated on the reservation.

However, at the same time she asserted that, it causes dependency, from the dependence on the government to the dependence on Indian gambling. Corruption on the reservation bleeds into Indian government and commerce. Gambling addiction replaces addiction to alcohol and poverty is replaced by materialism.

Mrs. Joseph expressed her personal approach and noted that the strategy that is formulated by the initiators of gambling business is problematic. Instead of employing Native Americans on that kind of work (gambling business), it is more important and preferable to provide them with education to obtain professional/career development. Government officials should understand and know what the problem really is. Compared to other minority groups, like African Americans, Natives are less involved in cultural, political or social life of the United States. The reason of this is connected to their past. The fact that they were the first inhabitants of North America and newly arrived white settlers took their land by the application of force, they are more insulted and outraged compared to other minority ethnic groups in the United States.

We touched upon the current issues as well and talked about the case of Indians' "Americanization". As she mentioned, Native American youth is more "Americanized" than they were forty years ago. This condition is expressed in their cultural, social and political life.

After such a fruitful meeting with Mrs. Joseph, I started working on the online interviews with Native Americans and particularly, the Cherokees.

I had ten online interviews with the members of the Cherokee Nation: Assist. Prof. Dr. Benjamin Frey from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (Department of American Studies), Shawn Wright, Clarke American Sanders Product Line Manager at Amano Pioneer Eclipse (North Carolina), Richard A. Rose, Ed.D., MEP, Supervisor of Higher Education Programs at New York State Education Department (New York State Education Department, Schenectady County Community College), Scott Williamson, IT Professional (Tulsa, Oklahoma), Wynn Westmoreland, Editorial Review/Contributing Writer CNN.com (Atlanta), Starla Bilyeu, Professor at Pawnee Nation College (Tulsa, Oklahoma), Leann Manus, Health Technical Analyst at Cherokee Nation (Tahlequah, Oklahoma), Charles Gourd, Adjunct Professors at Northeast Technology Center (Park Hill, Oklahoma), Robert Largent, Environmental Engineer at The Exchange (Cedar Hill, Texas), Kelli Weaver, Vice President of Business Development at American Checked (Tulsa, Oklahoma Area).

To the question “Which reference is correct/preferred – “Native American”, “Indigenous” or “American Indian”? 80% of the respondents replied that it is “Native American” and 20% made emphasis on “Indigenous”.

To the question - How do you define your identity as an ethnic group - “Tribe” or “Nation”? 70% of interviewees answered that it is “Nation” and 30% - “Tribe”.

When I asked, “Do you consider Native Americans to be the victims of discrimination from the historical point of view?” 100% of interviews admitted that there is no ‘considering’ to be done, that this is a historical fact.

“Did you personally experience the boarding school policies? How do you evaluate the legacy of Indian Boarding Schools? Positive or negative” – None of my respondents experienced the boarding school policies personally and 100% had negative attitude towards it. They discussed their mothers and grandmothers painful recollections. “The boarding school policy was a bald-faced attempt to eradicate American Indian cultures and further proliferate the aim of cultural genocide (Dr. Benjamin Frey). “This is a dark chapter in our history” (Richard Rose). “The children of the boarding school victims realized that their parents had learned how to be a white man but had lost how to be a Red Man in the process. This was the stated goal of these schools” (Shawn Wright).

“Is the current poor socio-economic condition of Native Americans the result of historical discrimination?” - 100% of respondents implied that it is connected to their past and once again stressed on the painful boarding school policies.

To the question – “How do you evaluate the U.S. government welfare policies towards Native Americans? Do these policies have negative or positive impact on the socio-economic conditions of Indigenous people?” - 100% of the interviewees stressed on the term ‘welfare’ and its negative correlation. The word *welfare*, according to them comes with ‘American baggage’. “This word welfare can mean free loader lazy person who does nothing to eat except survive on the governments generosity. This is far from what a Cherokee sees and feels.

I was able to get some information concerning the gambling business within Native American communities. Answers of my respondents and my researched material concerning this issue coincided with each other. To the question “What are the benefits and/or disadvantages of engagement in gambling business for Natives?” All of the interviewees (100%) admitted its advantage - finances for tribal infrastructure and for the negative side, they pointed to the corruption.

To the question how are the gender roles distributed between Cherokee men and women? Who holds the leading role? Can the (power) relations between Native men and women be defined as Matriarchal or Patriarchal? All of them (100 %) answered that it is Patriarchal as the role model of the U.S.

When I asked the question about Native American Traditions, particularly, “Do you experience conflict between exercising your Native ways and adapting to modern life requirements/conditions?” All the respondents asserted they don’t encounter any challenge regarding this issue, they still have and practice their ceremonies, their culture and language; the circumstances surrounding them are just different, just as they have been different in every historical period since European contact and even before.

After completing the interviews with the actual representatives of the Cherokee Nation, I decided to contact Georgian professors who are familiar with Native American issues and who visited some of the reservations in the U.S.

Professor Dr. Tamar Shioshvili, Dean of the Faculty of Education and Humanities and the program coordinator of American Studies B.A., M.A. and PhD programs at International Black

Sea University (Tbilisi, Georgia) visited Santo Domingo Tribe in New Mexico State in 2005. In an interview she discussed the procedure while entering an Indian reservation, current social, economic and cultural conditions of Native Americans, welfare policies provided by the U.S. federal government.

Assistant Professor Dr. at Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University (Tbilisi, Georgia) Mikheil Barnovi who has defended his PhD dissertation on Native American issues this year (2016) visited Mescalero Apache Indian reservation in New Mexico. He discussed current socio-economic conditions of that particular Indian tribe.

Overall, this is the end of my interviews with the actual representatives of Native Americans, the Cherokees and Georgian professors who are familiar with Native American issues. I was able to get a clear and valuable information regarding the realities faced by the Native Americans in the past and understand what kind of challenges they encounter in today's America.

Despite many obstacles facing today's Native youth, tribal nations and communities still hope and prove that it is possible to overcome these problems with focused, planned and strategic efforts. Without providing necessary investments and reforms targeting Native youth in education and other important areas, these adults will face even greater challenges in the future. It is crucial to involve young generation of Native Americans (including the Cherokees) in tribal cultures and traditions. Federal, state, local and tribal governments, as well as private and nonprofit sector institutions, all have roles and responsibilities in assuring that all young people have the tools and opportunities for achieving success.

CONCLUSION and RECOMMENDATIONS

The influence of white settlers had exposed differently on the Cherokees. Some of them adapted the 'Civilization' program to fit their own demands and to aggrandize rather than to transform their culture; some of them embraced the changes and many remained with the traditional beliefs. Eventually, majority of the Cherokees blended the two cultures to fit new technology and religions into the old ways of understanding their role (Perdue, 1998).

The power which the Cherokee men and women once possessed, was gradually diminished and taken over. The role of men and women drastically changed within the dimensions of their original culture but found a way to remain in part to fit the changes enforced by the Americans. As a result of the settlement of white people into the Cherokee territory and the influence of Christian missionaries on their lives, Cherokee community experienced many changes. In an industrialized and modernized society it was difficult for the Cherokees to resist new advances and to maintain their own tradition.

While discussing the current living conditions of the Cherokees, it is important to note that generally, the scope of social problems within Native American communities is overwhelming in the 21st century. While touching upon the list of health problems, like diabetes, cancer, substance abuse, suicide, pulmonary disease and cardiovascular problems, we can say that Native Americans are frequently listed as the sickest minority population in America (Johansen, 2000).

Agencies such as, the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Indian Health Service have been developed many policies and interventions, both at the national and local levels in order to address health related issues. It is important to note that some of these policies turned out to be effective and successful, however, throughout the North America some problems concerning the increase of rates of diabetes, cancer and alcoholism among indigenous population still continue.

Anthropologists direct all those problems to the America's past and the effects of colonialism, with the first contact of Europeans and Native Americans, which became more intense in the 1800s with the political, economic and cultural appropriation of Native life and lands and was embodied through the Manifest Destiny. This is the cultural trauma of the past; effects of the boarding school policies were offensive, Indian children were depressed ashamed and emotionally ill.

We saw how Georgia's national development was restricted as a result of this policy. This evidence has become clear since Georgia got independence (1991), acquired its natural ways of development and established relationships with the world.

In June of 2014, President Obama together with Mrs. Obama carried out his first presidential visit to Indian Country (Standing Rock Indian Reservation), where he met a group of Native youth; these people shared their stories of struggle and triumph, after which President Obama challenged his Administration to do more and do better for the Native American adults (President, 2014). The report highlights that the Obama Administration is working to find solutions to the challenging problems that encounter Native youth; the policy emphasizes education, economic development and health. The report admits the importance of young Natives who have a special role as citizens of tribal nations in defining the future of this country, preserving and leading Native cultures, traditions and governments into the next century (President, 2014).

Throughout the nineteenth century, non-Native people were using ethnocentric assumptions and stereotypes concerning the removal of American Indians from their cultural landscapes; this policy intended to confine them to reservation, destruct their language and culture by means of boarding school system and simply force them to relocate to another places.

In the twentieth century, the system of Indian boarding school continued its existence, federal and state policies did not change their practices of destroying Native American lands, degrading their culture, customs and believes. Accordingly, all these processes had negative consequences on health status of American Indians as they were/are displaying emotional, physical and cultural trauma.

Moreover, our hypothesis has been proved based on interviews with the actual subjects of the dissertation - Native Americans and particularly - members of the Cherokee Nation, who link the current unfavorable social and economic condition to the historical colonization. According to my respondents, it is the result of (often forced) land cession treaties and the consequential appropriation of natural resources from indigenous people, along with a history of grief and trauma that has gone largely untreated.

The hypothesis has been proved based quantitative data analysis provided below.

We can provide the reports of 2011 and 2013 by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention about the suicide and homicide rates by race/ethnicity and age group, according to which Native

Americans have the highest suicide rate compared to other groups (See Figure 3-2 and Figure 3-3) and homicide rate higher than Non-Hispanics, Whites and Asian/Pacific Islanders (See Figure 3-4 and Figure 3-5). According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention of 2016, Native American Youth aged 18-24 in the U.S. have the highest suicide rate compared to other groups (See Figure 3-7 and Figure 3-8).

Besides, they have significantly fewer educational opportunities compared to their peers (See Figure 3-11). According to the American Community Survey 2010-2012, twenty-two percent of American Indians and Alaska Natives ages 25 and older have not finished high school and only 13 percent have completed a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 29 percent of the U.S. population who have a bachelor's degree or higher (Bureau, 2016). Furthermore, Natives have the higher unemployment rate compared to Whites (See Table 3-2).

Despite many challenges and obstacles facing today's Native youth, tribal nations and communities still hope and prove that it is possible to overcome these problems with focused, planned and strategic efforts. The recommendations include: strengthening tribal control of education, providing comprehensive, community-based student supports, strengthening the integration of Native cultures and languages into school climate and classrooms, supporting highly effective teachers and school leaders, promoting 21st century technology for tribal education, strengthening and expand efforts that target suicide prevention, improving community systems on care to better address the behavioral health needs of Native youth.

Without providing necessary investments and reforms targeting Native youth in education and other important areas, these adults will face even greater challenges in the future. It is crucial to involve young generation of Native Americans (including the Cherokees) in tribal cultures and traditions. Federal, state, local and tribal governments, as well as private and nonprofit sector institutions, all have roles and responsibilities in assuring that all young people have the tools and opportunities for achieving success.

In the framework of the historical research, it has been identified that the analysis of Native Americans' political, cultural, and socio-economic development has acquired more critical approach throughout the United States 200 years of development which is expressed in gradually changing stereotypes and attitudes towards Native Americans.

The criticism has become more vital, acute and objective. There has been made more thorough analysis based on holistic and global perspectives. Besides, nowadays, the majority of the U.S.

population acknowledges that Native Americans have been subjected to mistreatment and discrimination.

Officially the U.S. government has admitted the challenges and obstacles faced by Native Americans, but no specific action plan has been initiated before 2014 (during the presidency of Barack Obama).

The visit of 2014 (in Standing Rock Indian reservation) can be considered as a ground break in terms of presenting a new policy towards Native Americans which would later introduce profound changes in their social and economic development.

While discussing the novelties of our dissertation we can say that the policies and programs initiated by Barack Obama administration in 2014 highlighted the issues of Native Americans on the XX-XXI century decisions/conventions of International Organizations on the Ethnic Minority Rights.

For example, in 1992, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities and in 1995, a Working Group on Minorities was established, which is expressed in the following way:

- Persons belonging to any kind of minority in any State shall not be denied any of their specific rights;
- States are obliged to ensure that persons belonging to minority groups can effectively exercise all of their human rights and fundamental freedoms without any discrimination;
- States undertake to promote and protect the rights of persons belonging to ethnic minorities;
- Any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, color, descent, national or ethnic origin, which has the purpose of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life (Nations, 2016).

In correlation with the abovementioned ethnic minority rights, the long-term policies and programs worked out by Obama Administration is characterized in terms of protecting national minority rights, offering more freedom and support for individual social, economic and political development.

It can be assumed that when the policy of U.S. government towards Native Americans is changed, native nations will become more self-organized, find its natural way of development and better adjust its traditional ways of life to the requirements of modern lifestyle. Finally, Native nations will achieve spiritual strength and regain their lost self-identification.

The List of Publications on the Present Research

1. Chumburidze, T. (2016). Westernization of the Cherokee Marriage Traditions and Distribution of Gender Roles. *Journal in Humanities*, 5(1), pp. 15-19.
2. Chumburidze, T. (2015). Educational Challenges Faced by the Native Americans: The Case of the Cherokee Nation. *Journal in Humanities*, 4(2), pp. 19-23.
3. Chumburidze, T. (2014). Theories about Turkic vs. European Roots of Native Americans. *Journal in Humanities*, 3(1), pp. 23-25.
4. Chumburidze, T. (2014). Engaging a New Generation of Native Americans in a Cultural and Social Change. *American Studies Periodical*, (6), pp. 80-85.
5. Chumburidze, T. (2014). The Problem of Native Americans: Integration or Assimilation? *International Conference in American Studies*, (7), pp. 301-307.
6. Chumburidze, T. (2013). Racism against Native Americans: A Look at the Bottom. *American Studies Periodical*, (6), pp. 158-165.