

ETHNOCULTURAL IDENTITY OF KAZAKHS OF MONGOLIA IN EVERYDAY LIFE*

Nazgul BAIGABATOVA¹, Amangeldy TOLAMISSOV¹

Saira RAKHIPOVA¹, Dana ASHIMOVA¹

Onerbek KHUANGAN¹, Kadyrzhan SMAGULOV²

¹Zhetysu State University of Kazakhstan

²Al-Farabi Kazakh National University

e-mail: bnk1606@mail.ru, ansarok@mail.ru

sayra.76@mail.ru, dana.ashimova@mail.ru

onerbek_86@mail.ru, kadyrzhan@gmail.com

Abstract: *The article deals with the mechanisms of functioning and reproduction of ethnic identity among Kazakhs living in the territory of Western Mongolia. The research, based on the field studies, presents the ethnography of everyday life of Kazakh diaspora. Preliminary analysis showed that it is the ethnic group united by the diaspora that is capable of consolidating the particularities and preserving its ethnic identity. Different conditions and mechanisms for the formation of ethno-cultural identity in a specific diaspora pre-determine its differences in structure, priority elements, and sustainability. The authors comes to the conclusion that the objects of traditional material culture, which are assigned the role of “ethnic markers”, as well as the articulation in public space of ethnic, tribal and religious identity contribute to the process of maintaining and representing the ethno-cultural identity of Kazakhs of Mongolia.*

Keywords: *Identity, ethnicity, ethno-cultural identity, Kazakh diaspora, Kazakhs of Mongolia, ethnic markers, everyday life.*

Rezumat: *Identitatea etnoculturală a kazahilor din Mongolia în viața de zi cu zi. Articolul se referă la mecanismele de funcționare și reproducere a identității etnice în rândul kazahilor care trăiesc pe teritoriul Mongoliei occidentale. Cercetarea, care are la bază studiile de teren, prezintă etnografia vieții de zi cu zi a diasporei kazahă. Analiza pre-*

* This article was prepared within the framework of grant funding for scientific research for the years 2018-2020 of the Science Committee of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan (grant No. AP05132285 / GF4).

liminară a arătat că grupul etnic, unit de diaspora, este capabil să-și consolideze particularitățile și să-și păstreze identitatea etnică. Condițiile și mecanismele diferite pentru formarea identității etno-culturale într-o diaspora specifică își determină, în prealabil, diferențele în structură, elemente prioritare și durabilitate. Autorii ajung la concluzia că obiectele culturii materiale tradiționale, cărora li se atribuie rolul de „markeri etnici”, precum și articularea în spațiul public a identității etnice, tribale și religioase contribuie la procesul de menținere și reprezentare a identității etno-culturale a kazahilor din Mongolia.

Résumé: L'identité ethnoculturelle des Kazakhs de la Mongolie dans la vie quotidienne. L'article ci-joint fait référence aux mécanismes de fonctionnement et de reproduction de l'identité ethnique parmi les Kazakhs qui vivent sur le territoire de la Mongolie occidentale. La recherche, fondée sur des études de terrain, présente l'ethnographie de la vie quotidienne de la diaspora kazakhe. L'analyse préliminaire montra que le groupe ethnique, uni par la diaspora, est capable de consolider ses particularités et de garder son identité ethnique. Les conditions et les mécanismes différents pour la formation de l'identité ethnoculturelle dans une diaspora spécifique déterminent, à l'avance, les différences dans la structure, les éléments prioritaires et la durabilité. Les auteurs arrivèrent à la conclusion que les objets de la culture matérielle traditionnelle, auxquels on attribua le rôle de “markers ethniques”, ainsi que l'articulation dans l'espace public de l'identité ethnique, tribale et religieuse, contribua au processus de maintien et de représentation de l'identité ethnoculturelle de Kazakhs de la Mongolie.

INTRODUCTION

Despite the reduction of researchers' interest to the phenomenon of ethnicity for the last decades, the place and significance of ethnic component in the structure of human society in general, and Diaspora in particular, is still an important question. In anthropological science the discourse about ethnic identity is formed as situational, scatter, constructed and etc. However, it is being detailed as it is constructed seldom. In the researching of ethnicity by many anthropologists there is the tendency of its politicization, ideology, and we can observe that a specific role of the state (government), “ethnic entrepreneurs” and “ethnic communities” elite in construction is emphasized.

In case with the Kazakhs of Mongolia it does not work. We have a case from region where we can observe absence of ethnic tension in everyday life, powerful instruments and institutions that impose identities, ethnic organizations-centers that construct ethnic identity and thus contributing to consolidation of Kazakh people representing their interests, speaking on their behalf, etc. Kazakh people

have lived here for more than 150 years, they pastor cattle, bring their children up, they are engaged with everyday life not thinking, from the first sight, about their ethnic identity. However, living in the alien country with different cultural-value orientation but similar climatic conditions, Kazakh people could adapt there as well as save their language, and also original traditional folk arts and crafts and material culture, in short, everything that is included in the concept of ethnic culture, which in the conditions of the soviet Kazakhstan had been exposed to disappear as long ago as in 1950-60-ies.¹

It is possible that the functioning the traditional material culture of the Kazakhs of Mongolia is caused by general preservation of the archaic grounds of economic activity, in the given case of semi-nomadic pastoralism. Partially agreeing with this point, in the planning study we only want to understand whether the features of economic activity has facilitated the conservation of the culture. At the same time Mongols living next to the Kazakhs are nomadic. However, their material culture, their ethnic outlook of the world is very different from each other. Our case shows that the Kazakhs of Mongolia from year to year, from one generation to another reproduce “*their*” culture, and may, thus, construct and demonstrate their ethnicity.

The problem of the demarcation of ethnic groups as contrasting cultural units and connected with it the problem of determining the ethnic borders occupied many scientists.² So, H. Eidheim noted that “the identification of cultural components and their analysis can demonstrate that the concentration of those or other components are correlated with the group. ... People themselves do not experience definite difficulties in attributing the ethnicity that means, we can detect a high degree of “*homogeneity*” if there are indicators of ethnic diversity, expressed and articulated at domestic and interpersonal level”.³ As a result, the question of how ethnic distinction is socially reproduced, represent, and supported has been raised.

¹ S. Azhigali, N. Baigabatova, O. Oshanov, *Bayan-Olgii aymagindagy ethnigrafialyk zertteulerdin keibir natijelery* [Some results of ethnographic research in the Bayan-Olgii region], in “Kazakh diasporasy madenietin zertteleuy” [Study of the culture of the Kazakh diaspora], Almaty, 2004, p. 26.

² F. Barth (ed.), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. The Social Organization of Culture Difference*, Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1969, p. 20.

³ H. Eidheim, *When Ethnic Identity is a Social Stigma*, in F. Barth (ed.), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, p. 49.

The aim of this article based upon the concrete fieldwork materials, collected in West Mongolia, is an investigation of perceptions of ethnicity among the Kazakhs of Mongolia and ways of their presentation in everyday life through a prism of the cultural practices. Possibly, it will help to find the answers to the following questions: where, how and why does ethnicity “appear”, “show” and “present” in the everyday life? What is the sign of “Kazakhity” for the Kazakhs of Mongolia? How do the cultural differences get their significance as ethnic? How are these signs presented in the space of Mongolia?

It is important for this research to point out that despite the Kazakhs of Mongolia were researched and still draw attention of anthropologists⁴, research of ethnicity itself in West Mongolia is still a poorly studied subject.⁵

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH STRATEGIES

Attempts to find the answers to these questions revealed a necessity of consideration of conceptual and theoretical problems of modern ethnology. It should be stressed that the structure and content of major research approaches to the description of ethnicity and culture representations are based upon the methodological premises of social constructivism.

The nature of “ethnicity” and its definition, despite their rather active discussion in the scientific area (in 1970-1980's - in the West, in 1990's - by Russian researchers) is still not clear. Consideration of ethnicity in the context of native and foreign social science finds different approaches to the understanding of ethnic problematic. At the present discussions about ethnic identity are filled with a standard set of indicators that point at that such identities are multiple, unstable, accidental, challenged, fragmentary, constructed, contractual ones.⁶ However, existing approaches in definition of ethnicity despite their opposition do not deny existence of cultural peculiarities in its characteristics⁷; they can be considered as

⁴ P. Finke, *Nomaden im Transformationprozess. Kasachen in der postsozialistischen Mongolei*, Köln, 2004, p. 364; A. Diener, *One Homeland or Two? The nationalization and Transnationalization of Mongolia's Kazakhs*, Berkeley, 2009, p. 405; A. Portisch, *Techniques as a Window onto Learning Kazakh Women's Domestic Textile Production in Western Mongolia*, in “Journal of Material Culture”, 2009, vol. 14, no. 4, p. 471-493.

⁵ P. Finke, *Nomaden im Transformationprozess...*, p. 305.

⁶ R. Brubaker, M. Feischmidt, J. Fox, L. Grancea, *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2007, p. 7.

⁷ C. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures. Selected Essays*, New York, Basic Books, 1973, p.

significant ones by the group members.⁸ Otherwise stated, one can say that there is a real “*sum*” of some cultural distinctive features that help to join or separate people by means of them.

The basis for this statement is the differentiation between contents of “*cultural diversity*” and “*cultural difference*” offered by H. Bhabha. He states that the “*cultural difference*” reflects the process of culture presentation as “*realized*”, in the form of meaningful and authoritative strategy of adding the systems of group and individual identifications. Besides, cultural difference is the original mechanism of articulation.⁹

This theoretical reference is the basis of my hypothesis that is included in the following. In the public space a group can “*state*” about its presence by means of definite signs, symbols as “*ethnic markers*”. The latter can be more significant agents in the process of support and presentation of the symbolic “*imaginary*” ethnicity and make it “*visible*” for “*others*”. Reproduction of ethnicity through the visual signs and their presentation in public space is the dominant way “*appears*” and “*reflects*” of ethnicity at everyday interaction with representatives of ethnic communities as “*alien*” and “*their*” ethnic group.

According to the theory of *ethnic borders and significant cultural markers* (F. Barth), these markers can be the features of culture which are used as signals or emblems of the differences, so-called cultural markers or symbols. Discussions about the nature of ethnic symbols and their role in establishing the ethnic boundaries and ethnic identification are held in terms of the “*symbolic ethnicity*” concept. Its supporters have allocated a special concept of the ethnicity core (myths, memory, symbols, values), contents of which ensures the preservation of a people, and also is an internal source of ethnic continuity.¹⁰ For identifying and studying ethnic symbols one need to take into account that they perform as the function of indicating the ethnic group, replacing it with their hidden content, and so, accordingly, the function of separating it from the others. Therefore, the unity of symbolic system provides both the content and ethnicity boundaries and can serve as

470; Ю. Бромлей, *Очерки теории этноса* [Essays on the theory of ethnos], Москва, Наука, 1983, с. 418.

⁸ F. Barth (ed.), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries...*; В. Тишков, *Реквием по этносу. Исследования по социально-культурной антропологии* [Requiem for the ethnos. Studies on socio-cultural anthropology], Москва, Наука, 2003, с. 544.

⁹ H. Bhabha, *Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences*, in Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, Helen Tiffin (eds.), *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, New York, Routledge, 2006, p. 155–157.

¹⁰ A. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1986, p. 312.

a distinctive (from other forms of social interaction) sign.

Previous experience of fieldwork has shown that it is not always concepts, existing in society, agree with the real picture. Informants depending on the age, sex, level of education, specific situation, their mood, and attitudes may say one thing, but in fact, in real life, things may be different. In this case, we do not rule out the possibility of a deliberate demonstration by some of our informants their "kazakhity" "unlike the Kazakhs of Kazakhstan who have lost all of these" – that is the conviction they had as a result of contacts with relatives and friends, who were in Kazakhstan or already moved to the "historical homeland" forever. Saying as T.O. Geertz, "we start with the interpretation of what involves our informants (or with the interpretation of their own perceptions about what they are involved in and then systematize it)".¹¹

Therefore, philosophy of this project was to use the following research strategy. The nature of social reality I study refers to the hierarchical ontology in which one can distinguish two levels:

1) *really existing and observable reality*. In our research that is really existing visual signs, including objects of material culture of the Kazakhs which differ from material artifacts of the Mongols. They are types of dwellings, their interiors, food, clothes, and objects of folk art;

2) *implied level of reality – a reality "under the surface" that creates "observable" reality*. This is the reality, through which these signs and artifacts are created, and the knowledge handed down from generation to generation facilitates the reproduction of ethnicity diaspora.

At the present times study of diaspora becomes an integral part of scientific knowledge. This interest is explained by the "diaspora" category itself, denoting the thematic space of discussion of extremely important anthropological problems, demonstrating the complex system of interrelations of nature and society, "ours" and "aliens", policy and economy, ideology and culture, and etc. The existing scientific and public discourse suggests a complex and far ambiguous nature of the diaspora phenomenon.¹² The content and cognitive boundaries of the majority of such works reflect, first of all, the political ambivalence of their applied aspects

¹¹ C. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures...* p. 15.

¹² В. Дятлов, *Дiaspora: попытка определиться в термине и понятии* [Diaspora: an attempt to define the term and concept] http://archipelag.ru/ru_mir/rm-diaspor/proposition/diatlov (Accessed on 1 May 2018); Ю. Семенов, *Этнос, нация, diaspora* [Ethnos, nation, diaspora], in "Этнографическое обозрение" [Ethnographic Review], 2000, no.4, p. 64-74; В. Тишков, *Реквием по этносу...*

(up to categorical statements that the diaspora is the essence of political phenomenon). Currently attention to the diaspora is attracted also in connection with strengthening the role of the factor of ethnic identity. *"Ethnic globalization paradox"*¹³, when the barriers between the nations are erased, but in connection with this growing opposition of the same cultural norms and standards to leveling, planting in all regions of the world, causes the desire to preserve the uniqueness of their culture and awareness of belonging to a certain ethnic group - their ethnic identity. In this respect, the diaspora plays an important role, as this very ethnic group united by diaspora is able to consolidate ethnos and preserve their ethnic identity. The process of formation and preservation of ethnic identity in the diaspora requires careful examination.

Besides, there are contradictions in the attempt to determine its ethno-cultural characteristics. On the one hand, it is stated that the diaspora is *"a separated piece of ethnic continent carrying in itself the main characteristics of this continent"* and *"an etalon, a true bearer of the nationwide qualities that are lost for some reason by the residents of the national home"*.¹⁴ On the other hand, it is also a widespread opinion that the part of society, which for some reasons lives for a long time outside of their *"historical motherland"*, in the process of adaptation to the new environment loses its ethno-cultural specificity. *"People living outside of their ethnic territory usually undergo the assimilation and, sooner or later, dissolve in the environment where the ethnic community prevails on the territory: they gradually lose their native language, culture, and then the feeling of the same ethnic origin"*.¹⁵

Therefore, one of the most important tasks of the groups' research, found them in the alien ethnic environment, in the isolation from the main ethnic mass, is the identification and analysis of the factors determining the ethnic peculiarities of their development and affecting their adaptation to the new external conditions and circumstances.

Since the purpose of research is finding out the perceptions and practices of the specific ethnic identity of the Kazakhs in Mongolia, the most optimal for revealing the meaning of ethnicity is the method of interview and method of participant observation. If the method of participant observation is adequate for the first

¹³ U. Beck, *The Cosmopolitan Society and Its Enemies*, in "Theory, Culture & Society", 2002, Vol. 19(1-2), p. 38.

¹⁴ Л. Абаева, *Диапоры в современном мире* [Diasporas in the Modern World], Хулун-Буйр, 2007, 290 с.

¹⁵ Ю. Семенов, *Этнос, нация, диаспора...*, p. 66.

level research, then using the method of interviewing is necessary for the second level, more difficult one. The method interviewing allows finding out the ways of construction of ethnicity as the identity is discovered by means of pronunciation, i.e. on the language of interpretation.

In the work *Ethnicity as cognition*, Brubaker, Loveman and Stomatov stated that “ethnicity – an interpreted prism, a way of explanation of social world”. Indeed, ethnicity cannot be studied as independently existing field of knowledge. Therefore ethnic ways of understanding, vision and an explanation of the social world can be studied only in combination with other non-ethnic ways of vision and existing. The Norwegian anthropologist T. Eriksen wrote that if a man goes outside in order to see ethnicity, he will find it, and thus, will contribute to its construction. Therefore it is necessary to bring ethnicity in “*non-ethnic context*” for studying the ethnicity.¹⁶ That is why our research strategy lay in the observation of daily life of the Kazakhs of Mongolia or “placing of people into the context of their own banalities”¹⁷ and fixation of possible presentations of ethnicity.

Ethnography of everyday life allows studying the ethnicity on the real and visible level of daily life and offers to add this knowledge to the analysis of complex abstractions of social systems, structures, social action and others constructs. It claims that such abstractions are embodied and realized in the episodes of everyday life.¹⁸ Therefore, they must be considered, observed and fixed exactly here. This research is regarded as attractive because the most part of life is visible on this level and it can be observed, and it allows studying everyday contexts in which ethnic categories and processes get their meanings and with the help of which ethnicity really functions in everyday life. So, in studying of the phenomenon of ethnicity is important to understand how the people reproduction of this type identity in the concrete context.

CONTEXT

Field research showed that the majority of inhabitants of Bayan-Olgii and Hovd Aimags are Kazakhs and Mongols who do not think always about their or alien ethnic identity. Everyday routine is interpreted very rarely and explained in ethnic terms. However, there is the ethnicity in everyday life of the Kazakhs of

¹⁶ T. Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism. Anthropological perspectives*, London, 1993, p. 15.

¹⁷ C. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures...* p. 22.

¹⁸ P. Sztompka, *The Focus on Everyday Life: a New Turn in Sociology*, in “European Review”, 2008, Vol. 16, no. 1, p. 12.

Mongolia it is realized and shown. We can consider it's functioning as a practice of representation of cultural differences that to some extent approves our initial point – statement of F. Barth according to which the ethnicity is a form of social organization of cultural differences and significance; it belongs to those cultural characteristics that give marking value by group itself.¹⁹

One of the aspects of demonstration of ethnicity is that anthropologists call “*excessive demonstration*” (intended accentuation) or “*decreased demonstration*” (intended detracting) belonging to ethnic category.²⁰ From the standpoint of interaction of view of interaction of “*own*” not only with “*alien*”, but also from “*own*”, these signs are not only cognitive sources that might be decrypted by observers, they are also a discursive and interactive sources that might be used by people themselves. They are signs that can be consciously or unconsciously “*rendered*”.²¹

A. Artifacts of Kazakhs traditional material culture as ethnic markers

We would include the main artifacts of traditional material culture into “*consciously rendered*” ethnic markers in everyday life of the Kazakhs of Mongolia. By the way, our informants called them as identification symbols. Distinctive features belong to Kazakh nomadic dwelling – *yurt* (particularly its construction – is spherical cupola formed by specific shape of cupola poles – *uyk*, another shape of yurt pommel – *shanyrak*, especially the interior, placing of things, etc.).

According to Aidos Shavdan's report (48 years old, a resident of Olgiy), yurts of the Kazakhs and Mongols have significant external differences. First of all, thanks to *uyks* one can distinguish Kazakh *yurt* from Mongolian from a distance: “Mongolian *uyks* are straight; respectively dome of the yurt is a clear cone with a little cut top. Then the Kazakh yurts have *uyks* curved by the end which make the lower part of the yurt's dome curved as well”. Since all the details of the yurt is made manually, to make such *uyks* is much more difficult as the manufacture of the bending – *uyktin karyny* - requires the certain skills. To the question: why do the Kazakhs not do *uyks* straight as the Mongols do, because they are easier to produce, informants gave the following answers: “as we always do”, “so did our fathers”, “the Kazakhs are doing so”, “thanks to such *uyks*, our *yurts*, particularly, the dome is higher, so there is the more air”. In addition, *uyks* of the Mongols have rings at the ends, which cling to the *kerege* (wall), and then the Kazakhs' *uyks* are fastened with ropes, having a length of about 1 meter. Another important external

¹⁹ F. Barth (ed.), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries...*, p. 16.

²⁰ T. Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism...*, p. 47.

²¹ E. Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, University of Edinburgh, 1959, p. 234.

distinctive sign of the yurts is a number of *beldeu* - belts located on the outer perimeter of the *yurt*. The Kazakhs encircle their *yurts* 2 times and as *beldeu* use strong *arkans* - ropes woven of wool and horse hair, but the Mongols use 3 belts, at the same time in the last years they use tarpaulin for this" (Kulyash Nurtaza, 70 years, Tsengel somon, 6 tank). When we asked questions to younger generation in order to find out whether they know about these external differences of *yurts*, the majority answered us that they know about it. In this case, the informant Sayabek Darzhanuly, 27 years old, noted that this knowledge is specially not handed up or told to other generations. "I just know about this, because since the very childhood I have seen all these differences, often while watching how people set yurts. Then I began to do exactly like that."

It would seem that these allegations about external difference of *yurts*, it may allow us to distinguish Mongolian and Kazakh *yurts* and count them as ethnic markers. However, conducted fieldwork in the Hovd Somon showed the absolute failure of the previous assumption. Having arrived here, we discovered that almost all of the *yurts* are Mongolian here, and the Kazakhs live in them! Local residents explain the fact by means of natural-climatic conditions, in particular the strong gusty winds, to which the Mongolian *yurts* are more stable, because they are lower and slightly smaller than Kazakh ones. This example is a bright sample of how ideas and practices may not be same in real life.

However, our personal observations all the same as cultural markers allowed emphasizing this element of a wooden construction of the *yurt* as a *shanyrak* (at the top of the yurt). In spite of the fact that is the Mongolian *yurt*, the Kazakhs are still trying to establish their Kazakh *shanyrak*, which represents a circle including 6 transversely installed, 3 on each side of the poles; the Mongolian top of the *yurt* reminds a wheel with spokes. Probably, it is not by chance the Kazakhs have a saying: "*Shanyrykka kara!*" (Look at the top!). One should pronounce it in the case when there is a wish to remind the guest who is the host of the house. We dare to assume that, perhaps, it appeared precisely in those days, when there were "Kazakh" and "Mongolian" *shanyraks*, and when this difference can be determined in whose *yurt* you are.

It is interesting that this proverb is quite often used by modern Kazakhs in Kazakhstan, in the absence of *shanyraks* themselves, because there is no *yurt* at all. In the present time, the *shanyrak* is considered to be a house, a family's hearth. It is very important that at the state symbol - emblem of the Republic of Kazakhstan - *shanyrak* occupies one of the central places in the overall composition.

In general, it should be noted that the *yurt* is of great importance in the life of not only the nomadic population, but also among the population of stationary

settlements (and not only from the point of view of its functionality). According to Gulbarsha, a 56-year-old resident of the Olgiy, “regardless of season the deceased is placed, and then taken to the funeral only out of the *yurt*. Therefore, in such cases, even in the cold winter, the inhabitants of the town set a *yurt* in the yard of the house. The deceased is placed on the left side of the *yurt*, where it has laid for the first time, only where he or she was born - *ozi en algash zhatkan zherine zhatkызady*”.

And yet the interior of *yurt* is actually an important and significant distinctive feature, in our opinion. Although Mongolian spots in the form of wooden cabinets for dishes meet in the decoration of the Kazakh *yurt*, especially among the Kazakhs of the Hovd Aimag, yet having entered the tent you would undoubtedly discover significant differences. Firstly, it is color of the interior as a whole. The Kazakhs prefer various shades of red and brown, while the Mongolian interior is marked by orange and blue. The latter have very little furniture, there are almost no items of national applied art, the walls are covered with transparent cloth, and there is almost no floor decking. Completely different picture appears when visiting Kazakh *yurts*. In its interior it is surprisingly easy to integrate traditional and modern subjects such as iron beds, TV. We can see the traditional bed “*kaikybas tosek agash*”. Floors are covered with colorful bright carpets *syrmaks*. On the walls there are (at least 3-4) hanging wall embroidered carpets *tus kiis* above each bed.

It should be noted that the cultural difference of the interior, first of all, is seen in the ornament. Certainly, what we today call the “Kazakh” or “Mongolian” ornament has its ancient roots and traditions. However, in the conditions of modern Mongolia we can interpret them that way. Kazakh objects of decorative-applied art adorned with ornaments, which is dominated by zoomorphic and plant motives, visibly differ from the Mongolian geometric forms. And this is the first thing that catches the eye when visiting any *yurt*.

On the basis of this it can be assumed that the ornament is one of the main ethnic markers in the everyday life of the Kazakhs. Proof of this can also be validated by the following fact. In recent years, local residents of stationary settlements, both Mongols and Kazakhs, very often do ornament on their fences and gates, through which it is possible to conclude how the people living behind these fences identify themselves.

Observing everyday life as well as taking a direct part in the normal social interactions in family, between neighbors, between the Kazakhs and the Mongols including in joint meals, and we found that in this area there are also significant differences. They are also introduced in assortments and cooking (slaughtering the animal, assortment and specificity of cooking).

Many informants noted that the first thing that distinguishes the Kazakhs from the Mongols is the fact that “the latter do not cut, but simply kill sheep, in other words, do not let the blood. “*Maldy bauyzdamaidy!*” (Kabył Kaiypuly, resident of Ulanhuus, 54 years). In addition, the process of cooking the meat has its differences. “If the Kazakhs cook meat from 1.5 to 2 hours inclusive, the Mongols consume meat, having boiled it for 30-40 minutes, and some even consider it ready as soon as water boils in which meat is cooked” (Kauila Zaishkyzy, a resident of Hovd, 52 years). According to the opinion of Baitei Babiakeli, Ulanhuus’s inhabitant, 75-year-old, the Kazakhs also do not eat *tarbagan’s* (*suur’s*) meat because they are considered to be *aram* (unclean).

Clothes have significant and visible differences. In everyday life, we observed the wearing of almost all men older than 40 years of headdress - *kepesh* and *kimesheks* and *zhaulyks* (by women of the older generation). It should be stressed that a complete set of ethnic clothing is available in each house. However, people wear it very seldom nowadays, only in cases of mass gatherings or big events. It is necessary to mention, that Mongols are more “ethnic” than the Kazakhs in appearance of nomadic dwellings, wearing the dress, food preferences.

As it is known, the mark characteristics of an ethnic group are the result of historical, political, economic conditions, and specific situations. In our case, economical, first of all. Exactly peculiarities of the management and functioning of culture in the specific conditions of environment are resulted in the accumulation of specific features, properties and attributes, which, ultimately, identified a unique combination of ethnic stereotypes and self-consciousness of the Kazakh diaspora.

Material artifacts of Kazakhs of Mongolia act not only as the means of keeping and the channel of communication of difficult complex of information (collective memory and cultural knowledge), but they are also the way of reproduction and demonstration of diaspora ethnicity. Semi-nomadic pastoralism stipulated the environment, determined the way of the life and models of cultural of life support of Kazakhs of Mongolia, following which used to be the compulsory condition of the social life of group. We asked them why they saved these differences, for example, in construction of yurt, in dress, in meal preferences and they answered: “Our ancestors – *ata-baba* did it so, that is why we also do it the same way”. Automatization of reproduction and unconscious realization of underlying model of traditional ethnic culture is determining factor of their stability in these days.

The materials of researches of Kazakh collections in museum funds in Mongolia are of specific interest. In this case the purpose was to discover what material artifacts introduced on the expositions of museums are demonstrated like Kazakh ones. Museums of towns Olgiy, Hovd, the National museum in Ulan-Bator

have been researched in order to discover if there were Kazakh exhibits. Preliminary results show that more detailed researching of them can give very valuable material for searching the answers to such important questions: Which objects of material culture act like ethnic markers? Who determines what artifacts can be introduced like ethnic ones and how? And consequently to solve the problem – how are ethnic images constructed?

There is the most complete complex of things of traditional material culture of the Kazakhs is introduced in the museum of town Olgiy. There are 2 complete sets of dress (for man and women), 2 saddles, musical instruments, domestic utensils in the museum Hovd that have been presented like Kazakh ones. 2 pictures of local artists-Mongols with the image of the Kazakh life are of great interest. Game “*Kokpar*” is painted ones first picture, and the second picture is called “Evening village”. From our point of view, reproduction of Kazakh yurt and clothing of Mongol artists is extremely important. It indicates good knowledge of differential peculiarities of Kazakh culture. In the National Museum in Ulan-Bator there are following expositions: 1 full complete set of women costume, 2 items of head dress – *kepesh*, musical instrument – *dombra*. (NB: adding of some kind of artifact to Kazakh ones were carried out only at “Kazakhity” indication on museum tag of the introduced exhibit).

Analysis of the introduced things and items of traditional Kazakh culture exposition indicates about presence of ethnic differentiation of population of Mongolia at the institutional level. Thus, the “real” components of ethnic culture – a system of settlements, housing, food, clothing, utensils and furnishings – a component part of the traditional culture of people’s life-support which represents not only the result of centuries of its adaptation to specific conditions of eco-environment, but it is one of the factors affecting the ethnic self-identification, and, of course, they themselves are the indicator of an ethnicity scale.

B. Visualization of the Kazakh ethnicity in the public space

Ethnicity of Kazakhs of Mongolia has obvious external embodiment not only in the museum, but also in the area of stationary settlements, towns Olgiy and Hovd, and also in Somons. The analysis of our field data shows that it is lawfully to refer the productions of folk decorative and applied art to advisedly accentuated sings of presentation of Kazakh ethnicity. They are not only internal decoration of dwellings, but also the products of extensive trade.

Sign boards observed by us – «Art Shop. Handmade Kazakh Products» or «Altai-Kerei Shop. Kazakh-Handcraft» and many others are indicators of it. It is clear that the given articulation is directed, first of all, on foreigners (there are

many of them in Mongolia), but it also indicates about 2 obvious and interconnected facts of demonstration of own ethnic belonging: a) statement about the presence of items of the Kazakh domestic handcraft and business; b) statement of the more large-scale plan – about presence of other ethnic groups – Kazakhs in this space (space of Mongolia).

By the way, in case of “Altai-Kerey Shop. Kazakh-Handcraft” the territorial and tribal belonging of salesman’s can be shown. In this case, presence of ethnonym *Kerey* has specific significance here – it is the tribe which most of the Kazakhs of Mongolia belong to.

According to local Kazakhs, it is one of the main sings of their identity. References on “*Kerey*” have been kept till now in the titles of some items of traditional clothes – “*kerey tymak*” (*kerey hat*), “*kerey beldik*” (*kerey belt*). Last years, owners of automobiles also show their tribal belonging to tribe in public area. Their cars have an inscription “*kerey*” on the back of the car.

The observed historical and cultural tribalism is the preservation of the principles of activity of the past institutions created on the basis of descent division at the present stage. Modern tribalism of the Kazakhs of Mongolia is characterized by the participation of certain groups on the basis of family ties for the provision of social support to members of the generation through existing institutions of mutual assistance. Generation as an important social actor, based upon the feelings of kinship connectivity, represents a certain corporation, inside of which there is close and regular communication on the basis of established rituals. Thus, the Kazakh of Mongolia is always integrated in a small clan community. In the conditions of the country, where for the vast majority the tribal affiliation plays a role of the main marker by means of which it is determined who is “*their*” or “*alien*”, the use of such a group identity plays both constructive and destructive roles. On the one hand, there is the process of attributing and self-attributing, i.e. consolidation of an individual with a certain tribal group; and, on the other hand, - there is a separation process within the Kazakh society.

At the same time we would like to underline the following interesting fact. In the end of 90’s of the XX century, there was the change of civil passports in Mongolia. Since that ethnic belonging has not been shown in the new documents of identity cards, but the point of tribal belonging became the compulsory one. Reasonability of that was explained by boiled up necessity of regulation of family and marital relations as the population size of the country was low. The most part of Mongolia population is introduced by different ethnic groups of Mongolian origin – Khalkha’s, Zahchins, Myangats, Torgouts, Derbets and so on. In identity cards of Kazakhs of Western Mongolia looked through by me tribal belonging –

Kerey was not indicated, there was generic subdivisions of this tribe. It was connected with this fact: when taking passport young people tell their generic group that is included into of 12 clans *Kerey* tribe. Officials do not go deep into these details and just write what they have heard. So, in the result, at the present moment in time there is no ethnic categorization of Kazakhs as well as other ethnic groups of country population in state. Time will show how the ethnic component of Mongolia population will look like in future. This question requires further special researches.

According to local Kazakhs the most important component of their ethnicity is the religious identity. Kazakhs of Mongolia consider themselves Moslem of Sunni direction and think that this fact is the main difference from neighboring Mongols. Religious beliefs of the Kazakh Diaspora have sufficiently vividly shown visual expression – mosques, Moslem cemeteries, presence of holly book in dwellings – *Koran*, Moslem panels, compulsory bloodshed, etc. At present there are 20 mosques (17 of them are in Bayan-Olgii and 3- are in Hovd Aimags). From the experience of observations it is necessary to mention that despite the assurances of our informants, attendances of mosques, fasting - *oraza*, doing Moslem everyday ritual practices, in particular – reading *namaz*, is not widely spread phenomenon. Therefore, we would call local Kazakhs rather nominal Moslems.

Proof of this is the observation over mosques' attendance. For example, on the Friday pray (*namaz*), which is considered to be compulsory for all Muslims, not more than 40-50 men come to the mosque of Olgii town, while the number of the inhabitants of the city is about 30 thousand people. According to the imam of the city Hovd, Berikbol, the mosque is constantly visited by around 20 people, despite the fact that in Hovd there is the population of more than 3 thousand Kazakhs. The informant notes that now the mosque is attended, mainly, by young people of 20-25 years. In Ulanhuus, although the mosque was opened on Friday, prayer service was not even attended by the imam, whom we waited for more than 2 hours. All this testifies that the religious identity, which is emphasized by the informants as the key difference from the Mongols, is in practice a common declaration. However, growing number of Moslem members of mosque, including those who get their religious education abroad can change the present situation to one.

It is clear that both identities – tribal and religious have their own nature of origin and are not connected with ethnic sings, however in conditions of Mongolia informants interpret them as one of the main ethnic sings. Superimposition of one form of differentiation (identity) on the other one and showing it as something whole is strengthened considerably by the given context.

The most stable feature of "*Kazakhity*", in opinion of informants, is language;

it is acknowledged by its using it in many spheres of life, but only within the limits Bayan-Olgii Aimag. There is another situation in Hovd Aimag as Kazakhs are just a small part of population here. From time to time language features are visual. Being the criteria of ethnicity language can act an indicator, finding out more reliable practical features of ethnic belonging. In our case Kazakh language fulfils exactly this function. There are many cases when the titles of shops, hotels, cafes, hairdressers, photographic studios the owners of which are Kazakhs have been introduced in Kazakh language, but the words “shop”, “café” – on Mongolian. By this they emphasize their ethnic identity: “Kazakh people must name everything “their” in Kazakh” (Gulbarsha, resident of Olgii).

However, observations show that not only this factor is the basis for introduction of the Kazakh language in the public space. Names of public places, in our opinion, are somewhat a message directed to “their”. Important is the fact that, for example, in the city of Olgii actually the owners and the personnel of hotel with Kazakh names “Bastau”, “Duman” are the Kazakhs, and then as the hotel “Tsanbagarav” is “purely Mongolian”. The same case is with places of public catering. So, menu of “Mongolian” restaurants and cafes is made only in the Mongolian language. Although, more than 90 percent of Olgii’s population including visitors, are the Kazakhs.

The observed various signboards, signs, newspapers and magazines in Kazakh language can also be attributed to the visual signs of the language. And yet the majority of linguistic signs are acoustic. The most obvious is just heard language they speak. In this regard, Bayan-Olgiyskiy Aimag of Mongolia is more “Kazakh”, in contrast to the Hovd Aimag. While in Olgii, everywhere we can hear the Kazakh language, in Hovd Aimag, there is a common practice of communication in the Mongolian language, and here it is very rare to hear the Kazakh language in the public space. In process of removal from Olgii - main places of dense settlement of the Kazakhs - use of the Kazakh language gradually disappears. Aizhan Nurbek, 19 years old, resident of Olgii, a student of the University in Ulan-Bator stated: “In Ulan-Bator we do not speak Kazakh. The Mongols do not like, when we speak Kazakh. Even when you have to talk to parents, we try to find a place to where we are not heard. When we see the Kazakhs, we are very happy to see each other. Although at first glance it is very difficult to distinguish the Ulan-Bator Kazakhs from the Mongols. Especially, the Kazakhs from Nalaih. They even speak different Kazakh language. We have to live in Ulan-Bator on the Mongolian rules and the Mongolian proverb, the meaning of which is that in the stranger monastery not go with its charter”.

Thus, the examined cultural practices of everyday life and their location in the space allow concluding that they are the original objects of ethnic culture and contribute to the preservation of ethnic and cultural identity of the diaspora's members.

CONCLUSIONS

In general, there are many methods and ways with the help of which ethnicity is introduced and expressed in everyday life of Kazakhs of Mongolia. Members of this ethnic group state about their presence in "*alien*" area sufficiently clear through "*visual discourse*". Functioning items of the material culture that have the role of "*ethnic markers*", also observable articulation in public space of ornament, of tribal and religious identity contribute to the process of support and introduction of symbolic ethnicity of Kazakhs of Mongolia and make it "*visible*" for "*other*" (Mongols, foreigners).

Reproduction of ethnicity through visual signs and their presentation is the dominating ways of "*appearance*" and "*expressing*" the ethnicity while interaction of ethnic community with the representatives of "*alien*", as well as "*own ethnic group*". Research has shown that we can include 2 main components into the content of "*everyday ethnicity*": 1) ethnic identity, marked by system of markers, having important meaning as for "*own*", as well as "*alien*" (the question is: "Who are we?" – Kazakhs, Muslims, Kereis); 2) ethnic culture, used as a resource and giving sense meaning to ethnic markers (the question is: "How are we?" – ornament, artifacts, interior).

Thus, everyday ethnicity of Kazakhs of Mongolia on the present stage act likes combination of practical skills of symbolic using of signs of ethnicity (ethnonym, material artifacts and cultural practices, etc.) in order to make itself different as the representative of one group from representatives of other group. Signs used for marking the boundaries of "*own*" community can be different and depend on concrete social context. Therefore it is important to reveal and determine what signs are used for marking the boundaries of "*own*" community.

Summing up the results of our research we can say, that the factor in the preservation of the ethnic identity of the diaspora is not only and not so much foreign ethnic environment (and even living in the structure of other national state in the minority), how much prevalent in society type of economy and social interactions. If in Kazakhstan blurring of the former nomadic culture contributed to the processes of industrialization, collectivization, urbanization, expansion of education, modern medicine, the Kazakhs in Mongolia due to favorable enough

reasons (the similarity of climate and landscape, the ability to deal with cattle breeding farm, non-interference of the state) have kept the old nomadic way of life with all the consequences that the peculiarities of the cycles of life, rituals, beliefs and material conditions.

However, already today in the conditions of a globalizing world position of the Kazakhs of Mongolia, which is not only characterized by modernization, but also the activation of ethno-cultural contacts, the migration mobility of the diaspora and the planning of life strategies with a focus on Kazakhstan, indicates less probability of preserving the fullness of *“traditional”* culture in historical perspective.