

UDK 821.512.157-13(045)

The heroic epos as an element of the ethnic identity of Sakha: in public's opinion



© **Osipova** Olga, senior assistant of Institute of the Humanities and the indigenous peoples of the North of the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Priority research topics: ethnic identity, interethnic relations, social communication, political communication. Contact Phone: 8-924-174-54-74. E-mail: osipovaovr@rambler.ru

Abstract

National art is one of important factors in preservation of national consciousness. The central place in folklore culture of people of sakha, is occupied by the heroic epos – olonkho. The report represents an attempt of ethnosociologists to answer the question of how the cultural heritage is reflected in ethnic identity of modern representatives of the people of sakha and what is an influence level of olonkho as a cultural value of the people to on ethnic identity's development. Modern society is impacted by the global processes such as globalization, urbanization, and informatization of inhabitancy. The report will try to answer the question of what is the picture that is formed by these factors in relevance to the ethnic heritage and whether or not olonkho as a genre of folklore is changing only to a certain exhibited art form which is only symbolizing the ethnicity.

Keywords: olonkho, heroic epos, sakha, Yakutia, ethnic identity, culture, modern society.

At the turn of the twenty-first century rapid social changes, the complexity of the social processes, interactions blurring the individual and society have led to a crisis of identity, which is a good illustration of the famous saying Zygmund Bauman that in the world of the shuffled values, changing routes and deliquescent framework, identities are something that can be worn and acting like the suit. [1] That is, even in a modern, highly mobile world with the accelerating pace of development of the people, as before, the need in the community, providing them with some confidence and reliability. It is known that one of these communities is a national community, and it is associated with the next wave of searches "solid ground" in an unstable reality. In connection with this escalating relevance of such questions as: "Who are we?", "Where are we?", "What are we?". The answers allow the individual to identify themselves, to better understand themselves and others, to be ready to understand and accept other cultures. In the connection with this, perhaps, is high demand for the ethnic memory, its values and in particular the social and cultural experience of the people as a whole.

Updating the theoretical discourse on the topic of the ethnicity has led, as we know, to the emergence of two theoretical directions - primordialism and constructivism. Supporters of primordial directions are considering ethnicity as a kind of objective reality, as nadsubektivnyu characteris-

tic of the individual, due to historical factors or biological nature. The constructivist directions in the study of the phenomenon of ethnic identity, perceived ethnic group in the quality of an artificial entity - "imagined community" (or "social constructs"), consisting of people subjectively aware of their proximity to the result of the intellectual design ideas and feelings, and disseminating them through education and the media. [2] Of course, each of the areas has its grain of truth, but we think it is important that, according to the constructivist theory, the formation of an ethnic group begins with the marking of cultural boundaries. In this area, it is believed that it is the cultural characteristics of the ethnic and projecting the result of group organization and dynamics of the relations between the groups are the basis of the ethnic identity. Thus, the reference to the theme of the ethnic identification is not possible without measuring the impact of culture.

Usually when people talk about culture, have in mind, first of all, language, religion, traditions, folk customs, art forms, etc. The same phenomenon is most often performed this-nodifferentive function. In most cases, they are viewed as self-sufficient as what needs to be preserved at all costs, but the extent to which these phenomena are the factors of self-identification of the modern man? Do the same with their self-worth? After all, cultural heritage reflects the diversity of the environment of the past. For example, the Yakut epos olonkho promoted, developed and preserved in a decomposition of the communal-clan system of patriarchal life and early class relations. The main ideas and the images olonkho express the most profound vital interests and aspirations of the Yakuts era begin the adoption of their identity as a nation. [3]

In addition it should be noted that the modern society is characterized by rapid and fundamental shift that manifests itself in the process of globalization, urbanization and the transition to an urban lifestyle, information technology environment. It puts on the agenda the question of the development of new adaptive cultural forms that allow living in a different world, but also the preservation of the traditional cultural forms. In this connection, the problem is updated engineered crops, the first of which it came into the collection of feature articles "The invention of tradition", edited by Eric Hobsbawm nominated unusual for that time, the idea that the national traditions of the majority are invented tradition. Hobsbawm and gives a clear definition of what is "invented tradition", "invented tradition" means the aggregate of practices ... aimed at inculcating certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past "[4, p.58]. In the design of the national communities, therefore, must be invented the historical continuity, to believe that members of these groups [4, p.59]

E. Hobsbaum, setting the presence of the process of the invention of the tradition and conducted a detailed study, paying special attention to simulations - the creation of the sign and the symbol of the complex structures, having nothing to do with historical reality, but, nevertheless, applying for the status of "tradition" and the National Governors consciousness. In our study, the focus is not on the invention of the traditions and attitudes, and their constructed. Since "design", in the contrast to the "invention" allows the synthesis of old and new mix of the traditional culture, which has its roots in the history, with targeted changes in the cultural attitudes of the modern man. [5]

Under the influence of the globalization issues of the nation building, production of the ethnic and the national symbols start form the basis for the stability and prosperity. Ethnicity more actualized in the connection with the unification lifestyle leveling characteristics and, accordingly, the search for individual and group identity in the society. Implementation of the ethnicity is in the process of symbolic representations in the contemporary space, the transformation in the ethnically-marked the symbolic capital. Sign of the times is wide celebration of national holidays, be it Russian Maslenitsa, the Bashkir and Tatar Sabantuy [6, p.4], or Yakut celebration of the New Year Ysyakh - such events are invariably accompanied by massive festivities, as well as the actualization of ethnic images. These events, on the one hand, are the ideological burden and combine the traditions of the past, the ancestors of the transferred population, on the other - are reconstructed and re-created from the top. Representation of the ethnic images in the public space, in the film industry, the fashion industry is involved in the construction of ethnicity. Thus, it can be seen that ethnicity increasingly evident in the public space and therefore becomes an instrument of the social construction.

In 2005, the epic olonkho became one of the winners of the "Masterpieces of Humanity" and was included in the World List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO of an international organization. Since then, work on the preservation and dissemination of the cultural property of the Sakha people was carried out at the state level. Apparently, it was a necessary measure, as an average of 36% of the surveyed population in the areas included in the study sample, believe that in order to olonkho has become a symbol of unity of people who really need the problem of dissemination and preservation olonkho discussed at the state level. About the same number of respondents (38.1%) believes that it is necessary to conduct propaganda in the media. In the light of the theory of the design traditions, the assessment of the regional political elite "Olonkho", recognized by the world community as a unique indigenous culture of Yakutia and its spiritual tradition, also provides for an adequate discourse in the media. The mass of information, representing the space of representation, along with other public scenes form the basis for the display and reproduction of ethnicity - these public fields are an ethnic display, with which ethnicity is not only played and to the public, but also reconstructed, deployed, lived every man [6, p.10]. In this situation, ethnicity is not only a primordial reality, prepared for the landscape and the genes, but also as a dynamic identification of the process of socialization and representation in the public spaces, with the filing of the ruling elites. Ethnic identification is presented as labile constructed with the defined objectives in the field of the cultural ethnic and cultural identity.

Recognition olonkho, as the masterpiece of folklore UNESCO has led to the upgrading of the epic as a national symbol. However, we have attempted to identify how this event affected by self-consciousness of the Sakha people. To do this, we proposed a survey of the question: "Did the proclamation olonkho UNESCO Masterpiece of the Oral folk art on your personal identity as a representative of the Sakha people?" On average, the sample 59% of the respondents believes that it really affected the self-consciousness. In a conversation with the respondents could often hear that they feel the pride of the nation due to this status. Those who are not affected by this event,

much less, an average of 13.4%. However, even this figure does not reveal negative attitudes toward olonkho. Some respondents in a conversation with the interviewer noted that "without the recognition of the various organizations of the people should respect their cultural heritage."

In addition, to determine the significance of olonkho in today's society, respondents were asked to determine whether an olonkho notions of collective consciousness: "In your opinion, what is the olonkho?" It was found that the respondents' answers regarding the definition olonkho in a broad sense are not clear. Leading positions occupied three possible answers that reflect the different approaches to the interpretation of population olonkho. Thus, 43.2% of respondents said that they olonkho outlook is primarily the Sakha people, 32% evaluate olonkho as epic, 30.8% consider it a reflection of folk stories. Almost completely absent associative perception olonkho with religious work, as the Bible (4.6%). As a general rule, I agree with this embodiment of the responses are from the youngest age group (14-17 years).

Next, we tried to figure out how the man himself is aware of the value for themselves olonkho, and what role is removed olonkho people in your life. Table 1 clearly observed ratio of the population surveyed to olonkho.

Table 1

Answers on the questions: «How do you assess the heroic epics of olonkho?»

| <i>Variants of the answers</i> | <i>%</i> |
|--|----------|
| Olonkho – is the fundament of the national culture of the Sakha people | 83,2 |
| Over the years, olonkho lose for me its value and attractiveness | 6,7 |
| I was never interested and I do not know olonkho | 8,7 |
| Others | 1,3 |

Studying the role of olonkho the perspective of its meaning for the modern society has revealed that the vast majority (81.1%) of the population surveyed believed that olonkho – the national treasure that should be protected and preserved.

Table 2

Answers on the question: «In your opinion, what role plays olonkho in the modern society?»

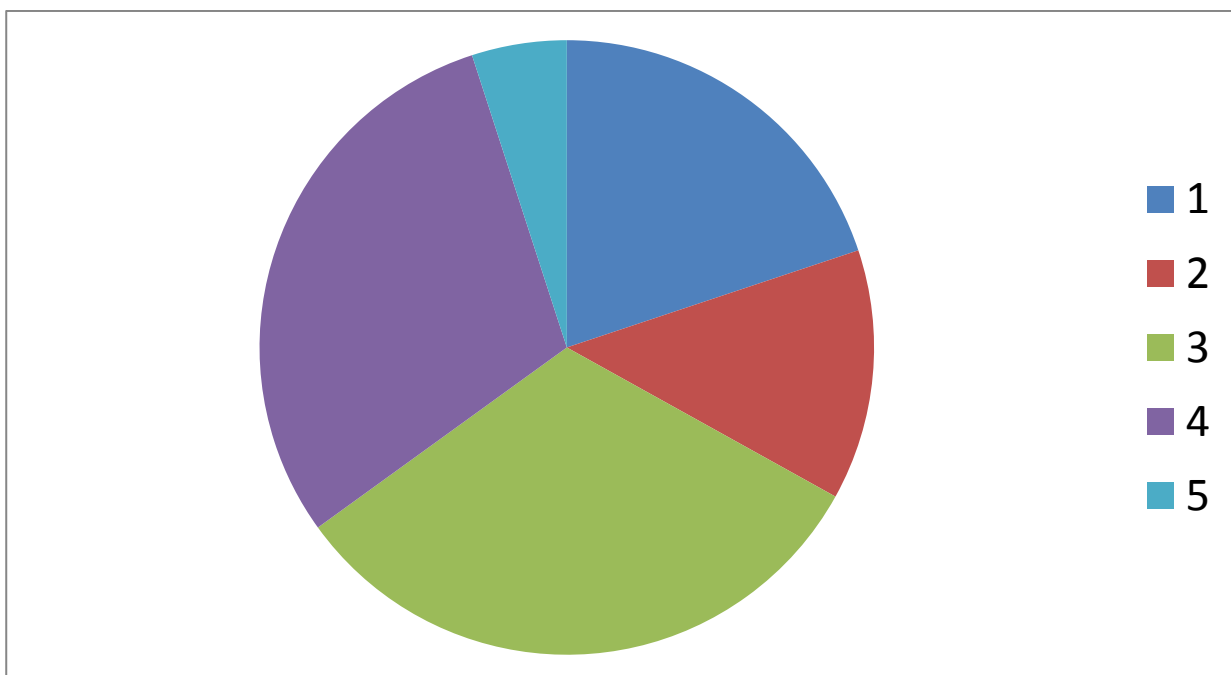
| <i>Variants of the answers</i> | <i>%</i> |
|--|----------|
| Maybe for the older generation has a value, and for the young is something archaic, obsolete | 81,1 |
| Plays no role and has no meaning in the modern life | 16,7 |
| Maybe for the older generation has a value, and for the young is something archaic | 1,1 |
| Others | 1,1 |

In the analysis of the data has attracted attention is that of agreeing with the statement of the archaic olonkho were representatives of all the age groups from 14 to 54 years. To explain this fact, it seems to us, we can not tying the personal position of the respondents in relation to olonkho (they note the high importance olonkho for themselves), and their subjective determination of significance olonkho as obsolete phenomenon for young people. In general, it should be noted that a pessimistic attitude does not appear in the general.

Note that in the next issue of the study was conducted covert testing confidence in olonkho significant role in the modern society. The question was worded as follows: "Do you think if there is alienation of the population, especially the young, from olonkho?" The survey results look like this: 48% of those surveyed agree that now is the alienation of the population from olonkho. The number of those who do not agree with this assessment, was quite small - only 21% of respondents. Difficult to answer 31%.

Thus, if previously only 16.7% of the respondents said that olonkho for young people does not play a role, and are of value only for the older generation, there is found that more than half of all respondents noticed the alienation of the population, especially young people, from olonkho. Most people are concerned about this process in 3 age groups: 35 to 64 years. Respondents were inclined to believe that this process is not present, the most in the younger group: 14 to 44 years, and found it difficult to answer - in the group of 18-22 years. In this case, the indicative appears that those who believe that the process of alienation is not significantly less than those who say the opposite - that modern society is in fact facing a serious problem that can lead to the loss of folk culture.

Next, it follows that our interest turned to the causes of this phenomenon. As can be seen from Figure 4, the respondents most often as the cause of alienation from olonkho that his performance has been the scene of a demonstration of talent and no longer carries those socializing and educational functions that are found in it the previous generation of the Sakha people. In addition, this point describes the current trend, manifested in training olonkho primary school and preschool ages. In this case, the execution olonkho really is basically a demonstration of children's talents.



Picture 1. Answers to the question: "Where do you see the reason for the alienation of the population, especially the young generation of olonkho?"

1. In the modern interpretation olonkho turns into the stage action.

2. The massive introduction of folklore contests and competitions for its execution olonkho "conservation" is rejected.
3. There is no proper olonkho prestige as the traditional values of the people in comparison with the brands of the popular culture.
4. Execution olonkho became the scene of demonstration talents of gifted people.
5. More.

The next most popular response was a variant of "a modern twist olonkho turns into the stage action." In an interview with the survey participants, especially older ones, can often be heard that young people today perceive olonkho only as a theatrical performance, which is devoid of the traditional features and often saves only the general plot and familiar characters.

The third most popular answer is "there is no proper olonkho prestige as the traditional values of the people in comparison with the brands of popular culture," the most obvious to the modern society. In a world of ever-accelerating social processes, increasing the flow of information and requirements for the competence and knowledge of the individual, the person just does not have time for introduction to the values of the traditional society.

So the next question in the questionnaire was precisely aimed at clarifying the impact of lost traditions olonkho in the modern society. As it turned out, the majority of the population surveyed sees the main problem is not even that over time becomes less of these narrators olonkho, but the fact that he is not claimed olonkho in the society, despite the people's awareness of its value.

Table 3

Answers on the question: «What do you think is the manifest of the losing by olonkho traditions in the modern world?»

| Variants of the answers | % |
|---|------|
| In the choice of listening | 4,3 |
| Very few willing to listen olonkho | 48,1 |
| It is becoming less and less of the storytellers of olonkho | 29,5 |
| Olonkho is increasingly becoming a theatrical performance | 24,5 |
| Nothing is lost, the traditions are preserved and respected | 8,5 |
| Others | 2,2 |

Thus, it should be noted that olonkho certainly seen as a cultural value of the Sakha people, but has no popularity in the society. However, further attention should be paid to the question of what kind of phenomena and factors representatives of the ethnic Sakha distinguish itself as a basis for the ethnic eslf identity. The results of the survey also revealed that as the basic framework of the ethnic identity of the majority of those questioned favor mother tongue (67.1%). A smaller value for the respondents Mountain ulus have the factors of national self-consciousness of man as "folk traditions" (32.5%), "faith" (11.4%), "a national holiday ysyakh" (14.3%), " the historical past of the people "(11.6%). This completes the list of "folk heritage olonkho" (7.8%). So it turns out that olonkho does not have a strong influence on the formation of ethnic identity, con-

sequently, on the ethnic identity of modern Sakha. In addition, it is necessary to take into account the factors that distinguish themselves for the persons interviewed as ethno consolidated.

Table 4

Distribution of the answers to the question: "Do you think that most of the above items you have in common with the nation "

| Variants of the questions | % |
|--|------|
| 1. Language | 75,9 |
| 2. Culture | 49,7 |
| 3. Customs and Tarditions | 41,9 |
| 4. Motherland and Nature | 61,6 |
| 5. Traits of the character | 4,3 |
| 6. Beliefs | 5,5 |
| 7. Historical past | 13,2 |
| 8. Relative connections | 20,7 |
| 9. Features of the external appearance | 7,4 |
| 10. Etc | 1,8 |



Picture 1. 25 Novemberя – The national Day of Olonho'.

URL: <http://www.sakha.spb.ru/news/465.html> (Date of access: 11.11.2011)

As can be seen from the table of the ten proposed positions that most make related to his people, the vast majority of respondents in the first place put the language. Also, one of them, the most significant markers of the ethnic identity is the "native land and in-kind." Here, it seems, to some extent, the formation of the regional identity is manifested through the media, broadcasting cer-

tain images and symbols, mainly in the representation of the administrative-territorial One unit ("Olonkholand", "Shares-for Tuymaada", etc.). In this case, the formation of the ethnic identity is due to link the symbols of the national culture and emotive ideas homeland.

In the ranking of the markers of the identity, the most significant for the population surveyed, "culture", "customs and traditions" took third and fourth place. Note that these markers reflect the so-called "ethnic picture of the world", understood as the whole world, including the structured and systematic ethnic angle under a set of the images and representations of the ethnic group and its members about social reality.

One of ethno differentiating factors were also related. Apparently respondents who chose this response came from primordialist logic transmission of the ethnic identity at the genetic level. This answer was more popular than, for example, the "community of the past." Although it is well known that the historical memory is also one of the factors influencing the formation of patriotism and love for the "small" and "big country." As it turned out, the commonality of the "historical past" as a phenomenon that performs functions etno consolidated, little awareness of the population surveyed. Thus, the most pronounced etno consolidated markers were "language", "native land, nature" and "culture", which confirms the thesis of great significance for the ethnic identity of the Sakha ecological value of unity as the feeling of intimacy with people of their own nationality on the basis of their language and culture and a general introduction to the nature and the earth [1, p.5]. Overall results of the study suggest the possibility that olonkho as the cultural values of the people, for the moment has no apparent effect on the ethnic identification of sugars, but, nevertheless, has a certain potential to be one of the factors in the formation of ethnic identity. People do not associate their ethnic identity is directly olonkho epic is probably one of the faces of the cultural heritage, which, in turn, has a direct impact on the ethnic identity of its speakers. However, one can not deny the fact that olonkho has obvious potential for consolidating the society because integrates such ethnodifferentiating markers such as language skills, a common historical memory, the worship of nature, the love of his native land, and at the same time constituting olonkho archetypes. Potential olonkho as a symbol of unity of people can be realized with the assistance of various channels of its propaganda, and their potential is far from exhausted. In our opinion, the attitude of the population to the most olonkho at its qualitative formation and replication as an information product can be quite positive.

Literature:

1. Russian identity in Moscow and the regions. - Moscow, 2009. p. 5.
2. Ignatieff V.B. The ethnic identity in the context of forming a united Russian nation.
3. Ergis H.W. The essays on the Yakut folklore. - Moscow: Nauka, 1974. - 404 p.
4. Balls KS The invention of the national traditions of the XIX century classical composers / / Bulletin of Moscow University. Ser. 7. Philosophy. - 2005. - № 4. - p. 58-59.
5. E. Pain The variations on the theme of the talk by G. Wisniewski "The demographic transition and cultural diversity." URL: www.kennan.ru/index.php/kennan/content/download/.../221009_Pain.doc (date of access: 20/10/09).

6. Oleinikova V. The cultural representation in the structure of the ethnic identity: Author. dis ... Candidate. Sociology. Sciences: 22.00.06. / Oleinikova Julia [a protection Place: Sarat. State. tehn. Univ]. Moscow, 2008. p. 4, 10.

*Reviewer – Shadrina O. N.,
Phd in Philosophy, Associate professor*