

PECULIARITIES OF GENDER STRATIFICATION IN NOMADIC CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

Gender stratification is associated with all forms of social stratification in society, which represents inequality in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities. This is an indicator that divided people into “male” and “female” categories. Therefore, the studied problems are of no small importance for the society. The main goal of the work is to study the features of gender stratification in the nomadic culture. To achieve this goal, the authors used methods of analysis and description. By itself, gender stratification, as history shows, cannot be the basis for the stratification of society as such. The authors found that gender stratification in the family is not a basis, but a consequence of general social stratification. The authors also found that the social stratification of the Kazakh nomadic ethnos is quite complex and, moreover, heterogeneous. This stratification is distributed over the so-called zhuz. The authors came to the conclusion that the Kazakh ethnos for many years has been collecting many ethnic groups, which Gumilev called ‘superethnos’. The key stratification of the Kazakh ethnos, which is related to others, must be represented in the form of three zhuz: The Senior (Uly), the Middle (Orta) and the Junior (Kishi).

Keywords: Gender Relations, Nomadic Society, Zhuz, Stratification of Society, Ethnos.

INTRODUCTION

The history of the most of mankind has been and continues to be a history of settled life. However, a different type of society and culture still exist, whose representatives do not lead a settled way of life, but at the same time their economy is producing. These are nomadic societies and cultures. Under nomadism we mean forms of farming and everyday life, based on extensive cattle breeding (including reindeer herding) with a seasonal movement of the population and herds of cattle (Shelomentseva, 2001; Bondaletov, 2014). “*Pure* nomads, for whom cattle raising would be the only type of economic activity, never existed” (Weinstein, 1989). In addition, the exchange of products, objects of everyday life, as well as the phenomena of spiritual culture, was always conducted between the nomads and settled people. It is still preserved in more than 30 countries of Asia and Africa (Sudan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan, etc.), covering about 40 million people (Weinstein, 1989).

It is no secret that for a long time there was a prejudiced attitude towards nomadism and the culture created by it in literature. Thus, the famous French historian Braudel classifies nomads as barbarians, noting that “only the Old World knew this exceptional category in the composition of mankind” (Braudel, 1986). The researchers did not understand that “universally

recognized criteria for the development level of civilization-the availability of written language, crafts, etc., which make it possible to understand the state of urban culture, are inapplicable in characterizing the level of culture achieved by various societies of non-settled pastoralists” (Areshyan, 1989).

The first thing that needs to be kept in mind, Khazanov notes is not to confuse the wandering and nomadic ways of life. The first is inherent in the appropriating economy, the second-in the producing economy. “...therefore, their mobility is caused by various reasons and has a different character” (Khazanov, 2000). Here is a generalized characteristic of Khazanov’s nomadism. “In my opinion,” he writes, “among the most important features of nomadic cattle breeding, which determine its economic essence, there are: 1) Cattle breeding as the predominant type of economic activity; 2) Its extensive nature, associated with year-round out of stall livestock maintenance at the pasture; 3) Natural, i.e., directed primarily at meeting the immediate needs of the nature of the economy (as opposed to the modern capitalist ranch or dairy farming)” (Khazanov, 2000). It seems to us that Khazanov correctly identified the main features of the nomadic economy. This is by no means an appropriating, but a producing economy (Evstratova, 2015).

The Kazakh philosopher Nurzhanov notes that the nomadic economy of the Kazakhs is based not on the economy of exchange, but on the economy of gift (Nurzhanov, 2003).

KHAZANOV’S VIEWS ON THE NOMADIC WAY OF LIFE

Analysing the works of Khazanov, his views on the set problems were studied. “Obviously”, notes Khazanov, “the drying up of the climate was the last impetus that prompted cattlemen to completely abandon agriculture and move to nomadism” (Khazanov, 2000). The well-known historian Toynbee uses the concept of “Call-and-Answer” to explain the mechanism of civilizations’ development. He also applies it to solving the problem of the nomadism origin. According to him, the drought twice challenged people living in the territory occupied by modern Kazakhstan. He writes: “In the first coming of the drought the pre-agricultural ancestors of the nomads went on to farming from hunting, turning hunting into additional and auxiliary asset” (Toynbee, 1991).

And he coped with all of this, giving a decent Response to the Challenge of Aridization. Nomads developed, according to Masanov's correct remark, one of the most rational ways of nature management and utilization of scarce resources of arid regions in the preindustrial period (Masanov, 1995). Moreover, after analysing the work of Masanov, the following was established: “An alternative to nomadism as an environmental management strategy has not been found even in such developed and rich countries as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, etc.” (Masanov, 1995).

STRATIFICATION IN THE KAZAKH NOMADIC SOCIETY

However, you cannot put all nomadic cultures on the same board. The only thing they have in common is their essence, that is, the leading mode of existence and, accordingly, the type of economy. Specificity is determined, firstly, by the habitat: The sands of the Sahara and the tundra of the North are far from identical in terms of living conditions. Secondly, the external environment of nomads is important (Interaction of nomadic cultures..., 1987).

The main thing depended on the nomads themselves. “Nomads,” writes Sarsenbayeva about the Kazakh ethnos, “not only managed to adequately adapt to the harsh, unique nature of the steppe, but also created a rich original culture based on nomadism as the most acceptable form of management, social interaction, the harmonious coexistence of nature and man” (Sarsenbayeva, 2009). The living conditions of Kazakh-nomads were observed in the 1920s by Russian scientist Levshin, as he described in his book, published in 1832 in St. Petersburg. He wrote: Removing and reassembling-a tent (this is how he calls a yurt-Z.K.) in half an hour, the Kirghiz (that is how he calls the Kazakh-Z.K.) is transporting it on a camel in the summer to where he finds enough food and water for his cattle.

Therefore, the genealogical structure of the nomadic society of the Kazakhs was real only in the lowest links and ideal, legendary and mythological at the highest level. They formed the core of the spiritual unity of society, because no one in the nomadic environment thought of himself outside of some genealogical group (Masanov, 1995).

Thus, the social stratification of the Kazakh nomadic ethnos is quite complex and, moreover, heterogeneous. First of all, one should name the stratification of the entire Kazakh ethnos by zhuz. Most likely, the Kazakh ethnos as such for many centuries was formed by the unification of many ethnic groups and sub-ethnoses (the term of Bromley), turning into something that Gumilev calls a superethnos. He gives it the following definition: “We call ethnic groups that simultaneously appeared in a certain region, interconnected by economic, ideological and political communication, which does not exclude military clashes between them as a superethnos” (Gumilev, 2003). It can be assumed that, in the future, the differences between zhuz would gradually be eliminated.

THE CONCEPT OF “ZHUZ” IN THE KAZAKH ETHNOS

So, the main stratification of the Kazakh ethnos, which is directly related to all its other social stratifications, including the gender one, was the division of this ethnos into three zhuz-the senior (Uly), the Middle (Orta) and the junior (Kishi). Each zhuz occupied a very specific territory. The Senior occupied the territory of the Semirechye, the basin of the Ili River, the interfluves of Chu and Talas, part of the Dzungarian and Zailiysky Alatau, the Kirghiz Range and Kratau, as well as part of the areas in the upper and middle reaches of the Syr Darya River; the Middle one occupied the territory of the Central, Northern, Eastern and part of Southern Kazakhstan; the Junior one occupied the territory of the entire Western Kazakhstan to the west of the Mugodzhary mountains to the lower reaches of the Ural. Yerofeyeva notes: “A certain specificity of cultural and historical processes was characteristic for each of these zones. Accordingly, zhuz are historically formed ethnoterritorial associations of Kazakh nomads, differing from each other in some parameters of ethnogenesis, socio-economic life, everyday life and culture of their constituent groups of nomadic population” (Yerofeyeva, 1999). Masanov clarifies: “As a result of the process of ethnic divergence in the early XIX century, was distinguished the so-called Inner Horde, the tribal structure of which differed by certain originality, from the composition of the junior zhuz” (Masanov, 1995).

However, the bulk of the Kazakh population, defined as free members of the community, did not differentiate according to class characteristics, which distinguished it from the ruling elite of the Kazakhs (Yerofeyeva, 1999). Representatives of the “white bone” also correlated according to the logic of the hierarchy: The highest position was occupied by the Tore, to which

belonged representatives of one of the branches of the Genghis Khan descendants. They were outside the genealogical structure of the zhuz and tribes and above it. The composition of the Khoja included ministers of the Muslim cult and they were the main bearers of Islamic religiosity. The second place, in order of importance, in the hierarchy of the “black bone” representatives was occupied by batyrs-military leaders.

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Inside these stratifications and in direct conjugation with them, there was also gender stratification. It was in many respects similar to the corresponding stratifications in other nomadic societies. Thus, Evola, the famous theorist of traditionalism, describing gender stratification in the Indo-Aryan nomadic epoch, emphasizes the clear distinction that existed between male and female functions. He writes: “The two fundamental forms of man’s activity, as close as possible to the autonomous *being in oneself*, are Action and Contemplation. Warrior (Hero) and Ascetic-are two fundamental types of pure masculinity. In parallel to these two masculine types, there are two types corresponding to feminine nature. A woman realizes herself, rising to the same level as a male warrior and an ascetic man, through the type of Mistress and Mother. Male and female spiritual types ideally represent two sides of the same heroic deed: Only in one case (for men) the action is active (active heroism) and in the other case (for women)-passive (passive or negative heroism)” (Evola, 1996).

At the same time, with reference to the nomadic society in general and to the Kazakh society in particular, one cannot say that male domination was harsh here. Argynbayev writes: Many scientists, noting the lack of the female Kazakhs’ rights in public life, correctly pointed to their relatively greater independence and freedom in the family compared with women of other peoples of Central Asia. In fact, women took an active part in domestic relations, helped their husbands in the household. And in the absence of their husbands they had to solve all the everyday issues on their own, they could receive and accompany the guests (Argynbaev, 1995). Therefore, the woman actively manifested herself within the nomadic society. A man had to protect his family, provide food supplies, i.e., he represented a nomadic society in communication with the outside world. Zuyev argues that among the ancient Türks not only the kagan, but also his wife, had the right to supreme power. This also led to the sacralization of their clans, Kagansky and Katunsky (Zuyev, 2002; Kadyrzhanov, 2010). “The steppe gave birth to such types of women as a friend-companion, a counsellor of the khan, a kinswoman, a wise woman, and, finally, a warrior woman. It is amazing that the nomads did not provide women for entertainment. According to the steppe code of honour, a fellow tribeswoman could only become a wife in the future” (Kodar, Zuyev, Dosymbayeva & Torlanbayeva, 2003).

Although by the XV century the Kazakh family was completely patriarchal, “vestiges of the maternal family, one of the important attributes of which is the collective ownership of land and means of production, marriage matrilocality” were preserved in it for centuries (Zuyev, 2002). In this regard, the role of women in the Kazakh society was high. A variant of such a family is widespread, for example, among the Eurasian steppe nomads-a patrilocal family in which one of the married sons, usually the youngest, lives with the parents and inherits the part of their property that remains after the rest of its parts were divided between his elder brothers (Kodar, Zuyev, Dosymbayeva & Torlanbayeva, 2003).

CONCLUSION

Thus, gender stratification in a nomadic society comes from the fact that men and women belong to one or another social stratum. In our opinion, a woman in a nomadic society was by no means a victim; she could not be by her nature, since the nomadic life itself gave birth to a proud steppe spirit. Just like a man, she felt free. After all, as Academician Zimanov rightly noted, “nothing was valued more than free-thinking and fair justice” in the Steppe. “The peculiarity of the nomadic family,” Khazanov emphasizes, “is that most often it coincides with a separate economy. Therefore, the main economic characteristics of the family as a separate economy for nomads is the compatibility of production (not excluding, of course, the age-division of labour), the consistency of consumption, expressed in unconditional right for the share of the produced product and the availability of general movable property, often in possession or under control of the head of the family. The family is a single and autonomous, ideally a self-supporting economic unit”.

Thus, having considered the issues of gender stratification in the Kazakh nomadic society, we come to the following conclusions:

- Since a nomadic society is a community that is dependent on the natural environment, social institutions that transform life or a way of life are impossible in it. In this situation, gender is almost indistinguishable from the biological sex, i.e., it is at the level of gender differences between a man and a woman. Therefore, even with the transition to patriarchal society, the woman remains the centre of the life of the nomadic world;
- However, in connection with the transition to the patriarchy, the status of a woman depends on the status of the husband: Marrying a noble, even a simple woman becomes an aristocrat and vice versa;
- Due to the fact that polygamy prevails in the marriage life of the Kazakh nobility, the status of the elder wife-baybiche is higher than that of the younger wife-tokal;
- Since the nomadic society is based on the cult of primogeniture and purity of origin, the lowest status belongs to illegitimate children-both women and men.

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