

ГРАЖДАНСКАЯ И ЭТНИЧЕСКАЯ ИДЕНТИЧНОСТЬ НЕМЕЦКОЙ ЭТНИЧЕСКОЙ ГРУППЫ КАЗАХСТАНА*

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Аннотация. Этническое многообразие общества тесно взаимосвязано с социальными процессами. В частности, является результатом миграции людей и их интеграции в принимающей стране. Изменения социального окружения становятся причиной изменения национальной или этнической идентичности граждан. В данной статье проводятся параллели между гражданской и этнической идентичностью немецкой этнической группы Казахстана на примере исследования немцев, проживающих в Карагандинской области и городе Алматы.

Ключевые слова: этнические немцы, немецкая этническая группа, этническая идентичность, гражданская идентичность, историческая родина, языковая ассимиляция, интеграция, мультикультурализм

ҚАЗАҚСТАННЫҢ НЕМІС ЭТНИКАЛЫҚ ТОБЫНЫҢ АЗАМАТТЫҚ ЖӘНЕ ЭТНИКАЛЫҚ БІРЕГЕЙЛІГІ

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Аңдатпа. Этникалық топтардың әралуандылығы әлеуметтік процестермен өзара байланысты. Олар көші-қонының және қабылдаушы елге кіруінің нәтижесі болды. Әлеуметтік органың өзгеруі азаматтардың ұлттық немесе этникалық ерекшелігінің өзгеруіне себеп болады. Бұл мақалада Қарағанды облысы және Алматы қаласында тұратын немістерді зерттеу мысалында Қазақстанның неміс этникалық тобының азаматтық және этникалық бірегейлік арасындағы параллельдер жүргізіледі.

Түйін сөздер: *этникалық немістер, неміс этникалық тобы, этникалық бірегейлік, азаматтық бірегейлік, тарихи Отан, тілдік ассимиляция, интеграция, мультикультурализм*

CIVIL AND ETHNIC IDENTITIES OF GERMAN ETHNIC GROUP OF KAZAKHSTAN

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Abstract. Diversity of ethnic groups can be an integral part of society, which is inter-connected with social transformations. This goes hand in hand with the migration of people and their integration into a host country. It can be referred to the national or ethnic identities of citizens. This paper draws parallels between the civil and ethnic identities of the German ethnic group of Kazakhstan in the cases of the cities of Karaganda and Almaty.

Keywords: *ethnic Germans, German ethnic group, ethnic identity, civil identity, historical homeland, language assimilation, integration, multiculturalism*

Introduction

There has been done much research on return migration to Germany, 'motivated by ethnic and political factors' (Dietz 2011, p 245 cited in p. 3), especially in the cases of European countries, such as Poland and Romania. The German minority groups of Poland were known as pioneers of immigration, followed by the ethnic groups from Romania. From the history, it is known that *'originally coined one-way migration into a circulatory movement between Germany and the origin in the case of ethnic Germans from Poland and Romania, in which 'return' becomes one of the many returns to one of the destinations [Michalon 2004 cited in jdfhdjp.2]'*.

It is also essential to note that migrated Germans from former Soviet Union countries have quite a different status. They are called 'Russian Germans' in addition to being 'returners'. This can be rooted in the historical background of the German ethnicity, differentiated across the countries likewise Poland, Romania and Post-Soviet Union countries. In addition to this, Pittman (2002) provides detailed statistics on German ethnic groups, commenting that the ethnic Germans comprised over 2 million in the Soviet Union in 1982. Furthermore, he (Pittman, 2002) highlights that the Germans in the Soviet Union were the least known in comparison with the ethnic Germans in Poland (over 1 million), Czechoslovakia (about 55,000), Hungary (220,000) and those in Romania (about 350,000).

Despite the data mentioned above, there has been done limited research on Germans, living in the Post-Soviet Union countries. This can be explained with the following statistics, provided by Pittman (2002). In 1979, Russians were considered to be the largest ethnic group, followed by other twenty-one ethnic groups, such as Ukrainians (42.3 million members) and Uzbeks (12.5 million members) and so on. It means the ethnic Germans with over 2 million members in the territory of the Soviet Union were not visible enough in comparison with other ethnic representatives likewise Ukrainians or Uzbeks. Therefore, this article attaches high importance to the exploration of ethnic Germans of the Soviet Union, who were deported to Kazakhstan in the cases of megacity Almaty and Karaganda oblast. Germans, who live in Kazakhstan have their unique history, which starts with the reign of Catherine the Great of Russia, followed by the Soviet Union period. In other words, some of them have the status of Russian Germans, while others believe that they are Kazakh Germans. Thus, this qualitative exploratory research study will be devoted to the investigation of the civil and ethnic identities of the Germans who have experienced citizenship of both the Soviet Union and Kazakhstan.

The aim of the study is to examine the strategic integration of German ethnic group of Kazakh society, taking into consideration the amount of Germans who have migrated to Germany last 30 years, which comprises 747 823¹

¹ https://stat.gov.kz/for_users/national/2009/general

people. Currently, there are 174 632² ethnic Germans, who live in Kazakhstan. According to the statistics on ethnic groups in Kazakhstan for 2021, the highest figure shows Karaganda oblast; there are 31 006 representatives of German ethnic groups. It is also interesting to note that Almaty city was the first German cultural center, established in 1989³.

Thus, the research question will be as the following: What identity does German ethnic group have in contemporary Kazakhstan in the case of Almaty city and Karaganda oblast?

Literature review

The Literature Review section is divided into two parts. The first part mentions that the research on German ethnic group is based on the historical background rather than identity and integration aspects. Contemporary topics on ethnic Germans are widely discussed in conferences, such as «Немцы Казахстана: мост между Астаной и Берлином» (Астана, 5-7 октября 2015 г.). The next part of the study explores German ethnic identity, taking into account the integration process with other ethnic groups in Kazakhstan. The scholars highlight the importance of learning the native language as the factor of identity. It will also focus on social integration and multiculturalism peculiarities, accenting on the significance of inclusive society. And the research question is the following: What identity do German ethnic group have in contemporary Kazakhstan in the case of Almaty city and Karaganda oblast?

Linguistic Assimilation

Nowadays, the German ethnic group does not apply their native language, they are aware of neither literary language nor dialectical one. They do not use German language on a daily basis. According to the census of population for 2009, there were 30 413 ethnic Germans, only 17% out of them responded that their native language is German and the rest of them consider another language as their mother tongue (Podoprigora U., 2016). Soviet Union ideology has a profound influence on building language identity. Laitin and Watkins (1998) report that the Soviet Union has promoted 'Russian language' as the language of international communication. As a result, Russian language was taught as the main language at schools and universities across the former Soviet Union countries. Thus, Russian language became the primary language among ethnic Germans.

Apart from linguistic assimilation, various topics were portrayed in other research works on German ethnic group of Kazakhstan. For instance, N. Efremova-Shershukova (2009) comments that a number of nationalities and ethnic groups were a part the former Soviet Union ideology, where the policy

² <https://taldau.stat.gov.kz/ru/NewIndex/GetIndex/703831?keyword=>

³ <http://wiedergeburt-kasachstan.de/istoriya-organizatsii/>

was to obliterate their national characteristics. Ethnic Germans were not an exception. T. Volkova (2015) has also analyzed the works on ethnic Germans published in Kazakhstan in 1990 and she listed the topics under the research, including migration of ethnic Germans in 19-20th centuries, confession-related issues in German society, deported Germans and so on. However, there was a lack of research on ethnic Germans who have integrated with other ethnic groups. As a result, there are no books or special materials on the integration and identity of German ethnic group. One of the first scientific works on ethnic groups was presented in 2016 by the supervision of A. Sadvokassova within the project 'Nation in Flow of History'. The large ethnic groups of Kazakhstan were the subjects of the research, and ethnic Germans were on that list. Having analyzed the development tendency of the ethnic Germans between the years 1941 and 1991, the author Podoprigora U. (2016, p.91) argues that there was the policy of unification of all ethnic groups, residing in the Soviet Union period, who are supposed to be the one united nation.

The vast majority of materials on ethnic Germans are available in Republican conferences, organized by German public organizations as 'Wiedergeburt', 'Zanders Magazine', Publications of the German Historical Institute series. They have widely discussed the aspects of identity, of those who emigrated to Germany and returned to Kazakhstan.

Identity and Integration

According to William James cited in Laitin and Watkins (1998) identity is "a voice inside me which speaks and says 'This is the real me'." He continues his thought with the idea that finding the identity usually takes time, where individuals judge themselves and are judged by others, which might impact self-perception. This formulation can be discussed in the case of ethnic Germans.

As we have mentioned earlier, the German ethnic group of Kazakhstan has their unique history. The thing is that they were invited to Russia as experts and started living in the Volga region. However, after the Second World War, the majority of them were deported to Kazakhstan, in particular to Karaganda oblast; German cultural centers were found in Almaty city afterwards. It means they have moved from their historical country and were known as Russian Germans; some deported ethnic Germans tried to return to Germany, while others wanted to go back to the Volga region. Not surprisingly, some ethnic Germans still live in Kazakhstan. This is why this study aims to examine the identity of German ethnic group of Kazakhstan in the cases of Karaganda oblast and Almaty city. Before investigating it, it is also vitally important to know how the integration process happens. The concept of 'integration' can be viewed from different perspectives. The primary understanding of the term can be linked to its structural status. According to Iskakov (2018, p. 559), there are 3 stages of integration:

- 1) structural (legalization status, which means obtaining a residence permit/ citizenship to inclusion in institutional aspects and state structures);
- 2) social (involvement in the public sphere and civil society of the receiving country);
- 3) cultural (transformation of values, which can lead to acculturation and even full or partial assimilation).

In other words, in addition to the structural aspect of integration, it is important to focus on the social and cultural factors of integration. Integration comes as a model of social organization. According to some scholars, special attention was paid to multiculturalism as an instrument of integration until the beginning of the XXI century. The purpose of multiculturalism was to unite different cultures and ethnic groups under the same rules, without paying attention to the cultural characteristics of immigrants, which led to the failure of this method. Chernyak (2015) considers multiculturalism as the experience of Europe, which carried a political strategy in the Association of different cultures in one country. However, he emphasizes that multiculturalism is a failed method. Further, he refers to the political leaders of Germany, France and the UK (German Chancellor, French President, British Prime Minister), who spoke about the insolvency and utopian policy of multiculturalism with the headings "failure of multiculturalism". Thus, all political leaders comment on multiculturalism as a 'failure' as a misguided choice of politicians in the organization of interaction between different ethnic, racial and religious communities. 'In fact, three European policies only talked about multicultural disintegration of their countries' (27, p. 14 Chernyak). Ye.V.Andreyev, exploring the failure of state multicultural policy in Europe, said that the problems of modern multiculturalism from the point of view of the ideology lie in European liberalism that allowed migrants to seek and obtain special rights, receiving any support from the advocates of liberalism (8, p. 71 Chernyak). Kimilika (1995) described this strategy as a fashion trend and a great disappointment for European countries, including the UK, Germany and the Netherlands. Bouchard (2011, 456) comments that "cultural neutrality of the nation-state is impossible". In other words, multiculturalism leads to segregation.

Having analyzed the above, it can be noted that the lack of multiculturalism is associated with a weak level of cohesion. Chernyak (2015) on this occasion writes that multiculturalism can lead not only to segregation, but also to ghettoization. In contrast, this article aims to search for plausible opportunities to save the cultural peculiarities of German ethnic groups living in Kazakhstan. In other words, segregation and assimilation are ignored in integration, which can be achieved by other tools of integration to build an inclusive society. As a result, German ethnic groups can feel comfortable preserving their culture, traditions and ethnic identity with Kazakhstan citizenship status. It means civil and ethnic identities can co-exist. This is why it was interesting to explore both the civil and ethnic identities of Germans of Kazakhstan.

Methodology

This chapter will elaborate on the rationale for the applied approaches in answering the research questions. Therefore, the section commences by providing the research questions of the paper, followed by a research design section, which justifies the chosen research approach. The participants and sampling sections will explicate the research population and sampling methods of the research. The interview and procedure sections will justify the interview approach and explain the process of interviewing the participants.

Research question is: What identity does German ethnic group have in contemporary Kazakhstan in the case of Almaty city and Karaganda oblast?

Research design

A qualitative approach has been chosen to answer the research questions of this study. A qualitative research method is more relevant for carrying out this study in comparison with other approaches, although qualitative research can be challenging. Palaiologou et al (2016) describe qualitative research as a phenomenological way of conducting research. Qualitative research has the advantage of providing unique and special data. This is due to the fact that the information collected through qualitative data is thick and rich, which allows data to be selective instead of representative.

Research participants

The following table displays the information of the sample population of the study. They are representatives of German societies of the city of Almaty and Karaganda oblast. The respondents of the interview were members of a mixed age group of 8 in each region (16 in total). The interview consists of 11 female and 5 male respondents and covers all age groups from 20 to 56. Kazakh and Russian languages were optional for the participants of the interview, depending on their preference, so that that they were able to express their thoughts. All of them used Russian.

Table 1. Research participants

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Language of interview	Duration of the interview
Svetlana	25 y.o.	Female	Russian	45 mins
Ivan	28 y.o.	Male	Russian	30 mins
Uliya	56 y.o.	Female	Russian	35 mins
Anya	20 y.o.	Female	Russian	40 mins
Maria	47 y.o.	Female	Russian	55 mins
Anya	20 y.o.	Female	Russian	57 mins
Lev	21 y.o.	Male	Russian	28 mins
Marina	53 y.o.	Female	Russian	43 mins
Inessa	48 y.o.	Female	Russian	60 mins
Vova	23 y.o.	Male	Russian	40 mins
Alyona	22 y.o.	Female	Russian	31 mins
Polina	52 y.o.	Female	Russian	35 mis

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Language of interview	Duration of the interview
Alissa	23 y.o.	Female	Russian	1 hour 5 mins
Luda	44 y.o.	Female	Russian	50 mins
Misha	35 y.o.	Male	Russian	45 mins
Boris	24 y.o.	Male	Russian	55 mins

Interviews

The semi-structured interview approach was used for this research. The interview questions were based upon two themes: identity and culture preservation. The first one deals with the civil and ethnic identities of the German ethnic group of Kazakhstan. The reason we have chosen the Germans is that they have a unique history. According to the history they moved to Volga Region as doctors, teachers and other specialists. They were deported to different locations in the Soviet Union. Consequently, some ethnic Germans were deported to Kazakhstan. This is why we find it crucial to examine the German ethnic group. The current elderly generation was born in the Soviet Union and can consider themselves as Russian Germans. Despite the fact that they have grown up in independent Kazakhstan. Hence, the first five questions are designed in order to clarify whether participants feel belonging to a historical country, to Russia, or to Kazakhstan. Their responses may assist to identify which identity they have a preference to opt. The second notion is devoted to the cultural peculiarities of the German ethnic group, which relates to the integration process based on inclusive society.

While developing the interview questions, the researcher must test the questions to ensure that the answers can be examined thoroughly and be understandable for the participants (Heigham and Croker, 2009). In order to make sure, that the interview questions were understandable, the researchers piloted the interview questions.

Thus, the researcher has employed nine open-ended questions for conducting an interview. The semi-structured interviews were conducted one to one with each respondent. This approach was chosen in order to provide various viewpoints.

The interview sessions vary in duration from half an hour to an hour. Robson et al. (2016) wrote that if interviews are longer than 45 minutes, the respondents can be resistant to take part in them (Robson et al. 2016). The researchers considered this point while composing questions for interviews.

In addition to this, the researchers were accountable for the controlling interview schedule (Scott et al. 2011), which was limited by certain factors such as activities in educational establishments and the vacation at the end of the academic year. Therefore, the timing of the interviews was crucial for collecting valuable data.

Research Procedure

Participants were approached to participate in this study through an emailed letter of invitation. The participants have agreed to take part in the interview as

long as they were informed about the purpose and nature of the study, which was done through the information sheets. The interviewees were provided with Consent forms before the interviews began. After having signed the consent forms, the respondents were interviewed, and the technical faults were checked, taking into account internet connection, personal laptop and telephone recording.

Findings and discussion

This chapter provides information on the results of the study. Mainly there were two emerged themes. The first two themes are addressed to language awareness and family values and, while the third topic assists to understand what the key factors impact on building ethnic and civil identities of German ethnic groups.

Theme 1. Traditions and Language awareness

The level of linguistic culture of German ethnic groups depends on their interest in the culture of their historical homeland, as well as on the education of parents and family values. It is interesting to note that the answers of the participants were varied in accordance with their age groups.

a) Young Generation

For example, young generation is not aware of their native language well enough to communicate with others. They learn German language to apply for different international scholarships and internships.

One young respondent says:

'Some members of the German Centers are competent enough to speak Academic German, but some have to work hard to get proficiency level, while others don't understand the language at all and are encouraged to go to language schools. (Female, 25 y.o.)'

The another respondent argues that:

'I speak Russian fluently and want to learn Kazakh language to speak with confidence. However, I am not interested in learning German language, I'd better go to fitness or meet with my friends'. (Female, 20 y.o.)'

The third young respondent says:

'I live in adjacent city to the capital city Nur-Sultan, and I want to learn Kazakh language and be a public servant. It is much better to learn Kazakh language in Kazakhstan and easier to find the job with Diploma... it is difficult to move to Germany when you don't know dialect of the modern German language. I don't want to work as a security guard'. (Male, 23 y.o.)'

Thus, having analyzed other young participants' responses, we came to know that some of them are encouraged to learn German language, however, they don't plan to move to their historical homeland, though they have visited their aunties several times in Germany. They understand Kazakh language but feel comfortable to speak Russian language.

b) Elderly People

The results of the study show that the knowledge of their native language among the representatives of the German ethnic groups is different.

For example, one parent's answer shows that her younger son is learning German with great enthusiasm, when the eldest son prefers to spend his free time with his friends. She also says that there are a lot of elderly people who come to the meetings every Monday at the German center Vidergeburg. These meetings are not only usual gatherings where people come and chat; all the meetings may have a common purpose. The purpose of the meetings is to preserve their own culture through telling the history, reading literary books and even cooking traditional meals, since the older generation are accountable for conveying an authentic culture of historical homeland. This is why they want younger generation to learn cultural peculiarities of their ancestors. It can be imperative to deepen the knowledge on culture and transfer it to young generation from the example of the following statement: "If You (Your family) do not stick to the traditions and customs of your ethnic group, what to expect from others, from those, who are not aware of it at all?" - all three respondents said that, for example, Russians and Germans celebrate Easter with pleasure, and others do not celebrate it, because they do not know, and their parents do not remember everything about celebrating the traditional events. This can be explained by the policy of the Soviet authorities concerning deported Germans.

Theme 2. Family values

The interview results also depict that there are many mixed families and the young generation may have a mixture of cultures. It can be inferred from the words of the young generation. According to respondents' answers, they are not focused on the ethnic background when it comes to marriage. They are more concerned about living in a country where they have stability and can work in accordance with diploma rather than moving to uncertainty. In other words, the young generation is afraid of moving to their historical country. One respondent says: *'We will be Russian Germans and it may take a couple of years at least to settle in as locals...we can be offered work as a shop assistant or so because of language competence. I mean language also evolve and we bear the language our elders taught us which might be unlike to the language they communicate in Germany.'* This is why the majority of German ethnic groups link their future with Kazakhstan. Thus, the study shows that German ethnic groups feel free in choosing culture and supported to be unique by Dom Druzhby and the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan.

Thus, according to the results of the interview, the respondents' answers can be divided into two main categories, which are based on the formation of the German ethnic identity, being outside Germany.

(A) the Importance of learning the language and culture of the historical homeland;

(B) the Family as the basis for the formation of ethnic and civic identity among young people of German ethnic groups;

Theme 3. Ethnic Germans and civil identity

German ethnic group in Kazakhstan has several strategies to define their ethnic and civil identities. German ethnic identity can correlate with the following six factors:

- 1) Consanguinity (a mother or a father);
- 2) History of a common fate;
- 3) German culture and traditions;
- 4) General self-concept;
- 5) Confessional belonging;
- 6) German language.

Civil identity of ethnic Germans appears to be linked with the recognition of themselves as the citizens of Kazakhstan with the motto: 'I am a citizen of Kazakhstan'.

Having analyzed the ethnic and civil identities of German ethnic group of Kazakhstan, we came to know that ethnic Germans of Kazakhstan can be the bridge for two cultures (Kazakhstan and Germany); Moreover, Kazakhstani citizenship allows them to feel comfortable both in Kazakh, Russian and German societies. As the result, German ethnic group in Kazakhstan can tie the knot with another ethnic group easily. Thus, one can witness that they can preserve their own culture and ethnic identity and at the same time be proud that they are Kazakhstani citizens.

Conclusion

The concluding part of the article revisits the key findings, providing further research implications and recommendations. Limitation of the study will be acknowledged, as well.

Key findings of the study

Identity is a phenomenon that is widely discussed amongst researchers, scholars, and practitioners across the world. Kazakhstan also pays high attention to this notion as the country is made up of different ethnic groups of about a hundred. One of them is ethnic Germans deported to Kazakhstan in the Soviet Union period. The interesting point is that their ancestors were Volga Germans, who moved to Russia from Germany in the early 18th century. It was interesting to know what identity German ethnic group in Kazakhstan might have in the case of two regions: megacity Almaty and Karaganda oblast, located not far from the capital city Nur-Sultan. The research showed the importance

of exploring the phenomenon of identity through investigating German ethnic group in Kazakhstan.

In conclusion, we came to know that

1. The Germans of Kazakhstan have their unique historical destiny and mission.
2. The Germans of Kazakhstan have contributed to establishing the independent Republic of Kazakhstan.
3. The Germans of Kazakhstan have their own tradition and culture, which enriches the people of Kazakhstan.
4. The Germans of Kazakhstan feel flexible for mixed marriages.
5. The Germans of Kazakhstan have their native language, literature and art.
6. Ethnic Germans can easily integrate with Kazakh culture even by sticking to their historical one.
7. The Germans of Kazakhstan have their native language, literature and art.
8. Germans of Kazakhstan unite three cultures, three civilizations — agricultural, industrial, and nomadic. This is the uniqueness and competitiveness of German ethnic groups at the present stage.
9. Germans of Kazakhstan unite three cultures, three civilizations — agricultural, industrial, and nomadic. This is the uniqueness and competitiveness of German ethnic groups at the present stage.

The answer to the research question will be as the following:

Ethnic Germans of Kazakhstan represent three identities: German, Kazakh and Russian.

Research implications and recommendations

The research on German ethnic group identity in Kazakhstan shed the light on integration and multiculturalism peculiarities in defining the ethnic and civil identity of other ethnic groups, residing in contemporary Kazakhstan. The main research implication is related to the role of language and family in forming identity. Another crucial implication is that the German ethnics can learn Kazakh and German languages, but speak Russian. Finally, undertaking more large-scale research will be beneficial in terms of investigating the identity of a new generation who were born in Independent Kazakhstan.

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