

# Cultural Integration as a Factor of Genesis of the Kazakh Nation in the Conditions of Multicultural Society

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**Abstract**—The article analyses historical aspects of the formation of the Kazakh nation in the conditions of the multicultural society. The authors underline cultural integration as a significant stage of the cultural advancement of the Kazakh nation. The transition to the modern-style houses, the adoption and development of the secular education gave a rise to the development of the society and culture on the whole.

**Keywords**—Assimilation, culture genesis, cultural integration, multiculturalism

## I. INTRODUCTION

**I**n a varying degree, contemporary states retain footprints of multiculturalism and it is highly possible to encounter representatives of national minorities almost in all states. Globalization, expansion of migration, financial crises and etc. wiped out borders and generated cultural diversity. The notion of “multiculturalism”, which emerged in 1960s in Canada, was an attempt to elucidate the dilemmas of peaceful coexistence of national cultures within the single state. Similar issues emerged in states of Europe and the West, as they experienced an influx of immigrants pursuing better lives from Asia and Africa in the mid of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The theoretical and empirical interest to the problem of multiculturalism is based upon the rising consideration of the problems of cultural diversity in the contemporary society. In addition, the philosophical and theoretical concepts, which became known in the late 20th century, give different explanations for “multiculturalism”.

According to C. Taylor, multiculturalism – ‘is a form of self-affirmation, not just a struggle for self-acceptance but a demand for recognition of originality, uniqueness and equivalence’ [1].

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W. Cimlica, an American theorist in the sphere of multiculturalism and multicultural citizenship, states the necessity for “aspiring towards preserving culture distinctiveness of national groups if it is initiated by them” [2].

C. Cucatas, the social philosopher of Indian origin, in his paper titled “Theoretical aspects of multiculturalism” highlights five possible response ways to the problems of cultural diversity (isolationism, assimilation, “soft” multiculturalism, “hard” multiculturalism and apartheid).

While considering assimilation that is cultural integration as a response way to the multicultural characteristic of the society, it is a wonder whether the cultural integration results in progress in the nation’s culture or ruins the uniqueness of that culture. For the theoretician of local civilizations, A. Toynbee, “challenge” (rapid change in life conditions) is a factor of cultural advancement where it requires an adequate “response” (way out from state of affairs) [3]. This situation carries a certain danger as society can simply overlook or may catch only partial picture of the “challenge” which in turn can ruin the foundations of the culture. In some societies “cultural minorities” may play the role of a locomotive by spotting the potential threat and bringing people forward.

The multicultural face of Kazakhstani society has its own several distinct features. Due to the historical and political events on its soil, Kazakhstan has never been a mono national state. Moreover, in the present times, there are more than 130 nationalities and ethnic groups cohabiting peacefully. The final multinational composition of our republic was been formed during the Soviet period. The multiculturalism in Kazakhstan is not an emerging phenomenon but the heritage of the past. In the aspect of multi culturalism, amidst the countries located in Eurasian continent, Kazakhstan can be contrasted only with Russia and India. Kazakhs comprise majority of the population (64.55%), followed by Russians (22.35%), Ukrainians (1.88%), Uzbeks (2.96%), Tatars (1.22%), Uigurs (1.42%), Germans (1.08%) and etc. [4].

The processes taking place around the globe and in Kazakhstan as it is an organic part of it, necessitates an acute and creative reconsideration and re-evaluation of the global and national values in accordance with the current realities. According to some scientists and politicians, cultural assimilation and integration of Kazakhstani people is the

solution to the society's problem of multiculturalism. Plenty of historians state that cultural integration is something unavoidable and natural.

## II. FORMATION OF NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS OF KAZAKHS

The functioning and development of culture in the society is dependent on the specifics of historical development, including socio-economic and political etc. relations, peculiarities of social psychology of ethnics etc. which determine common purposes of individuals while having an impact on the pace of the cultural advancement.

Cultural distinctiveness of every nation is dependent on the principles of cultural communication engaged to dialogue and interrelation with other co-existing cultures and in given point in time, inseparable from cultural uniqueness of other nations. Traditional nomadic society of Kazakhs based on the traditions and customs, faced rigid resistance with introduction of the novelties. According to A. Toynbee, the transformation of life conditions (these were expansion of capitalistic relations, economic disaster and illiterate population for Kazakhstan at the end of XIX century) was exactly that kind of "challenge" which required an adequate "response", change in life style. The representatives of Kazakh intellectuals (Sh. Ualikhanov (1835-1865), I. Altynsaryn (1841-1889), A. Kunanbayev (1845-1904) have become the "creative minority" who grasped the "challenge" in its true sense, and came to be the initiators of a wide-range of transformations in the socio-economic sphere, in the field of education and etc.

In Kazakhstan, in a land encompassing lots of ethnic groups each possessing ethnic-cultural distinctness while preserving tolerance on ethnic grounds, there are several mental characteristics common for all Kazakhstani's which determine their mutual understanding despite attachment to various ethnic groups and super-ethnoses. The establishment of this co-existence complied with the formation of national identity of Kazakhs, the process embarked upon a number of factors of inter-political nature and objective conditions of advancement of Kazakhstani society in the 18th-19th centuries and particularly in the period of active incorporation into Russian economy in the 20th century, Kazakhs while participating in significant military and political events began to recognize not only their tribal but ethnic affinity as well. The social structure of society became complicated and steadily nomadic form of lifestyle was transforming to the sedentary form. The Kazakh elite dealt with democratically-inclined Russian intellectuals who were in exile and Kazakhs obtained a new quality for development within the global community [5].

The researchers note the ambiguous role of Russian colonization as an accelerator of rise of the national identity amidst Kazakh intellectuals. There are two highlighted trends in this process. First, traditionally-oriented Kazakh poets (akyns) actively propagated the return to the nomadic lifestyle. On the other hand, Kazakh intellectuals saw Russian education model as a way of improving the well-being of

Kazakhs. In contrast with the Central Asian jadids the requirements of Kazakh intellectuals were not limited with the cultural aspects only. During the revolution at the beginning of the 20th century, the historical right of Kazakhs on their land has been declared under the slogan self-identification of nations [6]. The Kazakh intellectuals had disagreements regarding the development of the national culture. Some of them were supporting the preservation of the cultural uniqueness through close relations with the Muslim culture while others viewed the Russian culture as a bridge to the European values. Further, views on this issue are even more divided. The researchers studying this problem released new facts backed by evidences which clarify and extend the ideas of complex and contradictory evolution of ethnic identity formation and development of the Kazakh culture in the 19th and 20th centuries [7].

## III. FORMATION OF EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND CULTURAL CONSOLIDATION OF KAZAKHS

In the early 20th century, the development of the ethnic identity and cultural reinforcement of the Kazakhs was affected by the processes of centralization and unification of social, economic and cultural life. The first decades of the 20th century are known as a period of the rapid growth of the national consciousness of Kazakhs and other Turkic people residing within the Russian Empire, which was reflected in a significant cultural progress, the establishment and development of national languages, expansion in literature and media, the spread of the novel ideological concepts (Pan-Turkism, Islamism, Pan-Turanianism), reform movements (Jadidism) and etc.

The establishment of the education system, including the mixed Russian-native schools, the study in the Russian universities, acquaintance with the European and Russian culture had the decisive influence on the cultural advancement of the Kazakhs. A relatively significant stratum of the educated Kazakhs was being formed. The worldview of the Kazakh intellectuals was influenced by the major events in the social, political and cultural life of the Russian Empire. During this period, the group of thinkers emerged who struggled to preserve the national identity in the context of the modernization through combining traditional and spiritual values with the achievements of the human civilization (V. Tanachev (1887-1949), M. Chokaev (1891-1941), M. Tynysbaev (1879-1937), A. Bukeikhanov (1870-1937), H. Dosmukhamedov (1883-1939)). However, the traditional culture was a crucial factor in the Kazakh society, based upon not so much on the ethnic distinctions, but on the feudal-tribal, regional (juzes) and generic identification principles. It encompassed a strict hierarchy in the society, economic dependence, a complex system of relationships and preferences, stable authority of the aristocracy, Muslim and secular intellectuals. All of them penetrated into the routine life and ordained the value priorities. The colonial expansion of Tsarist Russia and their policy accelerated the formation of ethnic identity and the development of the national culture. At

the same time, it had an impact on the strengthening of the emulation between the tribes. The low literacy degree of the population, a vast territory withheld from the communication delayed the process of the ethnic consolidation [8].

#### IV. IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE OF TURCOFILS AND WESTERNIZES

In the awakening of the political dynamism of the Kazakh society, two central directions were distinguished, reflecting the mindset of the educated portion of the population. First, comprised of so-called westernizers having significant influence from the Russian literature struggled to implement the fruits of Western culture while shifting religious values to the secondary importance. Another group embodied turcofils who were brought up in the spirit of the Eastern Orthodox and national-religious exclusiveness. In the beginning, turcofils were the majority in the active stratum of Kazakh people due to the Russification policy, which generated suspicion from the western cultural enlightenment: the antagonism acquired ethnic color not through Russophobia of the masses, but by means of the anti-democratic government activities where key positions were held by the Russian-speaking appointees of the imperial center.

Nevertheless, the westernizers were able to acquire a wide influence in the regions and transformed into the leaders of the national movement. Their performance was in line with the requirements of the progressive Russian liberalism, taking creative view to the specifics of the socio-economic and political situation in the regions. While the turcofils, from the beginning, attempted to have close relationships with the All-Russian Muslim Movement, putting regional aims at the central target. The influence of Islam in the general culture of the Kazakh society was much weaker in contrast with many other Muslim nations within the borders of the Russian Empire.

The cultural constituent of the national movement that promoted education, periodicals, literary language and traditions of folk art was strengthened between 1910 and 1913.

Accordingly, A.V.Samsonov, the Governor-General of Turkestan testified that the mood in the different strata of the population was distinguished with high loyalty to the cultural policy of the authorities. He emphasized that the Kazakhs themselves provide funds for the construction of the Russian-native schools and boarding schools. They are keen on sending their children and make donations to those schools. A.V.Samsonov noted that Kazakhs possess a peculiar passion for the European education. They are highly ambitious by nature, with an unusual desire to rise to the position of an European – the government official, officer or person of a liberal profession (such as doctors, lawyers, etc.) and the Kazakhs are willing to get out of their centuries-old patriarchal environment.

However, educated Muslims resisted to hanging portraits of emperors and to the introduction of the Russian language in schools, they propagated strong opposition to all government

initiatives and advocated assimilation in a separate Muslim world.

A.V. Samsonov acknowledged that "one of the main reasons of the Kyrgyz unrest is not a questionable idea of the pan-Islamism but the recent regional policy, tending to forcefully acquire the lands of nomads and settle Russians". He accepted the responsibility of immigrants from Russian provinces for clashes with the local population. The compromise proposed by the local administrators and supported by the people was "our first responsibility in respect of Kyrgyzs should be to provide every parish with final parcels of land with a promise not to disturb them with further re-seizure" [9].

Economic success of the Kazakhs during the radical modernization could only be achieved through the cultural advancement. "We should by all means, pursue the education and general culture, and for that the primary thing we are obliged to do is the development of the literature in the native language," without neglecting the study of Russian and other languages [10].

#### V. THE ROLE OF INTELLIGENTSIA IN STRENGTHENING OF CULTURAL IDENTITY OF THE KAZAKH NATION

A new stage in the development of the ethnic culture corresponded with the commencement of the First World War. The Kazakh intellectuals were supporting the state with the various charity activities. But the war doubled the hardships of the nomadic and semi-nomadic life as a result of the outgoing resources, and due to the crisis of the resettlement policy. All of this triggered the social explosion, evolving into the inter-ethnic tensions. The uprising of 1916 had significant impact on the process of self-identification of the Kazakh society, strengthening social and national relationship. The hate to selfish government officials displaced traditional respect for the authorities. The dramatic collisions of the ethnic clashes, which began in 1916, accompanied the entire history of the revolution and civil war in Central Asian region, even reflecting after its termination in the 1920s.

The underdeveloped cultural and political social life of the Kazakhs was apparent in the February of 1917. The complex structure of the Kazakh society, which did not conform to the Western standard of social organization, was in the public indifference to the acute political struggle, but the collapse of the autocracy and implementation of the fundamental democratic reforms of the Provisional Government corresponded to the needs of the people and was widely supported. At this period, the involvement of the democratic, secular and Muslim trends began in the scope of the national movement, and also began a rise of the left radicals (Party "Ushjuz") supported by the Bolsheviks. Their leading role was determined by the charismatic potential of the intellectuals, accumulated experience in the social movement, reliance on the national democratic priorities and the relative weakness of the role of Islam in the Kazakh society.

The intellectuals, feeling guiltiness and obligation before the people, took the course of connecting the Kazakh traditionalism with the origins of the Western culture and civilization and attempted to accelerate the progress, fighting with the poverty, injustice and ignorance of the masses. However, rapid revolutionary developments prevented the evolutionary pace of the movement. The historical merit of its leaders is that they have consistently protected the national interests of the people, maintaining the requirements of the fair economic relations with the specifics of the Kazakh economy while advocating the local government in the traditional forms of regulation of the social relations alongside with sustaining the preservation guarantees of the development of the cultural identity and freedom of religion. However, the direct involvement in the reconstruction of the state brought them to the vanguard, and distancing them from the people. The intellectuals of the middle of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries managed to adopt cultural identity of Kazakhs as a nation, also acquiring political experience necessary to control the state. Thus, they created the prerequisites of the Kazakh state.

#### VI. CRISIS OF TRADITIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE KAZAKH SOCIETY IN THE SOVIET PERIOD

The Soviet period was controversial and dramatic for the cultural development of Kazakhstan when, from one side, much had been done for the cultural development of society (general literacy, education, science, culture and art, etc.), and on the other hand, the state focused on the purposeful annihilation of the national idea, and persecuted those who propagated them. The overall goal of creating a new historical community, the Soviet people, led to the transformations of the ideas of the national identity into a kind of decoration, only suitable mainly for external usage as an ancient exotic. The survival of not only of the national culture, but also of the entire nation was under danger.

The collapse of the traditional structure of the Kazakh society, which began in October of 1917, was accompanied by the fundamental changes in the ethnic adaptation mechanisms, customs, values and behaviors. The sedentary life, the development of which began in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, accelerated the demolition of the old tribal ties, wiping out the boundaries between *juzes* as an archaic form of organization. The watchful policy of the Soviet government regarding the old intellectuals attracted to the administrative positions, significantly influenced the evolution of the national identity.

The Revolution destroyed the traditional social relations and institutions and repudiated most of the traditional national values of the people of the former empire. In the sphere of the national interest the issues of land management, social assistance to the scattered suburbs, development of the culture and education, training of the national manpower, establishment of the administrative bodies which combine the functions of the proletariat dictatorship and the nationally represented local government, and many other matters came to the headlines.

However, it was carried out forcefully, without earnest consideration of the local specifics. The politicization of ethnicity, during its important role in the distribution of the power functions, enhanced the self-interest of national elites and their yearning for power and resources. This, in turn, induced the mistrust of the authorities to the intellectuals and generated inconsistent actions upon them. The thesis regarding the right of the nations to self-determination up to secession was gradually withdrawn from the practice, and its supporters were declared as "bourgeois nationalists". To the intellectuals, the priority of the national unity in the course of resolving the problems of social development seemed natural.

In the report announced by the former member of the Kir VRK T. Sedelnikov during the 2<sup>nd</sup> session of the Federal Committee on Land case titled as "Basic principles and terms of land management in the nomadic and semi-nomadic areas" (December 10, 1921.) Kazakhs were described in the following way "... the intellectual level of pure nomads is not below but above the average of their sedentary neighbors and majority of the Russian peasant population, especially in the forest areas. We should not overlook the fact that they are descendants of nomads, winners in the long struggle for the pasture on a purely nomadic platform. These are the people from the elite group who recently occurred in a disadvantageous position due to their former invincibility.

The poor literacy level and inferior development of European education compared to the sedentary comrades can be easily and correctly explained by not an innate dislike or weak capacity of nomads in education, but simply by their living conditions. If normal and professional schools, particularly specialized in rising the cattle, are adapted to those conditions, the picture will be totally different as it will enable to pull out from the nomadic masses thousands of outstanding cultural workers who are able to rationalize the nomadic nature in terms of the modern economy, if there is an advantageous relationship with the market "[11].

In the mid-1920s the task of the foremost importance was to overcome the reassessment of the national characteristics of the population and the exaggeration of the role of national intellectuals and fight against nationalism. The apparent absence of the conditions necessary for the fulfillment of the planned changes did not bother the Bolsheviks. Moreover, it was assumed that community traditions and ancestral "communism" of Kazakhs contributed to their susceptibility to the ideas of socialism and the possibility of their rapid transition. [12] Consequently, it was impossible to implement the proletariat dictatorship in the national borderlands without the use of force in such conditions. This despite helping to achieve stabilization and overcome economic inequality, inevitably led to the concentration of power in the center, which meant the subordination to the state (mainly Russian) patterns and trends. The advancement of the modernization process amidst the ethnic groups was distorted. Mostly, it did not lead to the qualitative changes in culture and mentality of the recent nomads. In reality, the age-old habit of subduing to the power and to the externally imposed rules determining the

game was in practice, while remaining in the closed world of the traditional attitudes and customs. The policy did not take into account the ethnic peculiarities even of the European part of Russia, not to mention the "exotic" nomadic civilization of Kazakhs.

#### VII. NATIONAL CULTURE OF KAZAKHS IN THE INTERNATIONAL SOVIET SOCIETY

The creation of the real metaethnic soviet community in the second half of the 20th century did not lead to the evaporation of the archetypes of the traditional culture in Kazakhstan. The rapid modernization changed the conditions of life, economy, political and social relations in the ethnic communities. However, the national policy relied on pseudointernationalist phraseology.

The unification under a new federal state had an objective reason, and created plenty of opportunities for the process of acceleration and enhancement of the cultural development in the national republics (science, general education, health, literature etc.), but at the X Party Congress the attempts to frankly discuss National Policy was thwarted. As a result, the usage of the slogan of internationalism enabled to flatten the cultural diversity and assisted to create mono-ethnic national regions. This objectively led, among other things, to the emergence of the potential sources of ethnic conflicts. However, despite the intense ideological pressure, Kazakh people preserved the respect for other cultures and kept their own distinct, rich cultural identity.

#### VIII. CONCLUSION

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The process of building an independent Kazakhstan lasts since 1991. Historically conditioned and unique as in most countries in the world, multicultural face of Kazakhstani population determines the historical interaction and interpenetration of the values of Eastern and Western cultures to its culture. Among the Kazakh and non-Kazakh ethnic groups living in the country, a unique experience of tolerant interethnic and intercultural relations has been accumulated, which allows developing the mutual ethnic cultures in accordance with the realias of today's life and prospects of the society. In the long history of different ethnic groups living together in Kazakhstan there is much more experience of mutually respectful cooperation than conflicts, which although had ethnic grounds, were not due to the ethnic or sectarian controversy, but of political, economic or social order.

Contemporary expert on Kazakhstan M.B. Olcott stated that the Kazakh people are distinguished with the emotional connection to the land, and despite the different perceptions of the world, a complex mixture of gratitude for the benefits received from the Russian civilization, and resentment for the suffering of Russian colonialism and Soviet power. The author with quite accuracy identifies the main factors of tolerance at Kazakhs towards Russians as the main partners in the socio-economic, political and cultural relations of the past and present [13].

One of the key characteristics of the Kazakh people is the commitment to the national traditions, which, in spite of the prolonged lack of support and even severe persecution, helped to keep the ethnic identity of spiritual culture; moreover ethnic identity of Kazakhs began to evolve with the passage of time. The Kazakhs once being nomads, under the influence of reality, began to settle and to engage in farming. At the end of 19th century, the prominent Kazakh thinker and philosopher Abai Kunanbaev in "Words of edification", pointed to the nomadic way of life as the main reason of the economic disaster of the province population. Abai urged Kazakhs to sedentary life of agriculture cultivation and animal husbandry,

the mastery of the craft, as he saw in it as the way to success. The Russian education was accepted as an opportunity to get access to the values of the European civilization. Modern Kazakhs have abandoned the nomadic life style long ago and are engaged in agriculture, building manufactures and factories. The radical break-up of the thinking and behavior patterns was dated by the 20th century. The enrichment of the Kazakh cultural values by the European civilization, its integration into the global cultural community is considered by us as a factor of lasting cultural genes of the Kazakhs. The cultural integration in the form of the transition to the new forms of management, the adoption and development of the secular education induced the advancement of the society and culture in general. By itself, the cultural integration has a positive impetus to the development of the multiculturalism while in this case the benefit is mutual.

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