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Kazakh diaspora in people's Republic of China and their social status

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Abstract

The article focuses on the Kazakh diaspora, mainly the article examines the formation of Kazakh Diasporas in the People's Republic of China and their political, economic and social status via comparative qualitative research methods. In result, an objective study of the issues of diaspora development can play a positive role in solving the problems of further preserving and consolidating civil peace, strengthening friendship and interethnic harmony. In conclusion, the situation which is happening currently in China proves that Kazakhs are experiencing another tragic stage in its history.

Keywords: Kazakh Diaspora, Policy, Titular Nation.

La diáspora kazaja en la República Popular China y su estatus social

Resumen

El artículo se centra en la diáspora kazaja, principalmente el artículo examina la formación de las diásporas kazakas en la República

Popular China y su estatus político, económico y social a través de métodos de investigación cualitativa comparativa. Como resultado, un estudio objetivo de los temas del desarrollo de la diáspora puede desempeñar un papel positivo en la solución de los problemas de preservación y consolidación de la paz civil, el fortalecimiento de la amistad y la armonía interétnica. En conclusión, la situación que está ocurriendo actualmente en China demuestra que los kazajos están experimentando otra etapa trágica en su historia.

Palabras clave: diáspora kazaja, política, nación titular.

1. INTRODUCTION

Kazakhstan is one of the largest countries by its territory in the world. After gaining state independence, Kazakhstan as an independent state began to conduct its diaspora policy in foreign countries which became a crucial element of the new political regime. As Charles and Neil (2010) stated Kazakhstan was the only post-Soviet republic that approached independence with a titular nation where the ethnic Kazakhs were only 39.7 percent of the total population in 1989. According to him this demographic deficit, along with a shaky historical justification for an independent state, maintained an incentive for Kazakhstani elites to look beyond the new state's borders and forge ties with a dispersed Kazakh nation.

Kazakhstan began to invite the representatives of the Kazakh diaspora and irredenta to coordinate joint activities of the Republic of Kazakhstan and Kazakhs living abroad. The First World Kurultay of Kazakhs took place in Almaty on the 29th of September 1992, where

delegations and representatives of the Kazakh diaspora came from 13 countries. The Second World Kurultay of Kazakhs took place in South Kazakhstan on the 24th of October 2002. On the 29th of September in 2005 the Third World Kurultay of Kazakhs held in Astana. The most memorable gatherings of young people, leaders of youth organizations, and student associations from different countries took place at the Fourth World Kurultay of Kazakhs where young people accounted for 60% of the forum delegates, not only from foreign countries, but also from Russia, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. World Kurultay of Kazakhs is a momentous event in the social and political life of the country. It has demonstrated the tradition of 5 Kurultays during the period 1992-2017, achievements of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the period of independence, including ethnic repatriation policy.

And on June 23, 2017, in the course of EXPO-2017, the 5th World Kurultay of Kazakhs started its work with the participation of the president of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev. The World Association of Kazakhs (WAK) as an organization coordinating activities of all Kazakh communities has been providing a unique platform for the ethnic Kazakhs living in different parts of the globe. From the very beginning, the World Association of Kazakhs has been developing relations with the Kazakh diaspora and helping them preserve their language, culture and traditions in their host states through different activities.

2. METHODOLOGY

According to Alexander Diener (2005), the World Association of Kazakhs (WAK) is responsible for refining and maintaining the policy of the amorphous diaspora in Kazakhstan which is dichotomous, relatively appealing wide criticism within Kazakhstan and among its neighbors. He confirms that the policy in the one hand has developed boisterous nationalism growing concern over depopulation after the collapse of the Soviet Union, which initiates the migration flow of diaspora Kazakhs to their historic homeland, exuberant nationalism and mounting concerns over depopulation following the Soviet collapse which initiates a migration stream of diasporic Kazakhs to their historical homeland, on the other hand it cultural that evolves relationships between Kazakh communities in different states and their ethno-national homeland. He believes that analysis of the different activities of Kazakhstani migration policy is a good indicator of a developing duality in the government's approach to its diaspora and its role in the future of the state.

3. RESULTS

How many people belong to the Kazakh diaspora? Where are they located and why they appeared in those countries? What is their political, economic and social status? The Kazakh diaspora was created by migrations over long distances, which had a temporary, then passed to a constant duration, with the crossing of external borders, first from Kazakhstan to China, Russia, Central Asia, Afghanistan and Iran, and then further all over the world. The Kazakh Diaspora throughout its history has

had a violent or forced nature of migration, due to political, economic and religious circumstances. Until the beginning of the 1960s, the migration of Kazakhs in the countries of the world was characterized by mass character, and in the modern period, individual movements with the practice of calling their families in the recipient country are more characteristic. Considering the Kazakh diaspora, we can state the following: its representatives are an integral part of the entire Kazakh people, have a single ancestral home - Kazakhstan, profess the Muslim religion, refer to the Turkic-speaking peoples, but due to internal and foreign political events in the past, currently live outside, most often in the countries of Asia, Western Europe and America.

The development and spread of the Kazakh diaspora in the world were largely influenced by many historical events, such as the Kazakh-Dzungarian wars, the Stolypin agrarian reform, national liberation movements in Central Asia against the tsarist autocracy, the establishment of Soviet power in Kazakhstan, the civil war in 1918-1920 the political genocide against the Kazakh people during the period of forced collectivization and the repression of the Kazakh elite as enemies of the people, conducted in Kazakhstan in 1937-1938, as well as the loss of the motherland of prisoners during the World War II. The condition, problems and living standards of Kazakhs in foreign countries are different, this is related to the state where they live. In various countries of the world, Kazakhs have a different political and economic status, social and cultural environment. Much depends on the history of education of the diaspora and on the loyalty of the policy of the country of residence. The current

population of Kazakhstan is 18,438,089 as of Tuesday, September 4, 2018, based on the latest United Nations estimates (Ualtaeva, 2012) .

Kazakhstan ranks number 63 in the list of countries (and dependencies) by population.

The population density in Kazakhstan is 7 per Km² (18 people per mi²).

The total land area is 2,699,700 Km² (1,042,360 sq. miles)

49.9 % of the population is urban (9,182,798 people in 2018)

The median age in Kazakhstan is 29.6 years.

The estimated of the number of Kazakhs living outside the borders of the Republic of Kazakhstan are rather different. The data on the size of Kazakh diaspora abroad provided by different scientists does not match each other. However, according to the date of the World Association of Kazakhs about 5 million Kazakhs live in 43 countries of the world if this number is true, about one-third of all Kazakhs live abroad. Such estimations are uneasy since many of them are living in countries with unreliable or insufficient population statistics, some of them even in countries in the state of war or at least international isolation.

Table1. Estimated numbers of Kazakhs

Countries	Mendikulova (1997)	Tatimov
Kazakhstan	8,725,000	
China	1,500,000	1,296,000
Uzbekistan	1,500,000	870,000
The Russian Federation (RF)	About 800,000	660,000
Mongolia	83,000	157,000
CIS except Uzbekistan, RF	187,000	177,000
Afghanistan	30,000	45,000
Turkey	10,000	30,000
Iran	10,000	15,000
USA	1,000	10,000
Germany	2,000	7,000
Canada	7,000	5,000
France	2,000	4,000
Sweden	2,000	1,000
Total	4,134,000	3,277,000

Source: Kuscu (2008)

According to Mendikulova (1997) global Kazakh population in 2009-2010 exceeded 14 million.

Table 2.

Ranking	Country	Official data	Field study data 2007–2009
1	Kazakhstan	10,301,165	10,301,165
2	China	1,250,500	1,413,500 3
3	Uzbekistan	899,195	1.3-1.5 million
4	Russia	870,000	1.2 million
5	Mongolia	145,000	
6	Turkey		15,000
7	43 other countries		

Source: Mendikulova

Referring to the number of ethnic Kazakhs living in particular countries we can determine three basic categories of countries. China, Uzbekistan and Russia are in the first category where still living approximately 90 % of all member of the Kazakh diaspora. The second category includes remaining countries of the post-Soviet Central Asia plus Mongolia, Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey where between 10,000 and 100,000 members of the diaspora live. Other countries of the world where small communities counting less than 10,000 ethnic Kazakhs can be found (USA, Canada, Germany, France and Sweden) comprise the third group.

4. KAZAKH DIASPORA IN CHINA

While this article concentrates on Kazakh diaspora in China, we begin by providing some facts for the discussion. China is a country hosting highest number of ethnic Kazakhs, about 1,500,000 persons.

According to the data of Chinese statistics the Kazakh ethnic minority, with a population of 1,250,458, mainly lives in the Ili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture, Mori Kazakh Autonomous County and Barkol Kazakh Autonomous County in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (XUAR). Some are also located in the Haixi Mongolian, Tibetan and Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture in Qinghai Province and the Aksay Kazakh Autonomous County in Gansu Province. According to Rakisheva (2015) for a number of reasons, today the largest group of the Kazakh diaspora lives in the territory of XUAR of the People's Republic of China numbers 1,557,457 people, or 7% of the total population of the autonomous region.

Studies conducted during expeditions to China by representatives of the Kazakhstani Institute of Sociological Research show that 56.7% of families from the Kazakh diaspora have been living on Chinese soil for more than four generations, and the remaining 43.3% are indigenous people of China. Today, the Kazakhs living in China are represented by two groups. One of them is the Kazakh clans that migrated from the Soviet Union during the years of collectivization, the other, the most numerous, are those whose ancestors originally lived in the territory. Carefully reviewed the main markers of the ethnicity of the Kazakhs living in China (language, religion, culture and tribal relations) suggests that the Kazakhs in China managed to preserve their ethnic identity and show significant resistance to assimilation. The large number of the diaspora, the compactness of its residence, high internal solidarity and consistent national policy pursued by the leadership of the PRC, allowed the Kazakhs to preserve their culture, language, customs and traditions. The Kazakhs speak their native language, profess Islam, strictly adhere to

the zhuz-clan relations, and freely perform national traditions and religious rituals. They have their own cultural centers, whose functions include not only the consolidation of the Kazakhs within the country, but also the establishment of ties with the historic homeland. Kazakhstani scientist and Sinologist Professor Syroezhkin states that:

The Kazakhs remained one ethnic community, divided only by the state border line. However, despite belonging to one ethnic group, living on the territory of another country and involvement in the specific socio-economic and political processes taking place in it, the Kazakhs of the People's Republic of China submitted to a different logic of historical development; the formation of their social structure and national identity went differently (2010: 18).

5. POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL STATUS AND CULTURAL SPECIFICITIES OF KAZAKHS IN CHINA

Kazakhs are the 16th largest ethnic group out of 56 national minorities where 95% of them inhabit in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. The demographic policy of China has definitely influenced for representatives of Kazakh diaspora. Since 1979 the government has advocated a one-child limit for both rural and urban areas and has generally set a maximum of two children in special circumstances (the Kazakh and Uyghur families can have two children). If the one-child policy had not been implemented, the birth-rates would be much higher in the natural growth of the Kazakh population. There are about 1.5 million Kazakhs in China, compared to 10 million in Kazakhstan. They make up about 13 percent of all the Kazakhs in the world. Kazakhs made up about 9 percent of the population of Xinjiang in the 1940s and only 7 percent

today. They live mostly in the northwest of Xinjiang. About 90 percent are Kazakhs scattered across Xinjiang. Most live in three autonomous regions- Ili, Mori and Burqin and around the villages around Urumqi. Kazakh population in China: 0.1097 percent of the total population; 1,462,588 in 2010 according to the 2010 Chinese census; 1,251,023 in 2000 according to the 2000 Chinese census; 1,111,718 in 1990 according to the 1990 Chinese census (Elmes, 2018).

The Kazakh diaspora in China occupies an important place in Kazakh-Chinese relations, and its problems affect the national interests of Kazakhstan. Late in 1991, China and Kazakhstan, which had become a sovereign state, established bilateral interstate relations; on 3 January, 1992, the two countries established diplomatic relations. China's diaspora policy boils down to two main areas. The first is characterized by a policy in relation to the Chinese diaspora living outside of China, which boils down to monitoring and analyzing their situation abroad. The second direction is the attitude towards the national minorities living in China, which amounts to creating various obstacles to the departure of national minorities for permanent residence, as well as unofficial permission for the departure of unemployed or unskilled workers from among the national minorities. The Kazakhs, being one of the most successful national minorities in China, nevertheless, are facing the threat of gradual dissolution in the Han environment. To a lesser extent, this affects Kazakhs living in rural areas, and to a greater extent, those who live in cities and wish to achieve success with ordinary citizens of the PRC.

The Kazakhs in XUAR can be divided into two large groups according to their areas of activity: the first is the nomadic Kazakhs and people engaged in more traditional types of agriculture for China. However, land in Xinjiang is becoming increasingly valuable and is increasingly heard about cases of massive buying up of land from the Kazakhs and Mongols, as well as about incidents with the illegal seizure of land. In addition, in connection with the development of tourism and the creation of tourist zones in the picturesque corners of Xinjiang, the living space of Kazakh nomads is narrowing every year. The second group includes highly educated intellectuals, public figures and other representatives of the Kazakh ethnic group, who live mainly in cities and received higher education at universities in Beijing, Shanghai and other cities of China, as well as Japan, which is considered particularly prestigious among the local population .

Due to the lack of specific and official data regarding the representation of Kazakhs in government, it is difficult to draw conclusions about the involvement of Kazakhs in the leadership sphere. However, in all territorial units where Kazakhs are recognized as the title ethnos, according to the PRC constitution, the first administrative positions are held by representatives of the same ethnic group (this provision does not apply to the positions of the first secretaries of party committees, starting from the district and city levels). Nevertheless, there are a number of factors that carry a serious threat to the full development of the Kazakh ethnos within the framework of the Chinese family of nations. Firstly, this is actually the problem of adequate representation among the nations of Xingzyna. The share of Kazakhs in the region is

rapidly decreasing against the background of a continuous increase in the number of Han Chinese coming from other regions of the PRC .

Secondly, there are a number of problems of an economic nature. Conducting agricultural activities is faced with serious competition from the Han, where this sphere is put truly on industrial rails. The unemployment rate among all national minorities is rather high, the actively arriving Hans, known for their efficiency and ability to survive in difficult conditions, often intercept the work of the local population, which provokes an increase in internal discontent. As for the urban Kazakhs, compared to other ethnic minorities, they are more competitive. But, there are also a lot of pitfalls. Thirdly, in order to become successful in the Chinese environment, the possession of the Chinese must be at the level of speakers. Therefore, living conditions lead to the fact that in the cities the second and third generation of Kazakhs already have very little knowledge of their native language. Those representatives of the Kazakh ethnos, who occupy positions in power, must join the ranks of the Chinese Communist Party to make a decent career. Despite major socio-economic reforms in the past three decades in China, the Uighur problem persists till the present day; that is, the marginalization of religious, linguistic and cultural practices of the ethnic minorities in Xinjiang resulting in secessionist demand of the Uighur people for their own state outside of China or Kazakhstan. Freedom of speech, religion and movement for the 11 million Uighur people in China is strictly controlled by the state .

In general, the trend is obvious, that the American media are actively interested in and are leading the topic of respecting the rights of

the Kazakhs in XUAR. But detention is one thing, but what is happening currently in China? Darren (2018) in his interview given at Living Otherwise states and assumes the following: Since 2014, China has engaged in what it describes as a People's War on Terror. In the government's discourse, only people who practice public forms of Islam and look different from Han people can be described as terrorists. This means that what the state is in fact engaging in is a war on public expressions of Islam and Turkic minorities. There are at least two major reasons for this. First, since the early 2000s, the state has accelerated Han migration to the Uyghur and Kazakh homelands in China in order to develop natural resource extraction, consolidate control over the border regions, and develop new markets. As part of this process, they have introduced education initiatives and labor transfer programs to integrate Uyghurs and Kazakhs who have been displaced through this process.

6. CONCLUSION

This has led to violence and competition for jobs in Eastern China, in turn prompting large-scale protests, violence, and disappearances in Ürümqi. This atmosphere of violence, dispossession, and injustice led to increasing violence between Uyghur civilians and the police and Han civilians, both in the province and in places such as Beijing and Kunming. Second, in 2010, as part of a larger development initiative, the state sponsored the rollout of 3G networks across the region. In 2012, the social media app WeChat arrived in the Uyghur countryside. Almost immediately, Uyghurs purchased cheap smartphones and began to use the app as a way of connecting with each other and with Uyghurs in the

diaspora. Since the state had no way to regulate Uyghur speech on the app, much of the discussion online centered on religious practice. As a result, between 2012 and 2014 there was a widespread turn toward Hanafi forms of Sunni Islam. Political protests and small incidents of violence also began to exhibit signs of political Islam. The state took this as a sign of the rise of extremism rather than as quite normal forms of Islamic piety as practiced in most countries around the world. These two factors, taken together, led state officials, including new Party Secretary Chen Quanguo, to determine that security was not enough to produce lasting stability. Instead, large segments of the minority population needed to be re-educated. As a result, an estimated 1 million Muslims have been sent into indefinite detention without due process or legal representation. Millions more are now required to attend regular day or night camps, where they receive political instruction. All Muslim groups in what is called the Xinjiang region face the threat of being sent to re-education camps. It appears that in many cases local officials are given a mandate to detain a certain percentage of the population in their jurisdiction. In northern parts of the region, where there are fewer Uyghurs and Kazakhs, Hui (Chinese-speaking Muslims) are sometimes sent to the camps because they have practiced so-called extremist forms of Islam or have unauthorized knowledge of international politics.

An unofficial look at what is happening on was given only by the American Radio Azattyk. The fact is that Radio Azattyk, like the other division of the American Radio Liberty Radio Free Asia, raises the issue of persecution of the Kazakhs - Chinese citizens living in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR). Oralman who came from

Kazakhstan to China and some statesmen of Kazakhstan are concerned what is happening in China. The government of Kazakhstan is trying to smooth the situation. However, the issues remain open. Behind the settlement and formation of Kazakhs stay different histories. Formation of Kazakh diaspora was a result of different historical event. The situation which is happening currently in China proves that Kazakhs are experiencing another tragic stage in its history.

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