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IMPLEMENTING PROSPECTS OF MULTICULTURALISM THEORY IN KAZAKHSTAN

Almira Sagimbayeva*

ABSTRACT

Under the conditions of continuing globalisation and increasing migration flows the interweaving and coexistence of cultural diversities is becoming increasingly significant. This research highlights the importance of the cultural pluralism for developing Kazakhstan. The purpose is to identify the background and conditions for the implementing of the multiculturalism theory in Kazakhstan. Hypothesis is based mainly on historical analysis, using appropriate concepts and taking into account the experience of the European Union.

Key words: Multiculturalism, Interculturalism, The Assembly of People of Kazakhstan, New Kazakhstan patriotism

Introduction

The fate of multiculturalism which was intended to act as a conductor of tolerant coexistence of different cultures in a single society now is perceived as one of the main causes of interethnic relations' degradation. The theory of multiculturalism began its practical application in 1970-1980 in the countries with large immigrant flows. Under a wave of democratic sentiment humanistic ideas had to lead to mutual cultural enrichment of advanced multi-ethnic societies. But, in fact, the opposite happened: using the absolutely equal rights "newcomers" had increasingly isolated themselves, and there were ultranationalist shouts in the host circles.

Perhaps, all of this is an imperfection of national and migration policies or natural psychological unpreparedness of developed hosting side to "share" with the immigrants, who, in their turn, came searching a better life, but in some way abused the hospitality.

Anyway, the policy of multiculturalism was declared as "failed": right-wing nationalists insist on regenerating the "assimilation" and the defenders of human

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rights and citizen freedoms try to protect migrants from “melting pot”. It is obvious that the modern concept of multiculturalism needs a re-branding. Europe, which has faced a problem of both internal and external migration, is in an active search for solutions. The activities of the leading European research centres are increasingly focused on research in the field of migration, refugees and ethnic problems; developing and strengthening the values of tolerance and integration; promoting public awareness on migration and asylum issues¹.

Will Kymlicka emphasizes that ideas about the legal and political accommodation of ethnic diversity have been in a state of flux around the world for the past 40 years. One hears much about the “rise and fall of multiculturalism”. Indeed, this has become a kind of master narrative, widely invoked by scholars, journalists, and policymakers alike to explain the evolution of contemporary debates about diversity. Although people disagree about what comes after multiculturalism, there is a surprising consensus that we are in a “post-multicultural era” (Kymlicka, 2012). According to Kymlicka, we need first to make sure we know what multiculturalism has meant both in theory and in practice, where it has succeeded or failed to meet its objectives, and under what conditions it is likely to thrive in the future before we can decide whether to celebrate or lament the fall of multiculturalism.

Therefore, what does multiculturalism means in theory and practice? Multiculturalism is first and foremost about developing new models of democratic citizenship, grounded in human-rights ideals (Kymlicka, 2012). According to Charles Taylor, a number of strands in contemporary politics turn on the need, sometimes the demand, for recognition. The need, it can be argued, is one of the driving forces behind nationalist movements in politics. And the demand comes to the fore in a number of ways in today’s politics, on behalf of minority or “subaltern” groups, in some forms of feminism and in what is today called the politics of “multiculturalism” (Taylor, 1992).

In ordinary language multiculturalism is defined as the ethnic, linguistic, faith based, and lifestyle diversity of a society. If before such a variety stemmed primarily from the historical heterogeneity of the population of most modern states, in the post-war decades its main source has become immigration.

Another reference of multiculturalism is political and administrative practice, a certain system of measures taken by the state in order to maintain

¹ See more on the web page CERMES – Centre for European Refuges Migration and Ethnic Studies at <http://www.cermes.info> (20.2.2014).

cultural diversity. Looking closely, it will be found that only a small number of states are pursuing such a policy. Strictly speaking, the institutionalised multiculturalism enshrined in law and embodied in relevant institutions exists only in Canada and Australia. Only these two countries have put in their legislation fundamental view of society as a combination of ethnic groups, whose equality in access to material and symbolic resources is regulated by the state.

The new world states – United States of America, Canada and Australia are called the “immigration” countries, mainly due to the fact that American, Canadian and Australian nations were formed as a result of immigration processes. Furthermore, immigration is essential for nation-state identity of these countries. Western Europe represents completely different situation. Here historically-formed nation-states are faced with a massive influx of immigrants. Hence, inconvenience is arising from attempts to instil into the European soil public rhetoric and political practice typically occurring in “immigration countries”.

The Western model of multiculturalism has failed, so it was stated by the largest and most powerful members of the European Union. Countries such as Germany and France, faced with problems of immigrants who did not want to fully integrate into the host society, recognised the collapse of this policy. We know that these immigrants – people who want the best and high quality of life for themselves and their children, in search of new job, good opportunities and quality education – migrate to countries with advanced economies. There is an idea concerning the problem of migration, which the countries in Western Europe are currently facing – that it might be, in fact, certain “response” to their own colonial policy of previous periods; in other words – the former colonies now began to conquer Europe. They are poorly integrated, live by certain rules based on religion, strictly adhere to their own culture, their traditions and live by them, communicate in their native languages – i.e. they stand apart. Policy of multiculturalism of Western Europe is for them as a threat to themselves given the demographic problem in these countries. The local population is aging and new cultures are constantly growing in number; is it not a threat to the cultural conquest of the Western Europe? Probably that was the main reason why German Chancellor Angela Merkel and former French President Nicolas Sarkozy officially announced the collapse of the policy of multiculturalism in 2010-2011.

Regarding the crisis of multiculturalism in the Western Europe, Kymlicka

emphasizes the multiculturalism in the West emerged as a vehicle for replacing older forms of ethnic and racial hierarchy with new relations of democratic citizenship, and there is some significant, if not yet conclusive, evidence that it is making progress toward that goal (Kymlicka, 2012).

1 Historical review

The concept of multiculturalism as theory and policy appeal not only to Western scholars, but also inspire interest of social and political scientists in the post-Soviet as well. It should be noted that almost all post-Soviet countries are multinational states. The case of Kazakhstan, however, is very special.

Kazakhstan in implementing the task of strengthening its statehood and the development of civil society seeks to expand partnerships with the European Union in order to study and use the successful experience in all areas of state's life. In 2008 Kazakhstan adopted the State Program "Path to Europe", implemented in the period of 2009-2011. This programme was based on solving issues of internal development, rapprochement with Europe, strengthening historically-formed relations, joining the European integration experience (and embracing its institutional/legal reforms), as well as intensifying technological, energy, transport, trade, humanitarian and investment cooperation between Kazakhstan and Europe. It is important to note that European Union countries pay special attention to cooperation with Central Asia – with Kazakhstan in particular. EU is one of the main political and economic partners of Kazakhstan. In June 2011, the talks on the new enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between Kazakhstan and the EU were officially launched in Brussels.

Kazakhstan is home to over 130 ethnic groups and 17 religions, and the issues of inter-ethnic relations and social cohesion are relevant, with the necessary scientific and theoretical studies and modelling of applied research.

Kazakhstan as the heart of Eurasia and as the result of historical events has very rich cultural diversity. It should be underlined that before Kazakhstan became the part of first Russian Empire and then the Soviet Union, its population was almost homogeneous, there was only pure Kazakh nation.

According to first census held in 1897 by Russian Empire, albeit at that time Kazakh nation made up 81.7% of whole population on its territory, approximately 60 nationalities inhabited the Kazakh territory.

The demographic situation in Kazakhstan during the period of the

Russian Empire contributed to the gradual formation of its multi-ethnicity. The process of formation of this multi-ethnicity was intensified during the Soviet period due to the massive displacement of the population in the course of industrialisation, collectivisation and repression, deportation of entire peoples, the evacuation of the population during the World War II, the development of virgin land and the expansion of industry in the post-war period.

According to the historians, in 1920 representatives of 38 ethnic groups were registered in Kazakhstan; the census of 1970 shows there were 114 ethnic groups, and in 1986 there were 120 ethnic groups. According to the 1989 census, representatives of nearly 130 ethnic groups were living in Kazakhstan.

After gaining the independence, the Republic of Kazakhstan has entered a new historical stage of development of profound political transformations on the background of growth of national and religious identity, due to multi-ethnic Kazakh society that has developed in the Soviet period, and its multi-religious character that emerged in the course of democratic reforms.

According to the last national census in 2009, the population of the Republic of Kazakhstan amounted to 16.0096 million people. During the intercensus period (1999 census and 2009 census) the population of the country increased by 1.0283 million, representing an increase of 6.9%. According to the statistics, the population of Kazakhstan on October 1, 2012 was 16.9 million. Compared with October 1, 2011, it increased by 1.5%.

Today Kazakhstan's ethnic diversity consists of Turkic, Slavic, Iranian, Caucasian, Finno-Ugric and other ethnic groups.

2 The national structure of the population

	1970	1979	1989	1999	2009
Total population	13,026,274	14,709,508	16,222,324	14,981,281	16,009,597
Kazakhs	4,228,367	5,282,481	6,486,029	8,011,452	10,096,763
Russians	5,542,929	6,019,391	6,092,377	4,480,675	3,793,764
Uzbeks	216,258	262,960	330,417	370,765	456,997
Ukrainians	934,952	900,240	878,184	547,065	333,031
Uighurs	120,622	147,676	181,155	210,377	224,713
Tatars	286,878	314,065	322,338	249,052	204,229
Germans	857,777	900,343	946,967	353,462	178,409
Koreans	81,965	92,516	101,366	99,944	100,385

Turks	18,377	25,718	49,219	78,711	97,015
Azerbaijanis	57,607	73,240	88,887	78,325	85,292
Belarusians	198,430	181,821	178,325	111,924	66,476
Dungan	17,213	22,385	29,785	36,945	51,944
Kurds	12,259	17,606	25,245	32,764	38,325
Tajiks	15,986	19,296	25,301	25,673	36,277
Poles	61,385	61,106	59,321	47,302	34,057
Chechens	34,532	38,240	49,007	31,802	31,431
Kyrgyz	9,612	9,352	13,718	10,925	23,274
Bashkirs	21,500	32,577	41,060	23,247	17,263
Ingush	18,446	18,337	19,523	16,900	15,120
Moldovans	25,990	30,242	32,352	19,462	14,245
Armenians	12,814	14,022	18,458	14,762	13,776
Greeks	51,330	50,125	46,448	12,705	8,846
Mordovians	34,315	31,403	29,157	16,145	8,013
Chuvash	22,871	22,310	21,717	11,864	7,301
Udmurt	15,786	15,460	15,520	9,095	5,824
Georgians	6,883	7,700	9,013	5,361	4,990
Lithuanians	14,194	10,964	10,650	7,070	4,925
Persians	2,983	2,916	3,123	2,870	4,819
Bulgarians	10,420	10,064	10,222	6,916	4,523
Mari	9,089	10,589	11,912	6,495	4,416
Romany	7,775	8,626	7,057	5,130	4,065
Others	76,732	75,707	88,352	46,096	39,089

Source: Ethnic composition, religion and language skills in the Republic of Kazakhstan. Results of the National Census of 2009. Statistical Compendium, 2009, A. Smalova, Astana, 2010

Turning to the study of multi-ethnic Kazakhstan, the genesis of contemporary Kazakh society development should be provided. While being part of the USSR for the most of the 20th Century, the country fully experienced the totalitarian regime. Although the basic principles of the national policy of the Soviet government were aimed to promote unification process, which included the principle of equality of all peoples and the recognition of the right of nations to self-determination, sovereignty of Soviet republics in fact remained nominal, and internationalism in its practical implementation was seen as a right of

ignoring national identity and culture of the peoples.

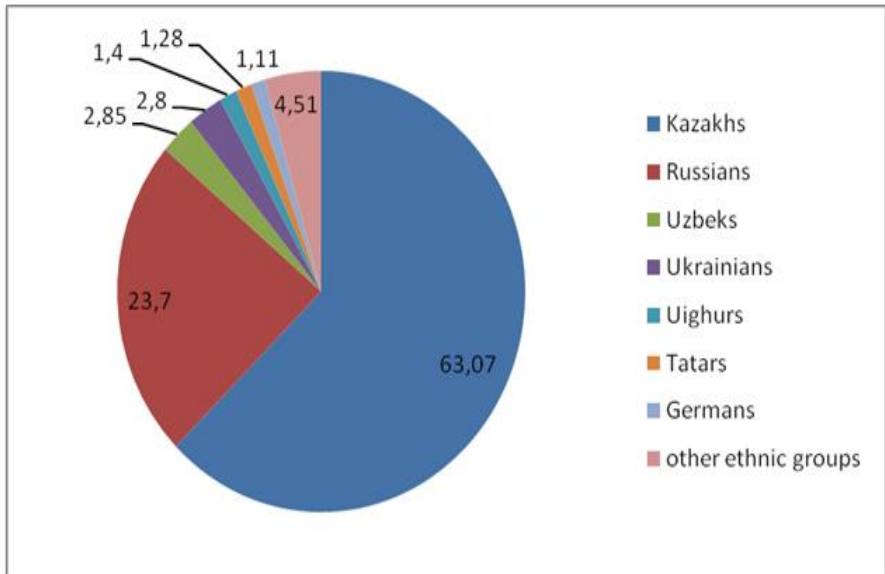
The remarkable fact is that the proportion of Kazakhs in the national structure in 1939 had been 37.8% as the result of Stalin's repressions and great famine. It means that titular Kazakh nation became a minority group in its homeland.

As a result of the establishment of the communist regime serious economic and social crisis spread throughout the Kazakh territory already in 1930: the forced collectivisation and the countrywide repressions led to the mass starvation and death of the indigenous population of 1.5 million; more than 600,000 Kazakhs migrated beyond the historical homeland (Nazarbajev, 2012b).

The new free territories vacated during 1938-1944 were populated by the exiles and deported peoples, as the population of Kazakhstan was supplemented with prisoners of the GULAG (General Directorate of the Camps and Detention Facilities): KARLAG (Karaganda Labour Camp), ALGIR (Akmola Camp of the Motherland Traitors' Wives) and others, some of them later stayed to live in Kazakhstan. The share of Kazakhs who formed 57.1% of the total population in 1926, declined to 38% in 1939 and in 1959 it was 30%. (Kratkij ekskurs v..., online) Only in the 1980s the Kazakhs have reached a proportional ratio of 50% in comparison to other ethnic groups in Kazakhstan.

In this case, the oppressed Kazakh people with their genetically inherent hospitality welcomed forcibly deported ethnic groups. It can be stated that tragic events of that time did not divide the ethnic groups, but on the contrary, strengthened inter-ethnic harmony. While not denying the facts of discrimination among the population in favour of Russian nationality, the overall picture showed the public order at the household level. The purpose of the Communist Party to turn all the nationalities into a single Soviet people was not achieved, but in practice it was naturally based on the principles of a tolerant society. At present, in Kazakhstan the most numerous ethnic groups are Kazakhs (63.1%), Russians (23.7%), Uzbeks (2.8%), Ukrainians (2.1%), Uyghurs (1.4%), Tatars (1.3%) and Germans (1.1%), that combined accounted for 95.6% of the population (Smailov, 2010).

3 Nationalities as % of total population



Source: compiled from the data of the Agency on Statistics of Kazakhstan.

In the country respective ethnic groups have their own formations: Germans (49), Kazakhs (40), Koreans (36), Tatars (29), Slavs (27), Chechens and Ingush (26), Azerbaijanis (23), Uyghurs (21), Russian (20), Ukrainians (19), Jews (18), Poles (16), the Turks (14), Greeks (12), Armenians (11), Belarusians (10), Dungan (10), Kurds, Uzbeks (8), Cossacks (6), Turkmen, Bulgarians, Dagestani (4), Kyrgyz, Tajiks (3), Karachai and Balkar, Chinese, Chuvash, Karakalpaks (2), Assyrians, Czechs, people from the Baltic nations, Georgians, Ossetians, Lezghins, Iranians, Buryats, Hungarians, Romanians (1). (Official website of the Kazakhstan..., online)

The existence and development of the various ethnic cultures within a united community of Kazakhstan gives the right to consider the situation from the point of view of cultural pluralism.

4 National policy of independent Kazakhstan

According to Abdumalik Nysanbaev², there are two basic strategies of nation-building, and the two dominant models of the corresponding inter-ethnic harmony among the Kazakhstani scientists concerning the concept of multiculturalism in Kazakhstan.

The first strategy is aimed at creating a unified Kazakh nation out of multi-ethnic composition of society based on common citizenship, which means not just a law fixing the fact of citizenship, but also high level of civil identification of members of different ethnic groups. This approach is called civic nationalism.

Supporters of the alternative strategy of nation-building point to the fact that the construction of a single "civil" nation in Kazakhstan is impossible, since ethnic identity of the individual will always prevail over his civilian identity. Therefore, taking into account the special role of the titular Kazakh nation, state building foundation culture of Kazakh society must be Kazakh culture, around which the cultures of all ethnic communities would eventually be merged. This approach is called "ethnic nationalism".

Between the supporters of these two models persists a struggle regarding several issues: citizenship, representation of ethnic groups in government, language problem, etc. The theoretical framework for this struggle comes to the problem of resolving the contradiction between civil and ethno-cultural understanding of the nation. Considering the arguments "for" and "against" the two positions, we can conclude that it is necessary to use both the concept of the nation - civil and ethno-cultural, and not rely only on one of them, disregarding the other at the same, for it would have disastrous consequences not only for the overall situation in the national sphere, but also for the fate of the state itself.

Kazakhstan as unitary state is trying to solve the dilemma of civil and ethnic and cultural models, combining community and society fellow citizens on the basis of compromise, reconciliation and rapprochement. On the one hand, this strategy demonstrated its effectiveness, but on the other - the state national policy is inevitably criticised from both sides.

Pushing the case for integration of civil and ethno-cultural concepts of national consolidation, Kazakh researchers emphasise that these concepts, their political implications and the consequences of these differences in

² Director of Institute of Philosophy, Politics and Religion of Kazakhstan.

strategies of nation-building are fundamental for understanding of social ontology and methodology of social cognition, as well as for understanding of differences in systems of political values. Ethno-cultural concept of the nation as a naturally occurring community solidarity (primordialist paradigm) corresponds with authoritarian political regimes, with a conservative ideology and republican understanding of policy and civic concept of the nation – with liberal views.

However, there is also another concept seemed to be more applicable in the case of Kazakhstan. In search of a compromise between the multiculturalists and assimilationists scientists are increasingly talking about the new-old concept of inter-culturalism. The idea of intercultural dialogue and warning self-segregation trends in society assume a central position of the majority culture; hence the integration of other minorities in the general public culture, respecting their diversity and preserving the unique cultural heritages. There is a mutual enrichment of cultures in a multicultural society on the basis of equal rights and the unity of all people of good intentions. Solidarity is a trademark of the civil sector. There is a variety of numerous associations, organisations, and initiatives that operate within it (Krasteva, 2011).

Gaining its independence in 1991, Kazakhstan had to make a choice of the future: a difficult, but the right way of building a democratic civil society or “closing within itself” and being under the pressure from the threat of “a dam break”.

The dissolution of the Soviet Union led to a dramatic collapse of the economy of post-Soviet space, including independent Kazakhstan. The trends of mass emigration started and the main reason was the difficult socio-economic situation and the sharp decline in the standard of living of the majority of the population. During the period of 1990-1999, 2,873 million people emigrated from Kazakhstan, while 1,939 million arrived (most ethnic Kazakhs). Ultimately, the migration balance was negative and exceeded 1,934 million people (Smailov, 2011).

Meanwhile, the formation of independent states of the former Soviet Union was followed by conflicts on ethnic grounds: from 1988 to 1991 in the former republics of the USSR more than 150 conflicts surged (Kiesian, 2009). Even in Kazakhstan some radical national-patriots called for the construction of a mono-ethnic state, all “non-titular” ethnic groups were “offered” to return to their historical homelands.

Internal stress was fuelled by external “advisors-wishers”. Zbigniew Brzezinski, one of the most famous and influential politician and statesman of

the United States, included Kazakhstan to the region which he called the "Eurasian Balkans", thus gravely increasing the instability and making the situation potentially much more explosive. He described Kazakhstan as ethnically divided and nationally vulnerable state, and predicted that the "Eurasian Balkans" would become a centre of ethnic conflict (Brzezinski, 1997).

In this difficult situation, the government of Kazakhstan in 1992 put forward the thesis of the necessity to build Kazakhstan on a multi-ethnic base and institutionalise inter-ethnic relations. New ethnic policy of the state was aimed at the formation of the Kazakh nation as a political community of citizens. That made it possible to create an optimal model of the relationships between all the ethnic groups of the country, to establish a dialogue of different cultures and faiths, and to put into practice the equality of citizens regardless of their ethnic and religious affiliation (Tuhžanov, 2009).

Since the first days of independence Kazakhstan faced the task to ensure equitable coexistence and cooperation among all ethnic groups. That has become a priority of the national policy. From that moment the state ethnic policy was aimed at the formation of a unified nation as a political community of citizens. That has created the optimal model of the relationship between all the ethnic groups of the country, enabled to establish a dialogue of different cultures and religions, and implement equality of representatives of various ethnic groups in Kazakhstan. It is known that the successful formation of inter-ethnic relations is compulsory and vital precondition for sustainable economic and political development of any country.

The Assembly of People of Kazakhstan has become the institutional formation of the sphere of inter-ethnic relations in the country, a sort of authority of public diplomacy. The Assembly has emerged as a fundamentally new institution of civil society without any counterparts in the previous Soviet era and in contemporary world practice as well. It is obviously the most important tool for successful implementation of public policies, as well as effective dialogue platform ensuring that all ethnic groups living in Kazakhstan may promote their interests in an interethnic sphere.

In a short period this structure has been a key element to create a state model of inter-ethnic harmony, powerful stabilising factor in society. At the same time, its existence it has not replaced the parliamentary institutions. Moreover, it did not turn into a bureaucratic instrument of control over the ethnic groups but rather it has become the focal institution promoting interests of all ethnic groups to ensure full respect of the rights and freedoms of all citizens, regardless of

ethnicity and religion.

The Assembly managed to avoid the politicisation of ethnic relations and to direct potential conflicts in a constructive way. Foundation of inter-ethnic harmony in our country has become the choice in favour of a civic rather than ethnic community.

The political implementation of the theoretical models of inter-ethnic harmony was applied in practice and guaranteed legally. Kazakhstan joined the fundamental international agreements in the field of human rights. For the implementation of the national policy, effective cooperation between government agencies and civil society in the field of inter-ethnic relations a consultative body entitled “Assembly of People of Kazakhstan” was established in 1995. In 2007 the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan has received constitutional status and the right to delegate to the Parliament of Kazakhstan nine members, who represent the interests of all ethnic groups living in Kazakhstan. According to the Decree on the Assembly, its chairman is the President of the State, the annual re-elected two deputy chairmen are from ethno-cultural associations.

If the original work of the Assembly was basically aimed at ensuring the revival of the language, traditions and culture of ethnic groups in Kazakhstan, now its main agenda is to provide a national-wide policy, the Strategy “Kazakhstan-2050”, introducing the concept of “new Kazakhstani patriotism” (Nazarbajev, 2013).

Excluding the existence of mono-national state and stressing the aim of bringing together the entire society across ethnic differences, it highlights the consolidating role of the Kazakh people in the process of creating the national unity. The Kazakh people should act as a powerful historical core of the national-state community for all ethnic and social groups in Kazakhstan (Nazarbajev, 2012).

In accordance with the Concept of the “Development of the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan” until 2020³, the population of Kazakhstan should

³ The Concept represents the system of benchmarks aimed at the implementation of state ethnic policy, the formation of a national unity, ensuring social cohesion and stability, improving the dynamics of interaction between state and civil institutions in the sphere of inter-ethnic relations and improving the mechanisms of this interaction, primarily through the Institute of the Assembly. The aim of the Concept is to further develop the Institute of the Assembly and substantiate its role in strengthening the independence and statehood of Kazakhstan, ensuring social harmony and national unity on the basis of patriotism and

develop the ability to master the so-called “trinity of languages”: Kazakh, Russian and English. Kazakh (state) language – has to become a factor of national unity and the spiritual core of society. In this context, the role of the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan would be to raise and promote the willingness of Kazakh ethnic groups to engage with the society as whole and to turn from the ethnic interests to the solution of national problems in the format of a single, united people of Kazakhstan (Tuhžanov, 2009).

At the same time, however, the state language policy aims to support the languages of all ethnic groups in Kazakhstan. In Kazakhstan there are more than 100 national schools, and 170 Sunday schools, where 23 native languages are studied. There are 29 branches of studying 12 native languages in three schools of national revival. In Kazakhstan four national and 15 regional national newspapers are published, and there are 6 national theatres (Kazakh, Russian, German, Uygur, Korean and Uzbek). Every year dozens of new books are published in the languages of ethnic groups. And there is a holiday – the Day of the languages of Kazakhstan, which is celebrated on September 22.

Historically, Kazakhstan is a country of religious pluralism, but the Constitution declares it as a secular state. Currently, the state policy in the sphere of religion is conducted under the auspices of the Agency for Religious Affairs. On the international level Kazakhstan positions itself as an area of

common values with the consolidating role of the Kazakh people and the state language. The main objectives of the Concept are: 1) harmonisation of interethnic relations and strengthening public resource consent as effective implementation of the Strategy “Kazakhstan –2050” to build a society based on a strong welfare state, economic development and opportunities of universal labour; 2) creation of favourable conditions for the formation of national unity, strengthening inter-ethnic harmony and tolerance in society through the provision of effective interaction between government agencies and civil society in the field of inter-ethnic relations; 3) integration of ethnic, cultural and other public organisations to achieve social cohesion and national unity on the basis of further development of ethnic cultures, languages and traditions of the people of Kazakhstan; 4) formation of a system of social values of Kazakh society, the development of political, legal and socio-moral culture of citizens, based on historical experience and democratic norms; 5) development of ethnic cultures, languages and traditions of the people of Kazakhstan; 6) supporting the Kazakh diasporas in the conservation and development of the language, culture and national traditions, and strengthening their ties with the historical homeland; 7) promoting integration and development of strong relations with international organisations and civil society institutions in foreign countries.

peace, harmony, tolerance, and rapprochement of cultures and religions. Kazakhstan's capital Astana hosted four times the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions.

5 Population by religion with a breakdown by nationality

	Total population	have pointed out:						declined to specify
		Islam	Christianity	Judaism	Buddhism	other	non-believers	
Total population	16,009,597	11,239,176	4,214,232	5,281	14,663	3,688	451,547	81,010
of which:								
Kazakhs	10,096,763	9,928,705	39,172	1,929	749	1,612	98,511	26,085
Russians	3,793,764	54,277	3,476,748	1,452	730	1,011	230,935	28,611
Uzbeks	456,997	452,668	1,794	34	28	78	1,673	722
Ukrainians	333,031	3,134	302,199	108	49	74	24,329	3,138
Uyghurs	224,713	221,007	1,142	34	33	63	1,377	1,057
Tatars	204,229	162,496	20,913	47	58	123	16,569	4,023
Germans	178,409	2,827	145,556	89	66	192	24,905	4,774
Koreans	100,385	5,256	49,543	211	11,446	138	28,615	5,176
Turks	97,015	96,172	290	7	6	20	321	199
Azerbaijanis	85,292	80,864	2,139	16	16	24	1,586	647
Belarusians	66,476	526	59,936	25	9	20	5,198	762
Dungans	51,944	51,388	191	4	15	19	179	148
Kurds	38,325	37,667	203	11	6	9	285	144
Tajiks	36,277	35,473	331	2	6	30	307	128
Poles	34,057	235	30,675	14	4	45	2,486	598
Chechens	31,431	29,448	940	6	3	16	653	365
Kyrgyz	23,274	22,500	206	6	6	4	352	200
other nationalities	157,215	54,533	82,254	1,286	1,433	210	13,266	4233

Source: compiled from the data of the Agency on Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Most of Kazakhstan's population is Muslim and Orthodox, but most of the people does not adhere to the strict rules of their religions and oppose religious fanaticism. It is noteworthy that the common historical experience of the Soviet era united various ethnic groups and people around local and international holidays, such as "New Year", "8 March", "Nauryz", "1 of May". In kindergartens and schools there exists possibility to voluntarily learn dance and songs of different nations: for example, the Kazakh may freely dance Georgian or Russian dances. Korean salad, "Uzbek plov", or Uyghur Lagman are common dishes of the entire population, while Kazakh meat "Beshbarmak" and Kazakh bread "boursaks" are the national treasure that is valued by all people of Kazakhstan.

6 Inter-ethnic marriages

Married to members of other ethnic groups						
	Grooms			Brides		
	2009	2010	2011	2009	2010	2011
Total	25,522	25,669	27,269	25,522	25,669	27,269
Kazakhs	4,910	5,090	5,559	4,185	4,246	4,578
Russians	7,267	7,320	7,768	8,906	8,841	9,703
Uzbeks	745	739	706	621	757	769
Ukrainians	2,768	2,705	2,932	2,600	2,649	2,836
Uyghurs	621	653	712	527	493	576
Tatars	1,513	1,539	1,729	1,619	1,642	1,730
Germans	2,220	2,112	2,311	2,249	2,147	2,310
Other ethnics	882	882	371	600	709	311
not specified	4,596	4,629	5,181	4,215	4,185	4,456

Source: compiled from the data of the Agency on Statistics of Kazakhstan.

Opinion polls (Sadvokasova, 2012) show that the people of Kazakhstan are open-minded toward possible inter-ethnic marriages; most of the respondents chose the answer “do not condemn”, “indifferent” and “welcomed the inter-ethnic marriages”, and noted the importance of personal qualities. To the question of “the situation of people of different nationalities in your city”, the majority chose the answer “quiet, conflict-free”, which characterises a positive ethno-psychological situation. A quarter of respondents see public relations as friendly and fraternal. Only less than a tenth of respondents in their responses showed a degree of ethnic and social tension, or was not able to accurately describe the situation in places of residence. An important indicator of preservation of ethnic identity is the predominance of ethnic traditions in daily practice. The question: “Do you support (your family) traditions and customs of your ethnic group?” Overwhelming majority said “yes”. Mainly Azerbaijanis (97.1%), Kurds (65.1%), Chechens (51%), Uzbeks (49.5%), Dungans (48%), the Uyghur (47.6 %), and Koreans (43.4%) are trying to comply with all the traditions and customs of the people. On the opposite side of the spectrum there were Ukrainians (49.5%), Poles (46.5%), Kazakhs (25.9%) and Russians (23.4%) who stick only to the most important traditions.

To the question of whether the respondents consider themselves to be citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 90% responded positively. The vast majority of respondents consider themselves the people of Kazakhstan, that is, the representatives of a single nation of Kazakhstan, which is an important

indicator in understanding the unity of the Kazakh society. Thus, there is the implementation of the concept of interculturalism. It is very important that the basis of Kazakh identity is not based on the principle of ethnicity, but citizenship. It is important that regardless of their size, each ethnic group in Kazakhstan is provided with the same rights and opportunities and as citizens their members have equal rights, and in political vocabulary such expression as “national minorities” is not used. Cultural pluralism is aimed at the preservation, development and mutual enrichment of ethnic differences in an objective account of the role of the Kazakh ethnic group.

7 Global integration and cultural cooperation

In the context of globalisation and the global economic crisis there is a necessity of mutually confident international cooperation and economic integration presents itself as an efficient solution. The experience and traditions of the European Union, which is considered as a benchmark of economic and political union, is deeply studied by Kazakh expert society. Kazakhstan, recognising the need for regional co-operation, offered strategy of transforming integration into the one of the most important resources of the economies of post-Soviet countries.

Kazakhstan’s idea of the Eurasian Union as an integrated entity with an effective mechanism for the implementation of joint decisions finds a support in the political circles of the region and is becoming a catalyst for the integration process between the newly independent states. At present, the Eurasian Union is seen primarily as an economic union that provides a “pragmatic integration” of states on an equal and mutually beneficial basis in order to increase competitiveness in global markets. However, along with this economic dimension the ideas of scientific, cultural and humanitarian integration are becoming more common. In the midterm period there will be necessity to develop a comprehensive concept of integration in the region. In this regard, models of cultural integration of multi-ethnic societies are widely considered. The European Union in practice demonstrates the advantages and disadvantages of the various methods and tools to ensure a fruitful and voluntary cooperation of member countries.

The original idea of modern Pan-Europe was the unity and equality of all EU states. However, with the expansion of the boundaries, there are “double standards”, concerning for instance the immigration policy, when the inhabitants

of the eastern part of the EU are going to the western part and are subject to infringement of rights.

Also, there is “European bilingualism”, when in the work of institutions (with the exception of official events) are used mostly German, French and English (the three working languages of the Commission) – while some other languages are used depending on the situation. In the context of EU enlargement and the accession of the countries where French is less common, the position of English and German is being strengthened.

Examples of discrimination against language (España, Italia y Portugal impiden, 2005) undermine the efforts of the EU to promote the diffusion of multilingualism among residents of member countries, and this is done not only for the sake of promoting understanding, but also for the development of tolerance and respect for linguistic and cultural diversity in the EU.

In the case of integration into the regional association Kazakhstan’s multicultural society will need to be ready to act as a single unit, saving on their national level cultural variety. Actors at the supra-national level, according to the multiculturalism theory should be mutually enriching, but stick to the equal rights without the extra advantages of any subculture.

To sum up, with the development of integration processes and improvement of the socio-economic living standards Kazakhstan will need to respond to the new challenges that may appear as a result of acute social problems of a global nature (global financial and economic crisis, the spread of social and military-political instability in the region and in the world, the rise of extremist and terrorist activities), the growing process of migration and the ethnic and demographic dynamics.

Conclusion

Kazakhstan’s society requires civil consolidation based on fundamental social modernisation of the society, recognising its unity in the challenges of a changing world. Therefore, the government should adopt a consistent, focused and proactive work. The scientific elaboration of this problem in Kazakhstan is not sufficient, but when considering hypothetically, the Kazakhstan’s experience is worthy of careful study and modelling of the future. Model of inter-ethnic and inter-religious harmony in Kazakhstan shows the viability of the concept of interculturalism, and multiculturalism theory can be applied in the future, when possibly the Eurasian Union will be formed, and then Kazakhstan and other

states will successfully interact on an equal political, economic and cultural rights, as an example examine the idea of the European Union.

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