

Transformation of Traditional Kazakh Society

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Abstract

This study is about the history of the Kazakh traditional society in the XVII – early XX century with reference to migration processes. The relevance of the study is determined by the need for clarification of the influence of the Russian Empire on Kazakhstan during the political and territorial formation period. The article analyses the institutions of power established by the colonial government, the course and consequences of land transformation, and the activities of political and social institutions of the Kazakh traditional society. Migration of Kazakhs due to the circumstances is explored and characteristic features of the traditional nomadic society are discussed. The influence of the Russian Empire in Kazakh-Russian relations is considered a reflection of the transformation process of traditional society. The authors suggest an interpretation of the concept of “ethnodeformation of traditional society” and its manifestations in Kazakh society.

Keywords: *Traditional society; political power; ethnocentrism; traditional society; migration processes*

Introduction

In pre-revolutionary and Soviet historiography, the history of the annexation or conquest of Central Asia and Kazakhstan to Russia is presented superficially, in a contradictory context. Many Russian pre-revolutionary researchers tried to show this process as a “gracious, humanistic action” of an advanced civilised country to “backward and savage” peoples to draw them into the mainstream of world civilisation (this covered the colonial aspirations and the great-power ambition of the official authorities), then Soviet researchers pointed to these actions as “the reactionary policy of tsarism” (Pirumshoyev, 2004). At the same time, the advantage was given to the progressive results of this historic act. The periodisation of the history of traditional society – is primarily a formula that determines the logic of the historical process (Fedotova, 2016). To give clarity to the topic, it was considered only historical events and phenomena of the XVIII-XX centuries, in which the close relations of the Kazakh Khanate with the Russian Empire were established.

The Kazakh society, which is the successor of the cultural achievements of the nomads of the Eurasian steppes, is a unique phenomenon in its external structure and internal content. However, there are many distinctive features in the traditional Kazakh society's political,

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cultural, and socio-economic activities compared with the cultural standards of the West and the East (Socio-economic..., 1986). Nomadic society as a complex ethnological system is based on several structural systems. For example, they were classified as an institution of power, property, and public relations (Wang et al., 2019). Modernising traditional society into a new society primarily involves transforming the form and functions of these institutions (Zakcharchyn and Lyubomudrova, 2019; Shvets, 2020).

Studies based on the ethnocentric concept considered the history of Kazakhstan locally, in isolation from world history. The historiographical theory and practice of Russian and European historical science in these matters are placed above the research of historians of national regions. The main methodological position in their research is eurocentrism, and to traditional society – sedentarism. Considering the topic from an ethnocentric position aimed at overcoming the influence of these two methodological concepts, therefore theoretical and methodological limitations were found (Sarsenbayeva, 2018).

Kazakh history in the Eurasian steppe belt was a political and cultural dialogue with both the East and the West. Of course, it was also fueled by its cultural and historical values (Kachur, 2020; Kuzelnyi, 2020). From this standpoint, the ethnic-social organisation of the traditional Kazakh society has unique features (Tursun et al, 2018; Hrytsaienko, 2020). The modernisation theory is used as a theoretical and methodological basis for studying the history of the traditional Kazakh society.

The history of Kazakhstan, built by Marxist principles of class-economic formation, has now changed. Some schools support civilisational, cyclical, ethnogenetic, and gender positions (Yakovets, 1997; Diuk, 2020). Kazakh scientists and methodologists also express their conclusions regarding the periodisation of national history. For example, M. Kozybayev (1998) divides the history of Kazakhstan from ancient times to the present day into nine epochs. It is known that in such periodisation, continuity and differences of epochs became the main landmarks. Attention should be paid to the policy of the Russian empire that had a great impact on the migration of Kazakhs, as well as on migration processes inside Kazakhstan.

The purpose of the article is to explore the influence of the Russian Empire on the transformation of traditional Kazakh society in the XVII-XX centuries in relation to migration.

The influence of migration processes on the formation of traditional Kazakh society

By the 1860s, the tsarist government began an intensified colonisation of Kazakhstan, seeking to resolve the contradictions in the internal provinces of Russia. The reform, which was adopted in 1868, declared the lands of Kazakhstan the property of the Russian Empire and thus prepared the basis for further resettlement policy (Toynbi, 1991). This was the beginning of the open colonialist policy of the tsar in Kazakhstan. The implementation of this task was primarily connected with the resettlement of peasants from the central part of Russia to Kazakhstan. The situation inside the country also contributed to this, since the peasant reform of 1861 did not help to solve the agrarian question in Russia, but led to the exacerbation of contradictions and the growth of revolutionary struggle (Brodell, 2007). The resettlement of the peasantry under such conditions should solve the agrarian question in the Russian Empire.



Speaking about Russia's policy towards the Turkic peoples had two directions: Kappeler (2003) said that the first direction was Russification through Christian and Eurocentric ideology and assimilation of Muslims. The second direction was a compromise with the Muslim elite to preserve political stability on the outskirts of the empire, with partial support for their proposals. Although the tsarist authorities did not hesitate in taking strict political measures to involve the trans-Siberian peoples in their zone of influence, in most cases, following the nationalist intentions, they were forced to accept their proposals (Luk'yanov, 2006). The Russian Empire, with its authoritarian tradition of government and a rigidly centralised system, discipline in military affairs did not even presuppose hints of autonomy and self-government for its eastern subjects, and over time, having forgotten the basic ideological agreement, the tsarist government set a course for complete subordination to imagine the Kazakh region.

As a result of migration movements at the end of the XIX – early XX century in Kazakhstan, the Kazakh population for a long historical period turned into a minority in its historical territory under the economic and political dominance of the Slavic components in the population structure. According to the 1897 census, the vast majority of the population of Kazakhstan lived in rural areas, and only about 6% lived in cities (Artykbayev, 2005). Only in Kazalinsk and Perovsk did the specific weight of the Kazakh population approach 45%. The smallest Kazakh population was observed in the cities of South Kazakhstan – Zharkente (1.2%) and Chimkente (4%). The largest population was concentrated in the Syr-Daryna region (835,432 people), and the population of the Semirechen region was (663,769 people). The population of South Kazakhstan was 36.14% of the population of Kazakhstan, that is, more than a third of the country's population lived in the southern regions (Radlov, 1989). The increase in population was achieved as a result of mechanical growth contributed by immigrants from the provinces of Russia.

Since the beginning of the XX century, active migration exchange has been observed in Kazakhstan. The reasons for this were the Stolypin agrarian reform, World War I, the civil war, and the famine of 1921-1922 (Poberezhnikov, 2004). Hundreds of thousands of people left it and then returned. Those who arrived in Kazakhstan at the end of the XIX and the beginning of the XX centuries and were already counted as “non-local natives” left the republic (most intensively during the famine of 1921-1922) and then returned (especially in 1923-1925). They were again counted as new arrivals. The same people were counted several times (Samokhin, 2016).

Later surge in migration was due to the strong social upheaval experienced by the population of Kazakhstan after the collapse of the USSR (Yerasov, 1982). The motivation of potential migrations from the republic indicates the presence of factors related to the change in the geopolitical situation; transformation processes in society, changes in the population composition; transformation of its ethnic groups into unprotected ethnic minorities and diasporas, changing their place and role in political life (Sahoo and Pradhan, 2021). The main reasons for migration were:

- loss of former social, psychological and ethnic identity after the collapse of the USSR;
- an increasing general concern for the future as a result of ethnocentric distortions in various spheres of the social and political life of the republic;

- fears related to the deterioration of the economic situation in the republic.

In the last decade of the XX century, the total number of townspeople (indigenous population of Kazakhstan) decreased by 8.8% (Masanov, 2007). The relationship between internal and external migration is quite clearly manifested in the following pattern: the more attractive an area is for internal migration, the more intense the emigration processes are. First of all, this is characteristic of regions with a significant share of the Russian (European) population. As a result, if at the end of the 1980s, Russians in the urban population were 50.8%, and Kazakhs – 27.1%, then by the end of the 1990s, this indicator changed to 41.1% and 43.1%, respectively (Khanington, 2006).

The peculiarities of the transformation of traditional Kazakh society under the influence of migration

The traditional Kazakh society entered into total modernisation in the period after its transformation into the zone of influence of the Russian Empire. Modernisation changes in the colonial regions were a direct continuation of the processes initiated or implemented in the metropolis and were modified by local characteristics. The main directions of modernisation of traditional society were mainly political power, land relations, social structure, financial relations, judicial system, and education. It is known that the social structure of the traditional Kazakh society was formed mainly from tribal divisions. This tribal division, which existed in the early Middle Ages, served as an ethnic and territorial association during the Kazakh Khanate. In the textbook of T.A. Tulibayev (2005), written in an ethnocentric direction, it is stated that the tsarist colonists simply divided the Kazakh people into three parts according to the recognition of the “zhuz”. And they pursued a policy of opposing them to each other, this not only preserved tribal divisions but also further aggravated the situation. The analysis of the history of Russian policy concerning the ethnic and territorial structure of the Kazakh steppe allows making sure that this was a superficial, scientifically unsubstantiated conclusion. According to the reforms carried out in 1867-1868, the Orenburg, West Siberian, Turkestan Governor-General, and the Transcaspian district were formed in the Kazakh steppe, but the traditional zhuz structure was not taken into account.

In the traditional Kazakh society, one of the main objects to be modernised was the tribal structure. But it turned out to be the most viable. The colonial government initially formed the volosts from tribal units. In the future, attempts to abandon this principle and create one parish from several clans could not exclude the tribal identification code from the historical memory of the Kazakhs. The issue of land relations has also become acute in modernisation activities. In traditional society, private ownership of land did not exist. Summer zhailau, winter wintering belonged not to one person or village, but a whole tribe. The main action of the colonial authorities to modernise land relations in the traditional Kazakh society was to eliminate public ownership of land and proclaim it the property of the state. Based on the charters adopted in 1822, and 1824, the institute of private ownership of land was introduced.

The main feature of the traditional Kazakh society is its nomadic economic and cultural type. The fact that pre-revolutionary history is a reliable history based on historical sources, archival materials, and data from statistical collections is evidenced by the accumulated materials on the history of traditional society. The value of the fundamental 35-volume work “materials on



land use of the Kyrgyz”, which contains sources related to the history and culture of the Kazakh traditional society, is very high. The resettlement Commission at the end of the XIX – early XX century in 150-200 positions compiled a description of the economic situation to each Kazakh village.

The colonial policy of the Russian Empire primarily concerned the institutions of power. There was no real executive and legislative power in the hands of the supreme Khan of the Kazakhs. Information and conclusions concerning the life and activities of the Kazakh khans given in the fundamental works of I.V. Yerofeyeva (2014) testify to this historical fact. In peacetime, “... khan has always been only a kind of moderator of the political process, a coordinator of discussion, a neutral arbiter in disputes, a conductor of consensus ideas, and during the period of military operations of the Kazakhs, he was also a military leader” (Masanov, 2007). The strong centralised state power, clearly defined during the creation of the Kazakh Khanate, has been weakening since the end of the XVIII century. Yesim Khan’s attempts to establish absolute power (the old way of Yesim Khan) were unsuccessful. After the death of Abylai Khan in the autumn of 1780, the Institution of the supreme khan, which was considered the guarantor of the central government, was abolished as a result of the involvement of his close relatives and other subordinate Kazakh khans together with their subordinates. It was happening under the influence of the geopolitical interests of Russia, the Kokand Khanate, Khiva, and the Qin Empire. Since that time, the transformation of the traditional system of power of the Kazakhs of the Younger and Middle Zhuz began under the influence of the state institutions of Russia.

The organisation of human society should consider the facts of significant (fundamental) differences between the institutions of the state and government (this is about tribal groups). If the government influences individuals or social groups, and the nature of the state is completely different from it. For the state, the territory becomes of paramount importance, and the people inhabiting this territory fade into the background. In the conditions of transformation, the internal mechanisms regulating the specific territorial localisation of the tribal structure of traditional society turned out to be extremely weak. The colonial authorities, taking advantage of this weakness, carried out modernisation actions to the Kazakh society, primarily through the development of a territorial-administrative system (military lines, outposts, fortifications, etc.), the creation of governing bodies, and a violent apparatus.

The nomadic economic type does not lend itself to isolation with a certain territory, such isolation, especially in conditions of drought, jute, would interfere with the system of creating conditions for livestock (a system of rational grazing). The first attempt of the colonial authorities to impose strict restrictions on the migration of Kazakhs and pastures was expressed in the form of a ban on the migration of Kazakhs of the Younger Zhuz to the right bank of the Ural River. This violent attempt became the main argument of the uprising led by Syrym Datov, which lasted 17 years. As a result of the uprising, the colonial power partially reached a consensus but ended in 1802 with the creation of a special territory called the inner Horde (Bukeevskaya Horde). The Bukeevskaya Horde became a springboard for testing the modernisation actions of the empire carried out on the Kazakh land.

In a word, the Russian Empire chose the forcible regulation of public relations in a traditional society. For two centuries, the empire pursued a policy aimed at bringing the nomads under its administrative control. The colonial authorities limited the migration zone of nomads and assigned nomadic groups of Kazakhs to districts, volosts, and counties. And on the lands of

these administrative units, they were forced to pay taxes. The forced establishment of this administrative-territorial system, tax policy, and other state institutions became the main reason for the armed struggle under the leadership of Syrym Datov against the colonial power and all subsequent uprisings.

Conclusions

In the present study, migration and political processes occurred in the Republic of Kazakhstan under the influence of the Russian Empire were analysed. This included discussion of land transformation, social and political institutions in the context of traditional society, the main characteristics of the nomadic society. The main causes of change in Kazakh traditional society during the historical period of the Russian Empire rule were discussed and migration highlighted.

Ethnic composition of the society has changed massively in this period and it is considered a negative feature of modernisation in Kazakhstan. It could separate people from their original culture, political, social, and economic environments. This was prevalent in the transformation of the Kazakh steppes during the 19th and 20th centuries.

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