

## ASSIMILATION AND ACCULTURATION PROCESSES IN THE STUDY OF INTER-ETHNIC MARRIAGES

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### Abstract

Inter-ethnic marriages present a captivating arena for examining assimilation and acculturation processes, where individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds merge their identities. This article delves into the dynamics of inter-ethnic marriages in the Turkestan region of Southern Kazakhstan through the lens of assimilation and acculturation theories. Utilizing data collected from 45 interviews across five villages, including Zhana Iqan, Hantagy, Shornak, Turki poselkasy, and Kentau, the study explores various aspects of daily life such as language usage, religious practices, traditions, cuisine, and ethnic values. Research questions probe how individuals negotiate cultural differences in their interactions and interpret multicultural coexistence through assimilation, acculturation, and dissimilation theories. The hypothesis posits three cohabitation patterns -acculturation, assimilation, and dissimilation- equally valid within the same cultural and geographical space. Employing qualitative methods including interviews and surveys, the study uncovers patterns of adaptation and the degree of assimilation or acculturation within relationships. By analyzing data through the prism of assimilation and acculturation theories, the study sheds light on how cultural elements are integrated into daily routines and decision-making processes within inter-ethnic marriages. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of how individuals navigate cultural diversity within marital relationships, enriching scholarly discourse on multiculturalism and societal relations.

**Keywords:** assimilation, acculturation, culture, inter-ethnic marriages, homogeneous families, social integration

**Diszcipline:** cultural anthropology, ethnography

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**Absztrakt****ASSZIMILÁCIÓS ÉS AKKULTURÁCIÓS FOLYAMATOK AZ ETNIKUMKÖZI HÁZASSÁGOK VIZSGÁLATÁBAN**

Az etnikumok közötti házasságok izgalmas színteret jelentenek az asszimilációs és akkulturációs folyamatok vizsgálatához, azokban az esetekben, ahol a különböző kulturális háttérrel rendelkező egyének egyesítik identitásukat. A tanulmány Dél-Kazahsztán, Turkesztán régiójában vizsgálja az etnikumközi házasságok dinamikáját, az asszimilációs és akkulturációs elméletek szemszögéből. A tanulmány öt faluban - Zhana Iqan, Hantagy, Shornak, Turki poselkasy és Kentau - 45 interjúból gyűjtött adatok felhasználásával vizsgálja a mindennapi élet különböző aspektusait, mint például a nyelvhasználat, a vallási gyakorlatok, a hagyományok, a konyha és az etnikai értékek. A kutatási kérdések arra irányulnak, hogy az egyének hogyan tárgyalják a kulturális különbségeket interakcióikban, és hogyan értelmezik a multikulturális együttélést az asszimilációs, akkulturációs és disszimilációs elméleteken keresztül. A hipotézis három együttélési mintát tételez fel - akkulturáció, asszimiláció és disszimiláció -, amelyek egyazon kulturális és földrajzi térben egyaránt érvényesek. A tanulmány kvalitatív módszereket, köztük interjúkat és felméréseket alkalmazva feltárja a kapcsolatokon belüli alkalmazkodás mintáit és az asszimiláció vagy akkulturáció mértékét. A tanulmány az adatoknak az asszimilációs és akkulturációs elméletek prizmáján keresztül történő elemzésével világít rá arra, hogy a kulturális elemek hogyan épülnek be a mindennapi rutinkba és a döntéshozatali folyamatokba az etnikumközi házasságokban. A kutatás hozzájárul annak mélyebb megértéséhez, hogy az egyének hogyan navigálnak a kulturális sokféleséggel a házastársi kapcsolatokban, gazdagítva a multikulturalizmusról és a társadalmi kapcsolatokról szóló tudományos diskurzust.

**Kulcsszavak:** asszimiláció, akkulturáció, kultúra, interetnikus házasságok, homogén családok, társadalmi integráció.

**Diszciplína:** kulturális antropológia, néprajz

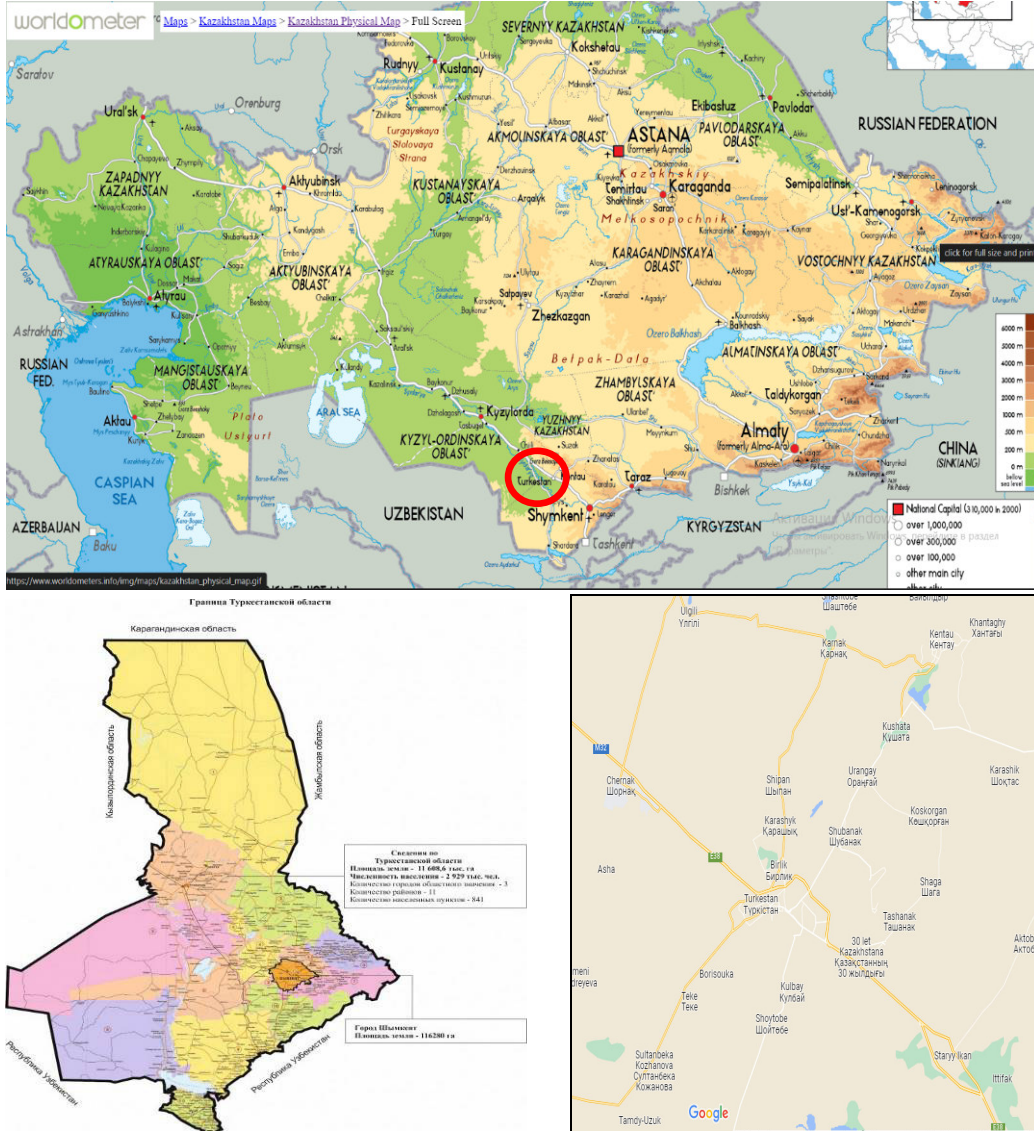
**Introduction**

Inter-ethnic marriages represent a unique intersection of diverse cultural backgrounds, raising intriguing questions about how individuals in studied unions navigate and integrate their respective cultural identities. Theories of assimilation and acculturation provide structures for examining how individuals from different cultural backgrounds come together, share experiences, and integrate aspects of each other's cultures. In the current article, the study of assimilation and acculturation processes, which offers valuable frameworks to explore the dynamics within inter-ethnic marriages, shedding light on how couples adapt, communicate, and construct shared cultural spaces, will be analyzed in

the case of the Turkestan region, Southern part of Kazakhstan (Picture 1.). As the main concepts of the research are based on the theories of assimilation and acculturation processes, the current thesis will commence with the interpretation of named aspects as the first step.

The primary purpose of this article is to present the analysis of the research conducted in the villages of Turkestan, a region of the southern part of Kazakhstan, based on the theories of acculturation, assimilation and obtained database, which was collected during the second visit at purposed study settlements in 2023, primarily, 45 interviews from the five different research spots: Zhana Iqan, Hantagy, Shornak, Turki poselkasy, and Kentau.

Picture 1: 1) Map of Kazakhstan, 2) Map of the location of the Turkestan Region, 3) Map of the location capital Turkestan. Link for the map: <https://www.worldometers.info/maps/kazakhstan-map/>



In particular, according to the main aspects of their eve-ryday life, such as the use of language, religious preferences, types of traditions, customs, beliefs, cultural cuisine, and other ethnic values.

Research questions: How do individuals in inter-ethnic marriages negotiate and navigate cultural

differences in their day-to-day interactions? How could the study of multicultural coexistence in Turkestan be interpreted equally through the theories of assimilation, acculturation, and dissimilation?

The hypothesis of the research: On the basis of strategical research positions, precisely, three types

of cohabitation patterns: acculturation, assimilation, and dissimilation in the study of multicultural society relations can be valid equally in the same cultural and geographical space.

**Research methods:** This is a fieldwork study and conducted in the purposed villages of Turkestan region. The study could employ a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods. Surveys, interviews, and observations may be used to collect data on the cultural practices, values, and traditions of each partner. This would help identify patterns of adaptation and the degree to which assimilation or acculturation occurs within the relationship. In order to fulfill the main goals of the study, current research uses interviews and survey methods. Interviews that used open-ended questions were conducted in the aimed research settlements, namely Zhana Iqan, Shornak, Hantagy, Sayram (Kentaу), and Turki poselkasy.

The multicultural part of the Turkestan region is located near the city of Turkestan. The most widely dispersed ethnic groups in Kazakhstan are represented in this study by the locations of the Tajiks, Russians, Tatars, Uzbeks, Turks, and Azerbaijanis, among others.

Within the confines of a qualitative type of research, a sampling method, the collected information was used to present the role and significance of the research topic. To research the degree to which people of various ethnic groups who are married into mixed marriages in Turkestan interact, as well as their culture, religion, language, customs, and other significant facets of their ethnic values. The first steps in the process involve gathering data based on ordering, partial generalization, scientific generalization, in-person meetings, interviews, the researcher's observation of the social environment, and the analysis of the data collected in relation to the theories of assimilation, acculturation, and other research concepts.

In this study, after collecting enough basic information about the interviewer's primary personal

data, exceptionally their social surroundings, which are a more significant part of the research, study questions were shared into the following groups: Primarily, interview questions consisted of the following main parts of the matter: (1) Questions for families which are couples from different ethnicities (mixed marriages); (2) Questions for families which are couples from same ethnic groups. Every central part of the points included the following matters: queries from language, religion, family and community circumstances, and culture at all, which include points on national clothing style, national dishes preparation, celebration of holidays, social norms that are based on the interviewers' personal experience, adoption and attitudes in Turkestan region. The collected data will be analyzed to explore themes related to cultural adaptation.

Researchers might examine how certain cultural elements are integrated into the daily routines of marriage, celebrations, and decision-making processes. The analysis could also uncover instances of selective adoption, where individuals may assimilate certain aspects of their partner's culture while maintaining distinct elements (Alsaawi 2016).

### **Theoretical background to the interpretation of interethnic marriages in Turkestan region**

At the heart of assimilation theory is cultural blending, where individuals or groups adopt the customs and behaviors of another culture. In the context of inter-ethnic marriages, assimilation theory explores how partners from different cultural backgrounds come together to form a cohesive unit. Research by scholars such as Milton Gordon and John Berry has delved into the processes of cultural assimilation and the impact on individual and shared identities within these unions. M. Gordon, in his book 'Assimilation in American Life' (1964), gives data on one of the first essential theoretical explanations and analysis of the definition of the theory of assimilation, acculturation, and other essential terms in the study of society. An early and

influential definition of "assimilation" by the two sociologists Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burgess reads as follows: Assimilation is a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons or groups, and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in ordinary cultural life. In a later definition of assimilation, *solus*, for the Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, Park, one of the most prolific germinal thinkers that American sociology has produced, appears to confine the referents of the term to the realm of cultural behavior, according to this definition, is "the name given to the process or processes by which peoples of diverse racial origins and different cultural heritages, occupying a common territory, achieve a cultural solidarity sufficient at least to sustain a national existence" (Gordon, 1964).

The formation of the theory of assimilation, its general concept and definition, based on several studies and personal experiences and observations of scientists, has constantly been developed and supplemented. Considering the definition of the next generation of scientists, it still has a fully formed concept. For example, if you look at the sequence, according to the following scientist, according to the theory of assimilation, Joseph Fichter defines assimilation as a social process through which two or more persons or groups accept and perform one another's behavior patterns. We commonly talk about a person or a minority category being assimilated into a group or a society, but here again, this must not be interpreted as a "one-sided" process. It is a relation of interaction in which both parties behave reciprocally even though one may be much more affected than the other. In recent writings, several sociologists have equated "assimilation" with "acculturation" or defined it as an extreme form of acculturation.

Acculturation, on the other hand, emphasizes the ongoing interaction between cultures, resulting in

changes to one or both cultures involved. In studying inter-ethnic marriages, acculturation theory helps us understand how couples negotiate and navigate cultural differences. The work of anthropologists such as John W. Berry, who developed the acculturation model, provides insights into individuals' various strategies to maintain their cultural heritage while integrating aspects of their partner's culture. Thus, Brewton Berry declares that assimilation means the process whereby groups with different cultures come to have a common culture. This means, of course, not merely such items of the culture as dress, knives and forks, language, food, sports, and automobiles, which are relatively easy to appreciate and acquire, but also those fewer tangible items such as values, memories sentiments, ideas, and attitudes.

Moreover, in the work of Berry, J. W. (1997). "Immigration, Acculturation, and Adaptation." *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, Berry presents a comprehensive overview of the concepts of immigration, acculturation, and adaptation. The paper is structured to provide a theoretical framework for understanding how individuals and groups navigate the challenges of adapting to a new cultural context. Berry introduces and elaborates on his influential model of acculturation strategies, which categorizes individuals based on their orientation toward their heritage and the dominant culture (Berry, 1997).

"Conceptual Approaches to Acculturation" by John W. Berry, featured in the edited volume *Acculturation: Advances in Theory, Measurement, and Applied Research* (2003), is a seminal contribution that further solidifies Berry's influential role in shaping the field of acculturation studies. In this chapter, Berry expands on his earlier conceptualizations, providing a comprehensive overview of various approaches to understanding the complex acculturation process. The chapter begins by revisiting the bidimensional model of acculturation, which distinguishes between the maintenance of

one's heritage culture and the adoption of the dominant culture. Berry then delves into the multiple conceptual approaches to acculturation, offering insights into the diverse perspectives that researchers employ to explore this multifaceted phenomenon. He examines unidimensional models, exploring their limitations and advocating for a broader, bidimensional framework (Berry, 2003).

Arnold Rose defines "acculturation" as "the adoption by a person or group of the culture of another social group. Alternatively, the process is leading to this adoption." He then goes on to characterize "assimilation" as the adoption by a person or group of the culture of another social group to such a complete extent that the person or group no longer has any characteristics identifying him with his former culture and no longer has any particular loyalties to his former culture. Alternatively, the process leading to this adoption. John Cuber adds the variable of group rivalry and its diminution to his brief definition of "assimilation." Assimilation may be defined, then, as the gradual process whereby cultural differences (and rivalries) tend to disappear (Gordon 1964).

#### **Assimilation concept in the study of inter-ethnic marriages in Turkestan**

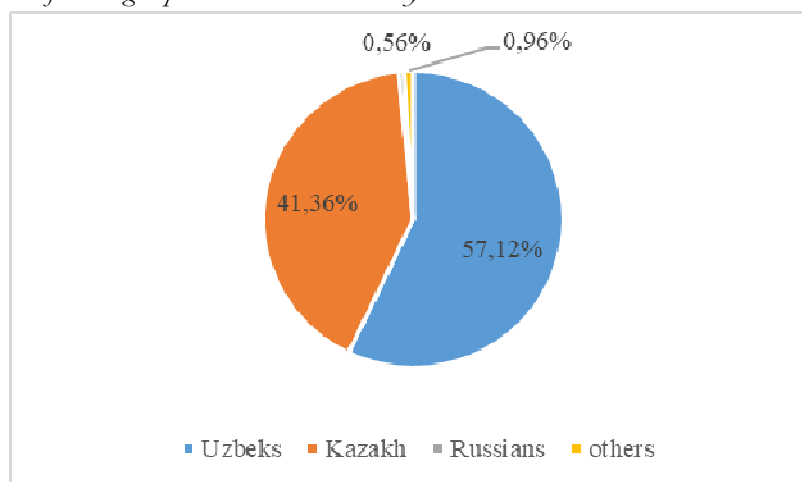
As mentioned above, assimilation refers to the process by which individuals or groups from one culture adopt another culture's customs, values, and behaviors, often leading to a blending or merging of identities. In inter-ethnic marriages, assimilation theory may focus on how partners from different cultural backgrounds adapt to each other's cultural norms and practices. This could involve one or both partners embracing aspects of the other's cultural identity, leading to a more unified or homogeneous family culture. First, the Turkestan region's case study, especially starting from Shornak village, will investigate how partners in inter-ethnic marriages adapt to each other's cultural

influences. This adaptation process, rooted in assimilation theory, involves integrating diverse cultural elements into the couples' daily lives. Shornak is the village of the Turkestan city administration, the managerial center of the Sauran region, and the Shornak rural district, which is located 22 km northwest of the city of Turkestan along the Arys-Turkestan canal.

One of the fundamental areas of the Turkestan region from an agricultural and industrial point of view is the processing spot of the Turkestan cotton ginning plant and the location of the grain receiving institution. Furthermore, farms were organized on the ground. According to the mentioned facts, Shornak citizens are mostly agronomists, and a considerable amount of the cotton and vegetables of the southern part of Kazakhstan are prepared in this rural district [3]. The population is 100,163, according to the latest statistics from the 2023 census. Uzbeks (57.12%), Kazakhs (41.36%), Russians (0.56%), representatives of other nationalities (0.96%) (Kazakh Encyclopedia 2005). As presented, the number of Uzbeks is more than Kazakhs (Figure1). Even so, during the visit to this research settlement, the following facts were observed: Ethnic values of the Kazakhs were more dominant. Why? and how?

In order to better understand and answer the basic questions, let us have a look at the data from M. Gordon's book, (Assimilation in American Life, 1964). Arnold Green, in his discussion of assimilation, quotes the Park and Burgess definition and then, in commenting on it, goes on to make a perceptive differentiation between cultural behavior and social structural participation: Persons and groups may "acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons or groups," and at the same time be excluded from "sharing their experience" and find themselves indefinitely delayed in being "incorporated with them in an everyday cultural life." Why?

Figure 1. Proportion of ethnic groups in Shornak. Source: by Author.



Because many of the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of the receiving group are common property, in the case of Turkestan, they are inclusive ones in Kazakhstan, such as patriotism, Islam, respect for elders, and male dominance in the family and veneration of legendary heroes, belong to all society and are easily accessible to everyone. On the other hand, according to Arnold Green, it can be the matter of sharing experience and incorporation in everyday life is limited, first, by a willingness on the part of the receiving group and second by a desire on the part of the new arrivals to foster social participation. However, it is usually the receiving group that erects barriers to social participation; the immigrant group, or segments of it, may, likewise, wish to do so.

This article will demonstrate how the ethnic groups of dissimilar nationalities relate to Kazakh's national values and other essential aspects of the research and their level of acceptance in aimed research spots. In most Shornak families, a man is considered to be dominant, as in most parts of South Kazakhstan territory, and since men are mostly Kazakhs, the national values of the Kazakh nation are put first. The interviewees were between

the ages of 35-65. In the villages of the Turkestan region, age is one of the critical aspects that could demonstrate the way of attitudes toward all social circumstances. During the interview took part that families whose wives were from another ethnic group and the husbands were Kazakh. As an example, in couples who have been living in that marriage for more than 40 years, the wife is totally Kazakh adherent, except for her facial features. As the critical aspects of the study of inter-ethnic marriages, the collected database will be given into four divisions:

(1) Cultural Adaptation: Focuses on how individuals in inter-ethnic marriages adapt to each other's cultural practices, values, and traditions. The extent to which partners embrace elements of each other's culture contributes to forming a shared family culture.

According to the information received from the wife, she has been in this marriage for more than forty years, and her nationality is Uzbek, even though from a biological point of view, she is an Uzbek by nationality, from a spiritual point of view he now considers himself a Kazakh. Speaks two languages fluently. He communicates only in

Kazakh in her family, and with her relatives, she speaks Uzbek. Her religion is Islam; she attaches great importance to observing Muslim norms and pays great attention to observing in the family. At first, it was not easy for her, the new daughter-in-law in a new family, to get used to this family. When she followed the culture and traditions of her people, her spouse, and his relatives did not accept her attitude at all, and there were times when she was even forbidden. For example, when a child was circumcised (sundet toy, mandatory for every Muslim man) according to Uzbek traditions, the family objected to preserving Uzbek values, and the circumcision ceremony was based on Kazakh traditions. After this situation, to maintain unity in the family without conflicts, she tried to preserve the values of the Kazakh nation as much as she could until now.

(2) Identity Negotiation: Assimilation and acculturation theories highlight the complex process of negotiating and constructing shared cultural identities within inter-ethnic marriages. This involves balancing individual cultural identities and embracing a common cultural ground (Berry, 2003). Accordingly, to the interviewees, the values of the Uzbek nation can be used in everyday life only in cooking and when the wife's Uzbek relatives come. The national clothes of the Kazakh people are worn on all national holidays, and all essential and responsible events in the family are held only based on Kazakh traditions and culture. According to this, even though this person is an Uzbek, she became utterly Kazakhized, submitted to the wishes of her husband and his relatives, and could freely show signs of her nationality only among her Uzbek relatives.

(3) Communication Patterns: Examining communication patterns within inter-ethnic marriages provides insights into how cultural differences are expressed, understood, and resolved. So, in Shornak village, children, spouses, and relatives of the spouse speak only Kazakh, which requires her to

use the Kazakh language as well. According to the interview, a common culture is formed in the family over the years. As a result, as the husband is predominant in the family, Kazakh's national identities were a priority in more everyday life deals. The Uzbek language is used only in communication with her own Uzbek relatives.

(4) Parenting Strategies: The literature on inter-ethnic marriages often explores how couples face the challenges of raising children in a multicultural context. Questions arise about whether couples prioritize one cultural influence over another or strive for a balanced approach to parenting. In Shornak, interviewed couples show that linguistic, religious, and social norms should be agreed upon and the decision of the man in the family.

Mainly, while the wife is mostly spending time and engages in education in the family, patterns of Uzbek nation were used as well, especially on how to prepare Uzbek national foods, how to relate with the elders, how to behave when you are new bride, how to speak and wear the clothes, rules on house-keeping, etc. (Bornstein 2005).

(5) Social Support and External Influences: in this part we will answer to that points, what is the common opinion in the research settlement among the couples from mixed marriages to the inter-ethnic marriage at all. Consequently, from the gathered database, it is concluded that both couples are same-ethnic marriage supporters.

As proof of this, their child was married only to the Kazakhs. The reason for attitude is that if spouses are from the same ethnic groups, they will understand each other better and have less conflict in the family. After studying the village of Shornak, it is determined that, despite the fact that the number of Uzbek ethnic groups is more significant, residents in the villages follow the lifestyle of the Kazakh people because the male and wives' dominant families are, in many ways, the representatives of other ethnic groups (DeSipio 2003).



### Acculturation concept in the study of inter-ethnic marriages in Turkestan

More evidence of the phenomenon of acculturation than of assimilation was found during the study in the mixed-marriage families under investigation. Therefore, the position of families across the several villages under inquiry is based on the concept of acculturation, despite the fact that the village of Shornak is an obvious example and confirmation of the assimilation process.

Acculturation refers to the process by which individuals or groups from different cultures come into continuous contact, resulting in changes in one or both cultures. This process involves adjusting and adapting to the cultural practices of the other group. Acculturation theory in inter-ethnic marriages explores how partners navigate the dynamics of living in a multicultural environment (Berry, 1997). It considers the degree to which individuals maintain their cultural heritage while also adopting elements of their partner's culture. This can lead to various acculturation outcomes, such as assimilation, integration, separation, or marginalization.

In order to better understand during research, the traditions of the people of the Turkestan region were observed by the author. Observing traditions provides a window into the rich tapestry of human culture, revealing significant phenomena that reflect archaic or traditional ways of life. Traditions encompass a wide range of customs, rituals, and practices passed down from generation to generation, shaping the identity and values of a community. In the case of Turkestan, the several research villages, Zhana Iqan and Hantagy, can be described here. Primarily the everyday life of Kazakh-Uzbek, Uzbek-Uzbek, Kazakh-Russian, and Russian-Russian families in order to observe the basic shared culture. Here, some significant phenomena associated with traditions were analyzed through interviews: family and social structure, ceremonial rituals, celebrations of holidays, traditional clothing,

use of languages, traditional music and dance, and cultural cuisine.

(1) *Family and social structure*: Traditional family structures, kinship systems, and social hierarchies contribute to the overall fabric of tradition. Furthermore, these structures often influence roles, responsibilities, and social interactions. Family and social structures are crucial in maintaining the continuity of traditions, passing down values, and fostering a sense of community (Schneider, 1984). Let us look at the mixed Turkestan region, and to compare and highlight the similarities and dissimilarities between them, we will analyze families with mixed marriages and same-ethnic marriages as a sample chosen Kazakh-Uzbek and Uzbek-Uzbek families.

#### *Kazakh-Uzbek families*

In Kazakh-Uzbek families, where the wife is Uzbek, and the husband is Kazakh. After a girl becomes a daughter-in-law in a new family, she must live for at least three years with her parents and those who have her husband's brothers in this family, honoring her parents and serving them. After the birth of a child, if a new daughter-in-law came to the family, that is, if the husband's brother got married, the eldest son left separately, leaving everything for the younger one. Before leaving, his son's parents help him buy a house and make and prepare other household items. When a newlywed arrived, the things needed for the home that came with her were often separated and sent away. The young family lived with their parents, i.e., the husband's family, for 3-5 years and left to live separately. This tradition is more characteristic of the Uzbek people because the Kazakh people do not require this from the newlywed.

However, the tradition, which has been accepted since ancient times, that the eldest son always went out separately, and the youngest always remained and had a large family in the hands of his parents; this traditional family structure rule is characteristic

of the Kazakh and Uzbek people. In the Turkestan region, where Kazakhs mainly assimilated with Uzbeks, many Kazakh families observe "Ake murasy," according to which the youngest son remains the heir to the father's hearth and property. Moreover, the youngest son cares for his elderly parents.

One interesting fact that was remarked is that the wife, Uzbek, has a special endowment passed down to her from her ancestors to heal people. According to her, it was given in her childhood; if she did not help people and cancel this talent, she could not live and would be sick as she tried to quit several times. She was currently continuing the path of her ancestors.

In Kazakh-Uzbek families of Zhana Iqan, the preservation of traditions is also carried out in its place, considering both nations' values. Since these couples have lived in this marriage for a long time, the values of the two nations are not openly divided. According to the couples, two nationalities cannot be clearly distinguished from each other because the values of the Kazakh and Uzbek nationalities mostly similar to each other; however, compared to other parts of Kazakhstan, only this village has a common specific culture typical only for these peoples, Kazakh and Uzbek nationalities, and mainly only the characteristic of the southern part of Kazakhstan.

(2)*Ceremonial rituals.* In the continuation of traditions, the values of both nations coexist, especially respect for elders, putting a man one step higher than a woman in the family; consequently, rites performed after the birth of a child, rituals performed due to the youth characteristics of a boy, Kazakh, and Uzbeks are often involved in the implementation of rituals. Since the traditions are similar, in this case, the common culture of both nations is used.

Differences can be seen only in the customs for new brides, the actions to be taken during the

wedding, the use of national instruments, and the making of betashar (The solemn ceremony of meeting the bride in the groom's house is called 'kelin tusiru'. The main element of 'kelin tusiru' is a traditional performance of a song of instructions and wishes - Betashar).

In ancient times, when the Kazakhs practiced a nomadic lifestyle, the dwelling (yurt) of newlyweds was located behind the house of the groom's parents. According to the tradition, the bride should cross the first threshold of the yurt and be sure to do it with the right foot. Also, during the wedding ceremony, the couple must drink a bowl of water with dissolved sugar and salt together. This ritual is considered a guarantor of a happy family life and the styles of dressing.

Since the man is dominant in this family, all the mentioned features are based on the traditions of the Kazakh nation and the positions left by the ancestors. According to his wife, since childhood, she especially loved the Kazakh nation. She dreamed of marrying a Kazakh man because he particularly liked the culture of the Kazakhs, especially the style of dressing and the way they treat brides.

(3)*Celebration of holiday.* Celebrating holidays in Kazakh and Uzbek families offers a fascinating glimpse into the rich cultural traditions and values that define these Central Asian communities. This exploration will delve into the festivities associated with Eid Bayram, Nowruz, Kazakh National Unity Day, Kurban Ait, and family celebrations, shedding light on the unique practices within each culture. Eid Bayram: In Kazakh and Uzbek, families are similar: Eid celebrations involve communal prayers, festive meals, and gift exchanges, with traditional dishes like plov taking center stage. Nowruz (Navruz): Kazakh Families: Nowruz celebrations feature Nauryz kozhe, traditional games, and cultural activities that symbolize renewal and abundance. Uzbek Families: Uzbek families celebrate Nowruz by cleaning, decorating homes, engaging

in traditional activities, and preparing sumptuous meals (Ismailov, 2017). In families of Zhana Iqan, both activities are fulfilled every year. Kazakh National Unity Day (May 1) Kazakh Families: National Unity Day is celebrated with parades, cultural events, and traditional games, fostering a sense of unity and pride (Tursynbayeva, 2016).

Uzbek families celebrate this holiday in the Turkestan region. Traditional ceremonies, music, and dance characterize Kazakh family celebrations, such as weddings and birthdays, emphasizing hospitality and cultural expression. Uzbek families celebrate significant events with unique ceremonies, colorful attire, and festive meals, particularly during weddings (Ibragimova 2015). These characteristics are equal to the Kazakh Uzbek community of Zhana Iqan.

(4) *Traditional clothing*: Traditional clothing serves as a visual representation of cultural identity, heritage, and societal values. Examining the traditional attire of Kazakhs and Uzbeks reveals a fascinating interplay of historical influences, craftsmanship, and cultural pride. Traditional Kazakh clothing is characterized by vibrant colors, intricate embroidery, and functional designs suited to the nomadic lifestyle (Nursultan, 2020). The clothing reflects the nomadic heritage, featuring elements such as the "shapan" (robe) for men and the "saukele" (head-dress) for women, symbolizing cultural identity and societal roles. At the same time, Uzbek traditional clothing is known for its colorful patterns, intricate embroidery, and the use of silk and cotton fabric. The traditional attire, including the "shapan" (robe) and the distinctive skullcap known as "duppi," reflects Uzbek cultural identity and historical influences from the Silk Road (Gafurov 2017). As we see, between the traditional clothing of Uzbeks of Kazakhs, enough dissimilarities; in the case of the Turkestan region study villages in interviewed families, Kazakh traditional clothes were most liked and chosen by women of another ethnic group to

wear for special vital days. Because of the requirements and support of the local society.

(5) *Cultural cuisine*. In the everyday life of mixed marriages in the Turkestan region, traditional foods of both ethnic groups were equally prepared, primarily taking turns preparing. However, special holidays were chosen and priority Kazakh ethical foods. For example, Beshbarmak, which translates to "five fingers" in Kazakh, is a national dish and a symbol of hospitality. It consists of boiled meat (usually lamb or beef) served on a bed of pasta-like flat noodles, accompanied by onions and sometimes potatoes. Traditionally, guests are offered the best pieces of meat as a gesture of honor (Nazarkulova, 2018). Kumis is a traditional Kazakh beverage made from fermented mare's milk. It is a mildly alcoholic drink with a sour taste and is believed to have health benefits. Kumis is often consumed during festive occasions, symbolizing hospitality, friendship, etc. (Abduvaliev, 2021).

#### *Uzbek homogeneous families*

In this case, in order to compare and see the level of differences and similarities, analysis of families within the same ethnic groups can be relevant. Firstly, in Uzbek-Uzbek families, according to their family and social structure, they look like almost the same system as in Kazakh Uzbek families. One difference could be found that in some Uzbek-Uzbek families of Zhana Iqan, it is still acceptable to live with the parents of newly married couples, even after the marriage of another son, it means brothers of the groom like it is acceptable and typical according to the Uzbek culture, moreover currently practical in Uzbekistan as well. Girls in Uzbek families a kind of a separate topic.

Uzbek family's birth of a girl is often not welcomed because a girl is considered someone's "Amanat." This means people of fidelity or people of honor, in the general sense, are entrusted for safekeeping and reliability what Allah has entrusted

to people. It is understood as given for safe-keeping, both intangible values (language, culture, nationality) and material (things, real estate). It is the parent's responsibility to securely hand over the amount to her own 'original family,' her husband's family. Therefore, girls are given into early marriages on an accelerated basis before they reach puberty. In Kazakh-Kazakh, a girl is a child who is considered an honored guest and is raised carefully, nurtured, and pampered. Brothers are required to respect their sisters and do what they say.

Ceremonial rituals are pivotal in shaping Uzbek households' cultural identity and familial bonds. Rooted in centuries-old traditions, these rituals weave a rich tapestry of cultural heritage, providing insight into the values and customs that define Uzbek family life. Mainly, ceremonies of weddings and birth celebrations have mostly stayed the same in this family. For example, this family still follows old Uzbek national traditions. Uzbek weddings are elaborate affairs marked by a series of rituals and celebrations. The pre-wedding rituals include the "Qiz Oshi" or girl's farewell, where the bride bids farewell to her family, symbolizing her transition to married life. The main wedding ceremony, "Nikokh Tui," involves exchanging vows and presenting gifts, emphasizing familial ties (Rashidov, 2018). These rituals symbolize the union of two individuals and highlight the importance of family and community in Uzbek culture. In Kazakh culture, a wedding celebration does not have a mentioned ritual.

*Birth Celebrations.* The birth of a child is celebrated with various rituals, including the "Chilla," a 40-day postpartum period of seclusion for the mother and newborn.

Another significant ritual what is connected with the birth of child is the "Aqiqah," a ceremony involving sacrificing an animal, typically a sheep, to mark the child's arrival (Khakimov, 2019). These rituals signify the importance of welcoming a new member into the family and community, focusing

on ensuring the well-being of both mother and child. In birth celebrations as well in Kazakh culture, we have a ritual called "kyrkynan shygaru" (қырқынан шығару). When a newborn turns 40 days old, the mother invites the closest female relative and friends of hers for a ritual. They are the child's Kindik ana (the selected woman who is in charge of this child in case something happens to his or her birth mother) and would wash the child in water with silver jewelry for the ritual. The silver pieces of jewelry should be put into the water as it serves as a water cleaner. After the bath, Kindik Ana cuts the child's nails and shaves his head

In Uzbek homogeneous families of Zhana Iqan, wearing traditional clothes on holidays was not too much paid attention to as their celebration of national holidays was together with the local people of the village as they are workers in the administrative place of the region, in their families were welcomed to wear and to fulfill another social norm were welcomed. According to the interviewees, they are very open-minded and easily adaptive persons for the generally accepted regards.

All cultures that highlight Uzbek ethnic group values can be fulfilled if there are only Uzbek relatives. In everyday life, they cook Uzbek, Kazakh, and other ethnic groups traditional foods who are living in that village. However, for the national holidays, they prefer to prepare traditional Kazakh foods; this choice can be changed according to the nationality of the people who surround them at that moment.

Kazakh, Uzbek, and other ethnic groups' traditions and cultures living in the Turkestan region can be similar to each other, mostly in comparison with Russians. The leading cause of that is religion. During the interview, it was observed that fact, in mixed-marriage families of Russians with another ethnic group, religious preferences were changed from Christianity to Islam, in 50% of cases. Primarily, it was remarked that in young families, other people who kept and stayed in their first

religious belief were older people between 50 and 70 years old.

Patterns of explanation and description of the heterogeneous, Kazakh-Uzbek families are valid to the Kazakh-Russian families. In the *Kazakh-Russian families* of Hantagy, where the husband was Kazakh and the wife Russian are living in the same social surrounding provision as the Kazakh-Uzbek family system. However, at first years of their marriage, for his wife to adapt and receive the Kazakh traditional way of life was very hard. For her, it took at least 5-6 years while for Uzbek and Kazakh marriages there was not a difficulty of the kind. But after having a typical child, the woman made the decision to submit to her husband and his family's rules; she acquiesced to the Kazakh way of life beyond question, with the exception of her religious beliefs, which forbade her from desiring to communicate more.

#### *Russian homogeneous families*

Commonly, Russian families have long been characterized by a distinctive way of life rooted in cultural traditions, historical legacies, and social structures. This exploration delves into the traditional aspects of Russian family life by illuminating practices that have shaped generations and continue to play a significant role in contemporary society. In Hantagy, Russian-Russian families were assimilated well with locals, and as a result of acculturation and other basic concepts of the research, they could establish a common mixed culture. There, mostly Kazakh and Russian ethnic groups' national values and other essential accepted in their living community social norms were respected and used equally in everyday life. Except for other mixed and same-ethnic representatives' marriages in the Turkestan region, they differ in the following aspects. However, they were applied with other local ethnic values: *Dacha Culture*.

The *dacha*, or country cottage, is a quintessential feature of Russian family life. Families often own a

*dacha* where they retreat during weekends or holidays.

Gardening, cooking, and outdoor time are integral to *dacha* culture (Ivanova 2018). The *dacha* serves as a haven for relaxation, fostering a strong connection to nature and emphasizing the importance of family leisure. Extended Family Networks: Russian families traditionally exhibit strong ties across generations. Extended family networks are standard, and grandparents often play a vital role in childcare. Family gatherings, especially during holidays, are significant events (Kozlova 2019).

The emphasis on extended family networks promotes support, shared responsibilities, and the preservation of family traditions. Orthodox Christian Celebrations: Russian families often celebrate religious holidays following the Orthodox Christian calendar. Church services, festive meals, and rituals such as blessing Easter eggs mark Christmas, Easter, and Epiphany. These celebrations manifest religious and cultural identity, providing a framework for communal joy and spiritual reflection.

Maslenitsa Festival: Maslenitsa, the week-long festival before Lent, is marked by festivities involving the consumption of blini (pancakes), outdoor activities, and the burning of a straw effigy, symbolizing winter (Kleiman 2015). Maslenitsa celebrates the end of winter and the anticipation of spring, emphasizing community engagement and the joy of shared traditions.

#### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the article, based on the conducted research fieldwork in the Turkestan region and collected 45 interviews on daily lifestyle, culture, traditions, linguistic, religious features, and other essential research aspects of families living in mixed and non-mixed marriages were analyzed based on the theories of assimilation and acculturation. To be more specific, in the course of the study, married families of different nationalities living in the village of Shornak, including Uzbek and

Kazakh families, were taken as an example. Despite the large number of Uzbeks in the said village, they have fully mastered all the values of the Kazakh nation, and during the interview, a large number of representatives of other nationalities who consider themselves Kazakhs were identified. Therefore, it more closely fits the definition of assimilation theory. The concept of acculturation is often met by families in the villages of the Zhana Iqan and Hantagy. The main reason for that, in these families, people from different ethnic groups living together in one territory created a culture common to two or more nations living there. Among them, an Uzbek-Kazakh family was selected for comparative analysis.

Furthermore, comparative information about the Uzbek homogeneous families was given to see the differences and similarities. In the same structure, Russian-Kazakh marriages were chosen, taking into account that Russians are unlike other Turkic-speaking ethnic groups in comparison with Russian homogeneous marriages. This analysis of the study will be continued further with the research of another cohabitation pattern.

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