

THE ROLE OF NATIONAL VALUES IN INTERETHNIC MARRIAGES IN TURKESTAN

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Abstract

The present study focuses on the importance of national values in inter-ethnic marriages within the Turkestan region of Kazakhstan, specifically in the rural villages of Zhana Iqan, Shornak, Turki Poselkasy, Hantagy, and Sayram. The study explores three primary areas: the significance of preserving national values within inter-ethnic families, attitudes toward marriage involving children of different nationalities, and the participants' acceptance of the national values and social norms of their spouse. Drawing from 85 interviews and observational data, the analysis presented here examines the role of national values in shaping family dynamics, focusing on Kazakhs as the main ethnic group as well as their cultural integration with Uzbeks, Azerbaijanis, and Russians. The findings highlight how Kazakh values influence family structures and foster adaptive frameworks through cultural blending. Drawing on anthropological and sociological theories, the research demonstrates how inter-ethnic marriages in Turkestan create a dynamic interplay of traditions, promoting unity and coexistence in the region. The mixed-methods approach utilized in the study combines qualitative data from interviews and participant observations with quantitative data, offering a comprehensive view of how these values are preserved and negotiated. The

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findings open up that national values are not only fundamental to inter-ethnic marriages but also promote mutual understanding, adaptation, and respect between partners from different ethnic backgrounds. Additionally, the study emphasizes the significance of the "dominant spouse" in upholding and negotiating these values, providing insight into how cultural expectations are maintained and adapted within the realities of inter-ethnic family life in the Turkestan region.

Kulcsszavak: inter-ethnic family, inter-ethnic marriages, Turkestan, Kazakhstan

Discipline: Cultural Anthropology, Ethnography

Absztrakt

A NEMZETI ÉRTÉKEK SZEREPE A TÜRKESTÁNI INTERETNIKUS HÁZASSÁGOKBAN

Jelen tanulmány a nemzeti értékek jelentőségét vizsgálja a kazahsztáni Türkisztán régió interetnikus házasságaiban, különös tekintettel Zhana Iqan, Shornak, Turki Poselkasy, Hantagy és Sayram falusi közösségeire. A kutatás három fő területre összpontosít: a nemzeti értékek megőrzésének jelentőségére az interetnikus családokban, a különböző nemzetiségű gyermekek házasságával kapcsolatos attitűdökre, valamint a házastársak nemzeti értékeinek és társadalmi normáinak elfogadására. A vizsgálat 85 interjú és megfigyelés adatok alapján elemzi a nemzeti értékek családi dinamikára gyakorolt hatását, kiemelten a kazah etnikum szerepét és kulturális integrációját az üzbégekkel, azeriekkel és oroszokkal. Az eredmények rávilágítanak arra, hogy a kazah értékek miként formálják a családi struktúrákat, és hogyan segítik elő a kulturális keveredés révén kialakuló alkalmazkodási kereteket. Az antropológiai és szociológiai elméletekre támaszkodva a kutatás bemutatja, hogy a türkisztáni interetnikus házasságok a hagyományok dinamikus kölcsönhatását hozzák létre, elősegítve az egységet és a régióbeli együttélést. A vegyes módszertani megközelítés ötvözi az interjúkból és résztvevő megfigyelésekből származó kvalitatív adatokat a kvantitatív elemzésekkel, így átfogó képet nyújt a nemzeti értékek megőrzésének és tárgyalásának folyamatairól. Az eredmények rávilágítanak arra, hogy a nemzeti értékek nem csupán az interetnikus házasságok alapvető elemei, hanem elősegítik a kölcsönös megértést, az alkalmazkodást és a tiszteletet a különböző etnikai háttérű partnerek között. Emellett a tanulmány hangsúlyozza a „domináns házastárs” szerepét ezen értékek fenntartásában és közvetítésében, rávilágítva arra, hogy a kulturális elvárások hogyan maradnak fenn és alakulnak át a türkisztáni interetnikus családi élet valóságában.

Kulcsszavak: etnikumközi család, etnikumközi házasságok, Türkisztán, Kazahsztán

Diszciplína: néprajz, kulturális antropológia

Introduction

Inter-ethnic marriages have long been a distinctive feature of the social landscape in Turkestan, a region known for its centuries-long history of coexistence among various ethnic groups. In Kazakhstan, particularly in rural communities, ethnic identity influences a principal character in shaping familial and social relationships. The Turkestan region, inhabited mainly by

ethnic groups speaking Turkic languages, such as Kazakhs, Uzbeks, and Azerbaijanis, offers a unique setting for examining how national values and cultural traditions affect interethnic marriages. To better understand this context, an investigation into the cultural and social values and the role of national identity in family life was carried out using 85 semi-structured interviews conducted in the

Turkestan villages of Zhana Iqan, Shornak, Turki Poselkasy, Hantagy, and Sayram.

National and cultural values influence an important role in shaping social interactions, hospitality practices, and the observation of celebrations and traditional holidays. This study underscores how deeply rooted cultural and ethnic traditions shape family dynamics and inter-ethnic marriages. The focus on Kazakhs as the core group examined in this study stems from their status as Kazakhstan's most populous and culturally significant ethnic group. Kazakhs themselves serve as a focal point in shaping the country's national identity, cultural conventions, and value systems. The emphasis on Kazakhs provides an insightful perspective on how interactions with other ethnic groups, such as Azerbaijanis, Russians, and Uzbeks, contribute to the negotiation and alteration of cultural identities in mixed marriages.

This study employs key anthropological and sociological theories to investigate the role of national values in shaping interethnic marriages, highlighting their essential contribution to fostering national identity and social cohesion. Drawing on empirical findings drawn from the fieldwork, the study illustrates how shared language, customs, and traditions function as unifying elements, reinforcing community bonds within Turkestan's multiethnic society. These theoretical frameworks are reflected in the complex and hybridized practices that are found in cultural interactions in everyday life. These findings provide grounded insights into how abstract theories are embodied in lived experiences, particularly within the context of mixed marriages.

One of the theories upon which the present inquiry is based is structural-functionalism. Introduced by Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski, it offers a useful framework for understanding how cultural practices and institutions, including interethnic marriages, contribute to the stability and cohesion of society. The theory suggests that

social structures, such as family and kinship systems, fulfill essential functions that help maintain social equilibrium. For example, in the context of the Azerbaijani-Kazakh marriages examined in this study, structural-functionalism helps to explain how these unions may lead to the integration of various social norms and practices, ultimately contributing to the stability of multiethnic communities in the region. The theory also elaborates on how a balance between traditional values and modern influences can be maintained in an interethnic marriage despite differences in cultural backgrounds (Radcliffe-Brown, 1952; Malinowski, 1922).

Another important theory applied in the present study is social identity theory, which posits that individuals derive part of their self-concept from their affiliation with national groups, which shape their values and behaviors (Tajfel, Turner, 1986). In interethnic families, this sense of identity can be challenged as couples navigate the complexities of balancing their cultural heritages. Ethnic and national communities strongly influence individual values and relationships, which then impacts parents' perspectives on their own children's potential interethnic marriages. Families may express varying levels of support or concern depending on the degree of integration and the relationships between the given cultural groups.

In Turkestan, successful interethnic marriages often depend on mutual respect and understanding of each spouse's national values. Social identity theory emphasizes the importance of recognizing and valuing each partner's cultural identity, viewing it as a foundation for a harmonious relationship. Couples who engage in cultural exchange and maintain an open-minded approach are more likely to create a family environment that honors both heritages, fostering unity and mutual respect. This frequently results in the emergence of a hybridized family culture, blending elements from both cultural backgrounds.

Stuart Hall's theory of cultural hybridity suggests that rather than simply assimilating or preserving distinct cultural practices, inter-ethnic couples engage in a process of cultural fusion that creates new blended traditions that reflect both national identities. As younger generations grow more accepting of diversity, there is a shift away from rigid adherence to specific national value systems toward a more inclusive perspective. This generational change underscores the fluidity of cultural identity, with younger citizens in Turkestan increasingly viewing interethnic marriage as a means of fostering mutual respect and exchange. As a result, traditional concerns with cultural purity are giving way to a growing appreciation for multiculturalism, with hybridized cultural practices serving as symbols of this evolving identity (Hall, 1990).

This article is focused on several key themes, such as the preservation of national values in Turkestan and parental perspectives on their own children's future marriages. At its core, the analysis draws on cultural capital theory to frame how national values are transmitted within inter-ethnic marriages and influence family dynamics. This theoretical perspective views national values as cultural capital which enriches children's sense of belonging and identity within diverse contexts. Compromise and cultural exchange are integral to successful interethnic marriages in Turkestan. By blending their respective cultural values, couples can construct a cohesive family environment that respects and integrates both cultural backgrounds. Cultural capital theory supports this view, suggesting that each partner brings unique values and knowledge that enrich the family unit (Bourdieu, 1986). Through shared experiences, couples can foster a deeper understanding of one another's heritage, creating a familial space where both identities are equally valued.

Interview data collection process and participant overview

The fieldwork, conducted in two phases, provided a detailed understanding of inter-ethnic marriages in the Turkestan region. The first phase took place in the summer of 2022, during the scorching heat of June to August. The second phase followed between November 2023 and January 2024. Together, these efforts offered a comprehensive view of the lives and dynamics within the studied communities.

During the initial phase, the main goal was to understand the social and cultural dynamics of five targeted villages. This involved exploring key aspects of everyday life such as religion, language use, national values, culture, customs, and traditions. The focus was specifically on how national values influence inter-ethnic marriages and family life within this culturally diverse region.

However, building trust with the communities was not easy. Many residents were skeptical at first, fearing the research might have a political motive. To overcome this, I relied on personal connections through individuals familiar with my family, such as acquaintances of my father and grandfather. My father had studied in this region during his youth, and the relationships he had formed helped establish credibility and open doors to the community. Additionally, village leaders and administrators played a key role in granting access to families and providing support for the research.

The village administrations streamlined the process by compiling lists of families using "village passports," which contained demographic and statistical information. They also assigned staff to assist me and occasionally provided transportation. When such help wasn't available, my husband and family stepped in, accompanying me to ensure I could complete my work. Despite the challenges posed by the extreme heat, often exceeding 40°C (104°F), I conducted 45 interviews over three months and observed more than 30 different types

of families, gaining a rich understanding of their social and cultural structures.

The second phase built on the connections and insights from the first phase, but challenges persisted in certain areas, particularly in Azerbaijani and Turk Meskhetian communities in Kentau, where data collection was more difficult. Despite these hurdles, I was able to gather valuable information, particularly on the role of national values in shaping family dynamics and integration within these communities.

Participants from both phases came from diverse ethnic backgrounds, reflecting the multicultural nature of the Turkestan region. These included Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Russians, Azerbaijanis, Tatars, and Turk Meskhetians. The prominence of Kazakhs and Uzbeks in the participant pool aligns with the broader demographics of the region. Meanwhile, Azerbaijani and Turk Meskhetian participants provided unique perspectives on inter-ethnic marital trends, while the inclusion of smaller ethnic groups like Tatars and Russians further highlighted the cultural richness of the region.

The participants ranged in age from 21 to 70 in the first phase and 23 to 65 in the second. Most were younger or middle-aged, between 25 and 40, representing a group actively engaged in marriage and family life. This age group showed a greater openness to inter-ethnic unions, likely influenced by modern education and exposure to diverse cultural norms. In contrast, older participants reflected more traditional views shaped by the socio-political environment of earlier decades, revealing generational differences in attitudes toward inter-ethnic marriages.

The findings revealed that inter-ethnic marriages were much more common than homogeneous ones. In the first phase, 36 of 45 families were inter-ethnic, and in the second phase, 30 of 40 families followed this trend. These marriages often involve negotiating cultural values and identities, creating a blend of traditions that strengthens ties

between different communities. Azerbaijani and Turk Meskhetian families stood out for their willingness to adapt and connect culturally through these unions.

Mutual adaptation between spouses in inter-ethnic marriages played a crucial role in integrating families into the broader social fabric. This process of understanding and acceptance gradually influenced societal development, showcasing how families both shape and are shaped by their communities. These marriages act as bridges, fostering social cohesion and demonstrating the interconnectedness of the region's diverse groups.

Overall, this research highlights the significant role of inter-ethnic marriages in creating a multicultural and integrated society in the Turkestan region. Younger participants emphasized the need to blend traditions, while older participants often upheld longstanding cultural norms. Together, these findings reveal how inter-ethnic marriages contribute to the region's ability to balance its historical heritage with its evolving identity as a diverse, united society.

Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods approach to investigate national values in inter-ethnic marriages. In this context, national values encompass shared cultural traditions, historical narratives, moral principles, and practices that shape identities and guide interactions among individuals from different ethnic backgrounds. Qualitative research served as the primary method in the present study, offering an in-depth exploration of how national values influence interethnic marriages and lead to integration or tension among ethnic groups. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect detailed narratives from participants about their lived experiences, cultural practices, and family life. Participant observation was also employed to observe the daily routines and cultural events of

the community, particularly during ceremonies such as marriages, family gatherings, and national celebrations (Kvale, 1996).

The research followed a carefully structured plan designed to systematically investigate interethnic marriages in the various research sites, with a particular focus on the role that national values have in shaping these unions. As part of a larger ongoing research project on interethnic relations, this phase concentrated specifically on how shared or conflicting national values influence family dynamics, marital roles, and intergenerational transmission of identity and traditions within these households. All collected interviews produced a comprehensive dataset for analyzing the intersection of national values with ethnic identity and family life. This highlights the significant role of Kazakh national values on the broader inter-ethnic landscape, offering insights into regional patterns of assimilation, integration, and cultural exchange. This focus enables a more sophisticated examination of the interactions between dominant and minority cultural frameworks, contributing to the body of knowledge on social cohesion and intercultural dynamics in Turkestan.

The analysis of the data collected addressed the study's main objectives, exploring how national values shape family structures and impact the negotiation of ethnic identities within interethnic marriages. Specifically, these interviews explored two main themes related to national values. In regard to the first topic, national values in inter-ethnic marriages, the data revealed how couples incorporate customs and moral principles into their daily lives. These findings showcased how these national values are adapted or maintained within these households, exploring their acceptance and aligning with broader social expectations. The second main theme, the participants' perspectives regarding their own children's potential interethnic marriages, focusing on how national values influence attitudes toward inter-ethnic unions for

subsequent generations and the reconciliation of cultural differences within family practices.

The semi-structured interview format gave participants the opportunity to elaborate on their personal experiences while ensuring consistency across interviews, enabling comparison between the responses. Each interview was recorded with the participant's consent, transcribed, and later analyzed thematically to identify recurring patterns and themes (Braun, Clarke, 2006). Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the local administration's ethics committee. All of the participants were informed about the aims of the study and were ensured that their participation was voluntary and that they could opt out of the research at any time. Informed consent was obtained from each participant prior to conducting the interviews or administering the questionnaires. To ensure confidentiality, all identifying information was anonymized in the study results.

National values and family dynamics among Turkestan's ethnic groups

The national values of Turkestan's main ethnic groups, Kazakhs, Uzbeks, and Azerbaijanis, serve as the foundational frameworks that shape personal identities and family aspirations. These values are strongly rooted in historical traditions, cultural norms, and shared experiences and impact daily life, marital dynamics, and interethnic relationships. While core concepts such as hospitality, honor, and respect for elders are common across different Central Asian peoples, the prominence and significance of these values can vary across different ethnic groups. While some values may be more pronounced in the cultural practices of certain communities, others may be more subtly preserved or even adapted to reflect regional or historical variations. Therefore, in analyzing the national values of each group, the author sought to highlight and identify the most leading elements, taking into account both the

similarities and the differences between these values across the Central Asian peoples sampled. This tailored approach ensured a more comprehensive understanding of the role these values contribute significantly to the formation of social structures and family dynamics within these communities.

The approach above aligns with insights from previous anthropological research, which emphasizes that even shared values can be interpreted and emphasized differently depending on the historical, social, and cultural context of each group (Smith, 2003; Mardin, 2005). Thus, understanding these national values in a subtler way requires a careful examination of their relative strength and significance within the unique worldviews and traditions of each group. Based on the data gathered from the participants, the primary national values of the key ethnic groups examined can be succinctly outlined. These values are integral to each group's cultural identity and shape their social interactions, particularly within the family structure. The characteristics of these values can be summarized as follows.

Kazakh: As the dominant ethnic group in the region, Kazakh values emphasize respect for elders, hospitality, and the preservation of kinship ties. These principles are central to family life, shaping expectations around marital roles, intergenerational responsibilities, and communal solidarity.

Uzbek: Uzbek culture prioritizes strong familial cohesion, a sense of honor (*nomus*), and the integration of Islamic principles into their daily practices. These values often guide decision-making in marriage, child-rearing, and community interactions.

Azerbaijani: Azerbaijani families often prioritize respect for cultural heritage, strong community ties, and the importance of mutual respect in marital and familial relationships. Gender roles within Azerbaijani families are often influenced by

traditional norms, balancing modernity with historical practices.

Kazakh-Uzbek and Kazakh-Russian interethnic marriages

This section explores the role of national values in mixed marriages in Turkestan, with a specific focus on Kazakh-Uzbek and Kazakh-Russian unions. The findings reveal that Kazakh-Uzbek families tend to share cultural and traditional values common among Central Asian societies, such as respect for elders, communal hospitality, and strong extended family ties. These shared values promote smoother integration and mutual understanding within these marriages, promoting the negotiation of cultural differences.

The dynamics of Kazakh-Uzbek mixed marriages can be analyzed from the perspective of hybridization theory (Pieterse, 2001), which posits that inter-ethnic unions lead to the blending of cultural elements, creating a hybrid cultural space. Within these marriages, both partners adapt and integrate aspects of each other's cultural traditions, resulting in a distinctive marital framework that reflects both Kazakh and Uzbek values. This blending helps maintain marital stability, with couples navigating their differences through compromise and adaptation.

In contrast, Kazakh-Russian mixed marriages align more with the frameworks of structural-functionalism and cultural capital theory. Structural-functionalism explains that the cultural practices of a Kazakh wife, such as language use and family traditions, play a dominant role in maintaining family stability and cohesion. The husband, more indifferent to these cultural aspects, adapts to her influence, ensuring functional equilibrium in the family. Cultural capital theory further highlights how the Kazakh wife's cultural heritage shapes the family environment and helps preserve a strong Kazakh cultural identity for their children.

Together, these theoretical frameworks demonstrate how cultural values and family roles in mixed marriages can lead to both integration and tension. In Kazakh-Uzbek marriages, hybridization facilitates cultural fusion and cohesion, while in Kazakh-Russian marriages, the wife's cultural capital was observed to function as a stabilizing force within the family structure.

Kazakh-Uzbek interethnic marriages

In analyzing interethnic marriages between Kazakhs and Uzbeks, Stuart Hall's concept of cultural hybridity offers insights into the negotiation of cultural values and family dynamics. Both Kazakh and Uzbek cultures prioritize respect for elders and strong family bonds; however, these values are expressed through distinct cultural norms shaped by history, societal expectations, and gender roles. Kazakh culture tends to emphasize gender equality within the family, with more collaborative roles for both spouses. In contrast, Uzbek culture traditionally upholds a more patriarchal structure, with the husband in a more authoritative role, especially in decision-making.

As suggested by Hall (1990), this intersection of differing values leads to a hybridization of cultural expectations, with individuals selectively incorporating elements from both cultures. In interethnic households, the process of cultural blending creates a dynamic space for negotiation, where the two cultural identities are not fixed but continuously evolving in response to one another. This hybridization reflects the fluidity and negotiation of cultural identities, which Hall characterizes as central to the diasporic experience and the formation of new, hybrid identities in multicultural contexts. As couples navigate these cultural differences, they create new family structures that reflect both their shared and divergent cultural heritages.

However, this blending of cultural norms also has the potential to create tensions. For example, the husband's traditionally dominant role in an Uzbek household may conflict with the wife's expectations for a more egalitarian partnership shaped by Kazakh values. This tension highlights the ongoing negotiation of authority and power within interethnic marriages, as couples strive to reconcile conflicting cultural norms and establish a balance that reflects their hybridized identity.

In the study, six Kazakh-Uzbek families participated in interviews. This including four families with a Kazakh husband and an Uzbek wife and two families with an Uzbek husband and a Kazakh wife. One notable finding was that Kazakh partners, regardless of gender, tended to assume a dominant role within the family. In families where the husband is Kazakh, the wife generally adopts the husband's cultural practices and values, fully embracing Kazakh traditions. In one of the Kazakh-Uzbek families interviewed with a Kazakh husband, the wife conformed to Kazakh customs in various aspects, including the number of wedding guests, the traditions observed, and the celebration of family holidays. Despite the wife's relatives being Uzbek, their family organizes celebrations in accordance with Kazakh traditions, and the wife's relatives make efforts to accommodate the son-in-law's preferences.

The hybridization of cultural practices also extends to language use. In families where the husband is Kazakh, the language of communication in daily life (including with children and extended family members) is primarily determined by the husband's preferences. The wives stated that they readily adopt these language practices, expressing appreciation for Kazakh cultural values, which helps to prevent tension in this aspect of family life. However, the wives also maintain their Uzbek cultural identity by continuing to speak their native language with their

relatives and preserving their traditions within their own family networks.

Conversely, in families where the husband is Uzbek and the wife is Kazakh, the dominance of Kazakh national values continues to persist, particularly in regard to the upbringing of children. Children are typically raised speaking Kazakh and are influenced by the predominance of Kazakh-speaking institutions, peers, and society. Uzbek husbands generally accept this, understanding the societal context in which their children are raised. However, in other domains, such as food preparation and interactions with the husband's extended family, Kazakh wives feel comfortable incorporating Uzbek cultural practices, illustrating the fluid negotiation of cultural practices and values in these hybridized unions.

This analysis demonstrates how the hybridization of cultural values in mixed marriages can lead to both a blending of traditions as well as new sources of tension. Couples navigate these tensions through negotiation, adaptation, and selective integration of cultural elements, creating a unique and dynamic familial and social environment that reflects the intersection of multiple cultural identities.

Kazakh-Russian interethnic marriages

In contrast, Kazakh-Russian families often lack the culturally embedded practices typically found in Central Asian ethnic groups. Furthermore, differing religious beliefs (with predominantly Muslim traditions among Kazakhs and Orthodox Christian backgrounds among Russians) introduce an additional layer of complexity. These divergences in both cultural and religious values pose unique challenges to marital cohesion and require greater negotiation to achieve harmony.

The current study included interviews with five Kazakh-Russian mixed families, consisting of three families with a Russian husband and a Kazakh wife and two families with a Russian wife and Kazakh

husband. In the three families with a Russian husband, the Kazakh wife often assumed the dominant role in everyday family life. In these families, the husband typically does not prioritize language, cuisine, or traditions, such as the language spoken at home, the food prepared, or the customs observed during special occasions. Similarly, the children's language use and education do not appear as areas of significant concern. This dynamic can be explained through the frameworks of structural functionalism and cultural capital theory.

From the perspective of structural functionalism, the dominance of the Kazakh wife in these households can be viewed as a mechanism to maintain familial harmony and stability within her own cultural framework. According to Parsons (1951), families strive to maintain balance and cohesion, and in these cases, the wife's values, rooted in Kazakh traditions, provide the necessary cultural elements to ensure a functional family structure. The husband's relative indifference to certain cultural aspects reflects a functional adaptation to his wife's dominant cultural influence, facilitating family cohesion through shared responsibilities and values.

In addition, cultural capital theory (Bourdieu, 1986) can be applied to better understand the dynamics in these families. The Kazakh wife, through her cultural capital in areas such as language, traditions, and values, enriches the family life and provides the children with a sense of cultural identity. Her influence in maintaining certain cultural practices shapes the family's cultural environment, contributing to the preservation of Kazakh heritage despite the interethnic marriage.

However, the data also provided a case in which a Russian husband held the dominant role in the household, presenting a markedly different dynamic. In this family, the Kazakh wife, despite her devout Muslim upbringing, fully embraced her husband's national values, even converting from

Islam to Christianity. This transformation in her cultural identity is a clear example of social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), which emphasizes the ways in which individuals adopt or negotiate multiple identities based on their social affiliations. The wife's integration of both national and religious identities, as evidenced by comparisons between the Koran and the Bible shared during her interview, illustrates the fluidity of identity in inter-ethnic marriages. Her ability to navigate and incorporate both Kazakh and Russian cultural elements into her sense of self highlights how cultural and national identities can be adapted, negotiated, and reconciled within the context of such relationships.

Parental perspectives on their children's interethnic marital choices

Interethnic marriages have long played a significant role in shaping Kazakhstan's social and cultural identity. During the Soviet era, these unions were viewed as instrumental for the creation of a unified "Soviet people," with the aim of integrating diverse ethnic groups under a shared set of values and traditions. The Soviet model of multiculturalism promoted mutual respect and cooperation among different ethnicities, which contributed to the widespread acceptance of interethnic marriages (Zhumamurat, 2022). However, following the collapse of the USSR and the subsequent rise of Kazakh nationalism, there has been a noticeable shift towards preserving ethnic "purity" and traditional cultural values. As a result, interethnic marriages began to attract more scrutiny, particularly from those with stronger nationalistic sentiments toward preserving ethnic boundaries and identities rather than promoting multiculturalism (сборник конференций). James Clifford's concept of the "predicament of culture" (1988) is particularly useful for understanding these dynamics. Clifford examines the challenges individuals face when negotiating multiple cultural

identities, particularly in contexts of hybridity and cultural exchange. This is especially relevant in Turkestan, where the ongoing negotiation of ethnic identity within interethnic marriages mirrors Clifford's observations on the complexities of belonging and alienation. Despite growing nationalistic sentiments, the ongoing integration of diverse ethnic groups in regions like Turkestan suggests an ongoing process of cultural negotiation, in where shared identity and mutual respect are maintained through intermarriage. This reflects Clifford's assertion that identity is fluid and subject to continuous negotiation, particularly in multi-ethnic and multicultural settings (Clifford, 1988).

Kazakhstan's status as a multiethnic state is closely tied to its commitment to fostering interethnic harmony and ensuring the well-being of all its citizens. This is especially evident in the enduring sense of community and shared identity observed in regions like Turkestan, where ethnic groups such as Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Azerbaijanis, and Russians have coexisted for centuries. A Structural-functionalist perspective highlights the key role that such marriages serve in maintaining social cohesion. Although their numbers have diminished compared to previous years, a portion of the community continues to reside here. Many residents regard the ethnic groups in Turkestan region as members of a unified community, reflecting a regional identity that transcends ethnic boundaries. This shared ethos aligns with the hospitality and openness for which Kazakh society is widely recognized (Kymlicka, 1995).

Despite this inclusive position, the dynamics of interethnic marriages are undergoing significant changes. While such unions were historically encouraged as a symbol of unity, especially during the Soviet era, a growing emphasis on the preservation of national identity has led to diverging attitudes across generations and social groups. In Turkestan, for example, the perception

of mixed marriages is influenced by factors such as age, cultural background, and social status.

This section of the chapter focuses on parents' attitudes regarding their children's future marital choices, specifically in regard to the hypothetical situation that their child was to marry someone of a different nationality. This question offers profound insights into the broader societal and cultural dynamics of the region, with these parental opinions serving as a barometer for understanding how traditions, identity, and evolving norms shape attitudes toward interethnic unions.

By analyzing these perspectives, we can gain an understanding of the future trajectory of interethnic relationships within Turkestan and assess their impact on local communities. Parents' attitudes reveal not only their values but also their aspirations for the social and cultural continuity of their families. These viewpoints also paint a picture of the ways in which future generations might navigate the balance between preserving their ethnic heritage and embracing a more multicultural society. Such an understanding is important in predicting the evolving dynamics of the region.

Kazakh-Azerbaijani interethnic marriages

The researcher encountered challenges in identifying Kazakh-Azerbaijani interethnic marriages. Such unions were relatively rare and primarily localized to specific areas. Most interethnic Azerbaijani marriages were with Uzbek partners rather than Kazakhs. Among the few cases identified, two families consisted of Kazakh husbands and Azerbaijani wives, while more than three involved Azerbaijani husbands and Uzbek wives. Data collection was further complicated by linguistic barriers, as Azerbaijani respondents predominantly spoke Azerbaijani or a mix of Uzbek, Azerbaijani, and Kazakh languages. Additionally, some individuals identifying as Azerbaijani were, in fact, Meskhetian Turks, adding to the complexity of data interpretation. Despite

these challenges, the data were carefully analyzed to ensure accurate findings.

The findings revealed specific dynamics in Kazakh-Azerbaijani marriages. For instance, in one family with a Kazakh husband and an Azerbaijani wife, the husband maintained a dominant role. This family had five children, two of whom were married and continued to live with their parents. These married children followed local traditions, with one son marrying an Uzbek woman from a mixed-ethnicity family. The parents generally expressed openness to interethnic marriages for their remaining unmarried children, viewing such unions as a natural extension of their own diverse community. However, perspectives within the family were not entirely uniform.

The mother noted that her Azerbaijani cultural influence might encourage her children to marry other Azerbaijanis, given the shared language and cultural practices. The father, on the other hand, expressed a preference for his children to marry Kazakhs, citing advantages regarding their grandchildren's future integration and cultural continuity. He expressed concerns over his children adopting too much of his wife's Azerbaijani heritage, including language and lifestyle, through frequent interactions with her relatives. Despite his efforts to preserve Kazakh cultural traditions and values, he acknowledged that raising children in a multiethnic society inherently involves a blending of cultural norms and values, reflecting the diverse nature of the local community.

The mother's perspective aligns with the concept of cultural hybridity, which asserts that cultural identities are not static but evolve through ongoing interactions between different cultural groups. Hall argues that cultural identities are fluid, being continuously constructed and reconstructed through the dynamics of social interactions and shared experiences. In this context, the mother believes that shared language and cultural practices

can facilitate marriages within the Azerbaijani community, underscoring the malleability of cultural identity as shaped by these interactions. Hall's theory of hybridity supports the notion that cultural boundaries are not fixed but rather negotiated, leading to the formation of new, hybrid identities (Hall, 1990). In this case, the children of this intercultural household retain elements from both Azerbaijani and Kazakh cultures, enabling them to adapt and identify with both heritages. This fluidity of cultural identity demonstrates the hybridization process described by Hall, where cultural practices and identities blend and transform within multicultural contexts.

On the other hand, the father's preference for his children to marry Kazakhs reflects an adherence to structural-functionalism, which emphasizes the role of cultural norms and practices in maintaining social stability and cohesion. The father's concerns about the adoption of Azerbaijani cultural practices, especially language and lifestyle, echo Radcliffe-Brown's (1952) view that social structures (such as family units and cultural practices) serve to perpetuate societal order. By prioritizing Kazakh marriages, the husband aims to preserve the cultural continuity and stability of Kazakh identity, ensuring that future generations maintain a strong connection to their ethnic roots, a prime example of the structural-functionalist perspective of social integration and stability.

Moreover, the father's acknowledgement of the blending of cultural norms in their region reflects aspects of social identity theory (Tajfel, Turner, 1986), which suggests that individuals' behaviors and attitudes are influenced by their group membership. His awareness that his children are inevitably adopting aspects of both Azerbaijani and Kazakh cultures illustrates how the process of socialization within a diverse society can lead to the formation of hybrid identities that transcend traditional ethnic boundaries.

The age of the parents significantly influenced family dynamics and their children's outlooks. In the family mentioned above, the parents were over 50 years old; as such, their children displayed more traditional behaviors, adhering strictly to parental expectations. The parents limited the children's use of gadgets, fostering a conservative upbringing. The two married sons continued the family's traditional lifestyle by engaging in cattle breeding, following in their father's footsteps. In contrast, another Azerbaijani-Kazakh interethnic family, with parents aged between 28 and 32, reflected more modern values. This younger family demonstrated greater openness to contemporary practices, suggesting that generational differences play a significant role in shaping family norms and attitudes toward interethnic marriages. Both of the young parents expressed a progressive outlook regarding the potential marriages of their children, stating that if their children chose to marry someone of another nationality, it would be entirely acceptable to them. They emphasized that the primary consideration would be the happiness and well-being of their children in the marriage. Furthermore, the couple believed that mutual respect and understanding between spouses, regardless of ethnic background, were crucial for a harmonious family life.

This openness is deeply influenced by the effects of globalization, which has led to increased cultural interconnectedness and has exposed families to diverse perspectives and lifestyles. Through media, technology, and increased mobility, younger generations are more attuned to values such as individual choice and emotional compatibility, rejecting traditional considerations like ethnic or cultural preservation to a certain degree. The young parents' attitudes reflect this globalized mindset, which prioritizes the happiness of children while embracing a broader acceptance of diversity within familial structures.

Conclusion

This study as an integral part of the broader investigation addressed in this dissertation, discussing the intricate relationship between national identity and inter-ethnic marriages in the Turkestan region. By focusing on the role of national values within mixed marriages, the study contributes to the wider exploration of how ethnic identity, cultural practices, and family dynamics interact in a multi-ethnic society. Specifically, it examines the influence of national values on family life and the intergenerational transmission of cultural traditions, with a focus on how these values are negotiated within the context of inter-ethnic unions.

The research presented in this article employed a number of sociological and anthropological methodologies to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the historical and contemporary factors that shape national identity. In doing so, the study not only provides valuable insights into the significance of national values in inter-ethnic marriages but also contributes to the broader discourse on ethnic cohesion, cultural adaptation, and the transformation of national identity in post-Soviet Kazakhstan.

By focusing on families with Kazakh, Azerbaijani, Russian, and Uzbek backgrounds, the study revealed the complex dynamics at play in the Turkestan region, offering a detailed perspective on how national values are both preserved and transformed in modern, multi-ethnic households. The research highlights the adaptive nature of national values in the face of changing social realities, illustrating how families navigate the cultural blending while maintaining a connection to their national identity.

The study's methodological diversity and empirical findings deepen our understanding of Turkestan's evolving cultural landscape, providing a foundation for future research into the role of national values in shaping family and social life in

multiethnic societies. As Kazakhstan continues to navigate the complexities of modernization and globalization, the dynamics of inter-ethnic marriages will likely evolve, reflecting broader transformations in national identity and societal norms.

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