

(Re)constructing citizens through citizenship education in Kazakhstan

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Abstract

In the foundation of this study lies an attempt to study how citizenry is depicted in the ninth, tenth, eleventh grade civic curriculum in Kazakhstan. Instrumental in the study was analysis of nine textbooks and handbooks in Russian language via means of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) developed by Fairclough. The analyzed textbooks concern the period 2007 - 2014 years and present the most recent materials available at the moment of thesis writing. Results revealed that the construction of the nation is one-dimensional, primarily highlighting the importance of one Kazakh ethnicity. Study concluded that regardless of state discourses on the importance of multiculturalism, the content of high school curriculum did not include equal attention to representing cultures of ethnic national minorities. In result, such misrepresentation can be found discriminatory in context of a country in which representatives of more than 100 ethnicities reside. The content of the textbooks mimics state politics of nation building around titular Kazakh ethnicity. Despite state pronounced policy on multiculturalism, the culture of ethnic Kazakhs was presented as the core of the Kazakhstani citizenship. In short: Kazakhstani citizenship education focuses on patriotic beliefs and respect to Kazakh culture, rather than to cosmopolitan values for democratic citizenship.

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Introduction

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 brought to existence 15 independent nation states. It is in Almaty, a former capital of Kazakhstan, Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) came into being on remnants of USSR. Following the biggest geopolitical reshuffling of 90ies, the process of nation states establishment took off. A core nation-building element intrinsic to almost whole post-Soviet universe is favoring the titular ethnicity. While some authors¹ claim that the case of nation building in Kazakhstan is a “textbook example of how the past fragments the post-colonial collective imagining”, Kazakhstani case of the ethnonationalist political processes is generally understudied.

When Kazakhstan regained independence, it was left with a highly ethnically diverse fabric of the society. Significant population of Russians remained in the territory of independent Kazakhstan, as well as Koreans, Tatars, Uzbeks, Koreans along many others. Kazakh language was granted state status, despite the fact that only 40 % of the population constituted titular ethnicity and could partially speak it.² Nevertheless, keen to create its own nation state, officials employed *jus sanguinis* nationalistic policies, and repatriated thousands of ethnic Kazakhs from China and Mongolia. The numbers of historically largest ethnic minority groups – Russians, Ukrainians and Germans - decreased significantly over the span of 20 years for many reasons and primarily because of outmigration and low birth rates.³ As a result of repatriation policies, demographic tendencies and outmigration trends, the ratio of Kazakhs grew from around 40% in

¹ Surucu, Cengiz. "Modernity, nationalism, resistance: identity politics in post-Soviet Kazakhstan." *Central Asian Survey* 21, no. 4 (2002): 385-402.

² Olcott, Martha Brill. *Kazakhstan: unfulfilled promise*. Carnegie Endowment, 2010.

³ Zardykhan, Zharmukhamed. "Russians in Kazakhstan and demographic change: imperial legacy and the Kazakh way of nation building." *Asian Ethnicity* 5, no. 1 (2004): 61-79.

1989 to approximately 62% in 2009.⁴ Meanwhile, the number of ethnic minority groups significantly decreased: Russians from 38% to 24%; Ukrainians 5% to 2%; Germans 6% to 1%.⁵⁶

As per official state discourse, Kazakhstan is claiming a multicultural and multiethnic nature of the populace as a strength and advantage. Hence, the narrative of diversity lays out a basis of the official state rhetoric. However, as the matter of fact, the reality of nation building process Kazakhstan deviates from the course cherished by Kazakh state officials.

In 2013, a new subject with a focus on ethnically Kazakh poet Abai was introduced in schools. “Kazakhification” demonstrates how a dominant cultural group uses and abuses educational space for promoting exclusivist cultural practices.⁷ It happens through several ways; primarily, by imposition of Kazakh language and culture through compulsory school programme. School curriculum is “the official knowledge” promoted by the state.⁸

With the aim of understanding how educational space is used in order to promote understanding of citizenship, national feeling and belonging in Kazakhstan, in my current research, I have analyzed citizenship education curriculum in grades nine, ten, eleven, when students are exposed to civic studies classes. I have studied the content of the school curriculum

⁴ Olcott, Martha Brill. *Kazakhstan: unfulfilled promise*. Carnegie Endowment, 2010.

⁵ Agency of Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan (AoS), <http://www.eng.stat.kz/digital/Population/Pages/default.aspx> (accessed June 4, 2015)

⁶ Olcott, Martha Brill. "Democratization and the growth of political participation in Kazakhstan." *Conflict, Cleavage, and Change in Central Asia and the Caucasus* (1997): 201-241.

⁷ Apple, Michael W. *Ideology and curriculum*. Routledge, 2004.

⁸ Apple, Michael W. "The politics of official knowledge: Does a national curriculum make sense?." *Discourse* 14, no. 1 (1993): 1-16.

in order to reveal whether the notion of citizenry was presented from a multicultural or ethnocentric viewpoint. My hypothesis was that regardless of legal aspect of citizenship, the notions of citizenry promoted ethno-nationalist envisioning of the citizenry. Education plays an important role in countries with various political regimes. However, in highly centralized states educational sphere is used to promote particular discourses. In illiberal states like Kazakhstan, educational sphere is highly controlled. State sponsors and regulates the process of curriculum development and curriculum content. That is why I argue that state education plays an important role in autocratic regimes in terms of promoting particular state supported discourses on citizenship.

The notions of citizenship are often viewed as normative constructions linked to legal status of people residing in nation states. While some authors study citizenship education based on the studies of group, individual or cultural rights,⁹ I propose a broader understanding of the citizenry as a constructed notion promoted by mainly (but not only) state actors through mainstream compulsory public education. Studies of citizenship were greatly impacted by Marshall's¹⁰ works, which highlighted civil, political and social rights that are linked to citizenship status. However, current research focuses on a more fluid understanding of the notion of citizenship that is linked to the complex interconnected mix of civil, political, social and cultural aspects of it. The importance of legal aspects of citizenship in regards citizens' formal rights and responsibilities is evident, since most citizens reside in concrete nation states.

⁹ Banks, James A. "Diversity, group identity, and citizenship education in a global age." *Educational researcher* 37, no. 3 (2008): 129-139.

¹⁰ Marshall, Thomas Humphrey, and Thomas Burton Bottomore. *Citizenship and social class*. Vol. 2. London: Pluto Press, 1992.

Nevertheless, there are scholars¹¹ who look at citizenship as not only legal but also societal and cultural issue. Such studies further expand our understanding of citizenship and view it as a process: "... citizenship virtues emerge from the humdrum politics of everyday life in democratic societies."¹² Current thesis analyzes cultural aspects of citizenship that are developed through state citizenship education in Kazakhstan.

To the best of my knowledge, previous studies on this topic did not place the issue of citizenship education in the literature on nationalism; thus, the purpose of this thesis is to analyze the content of the textbooks and reveal why and what understanding of the citizenry is promoted through the texts and pictures of the civic studies textbooks in Kazakhstan. In current thesis at first, I will briefly describe broader nation-building trends in Kazakhstan. Then Kymlicka's multiculturalist views and after that I will focus on the role of education informing the civic values in young citizens of Kazakhstan and post-Soviet space. Finally, the results of the analysis of the civic curriculum in Kazakhstan will be presented.

National identity politics and nation building in post-Soviet Kazakhstan

There are multiple discourses and narratives on how a Kazakhstani nation is and should look like in government and scholarly circles. Brubaker¹³ argues that nationalizing nationalism is not only applicable to Kazakhstani case but to broader post-Socialist sphere. By "nationalizing

¹¹ Isin, Engin F., and Bryan S. Turner. "Investigating citizenship: an agenda for citizenship studies." *Citizenship studies* 11, no. 1 (2007): 5-17.

¹² Ibid., 16.

¹³ Brubaker, Rogers. "Nationalizing states revisited: projects and processes of nationalization in post-Soviet states." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 34, no. 11 (2011): 1785-1814.

nationalism” the author means a process of nation building after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Nonetheless it is becoming more evident that Kazakhstan is trying to use primordialist model, in which kinship, language and biological “roots” of the nation are emphasized¹⁴. Schatz¹⁵ further questions the genuineness of Kazakhstan’s rhetoric on multiculturalism. He states that Kazakhstan’s internationalist rhetoric was influenced by Soviet past. Internationalism did not take place in Soviet and post-Soviet Kazakhstan. He maintains:

“But, just as Soviet-era internationalism ultimately had a Russian face (holding a privileged position for ethnic Russians in the evolutionary march toward the ‘bright future’), post-Soviet Kazakhstani state ideology had a Kazakh face, singling out Kazakhs for linguistic, demographic, political and cultural redress.”¹⁶

Surucu¹⁷ argues that in Kazakhstan the identity discourse is two-fold. On the one hand, cosmopolitan views are advanced and supported by primarily urban populace while on the other hand Kazakh nationalists are eager to revive a pre-Soviet envisioning of Kazakhstan. Though above-mentioned bifurcation of views is deemed problematic given the complexity of the identity process. Nevertheless, Surucu’s¹⁸ conclusions are helpful in grasping the gist of the formation of cosmopolitan and ethnonational discourses in the country.

The first main discourse is that Kazakhstan is a multicultural country and cosmopolitan values are at the core of Kazakhstani prosperity. This narrative is commonly present in the

¹⁴ Surucu, Cengiz. "Modernity, nationalism, resistance: identity politics in post-Soviet Kazakhstan." *Central Asian Survey* 21, no. 4 (2002): 385-402.

¹⁵ Schatz, Edward. "The politics of multiple identities: lineage and ethnicity in Kazakhstan." *Europe-Asia Studies* 52, no. 3 (2000): 489-506.

¹⁶ Ibid., 492.

¹⁷ Surucu, Cengiz. "Modernity, nationalism, resistance: identity politics in post-Soviet Kazakhstan." *Central Asian Survey* 21, no. 4 (2002): 385-402.

¹⁸ Ibid.

speeches and addresses by President Nazarbayev. There is a whole section on new inclusive Kazakhstani identity in the content of the visionary development program Kazakhstan 2050¹⁹:

“Inclusive Kazakhstani identity should become historical self-identification of our nation. Today every Kazakhstani citizen is an equal national of our country. Kazakh nation and Kazakh language are the unification factors of our Kazakhstani identity. We are creating a fair society in which everyone can say: ‘I am Kazakhstani and there are a lot of opportunities for me!’” Today all our citizens have huge possibilities ahead of them. We are many but we are one – one country, one nation.”

Interestingly the second main narrative of a Kazakhified nation is also reflected in the same main strategic development program 2050:

“A special responsibility of realization of our strategic plan ‘Kazakhstan-2050’ lies first and foremost on ethnic Kazakhs. We should not forget that we could only develop in modernity if we save our cultural code: language, spirituality, traditions and values. ... If the nation is loosing its cultural code, then the nation in itself is destroying. We must not let it happen! I believe that our great history, memory about our ancestors will help to overcome future challenges. History knows it all – our ethnicity will always turn the challenges into opportunities.”

Kazakhization takes place through language policies, politics of exclusion and kinship politics. While constitutionally Russian language is the official language, Kazakh language has the status of the state language and up until now a lot of funding is spent on the development of Kazakh language. Brubaker²⁰ mentions that observing various macro settings can reveal the trends in nationalizing processes. In his research Brubaker highlights complexity of the nationalization project in Kazakhstan. While he believes there are attempts to Kazakhify the society, most policies are directed not towards the minority population but towards urban russified Kazakhs. Also, the policies are not necessarily successful, for example: “language shift

¹⁹ Akorda, http://www.akorda.kz/ru/category/gos_programmi_razvitiya (accessed June 4, 2015)

²⁰ Brubaker, Rogers. "Nationalizing states revisited: projects and processes of nationalization in post-Soviet states." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 34, no. 11 (2011): 1785-1814.

is a very complex process, it is not something that can be simply decreed.”²¹ While I give credit to Brubaker on contributing theoretical insights in the nationalizing discourses and processes in Kazakhstan and post-Soviet space, I believe some of the analysis lacks contextualized understanding of the degrees to which, for example, language policies and processes of Kazakhification affect the rights, livelihoods and career, educational opportunities of non-Kazakhs.

Peyrouse²² discusses the process of Kazakhization in Kazakhstan by analyzing the situation of Russian minority, which is the largest ethnic minority in the country. The author highlights that the Russian minority population is undergoing Kazakhization process through the imposition of Kazakh language and culture on them. Peyrouse²³ maintains that as a result ethnic Russians either leave the country or fully assimilate while developing “a double ‘Russian-Kazakh’ identity, and, above all, indifference to any nationalist rhetoric – Russian or Kazakh”.

In addition to assimilation, citing repatriation of *oralmans* comes as another significant policy that was introduced to ensure that the state and the nation of Kazakhstan were turning indeed Kazakh. After the breakup of the Soviet Union, Kazakhs in Kazakhstan constituted mere 40 % of the total population. It was the only country in the whole post-Soviet space where a titular ethnicity was in a minority situation. On those grounds, the President of Kazakhstan established a policy to repatriate all ethnic Kazakhs who left the country during Soviet times. In the backbone of repatriation policy that has started in early 1991 – late 1992 lays the idea of

²¹ Ibid., 1801.

²² Peyrouse, Sébastien. "Nationhood and the minority question in Central Asia. The Russians in Kazakhstan." *Europe-Asia Studies* 59, no. 3 (2007): 481-501.

²³ Ibid., 499.

imagined commonalities between oralmans and a Kazakh population in a kin state. In the words of Kundakbayeva²⁴, the repatriation of ethnic Kazakhs became “one of the most significant forms of population mobility [in Kazakhstan] since 1991.” As a result, more than 1 million of oralmans were repatriated to Kazakhstan from Mongolia, China and other neighboring countries.

Analyzing national political trends easily reveals explicit favoring and promotion of Kazakh speaking ethnic Kazakhs. Kazakh language requirement for civil servants excluded majority non-Kazakh speaking Kazakhs and members of other ethnic minorities to join high-level political positions. *De facto* Russian speaking Kazakhs and Russians were and still serve as civil servants and Russian language is *lingua franca*, but on a higher national level the situation is different: “At the national level, the chair of both the lower (Majilis) and upper (Senat) houses of parliament, as well as the presidency, were open only to those with fluency in Kazakh (i.e. in practice, ethnic Kazakhs).”²⁵ Dave²⁶²⁷ comprehensively wrote about how language policies are used in order to provide entitlements to the Kazakh language-speaking members of Kazakh ethnicity.

²⁴ Kundakbayeva, Zhanat. “Returned Diasporas and Homeland: Identity Differences Between Kazakhstani Kazakhs and Oralmans.” *International Relations and Diplomacy* (2014): 35.

²⁵ Schatz, Edward. "The politics of multiple identities: lineage and ethnicity in Kazakhstan." *Europe-Asia Studies* 52, no. 3 (2000): 495.

²⁶ Dave, Bhavna. *Kazakhstan-Ethnicity, Language and Power*. Routledge, 2007.

²⁷ Dave, Bhavna. "Entitlement through numbers: nationality and language categories in the first post-Soviet census of Kazakhstan*." *Nations and Nationalism* 10, no. 4 (2004): 439-459.

On the one hand, it is hard to identify one concrete narrative as to what constitutes nation, since largely it is a process of imagining a community.²⁸ On the other, as the analysis above reveals, it is possible to track the official state practices of nation building. It is indeed a complex process. In a very interesting study, Schatz²⁹ analyzed how different regions of Kazakhstan were competing for state resources in conducting research about local ethnically Kazakh historical figures and heroes. The author ironically concludes that, though the purpose of this activity was to consolidate and explore Kazakh heroes in order to construct reinvent Kazakh identity, in practice researchers from various regions ended up competing and rediscovering lineage-based identities.

There are, also, opinions that are shared by several researchers^{30,31} that demographical trends will guarantee natural increase in the population of ethnic Kazakhs. They argue that the birth rates of Kazakhs are higher than those of Russians or other minorities. As a result of this demographic trend, Kazakhs will outnumber the rest and finally will develop a truly Kazakh state and a nation where they will constitute the ethnic majority.

My general conclusion of some of the above-mentioned articles is that in many cases Kazakhstani society is presented in dual terms as though there are only Kazakhs and Russians

²⁸ Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. Verso Books, 2006.

²⁹ Schatz, Edward. "The politics of multiple identities: lineage and ethnicity in Kazakhstan." *Europe-Asia Studies* 52, no. 3 (2000): 495.

³⁰ Kolsto, Pål. "Anticipating demographic superiority: Kazakh thinking on integration and nation building." *Europe-Asia Studies* 50, no. 1 (1998): 51-69.

³¹ Zardykhan, Zharmukhamed. "Russians in Kazakhstan and demographic change: imperial legacy and the Kazakh way of nation building." *Asian Ethnicity* 5, no. 1 (2004): 61-79.

who live there. Such representation is misleading, as there are members of more ethnic groups who reside in Kazakhstan.

Among versatile gamut of views on the matter, the construction of nation and national identity through official school curriculum is ubiquitous. Language politics influenced educational opportunities for Russian speaking population. In this regard, Brubaker³² also states that education is one of the most important mechanisms of linguistic nationalization in the long term. Most recent trends as opening of the Nazarbayev University, where the majority of students are ethnic Kazakhs constitute the student body show which ethnic group is given more opportunities. The new academic elite is envisioned to consist of ethnic Kazakhs or Kazakh speaking minorities. Kazakhization is becoming more widespread and explicit. Since secondary education is free and compulsory, including in Kazakhstan, it is therefore of our interest to delve into the aforementioned nation state formation mean.

Schatz³³ provided an excellent overview of the increase in the influence of Kazakh language by looking at the educational statistics. For example, the development of Kazakh language use increased in all educational levels, both secondary and higher. Minorities in many cases were deprived from the opportunities to receive state grants and attend state universities, which are free and opted for attending private ones for a fee.

Although there is literature on national and civic identity building in Central Asian and post-Soviet space, the question of how citizenry is constructed through official school curriculum is not well documented. There is only one study, to the best of my knowledge that explores how

³² Brubaker, Rogers. "Nationalizing states revisited: projects and processes of nationalization in post-Soviet states." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 34, no. 11 (2011): 1785-1814.

³³ Schatz, Edward. "The politics of multiple identities: lineage and ethnicity in Kazakhstan." *Europe-Asia Studies* 52, no. 3 (2000): 489-506.

rural and urban youth negotiate the socially constructed notion of citizenship education in Kazakhstan.³⁴

On multiculturalism, identity politics and creation of a nation state

There are different ways by which the states interact with their citizens around the world. In developed liberal democracies such as Canada, multicultural policies advance more successfully, rather in the post-Soviet space, where non-democratic political regimes attempt to create nation states based around one titular ethnicity. In Europe, multiculturalism is interpreted in different ways and is serving various purposes in creating respective nation states. Kymlicka³⁵ states that multicultural ideas did not replace nation-building process in the West, rather they simply changed it. While some scholars question the relevance of the term ‘multiculturalism’, others argue that the ideas of diversity and liberal multiculturalism are significant. It is hard to undermine the importance of Kymlicka’s view on the role of multiculturalism and minority rights. He believes that not only all humans should be treated equally and be able to realize political, cultural and social rights in the countries they are living in, moreover the rights of the minority representatives and multicultural ideals should be proactively defended.

In countries experiencing democratic transition, like Kazakhstan, Kymlicka still sees the potential of the development of liberal multicultural ideas and this development will be especially useful over the long-term: “to my mind, this is potentially an attractive model for linking short-term stability concerns with long-term goals of justice.”³⁶ Indeed, social justice is at

³⁴ Fägerlind, Ingemar, and Alexander N. Kanaev. "Redefining citizenship education in the Central Asian countries." *Educational Practice and Theory* 22, no. 1 (2000): 95-113.

³⁵ Kymlicka, Will. *Multicultural odysseys: Navigating the new international politics of diversity*. Vol. 7. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

³⁶ Ibid., 305.

stake when we talk about the nation-building processes, since a dominant narrative of the nation can be exclusive of the ethnic or gender minorities.

Nation building processes in broader post-Soviet space and Kazakhstan hardly incorporate Kymlicka's views. It is rather paradoxical, since Kazakhstan is a member of the United Nations and other international organizations, which promote and insist on the respect for equal rights and cultural diversity. Kazakhstan always uses the multicultural discourse of the Kazakhstani nation where all people live in inter-ethnic peace. For example, Nazarbayev³⁷ mentioned multicultural nature of Kazakhstani society as its main strength in one of the speeches during the meeting of the Assembly of Nation:

“As you see, multiculturalism was created in Kazakhstan in the artificial historical way. Repatriated people are not to blame, since they found themselves in Kazakhstan against their will. However they all are Kazakhstanis now. We united everyone in one amalgamated nation. Today it is our main advantage. Our strength.”

While Kazakhstan is projecting an image of multicultural friendly nation, *de facto* ethnonationalist policies and rhetoric is flourishing. Ethnic Kazakhs or those who speak fluent Kazakh even during the selection processes for the prestigious Bolashak scholarship to study abroad. With the creation of the Assembly of Nations, Kazakhstan attempted to show that representatives of ethnic minority groups are included in the decision-making processes on a high political level. However, this project can hardly qualify as the one promoting inclusion. The Assembly of Nations, which was recently renamed to the Assembly of Nation, is to a great extent a symbolic structure, which does not have any legislative power. Thus it is simply a myth of inclusion, a superficially created and maintained structure.

³⁷ Akorda, http://www.akorda.kz/ru/page/page_219853_vystupleniya-prezidenta-kazakhstana-n-nazarbaeva-na-khkhii-sessii-assamblei-naroda-kazakhstana (accessed June 4, 2015)

In Kazakhstan, social exclusion of ethnic minorities and consequent outmigration occurs despite the fact that they lived in Kazakhstan since its independence.³⁸ Ethnonational injustice is happening on the grounds of premordialist envisioning of the nation, in which ethnic Kazakhs and its culture and language are considered to be the most important one. However, political exclusion happens in regards to urban ethnic Kazakhs who do not speak Kazakh language as well.³⁹ It is curious how in modern era, the discourse of the importance of one core ethnicity in a nation is so powerful, regardless the attempts of the international community to spread the ideas of liberal democracy and multiculturalism. Kazakhstan is forcing the minority groups to assimilate and excludes any alternative imagining of the nation state rather than one based on Kazakh culture. State officials are using education as one of the main channels to spread ethnonationalist ideals.

Such usage of educational space is not surprising; given the “nationalizing nationalism” process in Kazakhstan is progressing. However, it is indeed not how Kymlicka⁴⁰ envisioned the role of education to be in shaping multicultural citizens. According to the author, civic values are not only shaped in civics classes but throughout the educational experiences and curriculum. The author believes that history should be taught truthfully and citizenship education should teach how to critically assess authority. Two pillars of the civic education are “developing habits of

³⁸ Peyrouse, Sébastien. "Nationhood and the minority question in Central Asia. The Russians in Kazakhstan." *Europe-Asia Studies* 59, no. 3 (2007): 481-501.

³⁹ Brubaker, Rogers. "Nationalizing states revisited: projects and processes of nationalization in post-Soviet states." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 34, no. 11 (2011): 1785-1814.

⁴⁰ Kymlicka, Will. *Politics in the Vernacular*. Vol. 293. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

civility and the capacity for public reasonableness.”⁴¹ He believes that learning about other cultures is beneficial: “since it requires a sort of broad-mindedness which is hard to combine with an unreflective deference to traditional practices or authorities.”⁴²

Furthermore, Kymlicka⁴³ argues that citizenship education plays different role in multination and nation states with no large “territorially concentrated language groups.” In multination states, national identity construction based on one language can be seen mostly as undermining stability rather than promoting unity. On the other hand, in countries where immigrant population voluntarily came to their new homeland, helping them to integrate by teaching the mainstream language is more useful.

In order to further promote a myth of multiculturalism and inclusion, President Nazarbayev came up with an initiative to create a legal organization, which would help ethnic minority groups be represented on parliamentary level. As result, The Assembly of Nations was established. In essence, the aforementioned institution provides support for the organization of cultural activities for the members of various ethnic groups. In order to be eligible for assistance and support of the Assembly of Nations, ethnic groups have to apply for membership and be recognized by the regional office of the Assembly of Nation. Then, members of the Assembly decide whether to open a weekend language club or fund a dance festival organized by members of a particular ethnic group. However, individuals cannot join the Assembly. Only cultural ensembles, theater groups or other organizations that are deemed properly professional can file an application for the membership. In many cases those organizations do not even represent all

⁴¹ Ibid., 308.

⁴² Ibid., 309.

⁴³ Ibid., 312.

members of a certain ethnic group but rather are simply some NGOs or cultural organizations. For example, Roma people are not recognized as an ethnic group and are not represented at all in the Assembly. In essence, the Assembly of Nations was formed in order to create an illusion of inclusion. If members of ethnic minorities were truly included in the political life on a local, regional stages and the decision making process on a national level, there would be no need to create a parallel structure for the inclusion.

On education, textbooks and citizenship education in Kazakhstan and post-Soviet space

While some social scientists and educationalists attempt to depoliticize educational sphere, assuming that there are minimal power relations involved, other scholars and sociologists of education show the opposite. Foucault, Bourdieu, and most notable Apple⁴⁴ extensively wrote about ideology, schools and cultural hegemony that are spread by dominant cultural and economic groups internationally in the US education system. Apple's arguments seem very relevant when analyzing educational discourses in Kazakhstan. In one of his fundamental works, the author states:

“What is the relationship between culture and economy? How does ideology function? It is not enough to answer these questions in the abstract, however. As people concerned with education, we need to answer them in relation to one major institution, the school. Thus, we must rigorously scrutinize the form and the content of the curriculum, the social relations within the classroom, and the ways we currently conceptualize these things, as cultural expressions of particular groups in particular institutions at particular times.”⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Apple, Michael W. *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge, 1990.

⁴⁵ Ibid., X.

On the one hand, there are a number of scholars who are proponents of cosmopolitan understanding of citizenship and they believe that educational system can be used to foster diversity and multicultural values. On the other, there are research studies conducted by scholars that show how educational spaces are used to create envisioning of being a citizen in a particular nation state.

Civic values are taught in various classes throughout the primary, secondary and higher education in Kazakhstan. Research shows that an understanding of homeland, borders and belonging are reflected starting from early literacy education in post-Soviet Latvia, Armenia, Russia, Kazakhstan and Ukraine⁴⁶ (Silova et al., 2014). Children are being taught on how to conceptualize concrete geographical, political and cultural spaces pertinent to Latvian, Armenian, Ukrainian, Kazakhstani or Russian nation state.

In Ukraine, Mead's⁴⁷ analysis of Ukrainian primers revealed that the depiction of homeland in Russian and Ukrainian languages is different. While in Ukrainian language primers, the role of the Ukrainian language is depicted as the central in being Ukrainian, in Russian language textbooks, a more linguistically and ethnically diverse vision of the nation is portrayed.

In Kazakhstan, Kazakhization of the society through early literacy education is well-documented in a study conducted by Mun.⁴⁸ Mun's analysis of early literacy primers in Kazakhstan revealed that the content is full of pictures of Kazakh ornaments, description of

⁴⁶ Silova, Iveta; Mead Yaqub, Michael; Mun, Olga and Palandjian, Garine. "Pedagogies of Space: (re)imagining nation and childhood in post-Soviet states." *Global Studies of Childhood* 4, no.3 (2014): 195-209.

⁴⁷ Mead, Michael. "(Re)learning Ukrainian: Language myths and cultural corrections in literacy primers of post-Soviet Ukraine." Master's thesis, Lehigh University, 2012

⁴⁸ Mun, Olga. "Re-imagining national identity through early literacy textbooks in Kazakhstan." Master's thesis, Lehigh University, 2014

Kazakh traditions, sport games and cultural elements such as yurts, nomadic houses made of wool and wood. According to Mun, in some texts it was explicitly mentioned that the land of Kazakhstan belongs to Kazakhs. Heroes depicted in the primers reflected mostly ethnically Kazakh males. In fact, regardless the language of the textbooks, since the primers analyzed were in English, Kazakh and Russian languages, the central national identity formation message was clear: even if diversity is present in Kazakhstan, Kazakh culture is the crucial one.

Janmaat and Piattoeva⁴⁹ analyzed the trends in citizenship education in post-Soviet Ukraine and Russia in a comparative perspective. They found out that educational discourses change depending on the minister in charge. In Ukraine, there were more tendencies to follow European agenda on the development of education for democratic citizenship. In Russia, a heavy emphasis on patriotic education was observed. All in all, authors were not ready to provide concrete conclusions on the directions of the citizenship education in post-Soviet Ukraine and Russia due to unstable and unpredictable political situation. One of the most important conclusions of the study was that regardless the efforts of international agencies, active citizenship was rarely promoted in the curriculum. Authors concluded that it is highly unlikely that any of the post-Soviet countries will develop education for active democratic citizenship, since they are undergoing the process of the nation building.

Another study on citizenship education in Russia by Shmonin⁵⁰ revealed that current trend includes development of spiritual, religious and moral education as a part of civics

⁴⁹ Janmaat, Jan Germen, and Nelli Piattoeva. "Citizenship education in Ukraine and Russia: reconciling nation- building and active citizenship." *Comparative Education* 43, no. 4 (2007): 527-552.

⁵⁰ Shmonin, Vice-rector Prof Dr Dmitry. "Citizenship Education in Russia." In *Islam and Citizenship Education*, pp. 273-280. Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden, 2015.

curriculum. However, it is yet to be observed whether young people develop religious beliefs. Rather, as outlined by the author, young people develop more individualistic views. It might be so due to globalization and opening of Russia towards Western ideas.

In the Central Asian context, Fagerlind and Kanaev⁵¹ underlined general trends in citizenship education that takes place in post-Soviet Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. Some common trends include: de-sovietization and a focus on reviving national ethno culture. However, authors stressed a more internationalized and globalized version of the civic curricula.

While above-mentioned studies on the trends in citizenship education provide initial information on this topic in post-Soviet country context, more in-depth research is needed in order to understand the educational trends and discourses. While it is helpful to see the broad picture of the developments in post-Soviet Russia, Ukraine and other Central Asian states, more individual country-level contextualized research is needed in order to reveal the explicit and implicit messages towards national minorities that are enshrined in civic curricula. Hopefully current thesis will provide some information on this topic in Kazakhstan.

Methods and Sample

The main research question in this work was how citizenship discourse in civic education curriculum in Kazakhstan was depicted in the content of the textbooks in regards ethnic diversity and minority population. Some concrete research questions were:

- 1) How an ideal citizen is imagined in the content of the civic studies textbooks?

⁵¹ Fägerlind, Ingemar, and Alexander N. Kanaev. "Redefining citizenship education in the Central Asian countries." *Educational Practice and Theory* 22, no. 1 (2000): 95-113.

- 2) What role do national minorities play in constructing the notion of the Kazakhstani nation state?
- 3) What is the official school curriculum discourse on civic values, democracy and active citizenship?

In order to answer to the research questions, several topics were analyzed in-depth:

- **An ideal citizen: Multicultural or Kazakhified?**

It is important to look at how the state is constructing the notions of citizenry through its official channels of communication, as school curriculum. How is an ideal citizen portrayed in the textbooks? Does the role model promoted in education stand for cosmopolitan or traditional values? Analysis of the role of Kazakh traditions and culture described in the textbooks might answer some of the questions as to how the state is envisioning the ideal citizen.

- **On homeland and belonging: where to national minorities?**

In order to understand how homeland is discursively described in the textbook, it is necessary to look specifically on how the role of ethnic minority groups is framed in relation to the members of dominant cultural and ethnic group.

- **On civic values, democracy and active citizenship**

It will be necessary to analyze how civic notions and the understanding of democracy are constructed and described in the curriculum. Was active citizenship promoted in the textbooks? If yes, were students encouraged to take part in civil society? Why? Why not?

Methods

I examined school textbooks and curriculum materials for secondary school, grades 9, 10, 11 across Russian language schools drawing on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).⁵² CDA helped locate the explicit and implicit discourses on citizenry that were present in the texts, symbols and pictures of the textbooks. While there is no one subject that would teach citizenship, I collected a number of textbooks that are used in grades 9-11 on the topics related to civic and social studies. Drawing on CDA, I scrutinized how the notions of citizenry, civic and ethnic values and cultural symbols were portrayed in the school curriculum. I examined not only what

⁵² Fairclough, Norman. *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. Routledge, 2013.

was included in the content of the textbooks and handbooks but also what topics were excluded. It is thanks to the framework of the CDA, that I was able to qualitatively investigate the narratives of citizenship, law, society, democratic values and social inclusion that are being taught to young Kazakhstanis.

In order to answer the research questions, multi-level analysis was required. At first I have explored each textbook and handbook individually. After that I compared the content with other textbooks. The synthesis of the results will be presented according to thematic topics on relative issue.

Sample

For the purposes of current study, curricular materials for subjects: “A person, society and law”, “Law studies”, “A person and a society” and “The basics of understanding the society” were evaluated. “A person, society and law” class is taught in Grades 9 and 10. “Law studies”, “A person and a society” and “The basics of understanding the society” are taught in Grade 11. It is important to note that since Grade 10, students in the humanities direction have more civic studies related classes than students in the Math direction. For example, in Grade 11 of the humanities direction, students learn “Law studies” and “The basics of understanding the society”, while students in the Math direction study only “A person and a society”.

During fieldwork, which took place in Almaty, Kazakhstan in December 2014, I collected necessary civic studies textbooks for the analysis. Textbooks printed in Russian language were analyzed, since preliminary research revealed that the content of textbooks in Kazakh and Russian languages is almost the same, since the same authors write textbooks and the content is translated from Kazakh to Russian language. 7 textbooks published in Kazakhstan from 2011-2014 were investigated in the first stage. In the second instance, 2 didactic material

handbooks, which are supplementary to the textbooks that were published between 2007-2014, were reviewed. In total, 9 printed textbooks and handbooks that are being used in public and private schools with classes in Russian language instruction in 9-11 grades were studied. There is slightly different civic curriculum in 10 and 11 grades for students in math and humanities directions. Nevertheless, I have had the necessary curriculum to be analyzed for both directions.

Table 1: The list of the textbooks and handbooks

	Author(s)	Title of the textbook/handbook	Publisher	Year of the publication
1	Sabit, Izotov, Nysanbayev, Kazhymurat and Tatimov	A person and a society [<i>Chelovek i Obshestvo</i>], Grade 11, Math major, Textbook	Mektep	2011
2	Izotov, Sabit, Nysanbayev, Tatimov, Abishev and Kazhymurat	The basics of understanding the society [<i>Osnovy obshestvoznaniya</i>], Grade 11, Humanities major, Textbook	Mektep	2011
3	Uskenbayeva, Dauylbaeva	The basics of understanding the society [<i>Osnovy obshestvoznaniya</i>], Grade 11, Humanities major, Handbook	Mektep	2007
4	Izotov, Nysanbayev, Sabit, Dulambayeva, Ibraeva, Esetova	A person, society and law [<i>Chelovek, obshestvo i pravo</i>], Grade 10, Humanities major, Textbook	Mektep	2014

5	Izotov, Nyzanbayev, Sabit, Dulambayeva, Kopabayev, Aithozhin, Zhailin	A person, society and law [<i>Chelovek, obshchestvo i pravo</i>] Grade 10, Math major	Mektep	2014
6	Smagulova, Ahantayeva, Kadyrkozhaeva	A person, society and law [<i>Chelovek, obshchestvo i pravo</i>] Grade 10, Math major, Handbook	Mektep	2014
7	Zhukeshev, Sapargaliev, Asanbekova	A person, society and law [<i>Chelovek, obshchestvo i pravo</i>] Grade 9, Textbook	Mektep	2013
8	Zhukeshev, Loktionova, Beysebekova	A person, society and law [<i>Chelovek, obshchestvo i pravo</i>] Grade 9, Handbook	Mektep	2013
9	Zhukeshev, Asanbekova	A person, society and law [<i>Chelovek, obshchestvo i pravo</i>] Grade 9, Additional book to the textbook.	Mektep	2013

Society, law and a citizen: three pillars of citizenship education in Kazakhstan

The analysis of textbooks and handbooks revealed that through civic studies, Kazakhstani students are taught not only civic understandings and basic knowledge of law and constitution, but also culture specific understanding of citizenship. The results of the analysis can be generalized, since the same state school curriculum is used across all publicly and most privately funded schools in Kazakhstan. Only several publishing houses have the rights to print civic study textbooks, so the state funded “Mektep” publishing house printed all textbooks examined in this study. Education system is highly centralized in Kazakhstan. That is why all schools are mandated to use the textbooks analyzed in current study, which are approved by the Ministry of Education.

The textbooks on society and law included various information on family legislation, rights of children and various normative legal issues of citizenship. However, authors of the ninth grade textbook stated explicitly that the purpose of civic studies is to “help find the answer to the most important question in the life: how to become a person, a citizen and a patriot of your homeland” (Zhukeshev et al., 2013, p.169). Such trend of blending patriotic education with citizenship education in Kazakhstan is not unique and was also observed in Ukraine and Russia.⁵³

Ninth, tenth, eleventh grade textbooks provided materials meant to facilitate basic understanding of the Constitution, political systems internationally and nationally, political culture, national identity. Also, many teachings on moral and spiritual values were transmitted.

⁵³ Janmaat, Jan Germen, and Nelli Piattoeva. "Citizenship education in Ukraine and Russia: reconciling nation-building and active citizenship." *Comparative Education* 43, no. 4 (2007): 527-552.

There were separate chapters on religion, tolerance, civil society and human values. Lastly, textbooks also contained the basics aimed at helping in understanding the economy, private and public law.

When explaining the history of the world, a lot of references were made to ancient Greek philosophers as Aristotle and Plato. There were references made to Russian, British, German scholars when explaining certain aspects of ancient philosophy and ethics. However, for the purposes of this master thesis, I specifically opted to analyze chapters on multiethnic relations and constructing notions of citizenship in modern independent Kazakhstan. The rationale for above mentioned choice of analysis subject can be summarized in the following: regardless of providing general information on history of rights and world culture, by analyzing concrete chapters on active citizenship and patriotism in current times, it is possible to understand present state envisioning for its young citizens.

An ideal citizen: Multicultural or Kazakhified?

The analysis revealed that the issues of citizenship, national identity and Kazakh culture are interwoven in the fabric of social studies. It is without a doubt that legal education is a prerequisite of citizenship education. In many cases, though the language of the textbooks analyzed was Russian, cultural elements that were explained to describe Kazakhstani society were those pertinent to Kazakh ethnicity and culture. For example, in one of the chapters on morals and etiquette, it was written that new trends in Kazakhstani society include addressing people in Kazakh manner by calling a woman – *hanym*, a man – *myrza*, a lady – *bikesh*. It is highly uncommon to use such words in Russian language, since these terms – *hanym*, *myrza* and *bikesh* - stem from Kazakh language and Kazakh culture.

An ideal citizen is envisioned to have a certain type of a family (Zhukeshev et al., 2013): “every young person who is a citizen of Kazakhstan must fulfill its sacred duty of creating a family and having a child” (p.83). The authors maintain, “every country has its own tradition of creating a family” (p.87). Moreover, they describe in details the customs of Kazakh traditional family:

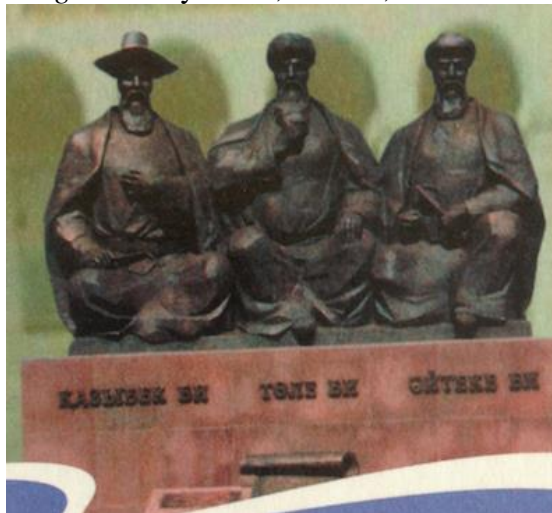
“in a traditional Kazakh family, when son leaves the family, he receives a part of the inheritance – *enshi*. Daughter receives inheritance only when she is getting married. The main person who receives the inheritance is the youngest son” (Zhukeshev et al., 2013, p.87).

By teaching students what vocabulary to use when addressing people and how to fulfill the duty of a citizen and establish a family, authors of the textbook create a particular narrative and a myth of Kazakhified imagined modernity. The creation of such dominant discourse excludes minority culture and traditions. Furthermore, such description of customary family relations goes against the description of legal duties of family members that are provided in the textbooks. On the one hand, a reader can interpret this information that such family relations were in the past. Still stating that there is such a notion as a traditional Kazakh family is misleading. It excludes other variations of family planning: single parent families, families with adopted children. Above-mentioned aspects of modern family are rare to come across. In upshot, the preference was given to traditional envisioning of the past that is expected to transcend into the present.

Even without opening the textbook for ninth graders, a reader can understand that the textbook will talk about history of the Kazakh society. Below one can see Image 1, which is depicted on the cover of the textbook. As to visual message three persons are portrayed on it are Kazybek bi, Tole bi and Aiteke bi. *Bi* stands for the judge or cultural activist in Kazakh language. This word and the above mentioned figures are historical figures from 17th century.

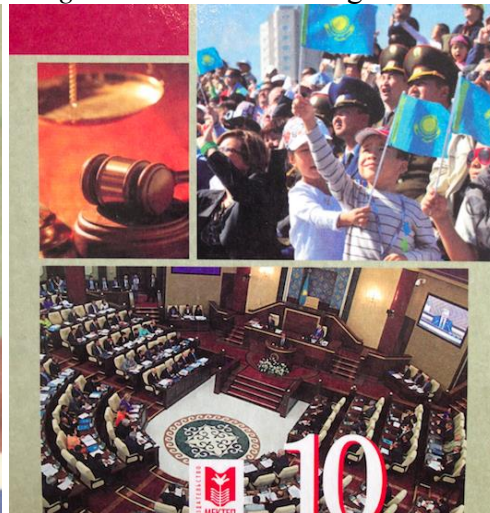
These three persons were the so-called forefathers of legal system in nomadic Kazakh society. They played major role in advising rulers and serving as orators in the community. Depictions of these judges demonstrate that Kazakh society had their own structure and even legal rules starting from 17th century. Image 2 below presents the cover of the textbook for tenth grade. You may see on it not only a picture of the element of the courtroom but pictures of Kazakhstan's flag and one of the chambers in the Senate or Majilis decorated with Kazakh traditional ornaments.

Image 1: Kazybek bi, Tole bi, Aiteke bi



Zhukeshev et al., 2013

Image 2: Kazakhstan's flags



Izotov et al., 2014

On the one hand, many might regard the renaissance of Kazakh culture as a positive trend, since Kazakhstan is undergoing the process of nation building. On the other, given the multicultural fabric of Kazakhstani society, such one-dimensional vision of the nation is misleading and even dangerous. Such understanding of the nation determines who belongs and who does not. The majority of analyzed textbooks contained chapters on diaspora and national minorities in Kazakhstan. Specific definitions were given to differentiate the terms *natsiya* [nation], *narod* [population, citizens] and *gosudarstvo* [state]. It is a very important differentiation if we are to

understand the nature of nationalist trends in Kazakhstan. Kazakhstani nation [*natsiya*] has a very different meaning from Kazakhstani population [*narod*], since it only incorporates ethnic Kazakhs, while Kazakhstani population includes all citizens. In English language one word is commonly used to identify the nation, which is inclusive of all citizens. However, it is extremely important to understand that in Russian language the word nation refers to ethnic titular group and not necessarily the whole population.

In addition to the textbooks on civics for the ninth graders, there was a book called *hrestomatiya*, which contained extra materials about Kazakhstani Constitution in order to help deepen legal knowledge of the pupils. Although, after careful analysis, it can't be thought as purely civic oriented book as it was replete with a lot of cultural details.

Occasionally there were excerpts from poems written by Russian poets such as Esenin. When teaching on morals, religion, ethics and patriotic beliefs, most references were made to ethnic male Kazakh philosophers such as Abai, Shakarim, Valikhanov, Al-Farabi. Predominantly literary works by ethnic Kazakhs, such as Abai, were printed in textbooks to show the significance of Kazakh authors as the prototypes of ideal citizens. Abai is famous for his publication of the words of wisdom that explicitly state how a Kazakh person should behave. Moralizing language of those excerpts contained complex messages and words of wisdom on how to live a proper life. On par with above-mentioned authors, *hrestomatiya* contained words from the speeches by President Nazarbayev from the long-term development program Kazakhstan 2030.

Lengthy excerpts of the speeches by Nazarbayev on national and state identity were reprinted. While multiethnic nature of Kazakhstani society was briefly mentioned, extensive

passages from the state program for the development of Kazakhstan's state identity were explicitly mentioning that Kazakhstan is based primarily on and for ethnic Kazakhs:

“Kazakhstan is the ethnic center for all Kazakhs. It is the only state in the world, which takes care about the preservation and the development of Kazakh ethnos, culture, language and traditions. Kazakhstan should only be identified as the Kazakh nation state.”

(Zhukeshev & Asanbekova, 2013, p.27)

To reinforce the materials printed in the textbook, handbooks had concrete exercises that highlighted the achievements of ethnic Kazakh role model citizens as Valikhanov, Abai and others. The pictures of Abai were printed in the textbooks (Image 3).

“Task 6

Outstanding Kazakh scholars C. Valikhanov, Y. Altynsarin, A. Kananbyaev wrote about the best human qualities such as humanism, patriotism, hard work and criticized stinginess, laziness. They motivated young generation of Kazakhs to work, study, learn crafts and be united.

Abai purposefully underlined five traits necessary to a human and five dangerous traits. Find in the works of Altynsarin words about the concepts of humanity and write them down in your notebook. Compare it.”

(Smagulova et al., 2014, p.14)

Image 3: Abai



Izotov et al., 2011, p.223

In addition to envisioning how ideal citizens should behave, the unified common national spirit that was shaping for ages and national character were described that are pertinent to all people in Kazakhstan. Such national character traits include respect to the elderly as well as polite and thoughtful speaking. Whole excerpts from Kazakh writers were cited on how citizens behaved in the past and should behave in the future. While pages were dedicated to reproducing such

moralizing text, in the handbook for the tenth grade only few tasks highlighted the role of Kazakhstani citizens of various ethnicities:

“Task 8

What Kazakhstani scientists do you know that contributed to the development of hard sciences? List their names in the notebook.”

(Smagulova et al., 2014, p.10)

Across the textbooks it was mentioned that all rights of all citizens should not be violated regardless of ethnicity. However, while Kazakh culture was described as wonderful and rich, other cultures of minority Ukrainians, Germans, Koreans, Uzbeks or Tatars were mentioned in the context of describing Diasporas that reside in Kazakhstan. The explicit message was written on the pages of the textbook for eleventh graders: “Kazakh culture has the richest spiritual and moral potential” (Sabit et al., p.127). Quotes from Nazarbayev were cited reaffirming that only Turk-Islamic Kazakh culture is a unique Eurasian phenomenon that would bridge Europe and Asia (Sabit et al., 2012). The meta message across the textbooks was that Kazakh culture is so unique that it is even better than European or Asian cultures only, since it combines the best of all.

On homeland and belonging: where to national minorities?

The topics of interethnic communication and the multiethnic fabric of Kazakhstani society were incorporated in all textbooks across ninth, tenth and eleventh grades. Across the textbooks analyzed it was explicitly mentioned that Kazakh ethnicity is the core of the nation in Kazakhstan and has a special status of *avtohtonnyi narod* or *korennaya naciya* [indigenous nation]: “Kazakhs are indigenous nation [*natsiya*] of Kazakhstan, since they historically formed the nation and have been living in this territory from ancient times” (Zhukeshev et al., 2013,

p.91). However, such depiction does not correspond to multicultural reality of Kazakhstani society.

The creation of the Assembly of Nations is named as the achievement in interethnic relations:

“today Assembly is the most important instrument in successful realization of state politics in interethnic relations, since it is a platform where various ethnic groups can interact. Since 1991 every year on May 1 we celebrate Unity Day of people of Kazakhstan. This holiday symbolizes Kazakhstani model of peace and unity” (Izotov et al., 2014, p.114).

Doctrine on national unity was named as a proof of fair treatment of all citizens in Kazakhstan. Special subchapter on the doctrine was mentioned in one of the textbooks but similar ideas came across numerous schoolbooks analyzed: all ethnicities receive equal treatment; they equally love the country, Kazakhstan, their homeland. It was said:

“Modern Kazakh state does not permit discrimination or violation of civil rights and freedoms by members of other ethnicities. Minority rights are protected by international human rights norms, since they are citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Russians and other minorities are not discriminated by the state or Kazakh people. In turn they love their homeland where they live and share all the sadness and happiness with their compatriots” (Zhukeshev et al., 2013, p.94).

Nevertheless, the chapter on *avtohtonnyi narod* [indigenous nation] stated:

“Indigenous nation and Diasporas.

As per Constitution, Kazakhstan is a unitary state. Emphasizing immense diversity, there are representatives of more than 100 ethnicities who reside here. However, Kazakh ethnicity is the core of the nation, which defines social- political status and unity of the country” (Zhukeshev et al., 2013, p.91).

In the above-mentioned example, even the title of the subchapter clearly divided indigenous nation versus Diasporas. While Nazarbayev’s quotes on the equality between all Kazakhstani are also included in the text of the textbooks, they are followed by the statements that different

ethnic minorities enjoy good life in Kazakhstan only thanks to the hospitality and uniqueness of native Kazakhs:

“it is possible mainly thanks to tolerance of Kazakh ethnos and its commitment to be friends with other ethnicities” (Izotov et al., 2014, p.114).

Such statements diminish the agency of national minorities. In fact, it represents minorities as guests that should be thankful to the hosts for their hospitality. It does not characterize all representatives of all ethnicities as active citizens but rather as passive elements of the society that should be forever thankful that they were welcomed to reside on the Kazakhstani territory by welcoming ethnic Kazakhs.

The paragraphs about national minorities and respect to diversity, which describe several schools and theatres that teach in German, Russian and other languages are often the only information about cultural diversity and minority rights. While there are a couple of sentences in all textbooks about equality between all citizens, it is described how Kazakh culture receives special attention:

“Since Kazakh culture is so rich, it needs additional support in order to uncover its full potential. With this goal in mind, massive project is implemented called “Cultural Heritage” (2004-2006 and 2007-2009), with a purpose to study vast periods of Kazakh culture and civilization in its all richness: philosophy, political science, literature, history, archaeology, music, sociology, arts, psychology, economics, Eastern studies, linguistics” (Izotov et al., 2011, p.117).

The central role of Kazakh culture was explained as a highly important unifying factor of different people and ethnicities. This message came across all textbooks from ninth to eleventh grades either in Math or humanities direction. It was mentioned that trilingual policy is being implemented in the country so that children can learn Russian, English and Kazakh languages.

Still, the role of teaching and learning Kazakh was named an absolute priority: “the nucleus of unity and integration is unique national culture of Kazakh ethnos” (Sabit et al., 2011, p.268).

In terms of visual representation, only Kazakh culture was portrayed. In fact, one picture portrayed girls wearing Kazakh traditional costumes against the backdrop of faceless silhouettes of people to signify how beautiful Kazakh traditional costumes are (Image 4).

Image 4: Girls in Kazakh traditional clothes



(Zhukeshev et al., 2013, p.34)

Tatar, Turkish, Ukrainian, Chechen, National cultural centres were mentioned in the chapters about the Assembly of Nation and minorities in Kazakhstan. However, the existence of Roma ethnic minority was not even mentioned in majority of the textbooks. Such misrepresentation of reality is especially exclusive of the most marginalized ethnic groups that do not have formal affiliation with the Assembly. Though it is stated that no member of Kazakhstani society should be discriminated against, some equal members of the same society are not spoken about in high school curriculum that was analyzed.

Other aspect of marginalizing the role of cultures and religions of national minorities was through overstating the role of Islam in securing peaceful development of Kazakhstan. While it was mentioned that different ethnicities practice Christianity and Buddhism, it was explicitly stated that Islam is the religion of the majority of ethnic Kazakhs. Although Kazakhstan is a secular state where religion of one culture and ethnicity should not dominate on a state level,

Islam was described as the *de facto* major religion in the country, since the majority of members of the titular Kazakh ethnicity practices it:

“the principles that are printed in the holy book of Islam – Quran: ‘All believers are brothers’ and ‘Let there be peace’, became the main guiding ideas of all believers in Kazakhstan” (Zhukeshev, 2013, p.123).

The analysis of the handbooks revealed that not politicized topics were given more attention as compared to politicized ones. For example, there were good exercises about analyzing situation of ecological problems in Kazakhstan. Political repressions of ethnic Kazakhs in Soviet times were scrutinized in great details. The copy of one concrete task highlights the nature of special attention to the struggles and suffering of people of Kazakh ethnicity in the past:

“Task 3

In 80s Kazakhstani society learnt anew about the spiritual heritage of Kazakh intelligentsia. Works on national questions were published in journals ‘Aykyp’ and ‘Kazakh’ in 30s and were repressed.

How do you think, why were such works repressed? List negative consequences of such repressions on the development of local culture, science and the arts” (p.33)

By providing such concrete tasks students are required to learn and remember the history of the suffering of ethnic Kazakhs. Beyond doubts, it is important to learn the history and tragedies of the past. However, when exercises focus on the suffering of one ethnicity, they do not represent the suffering that was experienced by millions of members of other ethnicities under the Soviet regime. For example, millions of Germans and Koreans were forcefully deported to reside in Kazakhstan. Nevertheless, handbooks rarely included tasks to highlight and emphasize the problems faced by members of national minorities neither that took place in the past or take place in the present. I believe it is done on purpose as to show that even throughout the history,

lived experiences of the titular ethnicity are more important, since they “own” Kazakh nation state.

Another important aspect of national ethnic politics was omitted. As mentioned earlier in the paper, one of the main policies to revive national ownership of Kazakhstan by Kazakhs was the repatriation of ethnic Kazakhs, oralmans. Though millions of oralmans were repatriated, the majority of chapters on diaspora or ethnic politics failed to mention repatriation policy. The above-mentioned policy demonstrates national politics towards favoring migration based on the imagined commonalities of all ethnic Kazakhs around the world. Although the fact that it was not mentioned in the textbooks is unusual. Moreover, such omission most likely is not accidental. It shows that the state is picturing an image of respect to all ethnicities by including information of the Assembly of Nation and respect to national minorities, while the reality of favoring repatriation and creating of Kazakhified nation was not reflected fully in the textbooks. As a result students are not learning about *de facto* politics of Kazakhstani government. It is therefore entails a problematic case given that students ought to learn truthful information about the political processes in the country as the purpose of civic studies curriculum is to teach about the society where students live in.

On civic values, democracy and active citizenship

Overall, particular understanding of civic and democratic values was transmitted through the content of the textbooks. In comparison to numerous chapters on market economy and spirituality, the paragraphs that contained useful information to promote active citizenship were relatively short, though in one of the textbooks it was written that one of the purposes of citizenship education is to:

“help young man to become active citizen and learn universal human and national specific values, to become a patriot of their own country with own opinion and vision of the events” (Zhukeshev et al., 2013, p. 3).

Indeed, young students should be taught about their rights. Moreover, they should be taught in practice on how to execute those rights. That is why I analyzed both textbooks and the student handbooks that accompanied the books. Every student should fill out extra exercises in the handbook in order to remember the most important information from the chapter in the textbook.

The textbooks were structured in such a way that there are questions in the end of each chapter to highlight the most important information in a given chapter. For example, in a chapter on politics, it was stated that:

“It is not enough for a person to enjoy beautiful nature. A person needs freedom, democracy, material and spiritual richness. It is all in his hands.” (Zhukeshev et al., 2013, p.20)

Again, it is indeed a very interesting statement but in the questions section this topic was not addressed. There were good examples on how to file documents for divorce. Still there were no concrete exercises on how to advocate for human rights or freedom of speech in the handbook materials analyzed.

Such exclusions and omissions are not accidental and are intentional. Human rights are an important part of citizenship education. After analyzing all textbooks it became clear that authors selectively cited Kazakhstan’s participation and commitment to international organizations and international norms. Kazakhstan’s affiliation was mentioned in regards the United Nations convention on the rights of children. More political topics were avoided and sensitive issues of democracy and civil society were only briefly described. On a positive note, human rights were defined in the textbook. Still no single negative case of human rights violation

that took place in Kazakhstan was mentioned. Human rights violations were rather presented as issues and injustices of the Soviet past:

“In 1968 Soviet army entered Czechoslovakia. In order to voice the disapproval of these actions a lot of international citizens and Soviet citizens came out to the Red Square and demanded to stop the actions of the Soviets. Many of them were arrested and detained for a long time.

How do you think, were human rights violated in this case?” (Smagulova, 2014, p.48).

In fact, the last sentence was written in bold in order to hint that human rights indeed were violated. The critical question remains. Why aren't there similar exercises about the violation of human rights in modern Kazakhstan? This example shows how state is constructing a certain narrative of the past and the present. Construction of the above-mentioned narrative embodies at least misrepresentation and inaccuracy as it depicts Kazakhstan as a perfect state, which is only developing in a positive direction of democratization and respect of human rights and diversity. It does not reflect the reality of highly centralized and authoritarian regime of present-day Kazakhstan is provided.

The state of democracy in Kazakhstan was defined as a process. The word democratization was used in a positive light to describe the political situation in the country and the transition from Soviet to post-Soviet development. It was mentioned on the chapters on political culture and parties that Kazakhstan is a democratic state. There was information on human rights and definitions were given about differences between human and citizenship based rights. On numerous occasions, it was reinstated that the democracy is developing in the country and soon Kazakhstan will become a developed democratic nation.

The handbook for the civic studies in the ninth grade uniquely had a list of signs of democracy. It is interesting that the rights of national minorities were named along with other signs of democracy. They included free speech, rule of law, the ability of peaceful change of the

ruling elite. While it is great that such notions were included, there were no concrete tasks to develop critical analysis of political situation in Kazakhstan in relation to the notions listed. While most of the tasks and the tests of the handbook targeted memorization of facts and dates of Kazakhstan's independence or paragraphs from the constitution. However, in order for students to be active citizens, they need to know how to execute the rights that they have. Unfortunately the handbook mostly consisted of general information about the political and judicial system of Kazakhstan rather critical tasks to solve the problems of Kazakhstani modern society. On a pros side, the concrete assignments about private property rights, the right to divorce, children's rights and work related rights and responsibilities have been presented.

Political reforms of the transition from Presidential to Presidential and Parliamentary Republic, the increase in political parties and the change of status of the Assembly of Nation were described in great details. Three main periods of the development of democracy in Kazakhstan were named: from 1991-1995, 1996-2000 and from 2001-2006. It was stated that democratic development of multicultural society was mostly developed in the last period. Yet if one was to critically assess these statements, one will notice that this information is conveyed with highly positive connotation. The constant modification of the constitution was not critically analyzed rather presented as the natural process. Likewise, it was given no account on the matter of fact that there was only one president since the independence of Kazakhstan in 1991 and international observers criticized most presidential elections.

Active citizens can practice their rights. Ideally students are to be taught how to become active citizens through civic curriculum. Examples of political movements can be described in the textbooks. In most of the textbooks only formal classification of countries based on bi or multi party system was named. No significant account has been given on civil rights movements

either internationally or nationally. Several examples of civil rights movements that took place in Kazakhstan were marginally mentioned in the textbook for tenth grade:

“Political movements are actively taking place in the country. One of the most vivid examples is the activity of the ‘Nevada-Semey’ association that was initiated by famous poet and activist O. Suleimenov. A lot of other movements are functioning in the country: workers movement ‘Azamat’, civil movement by pensioners ‘Generation’ and Republican united Slavic movement ‘Lad’ and others. Overall there are several thousands of such movements and civil organizations” (Izotov et al., p.161).

The above-mentioned quote from the textbook highlights the active development of civil society and civil movements in Kazakhstan. However, only several names of the civil society organizations were mentioned. The first one, “Nevada-Semey” - is the organization against nuclear testing. An ethnic Kazakh O. Suleimenov leads that movement. The second movement called “Azamat” is supposed to advocate for the workers rights. In fact, *azamat* translates from Kazakh language as a “citizen”. The third movement is about the rights of the elderly. Only one movement that is supposed to explicitly advocate for the rights of the Slavic minority was named. Concrete campaigns that were led by civil society members were neither mentioned nor encouraged.

The movements of other kind such as opposition political movements were not mentioned at all. On the contrary, the existence of the civil society was somehow attributed to the wise politics of the first president Nazarbayev:

“In his address to the people of Kazakhstan ‘Strategy Kazakhstan-2050’: President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nazarbayev indicated that our society step-by-step ‘is moving closer to the highest standards of democratization and human rights’. He specified new long-term plans about the development and strengthening of Kazakhstani democracy. He envisioned new type of state management, decentralization, widening of parliamentary responsibilities, reformation of the legal system and the work of special agencies, strengthening of the fight against corruption etc” (Izotov et al., 2014, p.162).

The above-mentioned paragraph about the Strategy 2050 was printed right after the paragraph on the civil society movements describe earlier in the analysis. This was done strategically so students can relate the efforts of the President to build democracy in the country. That is why various civil society movements exist and develop. It was not mentioned that it is thanks to the outstanding leadership of the organizations or membership of ordinary followers that they exist. It was not mentioned or taught in the handbooks on how to establish a local campaign to advocate for the rights of the animals or vulnerable social groups. In most cases the information in the textbook was one-sided and highly positive of the current political regime. It is highly doubtful that an active citizen can be developed if he or she is only receiving such unrepresentative uncritical information.

The aim of the civic curriculum was defined as to “promote civil position and social responsibility, i.e. highest moral standards and love to the homeland of the Republic of Kazakhstan” (Izotov, et al., 2014, p. 3). Somehow the two of the ideas were equated: the one was to promote civil position and another one was to love the homeland. In reality this two positions are not the same. Being socially responsible does not mean blindly loving one’s homeland. One can criticize the country and love it at the same time.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to understand how Kazakhstani state authority constructs a particular notion of citizenship and national belonging. It revealed that educational school curriculum mimics state agenda to Kazakhify the society and construct a Kazakhified nation state. The ideal citizen is imagined as a law-abiding person who respects first and foremost state language and culture, which is Kazakh language and Kazakh culture. While the equality of all

people of all ethnicities was emphasized and there were references made to international scholars and artists, the content of the high school curriculum depicted mostly Kazakh poets and writers as the most important role models and ideal citizens for young citizens of Kazakhstan.

Analyzing the situation of ethnic minority groups reflected in the textbooks in Kazakhstan through Kymlicka's lenses, it is possible to conclude that it is vulnerable and unjust, since the language and culture of Kazakhs is represented as the major one. Simply put, the role of national minorities was presented as playing marginal role. Since every citizen has the same rights and obligations, the educational system in turn should reflect the diversity. Unfortunately, current analysis revealed that though cosmopolitan values were present in the textbooks, citizenry was portrayed strictly in ethnonational terms. It was stated that Kazakhs are the indigenous nation in Kazakhstan and it was clearly affirmed that Kazakh ethnicity is the core of the Kazakhstani nation.

The processes of democratization and active citizenship were presented in uncontested and highly positive way. Therefore it poses a problem, since students are deprived from analyzing real challenging situation of political developments in the country. Civic studies are meant to teach responsibility for the citizens of a particular country. The analysis revealed that in the case of Kazakhstani civic studies curriculum, depoliticized topics on family legislation or ecological issues were often more prioritized than politically sensitive issues of discrimination or violation of human rights that take place in the country.

Moralizing language reprinted in all textbooks by Kazakh ethnic writers creates a narrative of intergenerational dialogue between the ethnic Kazakhs of the past and ethnic Kazakhs of the present. Such representation excludes artists, scholars and writers who live in Kazakhstan for many years but are not of Kazakh ethnicity. They are not recognized as

fundamental authors that deserve to be cited along the classic so-called fundamental Kazakh thinkers.

If Kazakhstan was such a democratic country as it was depicted in the school curriculum, it remains a question why initiatives or movements that are led by ordinary citizens were marginally included in the content of the textbooks. Instead there was omnipresence of references to the first president Nazarbayev by either citing his direct quotes or excerpts from state programs.

Current study revealed some of the trends in civic studies curriculum in Kazakhstan. It is important to study the textbooks as teachers use the books primarily as one of the main teaching material. Nonetheless in order to understand how young people understand and internalize the notions of citizenship, nationhood and national identity, it is needed to conduct qualitative studies and interview students themselves. Outlining further steps, it would be interesting to interview teachers who teach citizenship education, as they will be able to provide their feedback on the content of the civic school curriculum. Moreover, an opportunity to study teacher education materials of civic studies in order to see a more holistic view of the envisioning of citizenship education would be deemed highly pertinent. All in all, while all set objective and goals of this study have been met, expanding the research area and study the above-mentioned issues in future studies are the next steps to be carried out in continuation of the given research topic.

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