Implications of inclusive nation-building policies in Kazakhstan:

Young Kazakh adults' national identity

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Abstract

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The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the implications of nation-building policies in Kazakhstan for the future of *Kazakh* identity. To consider the implications of largely inclusive policies, this dissertation investigates how young Kazakh adults, born and raised in different cultural and geographical contexts yet with a shared experience of studying and working in the capital city, perceive ethnic, civic, and cultural categories of national identity.

A mixed methods approach is used, incorporating the comparative analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. A sample of 120 males and females aged 22 to 30, graduated from a higher education institution, and currently working in Astana, Kazakhstan, completed a questionnaire assessing subjective perceptions of their national identity. Quantitative data are complemented by qualitative data from 30 participants, providing depth and validity to the questionnaire answers.

The young adults' responses reveal that Kazakhs are becoming less segregated culturally, encouraged by the government's inclusive form of nation-building, the relocation of the capital city and the economic growth. It is argued that the young adults are Kazakhs not only in blood and colour, but also in taste and perception. The prevalence of civic virtues despite the presence of robust ethnic identification was recognized and the urge to organise social life in terms of sharp nationalist boundaries proved thin.

The implications of these findings for nation-building policies are discussed. Efforts should be directed towards introducing the historical inclusivity of *Kazakh* identity and highlighting the sufficiency of cultural integration of non-titular ethnic groups to become members of Kazakh nation.

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INTRODUCTION

Today, the nation-state is the pre-dominant form of political organisation. Its political power is evident in many areas, ranging from nationally-demarcated capitalism to the raising of national flags in international competitions. Contrary to the arguments pronouncing the demise of the nation-state, Roshwald (2011) claims that the peak period of nations determining their form of government without outside influence has come very recently: around the end of the 1980s. Since then different nationalities have managed to construct their own self-governing bodies and designate interstate boundaries that were previously imposed by 'military conquest, superpower agreement or the agency of imperial overlords' (Roshwald 2011: 4). Hence, at a time when Western Europeans seem to be less inclined to identify themselves with nation-states, Eastern Europeans and Eurasians have been embracing the nation-state (Brubaker 2011).

Indeed, with the fall of the Soviet Union, which Calhoun (1997: 16) viewed as 'the last major holdout against the division of the world into national states', the self-styled nation-states increased in number and gradually became infused with the values of titular ethnic groups. This is because although political transformations had created independent states, they were national only in form, not in substance and thus far away from the original model of a nation-state. To become fully realized nation-states they had to be filled with national content and ensure the congruence of people, territory, culture and polity (Brubaker 2011). While nationalism was a 'less sincere ideology than seizure of the spoils', in actual fact it 'delivered the final deathblows to the Soviet Union' (Mann 2013: 196) and replaced the communist ideology in nation-building policies of the newly-emerged countries.

Brubaker (1996) called post-communist republics "nationalising states", as they favoured the demographic, financial and political dominance of titular nations. Other scholars were also quick to put the ethnic label on the nationalisms of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia that followed the fall of Communism and the Soviet break-up (Ignatieff 1994; Snyder 1993). Ethnic nations ostensibly stress the necessity of resemblance between the homogenous ethnic group, the nation in question and the state that belongs to that particular nation, while civic nations bring people of various backgrounds under one umbrella and do this by stressing a common fate (Brubaker 1992; Gledhill 2005;

Hall 2013). Critics have questioned the applicability of this model by arguing that there are no nations that are purely ethnic or purely civic (Joppke 2005; Kuzio 2002). However, rather than equivalently portraying countries as either civic or ethnic nations, some authors suggest that the two should be observed as alternative conceptions of nationhood, with one or the other gaining dominance under different circumstances during various historical periods (Smith 1991; Kuzio 2002; Janmaat 2006). For instance, it could be contended that 'in ethnic nations the ethnic component of nationhood' is sounder 'than the civic component and vice versa for civic nation-states' (Tsuda 2010: 620).

All discussions about the choice between the civic or ethnic model of nation-building policies in post-Soviet states related, one way or another, to the relative status of Russians and the Russian language in the newly independent states. Few of these states made efforts to include ethnic minorities into the political nations and provide legal protection of the regional lingua franca (Russian). In most cases, media outlets, government structures, education institutions etc., began to operate in indigenous languages. Therefore, considered as unwelcome and even illegitimate 'colonialists', Russian-speaking residents were consistently pressured to emigrate (Laitin 1998). After the fall of the Soviet Union, many Russians decided to leave Estonia and Latvia in particular, as these states exercised nationalizing policies powerfully (Brubaker 2011).

On the other hand, the political transformation of multi-ethnic and multi-lingual Soviet republics into "homogenous" nation-states undermined their democratic developments, as the relegation of the Russian language to the margins deprived many non-titular groups of the opportunity to take part in the economic life of the country. These policies needed to be either reversed or moderated as soon as some ex-Soviet states became members of influential international organizations, such as the European Union, the Council of Europe and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Considering that these supra-national structures have endorsed the adoption of civic forms of nation-building policies, a few post-communist countries, especially Latvia and Estonia, lessened the tone of their nationalizing policies (Kelley 2004).

Unlike other post-Soviet states in Central Asia, Kazakhstan pursued both ethnic and civic forms of nation-building simultaneously, designating minority ethnicities as

Kazakhstanis to distinguish them from the titular nation, *Kazakhs* (Roy 2000). The distinctiveness of the nation-building strategy in Kazakhstan was rooted in its linguistic and ethnic diversity. Both geographically and culturally closer to Russia, Kazakhstan was exceptional in that it contained a large number of ethnic minorities within its territory and Kazakhs lacked the privilege of being the majority in their own republic in 1991 (Cummings 2006). Thus, the government opted for a more civic than ethnic form of nation-building to reflect the composition of the population. Whilst Kazakhstan's Constitution of 1993 defined Russian as the language of 'interethnic communication', the new Constitution of 1995 declared it as an 'official language' to be used in local and national governmental structures on a par with Kazakh, which is a state language. Due to the legacy of the Soviet Union, the government's civic form of nation-building is strongly associated in the popular consciousness of Kazakhstani people with the Russian language, while the Kazakh language is just as strongly associated with ethnocentrism and the corresponding model of nation-building (Kozyrev 2011).

However, not only multi-ethnic environment but also the linguistic segregation of Kazakhs occluded the ideological commitment to ethnic nationalism in Kazakhstan (Kolstø and Malkova 1997). While other Central Asian nations shared the legacy of *Russification*, the difference was that part of Kazakhs "inherited" it excessively and became estranged to the native language. So the maintenance of the Russian language provided a breathing space for Russian-speaking members of the titular nationality too (Dave 2003). By the time of independence, a significant portion of urban Kazakhs were Russian-speaking and 'for them not only the language, but the culture of Moscow and Leningrad (today St. Petersburg), not to mention Siberia, were much closer than the culture of the rural traditional Kazakh areas of their own country' (Fierman 2006: 102). They deemed their absorption in Russian culture as a gateway facilitating 'upward educational and social mobility', not a tragedy or misfortune (Fierman 2006: 102). In their eyes Kazakh-speaking rural Kazakhs were pining for pre-Soviet days to undermine the democratic and civic nature of the emerging country (Surucu 2002). Moreover, linguistic segregation was also regionally concentrated, as the majority of the Russian-speaking Kazakhs were living in the Russian-dominated northern and eastern Kazakhstan, and in the major cities, including Almaty (Wolfel 2002). Therefore, Kazakhs were not in the position to translate their 'ethnic pride into a coherent and widely accepted ideological defense' of their unique nation-state (Olcott 2002: 58).

Now, following the process of urbanisation during the years of independence, the proportion of Kazakh-speakers in urban areas has increased substantially, which has left the linguistic segregation only geographically relevant: with the Russian language dominant among Kazakhs of northern-eastern origin and the Kazakh language prevalent in southern-western provinces. Almaty, the former capital of Kazakhstan in the south-east, remained as an unusual case, as it comprised significant numbers of ethnic Russians and Russian-speaking Kazakhs. Instead of admitting the exceptionalism of Almaty, some commentators tried to reject the obvious-geographical divide of ethnic and cultural groups, arguing that 'some northern cities, such as Atyrau, are heavily Kazakh while some southern cities, such as the former capital Almaty, are heavily Slavic in composition' (Kussainova and Gleason 1998: 534) In reality, Atyrau is a western city situated near the Caspian Sea and is a "million miles" away from northern Kazakhstan (see Appendix 2).

The geographic division of ethnic groups, which was also a linguistic segregation, steered the government to move the capital city from the south (Almaty) to the north (Astana) in the late 1990s. The relocation of the main city instigated an internal migration, largely one way-towards the north. Russian people were gradually losing their demographic and then economic leverage. As for those living in the new capital, they were of a 'decidedly non-elite nature', unable to develop 'close ties with the newly relocated officials' (Anacker 2004: 528). So Astana became predominantly a meeting place of Kazakhs: Russian-speakers from northern and eastern provinces of the country and Kazakh-speakers from Kazakh-dominated southern and western regions at large. However, thanks to the government's ethnic migration policy that started in the early days of independence, local Kazakhs were also able to meet there their co-ethnics born and raised outside Kazakhstan, for instance, China, Mongolia, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan etc.

In Astana, a generation of Kazakh youth that has graduated from the universities and entered the work environment has already been formed over the last fifteen years. This study attempts to explore how inclusive nation-building policies in Kazakhstan affected the national consciousness of young Kazakhs with different lingo-regional backgrounds yet a shared experience of living and working in the newly-built capital of Kazakhstan. Since Kazakhstan will be shaped in the short term by the young generation of Kazakhs

educated under the sovereign state, a study of this group's national identities is of enormous importance.

My interest in investigating this particular problem arose from my personal experience. I was born in Kentau, a mineral-rich town in southern Kazakhstan - a region where the Kazakh language permeated every sphere of the daily life. Compared with linguistically-homogenous neighbourhoods, Kentau was populated by skilled workers from the Soviet Union and was relatively multi-ethnic and bilingual. As a result of the ethnic composition of the town and my schooling, I became introduced to Kazakh, Russian and English languages relatively early. After graduating from local school in 2003, I decided to study for my undergraduate degree in the new capital of Kazakhstan, majoring in English and German. In those days, Eurasian National University was the most tempting destination for high-scoring school-leavers and Astana promised an upward social mobility for all. I stayed there for seven years and witnessed not only the transformation of an old Soviet city into a modern mega-polis but also came to sense the ripples of the government's nation-building policies on the ground.

To my surprise, very few Russians or Russian-speaking non-Kazakhs studied at the university, although the education was provided in two languages: Kazakh and Russian. The vast bulk of students sitting in Russian-language groups were Kazakhs. So, it was the first time I came across Russian-speaking Kazakhs of northern-eastern origin, who cared little about their mother tongue, openly admiring Russian culture. This was in sharp contrast to Kazakh repatriates, mostly from China, unable to express a word in Russian. Then, I met Kazakhs from Kazakh-dominated regions of Kazakhstan, more fluent in Kazakh than in Russian. Born and raised in a different cultural context, the young generation of Kazakhs, meeting each other, were undergoing the process of "re-evaluation". A set of issues, ranging from genuine political independence to national identity, consistently and earnestly surfaced. After graduating and entering the job market, they started to feel the impact of globalization, as the rules of the game were rapidly changing in Kazakhstan's new capital. Unlike their parents' generation, the young graduates were left to cope with the legacy of the Soviet period, adapt to the cold winds of globalization, and revive their sense of 'Kazakhness', as the inclusivity of the state policy necessitated.

Out of this experience appeared a serious interest in and necessity for exploring the perceptions and attitudes of young Kazakh adults, with different language backgrounds, pertaining to the issues of nationality and attempting to draw out the key features of the emerging identity of Kazakhs.

This study attempts to investigate the attitudes of young Kazakh adults to nationality-related issues and thus conjecture the key features of their emerging national identity. The first objective is to critically employ the complex theories of nation-building and nationalism to investigate the salience of ethnic, cultural and civic identity markers in the construction of young adults' national identity. The second purpose is to see if those young adults who value ethnic characteristics of national identity also attach significance to its civic and cultural features. Finally, this study aims to discuss possible future scenarios for nation-building policies in the light of the young adults' attitudes to Kazakh and Kazakhstani identities.

A wide variety of strategies have been used to classify nations as more or less civic in previous studies. Some, like Greenfield (1992), employ a qualitative historical analysis of nationalist movements. Another prevalent method is to exercise survey data and see which features are deemed crucial by its members (Shulman 2002; Janmaat 2006). Then again, Kiely, Bechhofer, and McCrone (2005) attempted to recognize the nature of Scottish nationalism by handling qualitative interviews not only with members of the Scottish nation but also with non-members. This study opts for a strategy that resembles that of Shulman (2002) and Janmaat (2006) and uses survey data. Still, it departs from many studies of post-Soviet states (Rivers 2002; DeYoung 2010; Ibold 2010; Kirmse 2010) as it focuses on the new generation predominantly educated in the years of independence, who enjoy the experience of working in professional jobs and are better-placed to compare top-down and bottom-up identity-related trends.

In the new context of global modernity, studies of the nation-building practice in newly independent states have an enormous practical importance; such knowledge could actively contribute to the reinforcement of democracy, the establishment of civil society and maintenance of overall stability as all these issues are closely related to the policy pursued by the states in relation to national identity. The findings of the study will make a major contribution to general knowledge on nationalism; above all, the current study

will broaden the present knowledge of identity policies in one of the highly multinational post-Soviet states.

Since not much empirical research has been conducted on the nation-building practice in Kazakhstan, and those few studies that have been undertaken rely on official documents, there is a clear need for a study of the perception of identity, particularly of the young generation educated in the post-communist period. Thus, this study will provide a unique opportunity to observe the salience of ethnic, civic and cultural characteristics of national identity among young adults and to appreciate either the Kazakh nation or Kazakhstani nation in the making.

In addition to the Introduction this research has eight chapters and Conclusion. As can be seen above, Introduction contains different elements that provide an early structure for the thesis, including the objectives of the research and its value.

The first chapter reviews the literature on nations and nationalism. It is commonly accepted that in order to measure the fabric of national identity, multiple theories need to be employed, as nation-building policies not only structure but are themselves shaped by various processes on the ground. A special emphasis will be made on the salience of nation-state as a political actor in the contemporary world in the face of continuous pressures from globalization trends. By mentioning debates around civic-ethnic dichotomy and referring to the latest improvements on this front, the chapter will discuss the nature of post-Soviet states and the relevance of notions such as "nationalising" and "ethnic" used in their regard in the 1990s.

In Chapter 2, the nation-building process in Kazakhstan will be examined in the context of post-Communist Central Asia, as these newly-independent states remain interrelated and dependent on each other's socio-political conditions. Only by placing Kazakhstan in the context of the historical situation in which Central Asian people developed into nation-states and the problems and challenges faced by these countries, can we comprehend the full nature of Kazakhstan's national policies.

While Kazakhstan's government has pursued both civic and ethnic policies from the early years of independence, a few foreign scholars tended to notice the dominance of ethnic substance. Chapter 3 will argue that civic, inclusive nation-building policies were more powerful and consistent than ethnic ones. This chapter will also expose the main

divisions, problems and challenges faced by Kazakhs with a special focus on language in order to show why ethnic nationalism has not taken root in the country. Finally, this chapter will draw attention to the state's attempt to minimise the geographical and linguistic division of Kazakhs by relocating the capital city from the south to the north.

Chapter 4 will present the methodology of the study. Here a few suggestions will be given regarding the motives for choosing mixed methods approach. In addition, this chapter contains the key characteristics of the participants, their number and geographical context.

In order to increase the readers' familiarity with the type of Kazakhs chosen for this study, Chapter 5 provides fundamental information about the young adults. Since all respondents were asked to divulge personal data at the back of their questionnaires, it was possible to measure their level of Kazakh, Russian and English languages and to compare their parents' educational, regional and other features with their children's. In addition, this chapter will show the participants' religious practices, their definition of nationality and interest in foreign countries. On the basis of this information, it will be possible to see the relevance of national belonging among the new generation of Kazakhs.

Chapter 6 analyses how young Kazakh adults perceive of ethnic features of national identity. It will present the weight they give to ancestry in ethnic identification and show how important they find the prospect of elevating the status of titular nationality over the rest.

This study treats cultural elements of national identity separately from ethnic and civic elements, and Chapter 7 will demonstrate the extent to which the young adults find language and religion important in their lives and observe the extent of their familiarity with post-independence cultural celebrities.

In Chapter 8 a wide range of issues related to civic Kazakhstani identity will be analysed. Here, special emphasis will be given to the criteria the young adults believe should be exercised for membership to the Kazakhstani nation. Due to the fact that regional differences among Kazakhs were profound in the early years of independence, this chapter will measure how eager the young generation is to downplay language-reinforced regional disparities.

Finally, the Conclusion will highlight the main commonalities and differences between young Kazakh adults in relation to ethnic, civic and cultural aspects of national identity. On the basis of this, a number of future scenarios concerning nation-building policies will be discussed and evaluated.

Chapter 1

Theories of nations and nationalism

1.1 Introduction

Many scholars concede nationalism to be a political claim advocating the congruence of national and political realms, and that it is more vigorous and pronounced in newly-independent states enmeshed in the legacy of the past (Brubaker 1996 and 1998; Gellner 1983; Greenfeld 1992). Today, however, the nationalist rhetoric that ruthlessly denounces modern globalization can also be witnessed 'on the streets of Athens, in the ballot boxes of Switzerland, and in the conference rooms of the Texas Board of Education' (Roshwald 2011: 5). Yet, for the vast majority of people living in the Western world, the concept of nationality may not transcend the value of 'religion, humanity, morality or justice' (Ben-Israel 2011:67). Nonetheless, although stressed with different intensity, nationalism is present in every corner of the world.

The notion of the 'nation' is the main idea behind the concept of nationalism. In other words, nationalism is a certain standpoint or a way of thinking about the concept of the nation (Greenfeld 1992: 3-4). Although the terms 'nation' and 'nationalism' are interrelated, their relationship is not set in stone. While Hroch (2006: 21) suggests alternative terms, such as 'nation formation', 'national identity', 'national consciousness' and 'patriotism' to replace the term nationalism, Greenfeld (1992: 3) uses nationalism as an 'umbrella term' under which are included other associated concepts, such as national identity, nations and national ideology. This is a reason why some scholars (Ben-Israel 2011 and Calhoun 1997) argue that nationalism - due to its multifarious nature - cannot be given a distinct and precise theoretical description. By the same token, when considering the literature on nationalism, one may conclude that the term has a variety of definitions and is described and applied in contentious ways not only as a political but also as a scientific concept.

Here, I will critically analyse theories of nationalism and scholarly definitions of the notions of the nation and of nationalism, paying particular attention to civic and ethnic nationalism. Following this, I will argue that despite its complex nature, nationalism

and correspondingly the notion of the nation have not lost their relevance in the modern world.

1.2 Theories of nationalism

Although there are several theoretical perspectives on the issue of nationalism, these different theoretical stances are not necessarily autonomous or coherent, and not all contemporary scholars of nationalism agree on the same classification or categorization of the existing approaches. For example, while some modernists refer to industrialization as the power behind the nation-building process and as a driver behind a sense of nationalism, according to other scholars from the same theoretical perspective, it is print-capitalism that lead to the creation of national identity. At the same time, all modernists share the idea that nations and nationalism are modern phenomena. When ethno-symbolists put the emphasis on the historical and cultural background of various ethnic groups, primordialists come close in some of their assumptions to ethno-symbolists.

1.2.1 Primordialism

Primordialism, which generally refers to a belief in 'antiquity and naturalness of nations' (Ozkirimli 2000: 74), comes in three different forms. First of all, there are perennialists, who argue that contemporary nations have deep historical roots, and that they have inhabited the world from time immemorial. The second group, socio-biologists, tries to find an ethnic and national starting point in genetic structures, and considers modern nations to be the consequences of 'the idiom of kinship, or a kind of super family' (Ozkirimli 2000: 74). The third group, composed of the cultural primordialists, asserts that people's belief in sacredness generates strong attachments for the 'givens of social existence' (Ozkirimli 2000: 74). Taking into account that there are so many factors that forge one's identity, it is hardly believable that blood means everything. Consequently, quite a lot of scientific criticism has been voiced against the primordialists. For instance, Smith (1991) argues that ancient Egypt, despite possessing a number of features typical of modern nations, was not a nation but *ethnie,* a term coined by him in order to distinguish ethnic groups that look a lot like nations but do not constitute a nation in the full sense. To begin with, the Egyptian system of governance could not restrict 'aristocratic and priestly bases' and it underestimated the

necessity of integrating people through setting down common rights and duties throughout the Kingdom (Smith 1991: 45-46). Other scholars of nationalism are even inclined to discard the 'sociological usage of primordialism'; however; Ozkirimli opposes such a view, finding it 'unreasonable' (Ozkirimli 2000: 83). In a similar vein, Calhoun points out that people still recognize the surrounding world 'as always in some part given to them prior to their own actions' (1997: 30-31).

1.2.2 Modernism

According to the modernist standpoint, nations and nationalism are the products of the last two centuries; they took root in the early days of the French Revolution and were mostly formulated by contemporary processes, such as capitalism, industrialism, the emergence of a bureaucratic state, urbanization and secularism (Ozkirimli 2000, 85-86). Even though modernists (Gellner, Anderson, Deutsch, Breuilly, Brass and Hobsbawm) share the conviction that nations are recent phenomena and that nationalism is the politics of matching ethnicity to territory, they tend to underline diverse implications of modern practices on the construction of nations and nationalism.

For Gellner, a period marked by the switch towards industrialism went together with the evolution of nationalism and the chaotic modification of not only political but also cultural frontiers produced a fresh 'nationalist imperative' which made itself prominent in modern times (Gellner 1983: 40-41). In order to understand any link between industrialism and nationalism, it is important to realize what constitutes an industrial society in Gellner's perception. According to Gellner (1983), mass literacy and a high standard of arithmetical, technological and broad erudition are the fundamentals of a society that might be called industrial. Such a society is attainable only through education, and therefore Gellner (1983) writes that education shapes people's personalities and characters and while pre-industrial societies were divided and lacked mass literacy, industrial societies feature a single homogeneous culture common to the entire population. By culture Gellner implies language (Conversi 2007). Universal primary education spreads a dominant language, permitting wider access to technology, knowledge and culture and enhancing common bases for national identity (Gellner 1983)

Gellner's other major contribution is that he figured out one of the main motives of nationalist battle. Just because in the contemporary world states uphold particular

languages and cultures, those people with relevant identities are expected to be in demand and have the opportunity to save certain key posts in governmental structures (Taylor 1998). Taylor (1998: 195), however, argues that this issue has not been clarified completely, because 'the original energy fuelling these struggles remains to be understood'. A number of other scholars also criticize Gellner's presumption regarding the modernity of nations by arguing that scores of movements with nationalistic appeal grew in societies that were obviously far from industrialization. For instance, Hroch (2006) argues that industrialization is not the only way of organizing people. Occasionally it has played a paramount role and therefore prepared appropriate soil for the construction of a nation; however, industrialization was not the only root that widely expanded nationalism. On the other hand, Hroch (2006) considers that the contemporary nation was created as a result of the response to modern changes. The same view is expressed by Hall, who says that:

> *"Gellner's theory is not truly universal partly because it fails to explain the very first emergence of nationalism in eighteenth-century Britain and France. The nature of the failure is obvious: nationalist sentiments are clearly in place before the emergence of industry" (Hall 1994: 124).*

In terms of influence, Gellner's book *Nations and Nationalism* can only be compared with *Imagined Communities* by Benedict Anderson in which Anderson attempts to highlight cultural elements of nationalism and find the mechanisms that have led to its emergence. He spent a considerable amount of his life in Indonesia, Siam and the Philippines, which contributed to the formation of his understanding of the given phenomena. Anderson (1983) states that groups of people identified on the basis of their religion, despite their dignity and authority, started to decline following the end of the Middle Ages. A number of factors brought about these changes; for the most part, Anderson notes the ongoing discovery of a world beyond Europe as a primary cause, and the second reason is the slow but sure relegation of 'sacred languages' (1983: 36). According to Anderson (1983), the reduction of Latin triggered the disintegration and degeneration of societies which had until then been unified by language. Furthermore, Anderson (1983) argues that the gradual and irregular fall of these 'interlinked' beliefs led to the quest for 'a new way of linking fraternity, power and time meaningfully together'. This was accelerated by print-capitalism. In other words, print-capitalism made it possible for rapidly growing numbers of people to consider their own needs and

to be able to share common values with other people in a quite different manner. In short, Anderson refers to a set of reasons that enabled modern-day communities to become 'imaginable'-that is, 'a system of production and productive relations (capitalism), a technology of communication (print), and the fatality of human linguistic diversity' (Anderson 1983: 16-39).

Some scholars, like Balakrishnan (1996: 208), argue that Anderson's theory does not offer an explanation of 'the colossal sacrifices that peoples are at times willing to make for their nation', and cast doubt on Anderson's statement in relation to the creation of cultural kinships by print-capitalism. However, it is relevant to mention the role of language in the construction and sustaining of the imagined community, which is central to Anderson's argument (Day and Thompson 2004). Anderson insists that the creation of nations is wholly dependent on the appearance of 'popular vernacular nationalism', when a printed language supersedes all sorts of images and signs as the central ways of bringing people together (1983: 29).

Deutsch (1969), writing before Anderson, makes similar assumptions which however refer to communication tools in general rather than to print-capitalism. Some scholars wonder why Anderson makes no reference to Deutsch in his research. According to Deutsch (1969), a so-called practice that assimilates varied communities into homogenous civilizations in a large part of the world is a modern and extraordinary phenomenon. However, Deutsch (1969) claims that it emerged earlier in Europe, i.e. in the part of the world where communication links developed more rapidly than they did elsewhere.

To conclude so far, modernist arguments have been disputed for a number of reasons and on a number of grounds. Additionally, Greenfeld (2006) argues that nationalism appeared long before the heyday of the industrial revolution and capitalistic relationships. It predated the emergence of states and processes of cultural modernization. Other critics say that modernists fail to pay enough attention to the role of 'earlier myths, symbols, values and memories' (Ozkirimli 2000: 167).

1.2.3 Ethno-symbolism

As a result, a new course emerged in the literature on nationalism. Ethno-symbolism is a school of thought in the research of nationalism that places emphasis on symbols,

myths, values and traditions in the creation and perseverance of the contemporary nation. There are a few scholars who represent this group, among them the most prominent are Anthony Smith, John Hutchinson, John Armstrong and Hugh Seton-Watson.

The founding figure of ethno-symbolists is Anthony Smith, who specialized in the field of ethnicity and nationalism. Smith argues that 'ethnicity is largely 'mythic' and 'symbolic' in character; once it is constructed, *ethnie* continues to exist 'forming "moulds" within which all kinds of social and cultural processes can unfold and upon which all kinds of circumstances and pressures can exert an impact', and therefore, many modern nations have sought an 'ethnic basis' to simplify the whole practice of state-creation (1986: 16). Smith (1986) lists a number of factors that, by and large, served as grounds for the construction of modern nations. First and foremost, he states that throughout its history almost every ethnic group possessed a special 'collective name', which is a crucial element that distinguishes it from other groups. Secondly, Smith underscores the role of myths in describing the origin of nations, mainly because myths embody people's understanding of life and nature. Another factor in the construction of nations is their 'shared history'; Smith states that the absence of 'collective memory' might have undermined the very legitimacy of nations. The development of diverse cultures that eventually helped to differentiate the insider from the outsider is one more issue to be considered. Smith (1986) views territory as a further marker of distinctiveness, as ethnic communities always inhabited particular places and were frequently named due to their own land. Last but not least, Smith underlines the importance of the 'sense of solidarity' i.e. a strong perception of belonging, which helped people to ignore the grievances and conflicts between certain groups in the face of new threats (1986 22-31). Smith also argues that a lack of myth can thwart the creation of common objectives, i.e. 'identity and purpose or destiny' are significant parts of the idea of the nation (1986: 2).

Another member of the ethno-symbolist group is John Hutchinson, according to whom, almost in every corner of the world the process of nation-building was brought together with the resurgence of 'symbols, 'historic' names, languages, heroes, and cultural practices' (1994:2). Hutchinson (1994) argues that there are two kinds of nationalism that are typical but which at times oppose each other. One is political nationalism, which targets the emergence of self-governing state bodies, and the other is cultural

nationalism, that pursues the ethical renewal of the society. Even though cultural nationalism seems old, it is not traditional at all; on the contrary, Hutchinson (1994) suggests, current events could be fairly judged owing to the accomplishments of the past, and this may drive people to strive after superior goals. In fact, in tough times that mainly occur as a result of the modernization process, cultural nationalists possess the capacity to stand by as 'moral innovators' offering optional native forms of development. In contrast to political movements with nationalistic demands, cultural movements have comparatively little scope and numbers (Hutchinson 1994: 41). However, Hutchinson stresses the significance of the consideration of cultural nationalists as 'moral innovators' who in difficult times are able to create an original atmosphere for the formation of shared identity and supervise combined action, and are thus poised to lead a community between conservative and modernist viewpoints (Hutchinson 1994: 51). While criticizing the modernist theory, Hutchinson (1994) concludes that the future of the nationalist scheme, which is based on cooperative sovereignty, would be undermined if modernization processes encounter man-made or environmental disasters that may possibly culminate in the resurrection of religions.

Hugh Seton-Watson, who was the forerunner of the ethno-symbolic approach, claims that language played a great role in the formation of national identity in Europe after the French Revolution. According to Seton-Watson, nothing but language seemed to help overcome further hurdles in the construction of new national states, which followed the few old ones which succeeded in shaping their own national distinctiveness prior to the concept of nationalism (1977: 9-13).

Yet, there are criticisms and objections to the ethno-symbolist explanations. These criticisms range from claims suggesting the existence of conceptual confusion, which is noticeable in the miscalculation of distinctions between contemporary nations and 'earlier ethnic communities' to claims pointing to the false scrutiny of 'ethnic consciousness-formation' (Ozkirimli 2000:183) and were mainly developed by constructivists.

1.2.4 Constructivism

Calhoun (1993: 229) argues that nationalism should not be interpreted as the principle of ethnic resemblance; rather nationalism is an assertion that 'certain similarities should count as the definition of political community'. This means that nationalism, in contrast

to ethnicity, requires certain borders, and 'demands internal homogeneity throughout a putative nation, rather than gradual continua of cultural variation or pockets of sub-cultural distinction' (Calhoun 1993: 229).

Later works of some constructivist scholars, notably Brubaker, Calhoun, Seidman and Alexander, challenge well-known arguments that diverse communities are authentic and durable, and are 'pointing instead to the extent to which their existence depends upon social practices, discourses and representations' (Day and Thompson 2004: 86). According to constructivists, the very sense of relation to a particular separate group is not purely the outcome of cultural influence but is formulated under other circumstances ranging from conflicts with alien groups to the elites' attempts to assemble devotees around a shared identity (Calhoun 1997: 32). As Brubaker states:

> *"We should focus on nation as a category of practice, nationhood as an institutionalized cultural and political form, and nationness as a contingent event or happening, and refrain from using the analytically dubious notion of 'nations' as substantial, enduring collectivities" (Brubaker 1996: 21).*

In the same way, Calhoun asserts that nationalism is not merely a set of guidelines, it is 'a more basic way of human behaviour' (1997: 11), and that nationalism possesses not only political features, but also shapes such characteristics, as 'culture and personal identity' (1997: 3). Calhoun (1997) asserts that the projection of national identities and the unification of nations benefit mainly from state-building processes. Growth in the communication industry and transport links, along with the enlargement of market conditions, the development of production processes and the rise of 'state administrative capacities' significantly fortifies ties and increases interdependence in a variety of areas of a country. As a result, associations with strong aspirations for self-government may be left with limited scope to operate; yet in the long run, it leads to social cohesion together with linguistic homogeneity for the sake of 'unifying a country' (Calhoun 1997: 124). According to Day and Thompson (2004: 86), the constructivist form of 'theorising' has significant outcomes because it undermines the application of 'grand narratives' that comprise earlier descriptions of 'national development and growth', and the common influence of 'modernity'. It instigates the shift towards 'some final' destination, such as national freedom and self-government, or

the elimination of nations (Day and Thompson 2004: 86). Day and Thompson give a broader definition of the constructivist approach:

"To understand the complexities of the new social contours, there has been some convergence of social theory with philosophy, especially political philosophy and literary and cultural theory, and this has encouraged a greater readiness to address certain normative questions, of justice, democracy, authenticity, and respect for difference" (Day and Thompson 2004: 87.

The constructivist shift towards the deep consideration of national identity and identification, 'a move from the realm of the object to that of subjective consciousness and perception' (Day and Thompson 2004: 87), has removed from further discussion the role of the attributes of nations and nation-states. Constructivists are criticized for being incapable of outlining the whole reality (Motyl 2010). Their theory, however, may keep its relevance as long as constructivism remains reserved and mindful of its scope. In a more broad perception, Motyl (2010) states that the theory of constructivism will be valuable and practical when it avoids making extremely radical claims – that all of social reality is constructed.

1.3 Nation-state challenged, yet resilient

While a few nations appeared lacking any institutionalized support on the part of their own states, some states have not been founded on the basis of a nation (Gellner 1983). Yet, we are living in the world that contains states which are formally and legitimately nations, but which are distant from what the term 'nation-state' is usually expected to imply (Hobsbawm 1990). According to Hastings:

"A nation-state is a state which identifies itself in terms of one specific nation whose people are not seen simply as 'subjects' of the sovereign but as a horizontally bonded society to whom the state in a sense belongs…In it, ideally, there is a basic equivalence between the borders and character of the political unit upon the one hand and a self-conscious cultural community on the other. In most cases this is a dream as much as a reality" (Hastings 1997: 3.

Present-day nation-states scarcely meet these criteria, prompting various scholarly discourses on the end of nation-states. For instance, Hobsbawm (1990: 183) argues that

the time has already come to claim that nations and nationalism are matters of the past, and historians have started to make 'some progress in the study and analysis of nations and nationalism'. Hobsbawm views the replacement of the 'national economy' by a bigger 'world economy' as a sign that states with porous and penetrable borders are losing their earlier importance (1990: 174). Moreover, for Day and Thompson (2004), globalization, reinforced by the appearance of multicultural and transnational bodies, is sure to overtake old-fashioned loyalties based on nationality. In short, as Brubaker argues, the nation-state is undermined from two sides.

> *"From above, the cosmopolitan argument is that humanity as a whole, not the nation-state, should define the primary horizon of our moral imagination and political engagement (Nussbaum, 1996). From below multiculturalism and identity politics celebrate group identities and privilege them over wider, more encompassing affiliations" (Brubaker 2004: 119-120).*

Indeed, in light of the fact that modern societies are often multicultural, and that culture and polity would be unlikely to come together from now onwards (Brubaker 1998), it might seem to be irrational to persist with the old-fashioned scheme of nation-states. Does this mean that cosmopolitan and multicultural societies will become alternatives for nations?

The impact of globalisation on national identity is multifaceted. While for some it underpins the feeling of national belonging, others believe that globalisation weakens the appeal of national identity. Guibernau argues that the ability to produce and maintain a homogenous national identity is becoming problematic as people turn into both global producers and consumers of goods and information (Guibernau 2001). However, the demolition of the nation-states may not only lead to the evaporation of distinct public spheres, but also to a lack of significant national units to which people can attach and link themselves, may trigger the emergence of other modes of belonging that are not restricted to a certain territory and that are reluctant to come to any kind of consensus with opposing interest groups in terms of power-sharing (Roshwald 2011: 8). As the 'Twittersphere' is replacing the printing press, Roshwald contests the idea that any cosmopolitan society is emerging with the potential to bring us together and argues, by contrast, that global trends 'will reduce us to a disembodied, chat-room tribalism' (2011: 8).

Despite this, many observers still emphasise the dual impact of globalisation and digitalization on national identity, as globalisation may not only push some part of the population towards cosmopolitanism, but also develop 'resistance identities' within that nation (Castells 2004). It should be noted that nations and national identities have been shaped as a result of international relations ranging from wars, through trade to global migrations. When globalisation has amplified, nationalism has often grown resilient. While Islam, Christianity, Buddhism and other religions ascended in the contexts of empires and conflicts, they have also been remade as structures of identity crisscrossing nations and yet placing believers in a multi-religious world (Calhoun 2008). According to Smith, while the existence of culturally-diverse waves of immigrants has reshaped the meaning of national identity, this process also leads members of the nation to reflect on their national identity and reinforce its meaning and functions for the nation. Therefore, he maintains that, despite globalisation, 'self-reflective and self-celebrating communities, nations and nationalism are still very much alive' (Smith 2007: 30). Doubtless, neither the diversity of the world nor its interconnectedness satisfies everyone, as rising global connections can result not in appreciation for diversity or sense of moral concern for distant strangers but a source of defensiveness and anxiety. As has often been the case since the 2001 terrorist attacks, globalisation can steer renewed nationalism or reinforcement of borders (Calhoun 2008).

Due to its complex nature therefore, globalisation does constitute a confusing progression of contradictory influences on the shape of politics and society. For that reason, it needs to be contemplated as a process or a set of processes that do not adhere to linear logic or produce identical effects on societies around the globe (Held et al. 1999). This also explains why, nationalism for its part is a supple language in political terms; it is quite misleading to consider it as a predetermined concept (Brubaker 2004: 120) or an ideology that can be replaced or changed fundamentally. By way of 'deconstructing' the outlook as well as downgrading its function, it is unfeasible to diminish the major role and significant impact of nationalism on the progress of modern history and politics (Kitromilides 2011: 5-6). Besides, nationalism and patriotism tend to be beneficial in a number of other cases. They are useful not only in creating feelings of belonging and unity but also in creating full-bodied citizenship, which helps to execute 'redistributive social policies', facilitate the process of immigrant integration,

and even contribute to the conduct of foreign affairs in a more collaborative and objective way (Brubaker 2004: 120).

The end of the nation-state appears to be out of the question, as the previous decades have seen unpredicted pliability and 'resourcefulness' of nation-states that succeeded in acclimatizing to the troubles of modernity. If nation-states keep preserving their importance and consequent legitimacy in modern societies, they are likely to continue to grow as strong and discrete bodies in the near future. Assuming that human communities maintain their significance and authenticity, transnational organizations and supranational bodies would lack any choice but to contain them (nation-states) in their extant condition (Kitromilides 2011: 5-6). If nationhood would stay applicable, and powerful to transform the global situation, to modify the way people regard their lives, fortify belongings, promote stimuli and express necessities (Brubaker 2004: 116), it should be researched seriously. Its "demonisation" restrains us from making thorough and pervasive assessments concerning the phenomena of nationalism, nationhood, national identity and the nation-state (Kitromilides 2011: 5-6).

The nation-state also comprises the public sphere with particular scope and institutional structures and thus 'permit[s] some degree of meaningful and effective civic participation' (Brubaker 2004:124). Although the rapidly-increasing literature on citizenship touches on many issues in relation to nation-states, the role of national citizenship has apparently been missed. This requires a correction as national citizenship leads to national solidarity and fosters patriotism and therefore should not be dispatched as a relic of the past (Brubaker 2004). Moreover, modern nationalisms have need of a certain level of individualism. In other words, individual identity has a special importance in modern nations, as 'national identity assumes a special priority over other collective identities in the construction of personal identity' (Calhoun 1997:125).

According to Brubaker, the practice of belonging has formal and informal stages and features. For instance, formal membership requires the registration of nationality and citizenship by particular staff appointed by the state who act in line with formal rules and regulations; while informal membership has nothing to do with official institutions and personnel, and is rather administered by ordinary people during their life, on the basis of their experience and unspoken perception of 'who belongs and who does not, of us and them' (Brubaker 2010a: 65). In addition to formal and informal citizenships,

Brubaker suggests another kind of belonging which is essential to understanding the modern nation-building process. The first is the internal politics of belonging, which addresses those people who reside within the boundaries of the given state but are not members of it or fail to become full-fledged members, whereas the external politics of belonging asserts and supports the membership of people who, despite inhabiting neighbouring states or far-flung countries, are assumed to belong to the given state or to its nation. Their belonging does not stem from the holding of citizenship and is not formal, which in turn makes it very contentious (Brubaker 2010: 66).

On the other hand, even though territories are losing their significance as trans-nationalist and post-nationalist scholars argue, it is Brubaker's (2010a: 78) contention that this trend does not imply that nation-states need to be structured in a different way, in other words, 'in a way that does not rely on territory'. Considering that the nation-state is also a membership organization with a broad scope that goes beyond boundaries, he argues that the forms of external belonging display extension and modification of the model of the nation-state, not the vibrancy of trans-border nationalism (Brubaker 2010a).

1.4 Civic and ethnic form of nation-building

The last century has seen a debate held amid scholars of nationalism on the probable existence of two types of nations (and nationalisms): the first is civic and political, and the other is ethnic and cultural. Hans Kohn was among the first to observe this and coined the terms in his book *The Idea of Nationalism (*1944). According to Kohn, the whole world, except for the West, has experienced transformation of nationalism not into 'people's states'. On the contrary, while drawing the new boundaries, 'ethnographic' specifications dominated and states were constructed on the basis of ethnicity and on 'history, monuments and graveyards', while in Western countries nationalism emerged out of political interests and 'rights of man' (Kohn 1944: 329, 574). Apart from Kohn, Friedrich Meinecke and Liah Greenfeld are also the principal disseminators of the ethnic-civic terminology (Koning 2011).

In contrast to civic nationalism that brings people of various backgrounds under one umbrella by emphasizing a common fate, ethnic nationalism accentuates the need for similarity between the homogenous ethnic group, the nation and the state that belongs

to this nation (Gledhill 2005). Civic nationalism is often referred to as 'good' nationalism, whereas ethnic nationalism is often described as 'a term of abuse' (Brubaker 1999: 64). For instance, Miller (2008) describes civic and ethnic nationalisms as referring to open and closed societies respectively. According to him, the protracted clash between 'closed' and 'open' societies is one of the core problems of our age. Any community that pursues the imposition of its own particular values and principles on members of other groups or limits choice of values available to its own members is a 'closed' community. In contrast, 'open communities' grant to their people plenty of free choice in terms of identity, behaviour, rule and others norms (Miller 2008: 9). Today, to highlight the adoption of a civic identity is the way of creating a bright image of a country, and gaining credit in the international arena at the expense of neighbouring states that have chosen a more 'exclusive' course (Brubaker 1999: 56-57), although Nielsen (1999) finds it incongruous to assign liberalism, democracy and state-territorialism to the term civic nationalism, and thus show ethnic nationalism as intolerant and antidemocratic.

Many influential scholars studying nationalism have contributed to the discussion of the above dichotomy (Gellner 1983; Hobsbawm 1990; Smith 1991). Although A.D. Smith (1991) accepts that Western and Eastern models of nationhood have different historical roots, he finds a crude classification of nations to reciprocally exclusive civic and ethnic sets to be improper. From the beginning of the mid-1990s, a growing body of literature began to question both conceptual and empirical soundness of the ethnic-East/civic-West framework. Some features of Eastern nationalism as designated by Kohn (1944) can be found in the nature of a few European nationalisms, such as Irish or French nationalisms of the later nineteenth century, whereas some Eastern-European nationalisms, such as Czech and Hungarian tend to have more Western characteristics (Sekulic 2004). For Seculic (2004), the reason for such a dilemma is that ideas and propositions are easily accessible and adoptable in the modern world, and therefore it is reasonable to think about the arrival of civic nationalism from the West and about its successful establishment in some Eastern-European countries. In other words, Seculic (2004) argues that, subsequent to the Cold War era, a new phase of human history began. This post-Cold War era is marked by the 'domination of Western models of thought – human rights, democracy, open society, market, and individualism', which have replaced other ways of thinking (Sekulic 2004: 461). By the same token, one may

draw a parallel between the expansion of Western values and the entrenchment of the civic nature of national identity in places where ethnic identity has dominated. As identities are liable to change and might easily shift between either ethnic or civic 'poles', the fusion of ethnic-civic recognitions is also probable (Sekulic 2004: 461). Thus, none of Western states that profess liberal democratic values do so without appealing to an ethno-cultural background (Kuzio 2001), which means that Hans Kohn devalued the differences within the East and within the West, while exaggerating the differences between the East and the West (Joppke 2005: 17-18). A.D. Smith (1998: 212-13) also downgrades the idea that civic nationalism is morally higher than ethnic nationalism. He thinks that 'scholars who... oppose a 'good' civic to a 'bad' ethnic nationalism overlook the problems associated with each type' (Smith 1998: 212-13).

It is difficult to find a state based on purely civic values, as each country's stance is determined by its unique political or cultural features. According to Kuzio (2001), only through the implementation of democratic principles may one oversee what factors dominate in several societies: civic or ethnic nationalism. Democratic principles have proved to be unwavering in those states that managed not only to fortify national identity but also to establish civil liberties, whereas democracies failed in countries where the results of national liberation movements led to the emergence of strong borders and correspondingly tough regulations (Habermas 1996: 284). Indeed, the shift towards democratic society and multiculturalism brought a new meaning to the concept of citizenship, as it grew from just formal and organizational membership to politico-cultural status, which combines the issue of belonging to the given community with the right to make certain contributions to its preservation (Habermas 1996: 285). Habermas (1996) suggests replacing nationalism with 'constitutional patriotism', although he is not sure whether it can serve as a strong tie capable of bringing people together. Brubaker's (1999: 66) examples of civic nationalism are the resentment and resistance of Transylvanian Hungarians to 'the putatively inclusive, citizenship-based rhetoric of nationhood'. They therefore showed no willingness to be members of the Romanian nation, seeming to confirm Habermas' doubts. Noting that Transylvanian Hungarians, while being citizens of the Romanian state, perceive themselves as belonging to the Hungarian nation, Habermas writes:

> *"So the pressing question remains, under which conditions a liberal political*
> *culture shared by all citizens can at all substitute for that cultural context of a*

> *more or less homogenous nation in which democratic citizenship once, in the*
> *initial period of the nation-state, was embedded" (Habermas 1996: 290)*

Drawing inspiration from communitarian and republican philosophies, Brubaker (1999) stresses legal and socio-cultural meanings and argues that it would be more consistent from an analytical perspective to use terms such as 'state-formed nationalism' and 'counter-state nationalism' rather than civic and ethnic nationalism, as the latter expressions are complicated. For instance, in state-formed nationalism, 'nation' is construed as matching with the state, and as institutionally and territorially constructed by it. In the counter-state type of nationalism, 'nation' is conceived 'as distinct from, and often in opposition to, the territorial and institutional frame of an existing state and states' (Brubaker 1999: 67). One of the main representatives of contemporary communitarianism Charles Tilly (1996) also recognises two types of nationalism. The first of these is top-down nation-forming nationalism, implemented by central elites, which can be of a disturbing or invasive nature. The second type is bottom-up nationalism, which is in direct opposition to a state-run policy of nation construction. Top-down nationalism, for Tilly, is the 'insistence that the nation's collective interest, as interpreted by the state's current situation, should take priority over all particularisms' and those in power tended to plot not only 'doctrines and practices that implemented their visions of the Nation,' but also adopted or restored certain languages and historical heritage, conducted ceremonies, and built schools and museums (Tilly, quoted in Brubaker 2010). Bottom–up nationalism, however, was also orchestrated by elites, particularly in circumstances where political leaders possessed 'strong investments in alternative definitions of language, history, and community' and resisted top-down nationalism by 'rally[ing] supporters in the name of oppressed and threatened nations' (Tilly, quoted in Brubaker 2010).

Nonetheless, while some researchers believe that the typology needs to be abandoned, there are still advocates of its revision. Koning (2011) believes that the distinction can still be used as an investigative device in differentiating the nation-building policies of one country from those of another, as every use of the terminology should not necessarily carry normative implication and have judgmental character (Koning 2011). While 'pure' examples of civic or ethnic nation-building policies are non-existent, it is yet conceivable to locate diverse practices 'at different points on a civic-ethnic continuum' (Koning 2011: 1981). If types of nationalism can be positioned on a uni-

dimensional continuum starting from ethnic to civic nationalism, Janmaat (2007) argues that every nation could be placed somewhere on this continuum, as some occupy a position closer to the ethnic end and some remained closer to the civic end (Janmaat 2007: 53).

1.4.1 Revising the dichotomy

The difference between civic and ethnic nation-building practices largely stems from their degree of inclusivity (Day and Thompson 2004: 132). Consistent with Ignatieff's (1993: 3-4) description, ethnic nationalism assumes that the nation should consist of those people who share preceding features, which include 'language, religion, customs and traditions'; in contrast, civic nationalism embraces people who merely abide by the political order in the society.

One attempt to improve the scholarly application of ethnic-civic dichotomy was the suggestion of some scholars (for example, Nielson 1999) to extract the cultural elements from the ethnic category. Nieguth (1999) argues that some criteria of ethnic nationalism, such as language and religion, are not as primordial as kinship, blood, or ancestry. Outsiders can be easily incorporated into a nation provided they know the language or practise the same religion, so the cultural dimension has an inclusive power. The separation of cultural features from ethnic stock would also help to avoid the confusion evident in Koopmans and Statham's (2000: 19) treatment of civic-ethnic dichotomy. Elaborating on the lines that divide nation-building policies in Germany and France, they argue that in Germany membership is 'based on ethno-cultural belonging', while in France, it is founded 'on civic culture and political institutions'. In similar vein, 'civic, republican universalism of France' is different, for instance, from 'civic, multiculturalism of the Netherlands', for the reason that 'these two civic models lead immigrants to make quite different membership claims' (Bloemraad et al 2008: 159).

In addition, it should also be remembered that some people are loyal to both 'ethnic' and 'civic' features of national identity, while there are also those who downgrade the value of ethnicity and political creed of the community simultaneously (Koning 2011). This is supported by Janmaat's (2006) empirical study. In his research, respondents were asked to what degree they consider various 'ethnic' and 'civic' features as providing a sense of attachment to their nation. His finding illustrates that people may accord as much importance to civic characteristics as they do to ethnic characteristics,

or vice versa. Furthermore, if in empirical studies civic-ethnic dichotomy is commonly used not in the framework of 'either' and 'or', but in terms of 'more' and 'less', then 'such an approach also makes it possible to deal with cultural characteristics that are not manifestly ethnic' (Koning 2011: 1982).

1.4.2 Post-Soviet 'nationalising' states revisited

A lot of the literature on Soviet successor states reveals that these newly-independent countries were keen on adopting ethnic nationalism. In other words, they are 'nationalising' states. This term, coined by Brubaker (1996), sparked debates over the true character of the post-communist world. Brubaker (1996) argues that scholars who studied nationalism highlighted only those types of nationalism that crave independence, and therefore, bypassed nationalisms in the modern states that are 'nationalising' in their nature. These states, despite being partly constructed and having a long way to go in order to become full-fledged members of the international community, are still perceived by their main elite groups as nation-states (in other words, as states that belong to certain 'ethno-cultural nations'). For this and other reasons, such as severe suffering and national discrimination under alien rule in recent history, the post-Soviet 'nationalizing elites' have sought to foster the elevation of native vernaculars, various traditions and customs in relation to other cultures, and they long for the demographic, financial and political dominance of the titular nation. According to Brubaker (1996: 9), nationalizing policies are very prominent in post-totalitarian countries in a Eurasian continent. Kuzio (2001), however, opposes this view, arguing that there are more than twenty five post-communist states, and not all of them fall into this category; therefore, Brubaker's proposition appears to be too comprehensive. Moreover, according to Kuzio, Brubaker labels as 'nationalising' states not only those that take austerity measures towards minorities and elevate the status of titular nation in relation to others but also those countries which opt for civic nation-building practice, put on the agenda the development of other traditions and vernaculars and treat ethnic groups relatively fairly' (2001: 137). In a similar vein, writing about the nation-building projects in the Soviet successor states, Kolstø (2000: 2) argues that whereas in the West the nation has traditionally been understood as a community of citizens held together by a common territory and common government authority, a 'rival concept that sees the nation as a cultural entity . . . has deep roots in the eastern part of Europe, not least in Russia'.

Upon a wave of criticism, Brubaker (2011) revisited his classification of post-Soviet states as 'nationalising' states in recent years. He admits that it was a vague and hypothetical characterisation, considering that many studies have been undertaken on different features of nation- and state-building policies in the newly-independent states since then (Brubaker 2011). To begin with, the notion of nationalizing states is not a theory. Brubaker (2011) argues that it is not helpful in envisaging 'how nationalizing states will be' or 'how they will be nationalizing'. Nor is the concept of nationalizing state a tool for categorizing or ranking states in terms of their degree of nationalization (Brubaker 2011: 1807). Thirdly, he concedes that the expression 'nationalizing state' is equivocal; as it suggests not only that the state is doing the nationalizing but also that the state is experiencing nationalization. In the former case, the state is recognised as the agent of a nationalizing venture, while in the latter the state acts as the subject of a nationalizing course. Yet this ambiguity, in his view, shows the important dichotomy of project and process, which means that nationalizing projects from top down does not always produce their envisioned results; on the other hand, nationalizing processes on the ground have their own logic and may occur despite the absence of expressly nationalizing discourse or policies of the state. For that reason, Brubaker contends that the investigation of nationalizing states must address both projects and processes (2011: 1808). More importantly, Brubaker (2011) stresses that the application of the notion of 'nationalising states' may block the use of other analytical perspectives. He advises not to give excessive attention to the nationalising discourses in describing processes of state consolidation. This is because the nationalizing policies, discourses and processes are entwined with other discourses and processes. In other words, the notion of the nationalizing state cannot describe the 'essence' of post-Soviet political, cultural and social life, as it is only one theoretical device among many others that 'may help pose some analytically interesting comparative questions' (Brubaker 2011: 1809).

Nonetheless, in the same article he analyses the four post-communist states of Estonia, Latvia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan in terms of the local dynamics of nationalization, and concludes that in these countries nationalizing discourses, policies and practices have been central due to the fact that in the last years of Soviet rule they had the proportionately largest Russian minorities (Brubaker 2011: 1788). According to him, these states did not fit the paradigm of nation-state; they were not 'states of and for their eponymous nations' as titular groups constituted around half of the population. In

Kazakhstan, they comprised just 40 percent of the population, and a slender majority in Latvia, with just over 60 percent in Estonia (2011: 1789). It is important to mention that Brubaker (2011) admits that, while national languages experienced further promotion at the expense of the Russian language in many post-communist states and while in Estonia and Latvia 'restrictive citizenship legislation excluded about a third of the population from the citizenry' (1788), in Kazakhstan all residents were granted citizenship and the Russian-speaking population was reassured of their status in an independent multi-ethnic country (Brubaker 2011: 1792). Moreover, nationalizing discourses, policies and practices in Kazakhstan have not aimed to turn Russians into Kazakhs nor have they intended to force Russians to learn the state language, which is Kazakh. Instead, Brubaker sees a rapid nationalising trend in Kazakhstan in the demographic growth of Kazakhs, as they jumped from 40 percent of the population in 1989 to 63 percent in 2009 (2011: 1790).

1.5 Conclusion

To sum up, theories of nationalism tend to broaden a scientific scope for the comprehension of one of the most challenging phenomena of the modern world. Drawing on the various discussions in the field of nations and nationalism, I have highlighted several issues of importance in terms of my dissertation's objectives. First and foremost, nations, nationalism and nation-states still have the capacity to dictate rules in world affairs, as a sense of belonging has not vanished and needs to be preserved even for the benefit of transnational structures. Among the modernist scholars of nationalism, Gellner's and Anderson's emphases on language as a homogenizing tool and as a bastion of modernity, and their claim that only a society where the language plays a uniting role can succeed in economic, political, and social terms are relevant for my study.

Although the "era" of civic-ethnic dichotomy, ably employed in the description of the new post-Soviet nation-states in the 1990s, is surely subsiding, new scholarly discourses suggest the possibility of its revision rather than entire relegation to the margins. One of these attempts is an approach aiming to extract cultural qualities of national identity from ethnic components. Due to the "necessity" of linguistic homogeneity for the existence and upkeep of nation-states, "cultural" requirements for national belonging while not as straightforward as "political" (civic), are also not as

challenging as "ancestral" criteria (ethnic). Thus, the identity markers covered by the ethnic-civic framework can be clustered not in two but in three dimensions: ethnic, cultural and civic. Due to its theoretical and pragmatic appeal, this dissertation conceptualizes the ethnic-civic distinction in this way.

For Brubaker (2011), Kazakhstan is still a 'nationalising state', even though, unlike others, it has assured the participation of ethnic minority groups in the political and economic life of the country. He bases his argument on the rise in number of Kazakhs in relation to Russian people which is not a sufficient argument, as he himself acknowledges that such a phenomenon could only be understood as a result of the consideration of political, economic and cultural processes. In the next chapter, I will argue that Kazakhstan needs to be analysed in the context of Central Asia, where it shares the same geography, culture, and history with other post-Soviet states in the region. Moreover, in Chapter 3, I will show that the demographic dominance of Kazakhs was not the intended result of the government's policy nor was it later ideologically detrimental to non-titular nationalities in the country, primarily due to the cultural and geographical divisions within the Kazakh people themselves.

Last but not least, this dissertation will benefit from Brubaker's (2011) argument that nationalizing trends are not only shaped from above in the form of projects and practices but also follow their own path on the ground as processes independent from official discourses. The aim of this study is to see the implications of the civic form of nation-building policies for the titular nationality and on the basis of these findings envisage the future development of official national identity discourses.

Chapter 2

The unequal rise of Central Asian nation-states

2.1 Introduction

Central Asia is a micro region, now consisting of groups of nascent post-Soviet states - Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan (Appendix 1). Although related by kinship, language and shared histories, these states have undergone different processes of the institutionalization of political, economic and ideological powers since the fall of the Soviet Union. Even taking into account these differences, Kazakhstan has proved to be a deviant case in many respects, above all with regard to the issue of national identity. As the most northerly country abutting onto Russia, its recent history sat uncomfortably in the tradition of nation-state; Kazakhstan's government advocated a civic nationalism in contrast to flourishing ethnic identity policies in the region. To understand why Kazakhstan has developed more inclusive nationalism, I will draw parallels with the most similar cases, and compare like with like, Kazakhs with other nations - Uzbeks, Kyrgyz, Turkmens and Tajiks - in the historical context. In the following sections, I will describe critical junctures in the history of the region to show how these nations came into political existence, explain their different developmental trajectories and discuss what might have prompted Kazakhs to avoid 'ethnifying' their state throughout the years of independence.

To begin with Uzbek and Kazakh identities, along with Turkmen and Tajik, emerged with respect to adherents to different confederations after the division of the Mongol world into new states in the fifteenth century. While solidified considerably during the twentieth century, they are genuine, potent identities with a long history, not novel constructions moulded entirely by Western forces (Manz 2003). To understand the post-Soviet societies of Central Asia it is therefore necessary to look back beyond the last century and place their novel transformations within a context that considers the complex historical legacies (Dawisha and Parrott 1994).

2.2 Pre-colonial past: different lifestyles

The Arab caliphate of the eighth century, despite the fact that it functioned as a power structure for three centuries and as a system of social order for another three, was

relatively less influential in shaping Kazakh identity than the Mongol supremacy that started from the early thirteenth century. As nomadic and sedentary lifestyles formed most basic markers of identity of Central Asians (Manz 2003), Islam did not penetrate the identity of the perennially mobile Kazakhs as deeply as it did those of the settled Uzbeks or Tajiks (Yemelianova 2014). In the nomadic communities, Islam was syncretic in nature, powerfully influenced by past traditions and shamanistic practices, which was in sharp contrast with the text-based orthodoxy of the cities (Akiner 1998). In nomadic societies, power was understood in genealogical terms, with their legitimacy being derived from *aˆdat*, tribal norm and the institutions of the elders, while in urban communities, generations of *ulema* generated the juridical tradition of the sharia[t] (Khalid 2007). Having led a nomadic lifestyle for centuries, Kazakh tribes therefore were engaged more in the creation of the Mongol empire. To understand the extent of their allegiance, it is sufficient to say that the dynasty initiated by Genghis Khan in 1206 ceased to exist only after the fall of the Kazakh Khanate in the mid nineteenth century (Manz 2003).

The Kazakh Khanate as a separate entity emerged in the 1450s, when two descendants of Genghis Khan, Girey and Janibeq, moved out of the confederation of Abu'l Khayr Khan (another Chinggisid leader) to build their own Khanate with a separate name. In the late Mongol world political loyalty rather than language or residential background held prominence in the creation of identities (Ferrando 2008; Manz 2003). This separation was partly 'based on a difference between more and less conservative nomadic lifestyles' (Manz 2003: 87-88).

A strong rivalry between Uzbek Muhammad Shaybani (the descendant of Abu'l Khayr Khan) and Kazakh Buyunduk Khan for the cities around the Syr Darya River (southern Kazakhstan) in the sixteenth century served to fortify their distinct identities. Subsequently, under the reign of Qasym, who took Khan's power after Buyunduk, the Kazakh people became a more unified and integrated unit (Olcott 1995). They started to organise themselves around three basic tribal divisions known as *zhuzs* (elder, middle and younger) with subdivisions known as *ru* and *taipa* (Schatz 2000). The authentic root of the division into *zhuzs'* is not clear to historians, though some relate it to the well-known 'hunting army system', where there are left, right and central sides. However, most Kazakh historians attribute the emergence of the three basic *zhuzs* to the geographical location of the tribes who constituted them (Galiev 1998). The Elder

horde (*ulu zhuz)* inhabited the southern territories; the Middle horde (*orta zhuz*) occupied the territory of the central steppe region and northern and eastern parts, whereas the Younger horde (*kishi zhuz*) occupied the western regions between the Aral and Caspian seas (Dave 2003: 3). All three hordes were ruled by the descendants of Genghis Khan, who were known as *Chinggisids* (Galiev 1998). Kazakh *Chinggisids*, who were the offspring of Jushi, the senior son of Genghis Khan, considered themselves as '*aq suiek'* (White bone) (Martin 2010). They officially belonged to none of the main three *zhuzs*, rather they were considered as 'the ones that neither affiliated with nor related to a Subdivision' (Arslan 2014: 106) and thus given a special status. Indeed, the term *Chinggisids* is the Russian term for those whom Kazakhs called *Toreler*-the offspring of Genghis Khan. Another group conceived of as '*aq suiek'* (White bone), and who also avoided becoming a part of the three *zhuzs*, were *Qojas*. *Qojas* traced their lineage to Muslim saints, to Islam's Four Righteous Caliphs, or even to the Prophet Muhammad himself (Frank, quoted in Yemelianova 2014). *Qojas* were highly respected among the nomadic Kazakhs; often responsible for overseeing the major family events connected with the life cycle and for settling arguments over property, inheritance and clan-related problems. While the military leaders of *Chinggisid* descent always retained supreme authority in Kazakh society, *Qojas* were the main bearers of spirituality (Yemelianova 2014).

One of several small Khanates in Central Asia, only Kazakh Khanate shared a border with the Russian Empire in the north. From the eighteenth century onwards the Russian empire, by "invitation" according to some historians, although others disagree, started to occupy Kazakh land diminishing the power of the *Chinggisids* with the help of structural changes in land policy. The spread of state-sponsored 'official' Islam weakened the status of the *Qojas* as well, and consequently the 'unofficial' Islam of the Kazakhs. The arrival of Tatar *mullas* in the Kazakh steppe led to the introduction of the local people to mosque-centred Sunni Islam of the Hanafi *madhhab*. This policy was undertaken in line with Catherine the Great's (1762–96) strategy of certification and organization of her Muslim subjects. Confined to formally registered religious institutions (mosques, *madrasas*, *maktabs* etc), the Tatar-driven Islam encouraged the emergence of *shari'a* courts in the Kazakh steppe from the early nineteenth century (Yemelianova 2014). Indeed, the period of Russian occupation can be divided into two separate stages: the first one took place in the first half of the eighteenth century, when

northern territories, predominantly inhabited by the Younger and Middle *zhuzs*, were included in the Russian empire; the second phase began with the seizure of the southern region, a land that belonged to the Elder *zhuz*, in the mid-nineteenth century (Olcott 1995).

Russian colonialists did not treat Kazakhs kindly from the start. Nomads were perceived as less educated and more barbaric than the settled communities of the north and therefore needed to be 'civilised' (Akiner 1998). Kazakhs were deprived of the right to possess their own land; instead confiscated districts were allocated to Russian and Cossack settlers. The end of the eighteenth century saw the mobilization of some portions of the Kazakh population against the growing control of the Russian rulers over the steppes. Two fierce uprisings took place, one was the revolt organized by Emelian Pugachev and the second was the struggle led by Syrym Batyr (Sabol 2003). Yet, it was Kenesary, who repeatedly orchestrated attacks on Russian troops, and was regarded as the most prominent figure among the Kazakh leaders of that period (Schwarz 1952). To defend his Khan's privileges Kenesary's father Qasym also sporadically stirred up unrest in areas where Russians had recently settled in his time (Sabol 2003). As a *Chinggisid*, Kenesary attempted to preserve the power that belonged to him. He struggled for a decade from 1837 to 1847, but because of the lack of sophisticated military means and unity among Kazakh tribes, Kenesary was crushed (Sabol 2003).

Having absorbed Kazakh territories, from the second half of the nineteenth century the Russian Empire expanded southwards, towards the domains of Uzbeks, Turkmens, and others. Three different and ethnically mixed khanates - Kokand, Khiva and the Emirate of Bukhara - underwent gradual annexation. When Kokand was destroyed with ease (Haugen 2003), Khiva and Bukhara Emirates were strong enough to resist the Russian conquest. Although destruction and massacre were avoided, Khiva and Bukhara Emirates fell into economic enslavement after losing their industrial regions (Mandel 1942). In 1867, the General Governorship of Turkestan was set up with headquarters in Tashkent city (modern Uzbekistan). All territories of Kokand Khanate and some regions of Bukhara and Khiva were brought under the command of the Governor General appointed by the Tsar in the same year. However, Bukhara and Khiva-'survived in truncated form as distinct states dependent on Russia until after the Bolshevik Revolution' (Fierman 1991: 12).

2.3 The Soviet Period

The February Revolution of 1917, alongside other socially important adjustments, steered secessionist talks in Central Asia. Indigenous Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Tatars, etc., mostly educated in the institutions of Moscow and St. Petersburg began to articulate the program of the unification of Turkic people of Central Asia, which resulted in the creation of Turkistan Autonomy in 1917 (Abazov 2007). Although headed by ethnic Kazakhs, it comprised only a small portion of Kazakh people. The majority of Kazakh leaders of that period coalesced around the distinct nationalism of Alash-Orda, which was neither pan-Turkic nor pan-Islamic (Abazov 2007).

The members of the Alash-Orda movement intended to construct a nation-state on Kazakh soil modelled on European practices and were duly concerned about the status of the Kazakh language and issues of literature and culture (Kendirbayeva 1999). Initially, the idea of national self-determination took the form of autonomy within a democratic federal state of Russia, which would help to modernize Kazakh society, based on a balanced combination of traditionalism with the best achievements of Russian culture and human civilization (Kydyralina 2008). This explains why Alash Orda's army sided with the Provisional Government against the Bolsheviks. However, after two years of fighting and the ensuing prospect of total exclusion, Kazakh leaders attempted to negotiate with the triumphant communists and failed (Olcott 1995). The idea of nation-state was crushed in its infancy and the educated stratum of the Kazakh population perished in the Stalinist purges.

In 1918, the Turkistan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic was created, with Tashkent as its capital city (Abazov 2007). As Turkic unity under Turkistan ASSR seemed precarious, the Bolsheviks ultimately organized them into national republics (Haugen 2003). The introduction of a National Delimitation Programme in 1924-25 brought about the five states of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. For the first time, and in contrast with previous forms of recognition, notably, clan, tribe, region, and even religion, borders were demarcated along language lines. Then, dialects were transformed into national languages; historical events were interpreted differently and myths constructed according to Soviet interests. Institutions, like the Republican Constitution or local offices of the Communist Party, were given a nationalist colour and excessively supported. Furthermore, the contours of new national

identities were created and fostered on a par with a far broader Soviet identity, which for its part was also fortified by the formation of apt symbols and structures (Akiner 1998). The underlying principle behind the organization of national administrative and political entities in Central Asia required the end of *Turkestanian* nationalism and its replacement with national orientations (Uzbek, Turkmen, and so on) (Haugen 2003). Olivier Roy maintains that:

> *"Stalin's great victory was that he made the intellectuals in Central Asia defend their own languages and 'nations' against their neighbours, and not against Moscow, who instead was called upon for mediation and the settlement of conflicts" (Roy 2000: 73)*

Although the Bolshevik-sponsored national delimitation of the region forged a sense of territorial nationhood through the identification of distinct nationalities from numerous ethnic, sub-ethnic, clan and religious alignments, it did not uniformly promote a territorialisation of ethnic identities. As a result of the assimilation of various ethnic groups found on its territories, the category 'Uzbek' was considerably expanded, developing into a new identity separate from the 'historical' Uzbek identity. In contrast, the Kazakh nationality preserved its historical association with the nomadic lifestyle and its ethnic boundaries remained relatively unaffected during the Soviet period. As was recognised in the first comprehensive Russian imperial census of 1897, the Kazakhs were the single largest nationality among the various Central Asian groups, totalling 3.39 million, while the Uzbeks (including those listed as 'Sart') numbered only 1.69 million (Dave 2004).

With the exception of Kazakhstan, the created states became fully-fledged members of the USSR in the 1920s. With the largest territory in Central Asia, Kazakhstan only joined the Union Republics in 1936, up to that point having stayed within the Russian Federation (RSFSR) under the name Kirghiz or Kirghiz-Kaisak (Belokrenitsky 1998). Drawing attention to this episode Belokrenitsky argues that:

> *"...the [Central Asian] region was known in the Soviet Union to consist of two major units - on the one hand, Kazakhstan and, on the other, the rest of the Central Asian republics. To be precise, these republics were never called Central Asian in the Russian terminology. They were referred to as Middle Asian on the basis of the name given to the whole region (Srednyaya Aziya) -*

barring Kazakhstan. The outside, English-speaking world scarcely noticed this difference of little apparent semantic significance. Of greater ideological and political importance has been the separate designation of Kazakhstan and Central Asia" (Belokrenitsky 1998: 45-48)

In the 1920s, the ethnic composition of the Central Asian states started to mutate, with Kazakhstan changing most. At the start, the extensive clear-out campaigns of the later 1920s caused the exile and killing of numerous Central Asians, some of them labelled 'enemies of the people'. At least 50,000 people perished in concentration camps. Moreover, the policy of industrialization and collectivization, also known as Stalin's Revolution, implemented over a short period of time without the consideration of local peculiarities, caused famine and the death of millions. Initially launched out of necessity to rapidly increase the export of grain, which was indispensable for the upkeep of industrialization, the collectivization program destroyed the peasants' powerbase and precipitated urbanization. Though none of its aims were ultimately attained, the consequences of the collectivization policy were devastating (Olcott 1981). More than 800,000 Central Asians died from shortage of food and malnutrition (Abazov 2007:40).The forced settlement of Kazakhs led to the perishing of almost 90 percent of all cattle - the only source of livelihood for nomads. The ensuing famine resulted in a catastrophic human loss. The estimates of loss of Kazakh lives vary from 25 to 40 percent and most Kazakh historians and demographers refer to this period as a 'genocide' attempted by the Soviet regime against the Kazakh nation (Dave 2003: 3). The collectivization policy and subsequent migration of Kazakhs to the neighbouring states brought further decrease of the population. In the period between 1926 and 1939 the number of Kazakhs was reduced from 4.12 million to 1.5 million (Kaiser 1994). Although Kolstoe gives a slightly different account, she admits that:

The Kazakh nation was more thoroughly decimated than any other major Soviet nationality during collectivization and the ensuing famine in the 1930s. Between 1926 and 1939, the ethnic Kazakh population in the republic decreased from 3.7 to 2.3 million that is, by an astonishing 38 percent. This was the result partly of emigration (flight to China and Mongolia) but mostly of death by starvation and execution (Kolstoe 1995: 24)

A great number of Europeans were forcibly settled in the Central Asian steppes at the end of the 1930s, not only to suppress and dismantle possible strikes by the indigenous people, but to establish institutions with political and cultural dimensions, facilitate the processes of industrialization and collectivization, and therefore, to help to appropriately utilise the natural and agricultural wealth of the region. In addition, the outbreak of World War II activated the rapid evacuation of strategic enterprises from the border regions to Central Asia which led to the mass departure of Soviet people from the western part of the country. All in all, by 1960 many Slavs found themselves in the southern tiers of the USSR; some driven there for well-paid jobs, and others 'in response to political necessity' (Lubin 1991: 48). In the early 1940s around half million Volga Germans and Chechens were moved out of their homes and brought to Kazakhstan. By 1949 more than 800, 000 deportees had come to Kazakhstan, including '33,088 Karachai, 28,130 Poles, 28,497 Meskhetian Turks, 17,512 Balkar and numerous smaller nationalities' (Dave 2003: 3-4). The Virgin lands campaign of 1950s did also trigger the influx of more than 600,000 settlers from the Slavic and Baltic republics. The 1959 census revealed an entirely changed ethnic profile of Kazakhstan; while the Slavic and European nationalities together formed around 60 percent of the total population, Kazakhs' share was 29 percent. By 1970, due to the economic decline in Central Asia, the influx of Slavic people into Kazakhstan had significantly slowed. Between 1966 and 1979, the number of entrances in Kazakhstan from other republics diminished by sixty percent (Alekseenko, quoted in Dave 2003: 4).

As a result of the multi-ethnic profile of Kazakhstan, the titular Kazakhs did not necessarily occupy noticeable leadership positions. The only Kazakh who held the position of Secretary of the Kazakh Communist Party for a prolonged period was Dinmukhamed Kunaev (1959-61 and succeeding a brief break, 1962-86). His two Kazakh predecessors could not stay in office for more than a year (Dave 2003: 7). After Stalin's death in 1953, ethnic Kazakhs, like other Central Asians, started to be admitted to the federal and national political structures. While in 1964 Kazakhs comprised only 33 percent of the member of the Council of Ministers, this figure increased to 60 percent in around 15 years (Olcott 1995: 241-244).

In the early days of Soviet rule, Islamic institutions continued to function, as it was in the interest of Moscow-based politicians to obtain Muslim clerics' open cooperation. Yet, the end of the 1920s saw this policy fundamentally reversed. Islamic courts,

schools and colleges were gradually replaced with more secular structures (Akiner 1998). In particular, the anti-religious campaigns of the period between 1932 and 1936 had a profound impact on the practice of Islam. Religious duties including the pilgrimage to Mecca, *zakat* (support of the poor), and printing and disseminating of the Quran were declared illegal, and prayer venues were confiscated and converted into museums, entertainment places or factories. Around 3,500 hugely significant books were set on fire and thousands of Muslim women were urged to burn their veils, while religious leaders were persecuted. Yet, the outbreak of World War Two forced the Soviets to turn religion into an ideological tool. By reviving religious ceremonies, Moscow attempted to illustrate and reinforce a bond between patriotism and Marxist socialism (Hiro 2009: 53-58). This culminated in the creation of The Spiritual Directorate of the Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan in 1943. In the 1970s more than fifteen international Islamic conferences took place in Central Asia (Rorlich 1991). The Islamic revival of the 1980s was of massive help to the solidification of nation-states in the wake of the fall of the Soviet regime (Khalid 2003), as it showed how densely ethnicity and religion were intertwined in Central Asia (Rorlich 1991).

In contrast to positive changes in religious life in later stages, languages experienced destructive modifications from the early years of the Soviet rule. The introduction of Latin script in 1926 and the Cyrillic alphabet four years later contributed to a rapid surge in illiteracy levels. Taught in the Arabic alphabet in the past, people found themselves sequestered in their own 'national states'. The first census of 1926 revealed that only 2.2 percent of Tajiks claimed writing and reading skills; the figure was a little higher in Kazakhstan (7.1 percent). In 1939, the literacy rate among Tajik people soared to 71.7 percent, and yet Tajikistan lagged behind in many other ways in the USSR (Lorimer, quoted in Hiro 2009: 56). By the 1980s, many Soviet scholars began to draw attention to the high degree of native language loss among Kazakhs. Although census data for 1989 showed that 98.5 percent of Kazakhs indicated Kazakh as their native language, this was misrepresentative as respondents' answers were indicative only of the language they saw as connected to their ethnic group. In contrast, less than 1 percent of Russians in Kazakhstan claimed knowledge of Kazakh, which was the lowest level of proficiency in the titular vernacular of any Soviet republic (O'Callaghan 2005: 208-209). Despite the destruction of the nomadic way of life and forceful policy of *Russification* which severed the Kazakh people from their traditional culture and

heritage (O'Callaghan 2005: 208), it was Kazakh nationalism that achieved headline status in the world press during the Gorbachev years. This was the December 1986 disturbance in Alma-Ata (capital of Kazakh SSSR), which followed the replacement of the Republic Party's First Secretary Dinmukhammed Kunaev (a Kazakh) by the Russian Genadii Kolbin. The tensions in Uzbekistan's Fergana Valley also exploded into violent rampages in the spring of 1989 (Fierman 1991).

Having been formerly under minimal Russian control, then much tighter Soviet control, the Central Asian nations acquired their own states in the wake of the Soviet fall. Although modern republican languages are largely created in the twentieth-century, the borders between Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan are not very different from the earlier borders between the settled populations in the Uzbek khanates of Bukhara and Khiva and the Kirghiz and Kazakh nomads (Manz 1994, quoted in Manz 2003: 94). Even so, by the time the Soviet Union ceased to exist, 'the Central Asian republics had achieved modern identities showing the elements of European nationalism – emphasis on region, common historical experience, culture and language' (Manz 2003: 94).

Kazakhstan was the only Central Asian state to undergo a high level of industrialization in the Soviet period, while Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan specialised in the production of cotton, as well as fruits, vegetables, wool, and silk (Abazov 2007:43). Yet, Kazakhstan's tragedy was that its geopolitical situation, while enhancing the process of industrialization, proved to be its greatest strategic weakness at the same time. As a result of its geographical proximity to Russia, Kazakhstan was the only Soviet republic to 'have given birth to a nation whose titular ethnic group was in a minority in 1991' (Cummings 2006: 178). So, the problem of how to integrate ethnic minorities loomed large for the nascent government of Kazakhstan.

2.4 Post-Soviet Central Asia

The disintegration of the Soviet Union incurred a heavy political, economic, ideological and security price for all Central Asian governments as they not only had to confront geopolitical challenges, but also to ensure the smooth formation of domestic power relations, national identity and economic reforms. All the Central Asian republics adopted a presidential mode of governance (Brooker 2004). Pressured by the prospect of inter-ethnic violence, civil war and relative persistence of the Soviet-style

administration, the promotion of presidents' power was essential particularly in Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan (Rahimov 2007: 304). Amid other causes of the ascendency and eventual endurance of presidential systems in the Central Asian states was the revival of tribal and communal bonds in the form of clan groups. Inter-clan agreements were of immense help in the prevention of political disorder in the majority of these countries, whilst Tajikistan's slide into civil war was, in part, due to inter-clan conflict (Abazov 1999). In this respect Kazakhstan resembled other Central Asian states.

Although, in theory presidents had restricted power, in practice, they controlled almost everything in their respective countries. Akiner (1998) traced great commonalities between the traditional management system of Khans and that of Central Asian presidents. Yet, the Central Asian leaders demonstrated disparate world views, despite the fact that they were socialized in much the same communist party guidelines of economics and management. These variances were mirrored in the adoption of different developmental strategies for their republics and in the firm stance of Kazakhstan's president to pursue reform-oriented policies alone in difficult economic times (Gleason 2001).

The centralization of political power in the hands of presidents had diverse implications. In the case of Kazakhstan, it helped to precipitate its adaptation to the changing global realities by circumventing public discussion in the initial years. Additionally, while the newly-adopted constitutions proclaimed these states democratic, the scale of democratic changes varied from republic to republic (Haghayeghi 1994). Doubtless, the attempts by the Central Asian states alone to introduce democratic values in the face of limited financial and political resources were enough to generate international support. The Kyrgyz government's venture to depict the country as 'the Switzerland of Central Asia' or as a 'democratic island' accurately captures the mood of the days of euphoria (Petric 2010). However, numerous scholars (Anderson 1997; Akiner 2003; Gleason 2001; Katz 2006) argued that not only economically fragile Kyrgyzstan, but also mineral-rich Kazakhstan managed to pull ahead of others. While the Russian language suffered a terrible fate in Tajikistan and Turkmenistan where it became merely a tool of inter-ethnic interaction and while it was reduced to an 'ethnic minority language' in Uzbekistan, both Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan granted it official status in their respective constitutions (Dzhigo and Teplitskaya 2007). As a rule, the

proportion of the population who did not speak a second language in Tajikistan fell in the period from 1989 to 2000. Russian-language fluency diminished among all ethnic groups, from 21.4 percent to 8.5 percent for Uzbeks, from 19.1 percent to 10.8 percent for Kyrgyz, and from 30 percent to 19.5 percent for Tajiks (Ferrando 2008: 500). By the year 2002, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan replaced the Cyrillic alphabet with the Latin (Akiner 2003) and distanced themselves further from the regional lingua franca.

A fierce and in some cases measured attack on the Russian language reflected a general replacement of communist ideology with ethnic nationalism (Khazanov 2006), despite the paradox of building 'nation-state ideologies on the basis of a multinational population' (Ferrando 2008: 489). The design of their national flags overtly echoed the elevation of the role of the titular group (Akcali 2003). However, while for all titular ethnic groups in the region states became an 'imagined community' to which they developed loyalties, only the Kazakhs resolved to share their state with other nationalities and develop civic policies of nation-building. With the exception of Kazakhstan, the Central Asian states refused to discuss the recommendations of international organizations to differentiate the term reserved for the description of their country's identity from the term used to identify national groups - in other words to make a distinction between 'Uzbeks' and 'Uzbekistanis' - as that would point out the existence of a difference between those who are ethnic Uzbeks and those who are granted political citizenship (Roy 2000: 13).

As a rule, names of the cities and streets in all Central Asian states underwent significant changes to inaugurate the process of 'ethnic nationalization' (Diener 2002). Leninabad town in Tajikistan regained its pre-Soviet name Khojent. The same happened with Tselinograd in Kazakhstan which became Akmola, Krasnovodsk in Turkmenistan was renamed Turkmenbashi, and Krivabad in Azerbaijan was called Ganja. Other Soviet cities like Orjonokidze-abad in Tajikistan and Frunze in Kyrgyzstan also changed their names and became Kafirnehan and Bishkek respectively. Streets named after Marx and Lenin were superseded with such names as Rudaki in Tajikistan, Turkmenbashi in Turkmenistan, and Independence and Rashidov in Uzbekistan (Roy 2000: 162-163). However, Diener (2002: 645) argued that this policy 'has been more pronounced in states like Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan than in Kazakhstan', and alienated considerable proportions of the minority ethnicities.

The nationalization policies in the Central Asian states duly triggered non-titular nationalities to emigrate en masse, and subsequently the ethnic composition of states experienced a slight homogenization. Protracted war in Tajikistan caused 80 percent of Russians to quit; those living in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan also departed in large numbers (Tahir 2011). Another cause of massive exodus of non-titular groups was the emergence of armed religious groups pronouncing political aspirations. Radical Islamic organizations, particularly the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and Hizb ut-Tahrir (Salvation Party), from the early days of independence (1990-1991), struggled to exploit the shaky political situation in Central Asia (Akbarzadeh 2004). They operated mainly within the territory of Uzbekistan, pursuing their goal of the creation of a wide-ranging Islamic state in Central Asia (Karagiannis and McCauley 2006). Since Islam is built in to growing identities of Tajik, Turkmen and Uzbek people, it was difficult for their governments to lead an open struggle against its development (Akbarzadeh 1997) and block the subsequent proliferation of radical groups. Due to Kazakhs' historically low religiosity and geographical position, Kazakhstan remained peaceful in terms of avoiding religious conflicts during the transition period. Another factor that prevented the spread of radical Islam in Kazakhstan was the presence of a vast number of less-and non-religious Russians, which required the continuation of the secular regime (Aydingun 2007). Yet, it is also noteworthy that in the final years of Soviet rule, Kazakh state officials managed to mobilize Islamic clergies around a new body, the Spiritual Administration of Muslims in Kazakhstan (SAMK). It was a decision taken to minimize the influence of the SADUM located in Uzbekistan, and 'nationalize' Islam in order to reduce any potential threat from radical Islamic groups (Karagiannis 2007). As a result, 'traditional' Islam of the Soviet period was transformed into 'official' Islam in the newly independent Kazakhstan and the Islamic revival in the country was kept away from outside manipulation. Even though the government was not against the expansion of Islamic practice in its traditional form, the creation of political parties on religious grounds was prohibited by the constitution (Aydingun 2007). From the outset, the government was keen to keep a balance between Islam and Christianity in many fields and the Kazakhstan president's trip to the Vatican after his visit to Mecca in 1994 demonstrated this very clearly (Vertkin 2007). Therefore an attempt to launch an Islamic revolutionary insurgency in Kazakhstan could be vigorously resisted not just by the Slavic and secular Kazakh populations, but by the government (Katz 2006).

Besides ideological shifts, that denied Russians the opportunity to take the stage in the theatre of power, poor economic conditions also triggered their departure from the Central Asian states. Referring to the Russians' plight in Kazakhstan in the 1990s, Huttenbach argued that:

> *"Relatively few Russians have, so far, opted to emigrate from Kazakhstan to Russia. Kazakhstan's Russians have tended to avoid this course, anticipating a rosier economic future in Kazakhstan than in the economically troubled, stagnating and mal-administered Russian Federation" (Huttenbach 1998: 584)*

Indeed, although their political representation was secured in Kazakhstan, the future of local Russians and other minority ethnicities predominantly rested on the stabilization of the country's economic life; if they were to stay and identify themselves with the new republic, financial security needed to be guaranteed (Agadjanian 1999). The economic success arrived relatively early. In 1997, in per capita foreign direct investment Kazakhstan was way ahead of others in the post-Soviet realm. Mainly because of privatization yields, two years later it registered its first budget surplus. All the economic achievement 'bred confidence and a certain complacency, reducing the perceived need to find alternative markers of belonging' (Cummings 2006: 185). There were two preconditions for the continuation of the success story: the abundance of oil reserves and increasing global demand. A surge in oil prices in 1998 helped Kazakhstan to bolster its economic performance (Pomfret 2007) and it has the highest GDP per head of population (14100$) in Central Asia (CIA World Factbook 2014). Gradually, parts of the country's economy have become more tightly integrated with a transnational than with a national economy. The further economic growth has helped cement people's loyalty to the existing state. As has been recognized by recent research on post-Soviet states, Kazakhstanis, together with Azerbaijanis and Turkmens, are less nostalgic for the Soviet Union than other national groups (Esipova and Ray 2013).

Apart from Turkmenistan, the Central Asian states did not enjoy Kazakhstan's level of economic growth, and most of them failed to provide their own citizens with full employment, let alone retain highly-skilled Russians or other ethnic-minorities. In fact, their performance varied in relation to government policies, national resources and connections to international markets (Gleason 2001). Located in a mountainous region with no valuable mineral resources, Tajikistan displayed the regions lowest per capita

incomes, with almost half of the population living below the poverty line (less than US$2 a day). During the years of independence, Tajikistan lost many skilled workers, including Russians, which had a damaging effect on the economy. More than 300,000 Tajiks are believed to be working abroad and sending around US $310 million every year (Spechler 2008). Kyrgyzstan followed the advice of the international organizations and took on the neo-liberal reforms. Pioneering the printing of freely convertible currency in 1995, three years later Kyrgyzstan became a member of the World Trade Organization (Spechler 2008). The Kyrgyz economy however has seen no significant improvement to date. Not only corruption but also consistent reprioritisation of economic priorities stifled overall development (Pomfret 2007). Poverty rates were high until quite recently. An estimated 21.4 percent of the population lived below the $2/day international poverty line, as reported for 2003, down from 34 per cent in 2000. Due to this poverty and the lack of jobs, an estimated 500,000 Kyrgyz out of a population of about 5 million have left to work outside the country (Spechler 2008). Uzbekistan, the main hub of the cotton industry during the Soviet period, managed to go global and sell its main commodity to the western markets at higher prices (Spechler 2008). When in the first half of the 1990s, gross domestic product (GDP) in Tajikistan declined by 62 percent, and dropped slightly less in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan (49 percent, 39 percent and 30 percent), the figure in Uzbekistan was 18 percent (Rumer 2002). Zettlemeyer (1998) found that Uzbekistan's combination of low industrialization, its capacity to trade cotton, and energy independence explain why the country's output fell less than any of the other former Soviet Union republics. On the other hand, Turkmenistan has done well out of the Soviet disintegration. Due to its natural gas deposits, its economy thrived in the 1990s. Revenues from exporting gas and cotton make up half of the country's GDP today (Spechler 2008).

Hence, while the Central Asian countries had similar historical legacies and shared 'super-presidential political systems' in the wake of the fall of the Soviet regime, substantial differences in economic policies afterwards created more differentiated societies (Pomfret 2007). Comparing transitional strategies pursued in three different states, Luong (2000) concludes that Kazakhstan adopted neither Kyrgyzstan's open policy nor Uzbekistan's cautious approach. While accepting the possibility of democratic changes and development of market economy, Kazakhstan's government avoided giving the impression of outright success. Having its central role fortified in the

oversight of domestic financial operations, the government only slightly restricted the collaborative activities of regional governors with international organizations and thus kept a relatively moderate stance in relation to the politico-economic changes as a whole.

In subsequent years, the degree of openness of public offices and among their holders increased in Kazakhstan. This was aided by the exposure of the new generation to international education opportunities supported by a government scheme known as the *Bolashak* programme (Knox 2008). Along with acquiring 'knowledge' and 'professional expertise', young Kazakhstanis would be introduced to 'the western-style business environment and culture' (Abazov 2006: 4). By 2013, the number of beneficiaries of *Bolashak* scholarships reached approximately 10,000. Abazov traced the impact of the program through the country's advances in global standing:

> *"This change in cadre has helped to reduce red tape and inefficiencies and to improve professionalism (especially if compared to neighbouring countries in the region), achieving position number 72 out of 139 in the Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) 2010–2011 and 65th place in the GCI's higher education and training section, at least 20 notches better than any of the neighbouring Central Asian states" (Abazov 2011: 4)*

In their recent book, "Why Nation's Fail" Acemoglu and Robinson (2012) argued that politically less 'caged' (to use Mann's term) people are better placed to thrive economically, which was supported by many examples from around the world. It is not surprising that while all the Central Asian states were on their list of politically laggard countries that are also experiencing low financial growth, Kazakhstan was left out. This also shows that Kazakhstan does not conform to its micro-regional type in terms of pursuing political, economic and ideological policies.

The neo-liberal approach in the domestic politics of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, although measured in the former and too loose in the latter, has also been present in their foreign policy. Kazakhstan was an early enthusiast of the switch to international standards and its president was among the most articulate of post-Soviet leaders in advocating the adoption of international standards. This was in sharp contrast to the foreign policies of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, which were exaggerated forms of a structuralist approach, with Tajikistan's tactic lying somewhere between them. In other

words, while Tajikistan's government was intent on reform and on adjusting to international standards, it had a limited capacity to accomplish these goals (Gleason 2001).

Too cautious foreign policy of some also explains why geopolitically weak Central Asian states did not manage to create a political union, although they had a few in-built advantages and reasons to precipitate the process of integration. Firstly, the people of Central Asia share the same cultural inheritance ranging from a similar historical route and religious belief to common traditions and ideals. Secondly, the existence of scores of problems related to boundaries, water regulation processes and environmental issues was a reminder of the necessity for integration. Thirdly, all states of Central Asia faced certain dangers that could undermine their sovereignty, notably, religious radicalism, and across-the-board terrorism. Fourthly, the shaky economic and political situation of Afghanistan also offered a good reason for the Central Asian states to cooperate with each other so as to assist their southern neighbour to recover without further ado (Bobokulov 2006).

In reality, there were a number of unsuccessful attempts to bring all the states together and achieve the above goals. The first step toward Central Asian unification was taken in 1994 with the creation of new institution named the Central Asian Union (CAU). After four years, at a meeting held in Kyrgyzstan, CAU changed its name to the Central Asian Economic Community (CAEC) with particular emphasis on economic cooperation. Turkmenistan opted out of participating in these integration processes. Following the acceptance of Kyrgyzstan to the WTO, other Central Asian countries had to change their trade procedures in order not to be swallowed by the all-encompassing economic giant, and fall victim of the existing conditions. Therefore, a new organization was established under the broad name of the Eurasian Economic Community (EEC) in 2000 to include Russia and Belarus. In view of the fact that some religious and anti-government groups began to gain power, Central Asian officials modified the structure of the EEC, giving more priority to the security issue, as a result of which a new body - the Central Asian Cooperation Organization - came into existence (Bobokulov 2006). The Shanghai Cooperation Organization was also projected to become a negotiating arena and help solve problems of various scales. The accomplishments of the SCO's first year could fairly be ascribed to the existence of a set of factors such as common norms, mutual interests, and a so-called progressive

approach. The latter played a vital part ever since the organisation prioritised the political aspirations of member states, and thus was fashioned accordingly. To begin with, the following topics were put on the agenda; 'border delimitations, social stability, economic development, decreasing the Russian influence on the region and suppression of separatism and religious extremism' (Swanström 2004: 45)

Even so, none of the above organizations became viable political or even economic units. Nonetheless, the geopolitical importance of Central Asia has increased over the last two decades, not only as a major basis of energy commodities but also as a result of its strategic position 'at the nexus of Russian, Chinese, Iranian, and Western economic and security interests' (Clem 2011: 229). Still, Kazakhstan's 'unionist nationalism' (Hale 2005) eventually catapulted it into a Eurasian Economic Union. When the re-elected President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, started to draw attention to the need to construct an 'economically profitable' Union in the 2010s, he did so by referring to a lecture delivered by the President of Kazakhstan in 1994 at the Moscow State University, where the relevance of forging such a union was put forward for the first time. As a result, on May 29 2014, three states - Russia, Belorussia and Kazakhstan - formed a Eurasian Economic Union. None of the Central Asian states has yet entered it. While Kazakhstan's integrationist behaviour is geopolitically justified, it also shows that, in contrast to others, Kazakhstan has done little to distance itself from Russia since the early years of independence.

According to Cummings (2003), there exist at least four reasons for Kazakhstan to pursue 'integrationist' foreign policy. Firstly, Kazakhstan needs the partnership with Russia from an economic point of view; therefore, it will continue to keep strengthening its ties with its northern neighbour. Secondly, the fact that Kazakhstan is situated between two major powers, Russia and China, played a key role in shaping its foreign policy as, by turning a blind eye to the past, and underestimating any cultural and ideological difference, the Kazakhstani government had to act in accordance with its neighbours' wishes. The third reason is the attempts of elites to build a new Kazakhstani identity on the world stage, which is justified by the multi-ethnic composition of the state and its buffer role between East and West. Last but not least, according to Cummings (2003), the indigenous people are satisfied with a lack of any national identity. Indeed, while demonstrating openness to outside projects, developing economically and widening political opportunity structures for all non-titular groups

living in Kazakhstan, the government managed to avoid "the clash of civilizations", once predicted to take place by Huntington (1995). However, looking at the developments in the country from the vantage point of the last decade, Cummings correctly noted that:

> *"After more than fifteen years of independent governing, Kazakhstan's elite is still faced with the daunting task of instilling in both itself and its followers a sense of belonging" (Cummings 2006: 198).*

The failure of the government to designate the role of Kazakhs in the emerging society and influence the future development of between-ethnic relations in Kazakh language, while guaranteeing peace and prosperity, put the ideological component of the state at risk. Here, it is essential to remember Hutchinson's (1994: 131) evaluation, according to which European states like France and Spain are unlikely to face the fate of the Soviet Union, partly because the majority of the inhabitants of these countries have a strong adherence to their states since they are 'suffused with their name, myths, history, and culture'. In contrast, Russians did not have many privileges in the communist country, which was mainly built on their efforts and sacrifice. Thus, according to Hutchinson (1994: 133), in order to preserve ethnic stability in a multinational society the titular nation has to be prevailing in number and should be 'identified with the state and its territories' in the first place.

2.5 Conclusion

Nomadic Kazakhs, like the rest of the region's nations prior to the invasion of Russian and then Soviet empires, had a robust identity. However due to the geographical proximity to Russian lands, Kazakhs were destined to experience the cold winds of Russian colonization more thoroughly than other Central Asian people. Despite this, in the early years of Soviet rule, only the Kazakhs created a nation-state modelled on those in Western Europe, while pan-Turkic and pan-Islamic ideas circulated in the rest of the region. As a result of the collectivisation, *Russification*, deportation, agricultural campaigns and many other policies implemented in the name of communist ideals, Kazakhs, once numerically the most dominant ethnic group in Central Asia, came to constitute a minority in their own republic. Therefore, when they obtained their independence from Moscow in 1991, the Kazakhs were not in a position to build a

nation-state infused with their centuries-old values. Still, by providing political rights to numerous ethnic groups now living in Kazakhstan, the government managed to secure not only inter-ethnic peace but also to keep highly-skilled non-Kazakh workers and guaranteed a swift economic recovery. Thanks to more than fifteen years of financial growth that trickled down to both Kazakhs and other minorities, the question of the criteria for national belonging did not come to the fore seriously. Economic prosperity successfully trumped ideological discourses. In the next chapter I will show that ideologically Kazakhstan might have developed similarly to other Central Asian states had the Kazakhs been a more homogenous group in the early years.

Chapter 3

The inclusivity of nation-building policies: more civic than ethnic

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 explained why Kazakhstan emerged as an economically more prosperous, politically less centralized, relatively globalized and less nationalist in certain respects than other Central Asian states in the years after the fall of the Soviet Union. Here, I will discuss the inclusivity of the government's nation-building policies, and pay special attention to the demographic, linguistic and local-regional changes of the last years. Then, I will analyse the factors that both narrowed and reinforced the cultural division of Kazakhs.

The nation-building policies in post-Soviet Kazakhstan have been incoherent and consequently different opinions have been put forth in the literature. In the 2000s, foreign scholars argued that the policy of incorporating the whole population on a supra-ethnic basis was undermined by the policy of 'ethnifying' the state. Schatz (2000: 88) called it 'internationalism with a Kazakh face'. Later, Cummings (2006) made the shrewd observation that along with the introduction of civic Kazakhstani identity, the state's priority was the revival of minority ethnicities' cultural distinctiveness and the preservation of the Kazakh people's special status. He then concluded that 'Kazakhstan's nation-and state-building policies [did] not fit neatly into any one paradigm of nation-building' (2006: 177-178). I would go further and argue that the government's civic nation-building policies have been more powerful and consistent than their ethnic ones.

3.2 Commitment to civic form of nation-building

Of the fifteen national republics that constituted the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan qualified as the most multi-ethnic republic, with a substantial share of Slavs and many other nationalities in its population. From the 1950s, Kazakhs did not make up a majority of constituency in their own state (Dave 2003: 2). Only in 1989, did they achieve the upper hand by outnumbering Russians by two percent. The next five years saw Kazakhs

reach 44 percent of the whole populace, with the share of Russians reducing to 36 percent (Davis and Sabol 1998).

Although political representation of many ethnicities materialised from the early days of independence, to speak of Kazakhstan as a multicultural state was analytically problematic. A close look revealed a rather bi-cultural society, consisting of Russians with their culture tinted with communist ethos, and of indigenous Kazakhs. Ethnic groups of European origin, due to the possibility of obtaining privileges by identifying themselves as Russians, declared themselves to be Russians during the Soviet period. Therefore in the early 1990s, mainly two ethnic groups needed to be housed first, Kazakhs and Russians. In 1989, Russians made up 70-80 percent of the populace in the northern and eastern parts of Kazakhstan. Such a geographic concentration gave them a majority in a few regional constituencies (Peyrouse 2007) and duly engendered a 'Russian question' (Iglicka 1998; Kolsto 1998; Peyrouse 2007). The relevance of the 'Russian question' also arose from the nature of Russians' backgrounds. Of all Russians inhabiting Kazakhstan, two thirds were local-born (the highest number of all the republics, including Ukraine), and more than 37 percent of them had lived in Kazakhstan for more than 20 years (Peyrouse 2007). As a result, the prospect of Russian mobilisation was high. Alexander Solzhenitsyn's ideas, which centred on the assumption that Russian-dominated regions of Kazakhstan should be integrated into Russia, were also reverberating across the borders (Dave 2003).

Several organizations defending Russian interests in the country proliferated in the 1990s. Set up in 1990 in the northern city of Pavlodar, the Society for Slavic culture *Slaviya* targeted the promotion of Slavic values. In the wake of the Soviet Union's disintegration however, the members of the organization began to express unconcealed nationalist feelings. In 1992, they opposed the withdrawal of Cossack Ermak's statue from Pavlodar's city centre and pressed for the adoption of Russian as the state language. Additionally, the Russian people enjoyed the political support of *Russkaya obshchina* and *Lad*, which were officially recognized by Kazakhstan's government in 1992. Eventually however, only *Russkaya obshchina* became a member of the Assembly of Peoples of Kazakhstan. One more group that protested about the issues touching Russian people were the Cossacks. In the long run, seeing that Russian people were less committed to their own cause, the Cossacks followed suit and stayed outside politics (Peyrouse 2007).

The factors that led to the weakening of the 'Russian question' are diverse. The emigration of highly-skilled Russians is among the influential ones. They abandoned Kazakhstan at a time of economic problems; not as a consequence of ethnic discrimination (Davis and Sabol 1998). Besides, Russians, despite constituting the majority in the northern and eastern parts of Kazakhstan between 1950s and 1990s, were not a cohesive ethnic group. Some identified themselves more thoroughly with the Russians inhabiting the Far Eastern regions of Siberia, rather than the 'mainland' Russians. By contrast, the Russians of southern Kazakhstan were more integrated into Kazakh culture and had some degree of familiarity with the Kazakh language. Above and beyond, the nascent Russian government was not in a position to influence the lives of millions of Russians now living in different states (Dave 2003). For instance, in 2000 local Russian leaders submitted three propositions to the Russian president during his visit to Kazakhstan. They demanded either 'a form of cultural autonomy that would encourage Russians to stay in Kazakhstan, or a territorial unification of the northern regions with Russia, or a massive emigration to Russia'. The head of the Russian state welcomed only the last of these prospects (Peyrouse 2007: 494-495).

Nonetheless, the most important factor that diminished the power of Russian organizations in Kazakhstan was the fact that Kazakhstan's government has in time brought minority ethnicities inside a political nation on fair terms. A new constitution of 1995 introduced the term 'Kazakhstani' demonstrating the government's determination to consolidate diverse communities under one umbrella, irrespective of ethnic peculiarities (Kusainova and Gleason 1998). Along with special rights of the Kazakh diaspora to hold dual citizenship, the phrase defining Kazakhstan as 'the form of statehood of the self-determining Kazak[h] nation' was also removed from the new-fangled constitution (Polsto and Malkova 1997). The constitutional reforms were then bolstered by other documents, such as: Ideological Consolidation of Society (1993); Toward Kazakhstan's Renewal - through a deepening of reform and supranational understanding (1994); For Peace and Understanding in our Common Home (1995), and The Concept of State Formation (1996) (Cummings 2006: 182). From that period on, few western-based scholars referred to ethnic minorities inhabiting Kazakhstan as 'Kazakhs of' a specific ethnic origin, for example, 'of Polish descent', as Iglicka suggested (1998: 995).

Still, the civic orientation of nation-building policy was mostly demonstrated in the support of the Russian language. The language law of 1995 nominated Kazakh as a state language and Russian was granted the position of 'language of interethnic communication'. The following-year an amendment designated it as the 'official language', to be applied on a par with Kazakh. Despite passionate appeals of nationalist pressure groups, no language proficiency test for government workers was introduced and state officials were not obliged to have fluency in Kazakh (Dave 2003). Indeed, although only Kazakh was ranked as a state language, Russian had its glorious past and was much more preferable in many aspects. That is why the law that obliged all media outlets to broadcast 50 percent of their program in Kazakh has never been implemented fully (O'Callaghan 2005). Ironically, this was a general retreat from the Soviet policies designed to strengthen the status of the Kazakh language. The reformist spirit of the Gorbachev era, introduced under the banner of *glasnost* (Bova 1991), also targeted the revival of national languages in the Soviet republics. The first step in the name of revitalizing the Kazakh language was taken a few years before independence, in 1987. The government decree 'On Improving the Study of the Kazakh Language in the Republic' allowed Kazakh students to learn their native tongue at school. In 1989, a second document known as 'Kazakhstan's Language Law' came into being at a time when a parade of language legislations has been taking place across the Soviet Union. In relation to the decree adopted in 1987, this bill pledged to enhance the scope of the usage of Kazakh, guaranteeing that education in Kazakh would be available in all educational institutions (Fierman 2006: 104-105). The Language Law of 1989, amid other changes especially in the education system, also obliged government officials to use Kazakh in their workplace (Rivers 2002: 160). Fierman (2006) argued that if the decree of 1987 and the law of 1989 had enjoyed a wide and strict enforcement from above, a great many Kazakh nationalists would have been content with the situation.

Although political and ideological inclusivity of state policies have helped to avoid inter-ethnic conflicts, some help also came from economic difficulties on the ground. The fall of the Soviet Union had devastating economic consequences and people were more concerned with the problems of subsistence than politics (Edmunds 1998). In comparison to only five per cent in 1989, more than 50 per cent of the population lived below the poverty line in 1994. While hundreds of schools, hospitals, and libraries were closed, diseases such as tuberculosis resurfaced and the immunization of children was

no longer systematic. Moreover, salaries and pensions were remunerated 'at irregular intervals, and were too low to compensate for the rise in the cost of living' (Peyrouse 2007: 482). Although there was an abundance of Kazakh nationalist pressure groups in the early years of independence, they suffered from low attendance and scarcity of general support. By the end of the 1990s, they virtually ceased to exist (Edmunds 1998), for the reason that Kazakhs experienced material hardships more than any other group. To quote Edmunds:

> *"While the Slavic community has often been the focus point for conflict potential in Kazakstan, it must be remembered that the poorest section of Kazakstani society, and that which has perhaps suffered most from independence, are agricultural workers in the overwhelmingly Kazak rural regions" (Edmunds 1998: 469-470)*

In the light of this, the government introduced a novel strategy "Kazakhstan-2030" in 1998. Thus, the drive to cultivate collective identities through particular emotional issues was transformed into the realization of other more tangible tasks. The list included seven main areas, such as, territorial integrity and stability; political stability and consolidated society; economic growth; health, education and welfare of 'Kazakhstanis'; energy resources, infrastructure and professional state (Cummings 2006: 185-186).

At the end of the 1990s, akin to the idea of *Homo Sovieticus* which pursued the ultimate fusion of Soviet nationalities, the government named the people of Kazakhstan *Eurasians*, notwithstanding their ethnic background. Although many perceived it as another government's attempt to fortify interethnic stability (Schatz 2000), it was part of a set of factors designated to facilitate the unity of the people of Kazakhstan. The notion of *Homo-Sovieticus*, by changing to *Kazakhstani* and then *Eurasian* identity, also helped enormously to pacify ethnic grievances.

By the same token, the presentation of the new capital of Kazakhstan, Astana, in June 1998, took place 'in a quite Eurasianist' way. All the ethnic groups living in Kazakhstan performed their 'traditional' dance, each in their own 'national' clothing, while the grandstands were filled with participants spelling out central terms in the internationalist spirit (Schatz 2000b: 79). Indeed, early efforts to turn Astana into a Eurasian city, a bridge between West and East, began with the foundation of the

Eurasian State University (ESU) in 1996. Enjoying the financial support of the state, ESU gradually positioned itself as a leading institution fully equipped to nurture a new stratum of business and political elite. In 2001, it obtained a special republican status and was renamed as the Eurasian National University (ENU) (Kaz Pravda 2002). Although Astana is still a building site, already the main memorials of the city reflect the government's support for civic 'Kazakhstani' nationalism (Anacker 2004). On one of the monuments the text makes no mention of the pre-Soviet Russian colonization of Kazakh land. If the government had wanted to whip up nationalism by highlighting the sufferings of the Kazakh people, it could also have addressed events before the Bolshevik revolution. In a similar vein, the inscription avoids assigning an explicit ethnic identity to either the victims or the persecutors of the Soviet period. Even the word 'homeland' (*otan*) does not specifically address ethnic Kazakhs, as it is a generic term referring to other ethnic groups as well. This implies that Russians speaking Kazakh are able to 'read the sentences about expelled peoples and barren lands and easily assume that the monument was referring to their own ancestors' (Anacker 2004: 521-522).

In the late 2000s, the government was on the road toward the creation of a 'Kazakhstani nation'; the idea surfaced in the 'National Unity Doctrine'. This was a powerful state attempt to give non-titular ethnic groups an equal stake in the emerging community. Some nationalist intellectuals forcefully opposed the use of the term in public (Fierman 2005), epitomising the initiative as the last nail in the coffin of an indigenous 'Kazakh nation'. Due to criticism from Kazakh nationalists, who fought tooth and nail on the details, the document underwent more than a few corrections. In its final version, to underline the commonality of destiny of all people living in Kazakhstan, the first part of the doctrine was entitled –'One land, one fate'. The second section stressed an unequivocal equality of economic and political rights through-'Different origins - equality of chances'. The last one-'Development of the national spirit', emphasized the need to strengthen the sense of belonging and commitment to the existing state (Kesici 2011).

To sum up, there is much evidence and good reason to argue that Kazakhstan's government has been committed to the civic form of nation-building right up to the present day in the face of the abating 'Russian question', at least, through the adoption and half-way implementation of numerous legislations and high-profile documents.

This characterized an overall effort of the government to avoid the ethnic discrimination of minority ethnicities, and Russian people in particular, despite constantly present and at times fierce opposition from Kazakh nationalists. Though the majority of the population hardly conceived of the notion of a 'Kazakhstani nation' or a 'Eurasian identity', the government has discovered how to avoid linguistic nationalism and how best to avoid interethnic conflicts.

3.3 The "Kazakh question": numerically strong, culturally weak

Despite the government's multiple efforts to position the country as multi-ethnic and its nation-building policies increasingly inclusive, some scholars are still convinced that Kazakhstan is a nation-state that dare not speak its name. Dave (2003: 8) mentions 'two salient tools' that endorse 'nationalization and attaining of Kazakh ethno-national hegemony'. They are: 'demography and Kazakh language'. In a similar vein, Commercio (2004: 93) calls Kazakhstan 'a nationalizing state with a fairly antagonistic nationalization strategy' and also highlights policies that vindicate growing 'ethnification'. Some are 'related to citizenship and language issues' and others 'geared toward weakening the demographic preponderance and political hegemony of Russians'. Both of the commentators have been proved wrong, for Kazakhstan's government stayed loyal to civic values in its nation-building policies, as was shown above. Brubaker (2011) also finds no traces of ethnic and linguistic nationalism in the government's policies, yet expresses his concerns regarding the mechanisms that produced a rapid demographic growth of Kazakh people in the whole population (Chapter 1). In the passages below, I will show that although the government often talked about 'Kazakhness', these references were mainly rhetorical rather than real practical measures. Moreover, the numerical growth of Kazakhs was not accompanied by the maturity of linguistic and cultural cohesiveness and was not hostile to the Russian-speaking non-titular groups.

Since Kazakhs possessed their own republic in the Soviet Union and benefitted amply from the nationalisation policies of Moscow, they duly expected to be privileged further after the acquisition of independence in 1991. However, this proved a problematic prospect, as the nascent government had to keep the political stability and mediate ethnic relations, seeking conciliation between titular group and the rest. Many scholars

therefore, were inclined to believe that the Kazakh people received the state's patronage covertly. Dave argues that:

"In contrast to states such as Malaysia where indigenous ethnic entitlements are clearly specified in the constitution, or in India, where an elaborate structure of "reservations" based on caste and economic backwardness exists, Kazakhstan's constitution or laws make virtually no mention of any ethnic entitlements. The structure of ethnic entitlements, available to Kazakhs, is ad hoc and extra-constitutional and is executed informally" (Dave 2003: 16)

In a similar vein, Schatz notes:

"If in Malaysia preferences were more explicit and given legal grounding (even if the implementation was uneven and the subject of ongoing political debate), in Kazakhstan these policies were ad hoc and extra-legal from the start" (Schatz 2000: 498)

Indeed, if the number of Kazakhs increased in the government, it was only proportionately to their share in the whole population. For instance, in 1994, 48 percent of governmental workers were ethnic Kazakhs, while their share in the population was 44 percent, not a significant gap. Moreover, their rise began in Brezhnev's time, consistent with the policy of expanding the indigenous population's role in the local administration (Davis and Sabol 1998: 481). The presence of Kazakhs was limited in top government jobs as well. For example, in 1996 the governor of North Kazakhstan oblast was ethnic German. Although mayors were often Kazakhs, other functionaries were free from discrimination on ethnic basis (Edmunds 1998: 466). In 2014, 21 out of 107 members of the lower house of the parliament are ethnic Russians. Given that Russians constitute 23.7 per cent of the population, they are fairly well represented in the parliament. This degree of representation can be found in many fields, including, academia and sports (Kirbassov 2014). What is more, Russians have overly dominated skilled industrial professional occupations. In the late 1990s, 58.8 per cent of industrial workers were Russians and 21.3 percent were Kazakhs; while Kazakhs made up only 14.3 percent of engineers, technical personnel and office workers, 67 percent of these jobs went to Russians. If 68.1 per cent of chief specialists and 60 percent of top leaders and managers were Russians, Kazakhs' share was 15.1 and 18 percent. Although

Kazakhs were increasing their presence in skilled professions, it started in the mid-1970s, so long before the arrival of independence (Davis and Sabol 1998: 481-482).

On the whole, *Kazakhification* as an idea of creating the dominance of ethnic Kazakhs in the economic, cultural and educational spheres was 'bound to remain just an aspiration' (Sarsembayev 1999: 331) and '*Kazakhification* was often more discursive than immediately material' (Schatz 2000: 498). In the political field as well, 'ethnicity as such has not been the main criterion for the replacement of many Russian-speakers by Kazakhs' (Edmund 1998: 464). Nonetheless, this does not imply that ethnic nationalism was not at all the government's priority. The state ethnic program for Kazakhs' cultural revival included celebrations and renaming of streets after Kazakh historical figures (Cummings 2006). Still, these were Kazakhs who either endorsed the adoption of Russian culture during their lifetime or received education in Russia. In 1995, the 150th anniversary of the birth of Abay Kunanbai, known for his translations of Pushkin and Goethe into Kazakh, was honoured across the country. Similarly, the commemorations of Chokhan Valikhanov, the *Russified* Kazakh ethnographer, and Dzhambul who dedicated poems to Joseph Stalin, also implied that cautiousness was present in the selection of prominent names (Schatz 2000b).

Moreover, it was also argued that the government's purported attempt to mobilize Kazakhs resulted in the reinvigoration of ancestral identities and underpinned the main subdivisions among the titular group. So the networks providing access to desired state positions and resources in the country came to be structured not along ethno-national but lineage, clan or patron-client lines (Schatz 2004; Dave 2007). Although it is true that the awareness of *zhuz* membership is important for Kazakhs, *zhuz* affiliation is in itself an uncertain criterion for membership of a patronage network and is only one among many conditions in the use of connections (Edmunds 1998). This is evident in the fact that power structures in Kazakhstan are not staffed by Kazakhs only but can consist of members from any ethnic origin. On the other hand, considering that trust is the most significant asset on the road to success everywhere in the world, for people need to 'share similar interests and objectives once positions had been obtained', it is not surprising that in Kazakhstan *zhuz* associations frequently overlap with these goals (Edmunds 1998**:** 466).

Another policy, interpreted as a shift towards creating a Kazakh–dominated Kazakhstan as it could enhance ethnic nationalism, was the government's patronage of the return of ethnic Kazakhs from the neighbouring states. However, this was only partly implemented; culminating in the departure of some repatriates back to their countries and the marginalisation of those who stayed (Cerny 2010; Diener 2005; Dubuisson and Genina 2011). The official estimates indicate that around five million ethnic Kazakhs resided in foreign countries in the 1990s, with 1.3 million of them living in China, 870,000 in Uzbekistan, more than half a million in the Russian Federation, and 157,000 in Mongolia (Goble 2014). According to data published in 2006, more than a million Kazakhs entered independent Kazakhstan, with half of them benefitting from state-funding (UNDP 2006). However, the newcomers, particularly those from non-Soviet countries, found the incorporation into the Kazakhstani society problematic. The sole fact that nomadic Kazakhs of Western Mongolia, Western China, Northern Iran and Afghanistan had no command of the Russian language automatically marginalised them (Diener 2005). In the tough realities of post-Soviet Kazakhstan, they, despite being perceived as the descendants of those who fled in times of collectivization, political persecution and famine, found it difficult to grasp anything slightly reminiscent of the land their ancestors had left more than a century ago (Diener 2005**).**

As the one of the largest group coming from a non-Soviet country, Chinese Kazakhs also found themselves in difficult conditions upon arrival. Over 65,000 ethnic Kazakhs migrated from China to Kazakhstan between 1991 and 2009 following the official invitation. However, many had been engaged in small hold farming in China and lacked the professional experience to contribute to business links. They also faced linguistic and other barriers to integrating into Kazakhstani society. Although they had a good command of the Kazakh language the written script is different in Kazakhstan. While the modern Kazakh alphabet is Cyrillic, the Kazakh language abroad is based on Latin or Arabic script. Furthermore, local people considered Chinese Kazakhs as 'strangers', for they came from another cultural setting and usually did not speak Russian (Tyan 2013).

Although many factors hampered the smooth integration of newcomers to the Kazakhstani polity, the programme itself was not sophisticated from the start. To begin with, there were a wide range of shortcomings in the legal and institutional structure of the homeland. Inadequacy of co-ordination between the central and local governments,

and rampant corruption at all levels also contributed to the failure of the enterprise. Thus, the major forces at work were not the return migrants' education and attitudes, rather the shortcomings in the homeland government's policies and their implementation (Bonnenfant 2012). The government's initial discourse regarding the ultimate return of all foreign-born Kazakhs has therefore changed over the years focusing more on the plight of the Kazakh diaspora and on strategies aimed at protecting them in their host countries (Sultanmuratqyzy, Zaryqqaqyzy, quoted in Bonnenfant 2012). Then apparently alarmed by the skills, values, and compliance of those who had returned, state officials abandoned the repatriation program altogether in April 2012 (Goble 2014).

In addition, people on the ground were also less prepared to incorporate the newly-arrivals. When some repatriates were settled in villages and towns recently emptied by Germans, Ukrainians, Russians etc., they found themselves even more isolated. Diener argued that:

> *"They have been 'othered' through a lack of inclusion in the employment, privatisation and naturalisation processes of the state. They have also been 'othered' by their sense of what Kazakhs 'should be', in contrast to the reality of what many Kazakhs within Kazakhstan have become following decades of russification. They have even been 'othered' by their own hybridity, cultivated through years of residence within and interaction with their former host societies" (Diener 2005: 341-342).*

One of the reasons why Kazakh repatriates were 'othered' is that two types of Kazakhs, with opposing conceptions of identities and interests, actually emerged from the Soviet period. There was 'an identity quarrel *within* one ethnic group' in Kazakhstan (Danilovich 2010: 1) and so Kazakhs were not ready to integrate the newly-arrived co-ethnics. Many scholars termed them 'urban cosmopolitans' and 'rural traditionalists'. Cosmopolitan Kazakhs were largely the dwellers of urban areas, where they entertained cultural proximity to Moscow and Leningrad (today St. Petersburg) and deemed their obsession with Russian culture as an opening facilitating 'upward educational and social mobility' (Fierman 2006: 102). According to them, the core carriers of nationalism were rural Kazakhs, who were pining for the pre-Soviet days to undermine the democratic and civic nature of the emerging country (Surucu 2002). That is why

many urban Kazakhs were undecided about cultural and linguistic nationalism, as it could place 'considerable power in the hands of their less educated and less urbane country cousins' (Fierman 2006: 102).

However, I am sceptical of the view that Kazakhs could be divided on the basis of their attitude to civic, ethnic, traditional or cosmopolitan values in the early 1990s. Such a classification is not supported by empirical evidence. The principle division between Kazakhs was linguistic that cut across tribal and residential alliances. In the 1989 census, 64 percent of the titular group expressed fluency in Russian; while 98.5 percent stated Kazakh as their mother tongue. Not all Kazakhs however used Kazakh as their first language (Dave 2003). Therefore a more realistic classification is that of Sarsembayev, who says that:

> *"Rural Kazak[h]s are typically Kazak[h]-speaking and have some knowledge of Russian. On the other hand, almost all urban Kazak[h]s have a good command of Russian, and the majority of them are Russian-speaking having no or very poor knowledge of Kazak[h]" (Sarsembayev 1999: 327-328)*

Indeed, in the final years of the Soviet period Kazakhs accounted for over 57 percent of the country's total rural inhabitants, while in urban areas their share was around a quarter of all residents. Taking the republic's urban areas as a whole, Russians (almost 51 percent) outnumbered Kazakhs by a ratio of almost 2:1. On the other hand, Kazakhs (57 percent) numbered more than Russians (under 20 percent) by almost 3:1 in rural areas (Fierman 2005). Following the fall of the Soviet Union, however rural Kazakhs began to pour into urban areas in their thousands. Danilovich (2010: 3) observed a process called 'city ruralisation' and argued that the former capital of Kazakhstan was losing its distinguished 'political culture characterized by more sophisticated worldviews and active political participation'. According to O'Callaghan (2005: 212), it is too premature to say that the revival of the Kazakh language is taking place on the streets of Almaty. Yet, he concedes that Kazakh is clearly growing in importance in Kazakhstan's cities and 'the number of Kazakhs arriving from the countryside is increasing all the time' (O'Callaghan 2005: 212).

Although the rural-Kazakh and urban-Russian polarisation paled into insignificance as a result of the steady urbanisation process in the late 1990s, the linguistic segregation of Kazakhs was still underpinned by geographical division. By the end of the Soviet rule,

Kazakhs outnumbered other ethnic groups in the western and southern regions. According to the 1989 census, however, they comprised less than one fifth of the population in two of the seventeen provinces (Qaraghandy and North Kazakhstan), and made up around a quarter in five others (Pavlodar, East Kazakhstan, Kokshetau, Qostanay, and Alma-Ata city). These provinces were largely inhabited by Slavic people and, apart from Almaty (then the capital city), were situated in Kazakhstan's north, east, and central regions (Fierman 2005). Many of the local Kazakhs in these communities were linguistically and culturally *Russified* (Wolfel 2002: 490). (Appendix 2)

Although Kazakhs' profound language split has endured as a result of the constitutional amendments of the 1990s that allowed Russian to function on a par with the state language (Dave 2003), aided by the euphoria of independence, the usage area of Kazakh language has significantly enhanced, part by design and partly unintentionally. While in the 1989-1990 academic year only less than 20 percent of university students studied in Kazakh-language groups, their proportion was already around 40 percent in the 2002-2003, 2003-2004, and 2004-2005 academic years (Fierman 2005: 407). The percentage of school pupils studying in Kazakh was boosted substantially in this period. For instance, in rural areas where Kazakh language enjoyed a sizable dominance even in the Soviet period, 73 per cent of Kazakh pupils were studying in Kazakh medium classes (KMCs) in 1990, and it is estimated that this number increased to 85 percent in 1995 and exceeded 88 percent in 1999. However, the remaining 12 percent still preferred to go to schools where Russian was the language of instruction (Fierman 2006: 108). Kolsto predicted that the following dilemma would continue for many years:

> *"As long as no final solution to the language puzzle is clear not only the elites, but also the common people must make some important choices on behalf of their children. If they decide to send them to Kazakh-language schools and then, ten to twenty years on, Russian remains the dominant language in Kazakhstan, then their children will lose out in the labour market" (Kolsto 2003: 125)*

A similar trend could be traced in the cities where Kazakhs predominantly preferred schools with Russian language instruction for their children. For example, the number of ethnic Kazakh pupils studying in Russian Medium Classes (RMC) decreased to 20 percent in 1995 when it was 34 percent only five years before. It seemed that the

number would continue to decline consistently leading to the closure of Russian schools; however, the decrease of Kazakh enrolment into RMC came to a halt. It was indicated that in 2003 the share of ethnic Kazakh pupils in KMC was still around 80 percent. In other words, roughly one in five Kazakh pupils continued to receive education in RMCs (Fierman 2006: 107). The primary reason is believed to be a low quality of education in Kazakh schools, as their students' achievements in regional and republic academic Olympiads were not that impressive. In addition, another motive behind the decisions of some parents to send their children to the RMCs is associated with job opportunities, as in the big cities of Kazakhstan the knowledge of Russian is still very important for those eager to climb the career ladder. In other words, in the private sector excellent Kazakh language skills are not necessarily required. This stems from the fact that the graduates of Russian medium schools appear to be more knowledgeable, as the subject books in the Russian language are more advanced than those in Kazakh (Fierman 2006: 113-114).

Despite a number of factors working against the swift retrieval of the status of Kazakh language, Fierman (2005: 398) predicts an expansion of its domain over the coming decades, resulting in it becoming a 'more important component of Kazakh commonality as well as groupness'. In the early 2000s, only about 50 per cent of Kazakhs spoke their mother tongue (O'Callaghan 2005: 210). A couple of years later, Sultan Akimbekov (2012), a renowned scholar in Kazakhstan, revealed a vast increase in Kazakh-speaking Kazakhs, which now comprises 75 percent of all Kazakhs. The rise of the population in the Kazakh-dominated southern and western cities of Kazakhstan coupled with a decrease in the population of eastern, northern and central cities (Nyussupova and Sarsenova 2012), also contributed to the numerical growth of Kazakh-speaking Kazakhs in general.

In the mid-2000s O'Callaghan (2005) projected that language would be a key factor in debates between nationalists and politicians in the foreseeable future. Indeed, it was language that became a perennial issue of complaint for nationalist pressure groups, which brought the most celebrated Kazakh poet, Mukhtar Shahanov, into the limelight. Surucu (2002:397) was right to argue that Kazakh nationalism should not be reduced to either a competition of resources or intolerance of minorities; it is rather an attempt to reverse the legacy of 'more than two hundred years of colonial intervention on Kazakh society'. With Russian culture and language colonizing the public arena, it was the

worry of the nationalist groups that Kazakh national consciousness would completely disappear (Surucu 2002). Although a number of small political movements, such as *State Language* (2004); *In defence of Independence* (2010); *Nation's Fate* (2009), came into being in subsequent years, nationalists have no coherent alternative beyond grievances conveyed in petitioning forms.

Although many experts in the field expected Russian to dominate in Kazakhstan, O'Callaghan (2005) put his faith in the ascendancy of Kazakh if the right conditions were provided. One of the main transformations that O'Callaghan (2005) and Huttenbach (1998) believed would tip the linguistic balance in favour of the Kazakh language was the relocation of the capital city from the south to the north. This was a dramatic episode in the history of Kazakhstan yet the motives for the movement of the main city were quite diverse. One highly important explanation was the demographic segregation of the two dominant ethnics groups, Kazakhs and Russians. Concerned about possible irredentist activities in the north due to the seclusion of the Russians and the absence of Russian assimilation, the government attempted to nip secessionism in the bud by settling the northern frontier with people from other regions of the country. This was to create a unique Kazakhstani national identity in this region by mitigating the Russian concentration in the north (Wolfel 2002). According to Wolfel, although the new capital has the potential to uphold a unified Kazakhstani state, much will depend not only on 'the success of the national development programs' but also on how successfully Kazakhstan's government redistributes the population and creates 'a fairly even balance of Russians and Kazakhs in each region' (2002: 502).

A rapid shift of the main city to the Russian-dominated region was also an attempt to convince other actors in the region that the northern provinces are part of independent Kazakhstan. Considering that Almaty played a central role in the Soviet period and thus symbolized the colonial past, the construction of a new capital allowed the bolstering of people's commitment to the new state (Wolfel 2002). Indeed, the movement of the capital city not only produced economic opportunities, since even in a poor setting donor and investment funds tend to be funnelled disproportionately to the capital city, but also 'represented an enticement for these regions to become loyal' (Schatz 2004: 129). Thus, behind the construction of the new city from scratch the intention and necessity to solidify political independence and national unity dominated which was aided by economic growth. If the sole goal had been to produce 'an impressive post-

modern Potemkin village for foreign consumption', Kazakhstan's government could simply have done this in Almaty (Anacker 2004: 523). Considering that moving the capital city is one of the more advanced and expensive enterprises for building states and national identification, and that few actors even intend 'taking on the financial, logistical, and political costs of such a move', it is also Schatz's conviction that the relocation of the capital 'was designed to address pressing nation and state building challenges' in the first place (2004: 122).

Known as Aqmola previously, the city was named 'Astana' in 1998, which in Kazakh means 'capital'. Not only the name, but the demography of the city would also undergo profound changes in subsequent years. This has resulted in northern Kazakhstan, which used to be settled largely by Russians and ethnic minorities of European extraction, seeing the influx of thousands of Kazakhs (Wolfel 2002). While Russians' presence in the region is the result of a classic 'civilisation mission' (Kuzio 2002), Kazakh intellectuals view this mission to be reversed geographically. If the first vector of progress was moving from north to south, it is now from south to north, as Kazakhs not Russians were at the forefront of modernizing trends. If in 1989 ethnic Kazakhs constituted only 17 percent of the population of Aqmola, estimates in 2007 suggested Kazakhs' outright dominance, as they reached to some 60 percent (Lillis 2007). Even in the changeable context of the former Soviet Union, demographic transferals of that scale were quite uncommon. In fact, the rapid numerical advance of Kazakhs in the new capital was unparalleled in any other city or province in Kazakhstan (Anacker 2004: 526).

It is difficult to say whether this happened intentionally or not, however the move of the capital city also sequestered Russians from the networks of state power. While many Kazakhs were seduced by Astana, very few Russians followed suit, which 'cannot be explained by economic models of migration' (Anacker 2004: 528). The reason for this is that since many jobs in Astana are more or less related to the central state apparatus and Russians have literally viewed this establishment as belonging to Kazakh people. By and large, politically ambitious ethnic Russians who lived in Soviet Kazakhstan tended either to gain hold of the important state enterprises or look directly to Moscow, which means that they were less enmeshed in the political intrigues surrounding the Kazakh SSR headquarters in Almaty and this pattern has stayed relevant in the years of independence. Added to this is the fact that the local Russian residents of the new

capital were 'not in the kinds of social positions that will easily permit the development of close ties with the newly relocated officials' (Anacker 2004: 528).

For the above reasons, Huttenbach (1998: 586) expected 'the policy of a vibrant Kazak[h] culture and society' to become a top priority in Astana, despite the fact the government carefully harmonized it 'with the policy of overall state building'. Yet, the numerical and political progress of the Kazakh people, reinforced by the relocation of the capital city, did not change the government's nation-building policies, as was seen in the above section, particularly on the linguistic front. Even if the proportion of Kazakhs became significantly greater among the younger generation (Smagulova 2006), they were officially notified not to 'demand members of other ethnic groups speak Kazakh until they use it themselves' (Fierman 2006: 103). So the Kazakh language revival and strengthening of national consciousness was expected to come from the bottom up. In other words, 'whether they knowingly accept responsibility for it or not', after all it was the Kazakh people who had to decide 'the fate of the Kazakh language' (O'Callaghan 2005: 214) and the general course of nation-building in the future.

3.4 Conclusion

From the early days of independence, Kazakhstan's government has been serious in its attempt to incorporate Russians and many other minority ethnicities into the emerging society (Anacker 2006). Even though the demographic situation began to favour the titular group from the early 2000s, Russians and their language continue to play a vital role in the political and economic life of the country. As for the *Kazakhification*, a policy that purportedly tried to privilege Kazakhs over the rest, it could not be implemented for the reason that the Kazakh people lacked cultural cohesiveness. Their linguistic division is also geographically reinforced and has been further deepened by the arrival of foreign-born Kazakhs who lacked the Soviet experience and are entirely new to the Russian language. While many scholars predicted a long dominance of the Russian language in Kazakhstan, the relocation of the main city to the northern part of the country sparked hope regarding the revival of the state language and its eventual ascendancy. With the passage of years, instead of becoming a meeting place of different ethnic groups, Astana appears to attract mainly Kazakh people in their thousands, born and raised in different cultural settings yet ambitious to settle and become a part of the

new political and business elite. Whatever is evolving out of the encounter of different Kazakhs, it is going to affect the nation-building policy in Kazakhstan in the foreseeable future.

The above concluding arguments lead to my main hypothesis that regardless of their different linguistic and residential settings, young Kazakh adults could be expected to develop common attitudes to:

1.   Ethnic components of national identity

2.   Cultural values

3.   Civic ethos

In order to test this hypothesis, two questions are addressed:

1. What sort of values do the university-educated young Kazakh adults attach to ethnic, cultural and civic aspects of national identity? And what is the scope of common grounds?

    • What sort of values do they attach to ethnic aspects of national identity and are they developing commonality?

    • What sort of values do they attach to cultural aspects of national identity and are they developing commonality?

    • What sort of values do they attach to civic aspects of national identity and are they developing commonality?

2. How strongly do the young adults who value ethnic elements of national identity tend to regard civic elements, or vice versa?

Chapter 4

Research Methods

4.1 Introduction

This study examines the nationality-related attitudes, perceptions and experiences of young Kazakhs who graduated from one of the first-rate universities (ENU) in Kazakhstan. In order to obtain a broad and wide-ranging understanding of young Kazakhs' attitudes, perceptions and experiences in a relatively rapidly globalising city, I developed a research design that employs both quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

4.2 Why Mixed Methods Approach?

Although a few decades ago mixed methods approach looked empirically impracticable and less reliable due to ontological and epistemological problems, its categorical strengths were gradually recognized. Particularly, the works of Tashakkori and Tiedel (2003) guaranteed further popularisation and a wide use of mixed methods. These days the number of scholars and fields using mixed methods is continuously expanding (Creswell 2010).

In mixed methods research, an investigator or a group of investigators combine elements of quantitative and qualitative research approaches, such as-the use of qualitative and quantitative standpoints, data gathering, examination, inference methods, in order to broaden understanding and validation (Johnson et al 2007). Mixing quantitative and qualitative phases helps a researcher not only to address research questions and test hypotheses, but also leaves room for 'novel, unexpected findings to emerge' (Bryman 2012: 642).

The aim of mixed methods approach here is to 'involve integrating quantitative and qualitative data collection and analyses in a single study or program of inquiry' (Creswell, Fetters, and Ivankova 2004). In terms of rationale, illustration and completeness are the main uses of my mixed methods research. Completeness indicates that a more thorough answer to research questions can be attained by embracing both qualitative and quantitative methods, while illustration implies that some effective

interview data can be added to place 'some flesh on the bare bones of statistical data' (Bryman 2012: 646).

4.2.1 Quantitative research

According to Greswell (2003) quantitative research is frequently employed to make an initial, preliminary sense of phenomena, on the basis of which theories are generated that will be tested using qualitative research methods. This is because the latter are often used to obtain wider and deeper insight. Quantitative research is more of a deductive approach, as it places emphasis on statistics and numbers to provide a view of social reality which is continual, external, and objective (Bryman and Teevan 2005). Therefore, quantitative research is suitable in circumstances in which there is pre-existing knowledge that permits the usage of a questionnaire (Borg and Gall 1996).

4.2.2 Qualitative research

Qualitative investigators put emphasis on issues that are socially created, the close connection between the researcher and the object of research, and the situational limitations that fashion the whole process of investigation. Researchers using qualitative methods tend to uncover factors that lead to social understanding, and seek answers to constructed concepts (Denzin and Lincoln 1998). When quantitative investigators make social constructions their object of investigation, they are concerned with the creation of social processes (Maanen 1983). So, quantification is not the goal of qualitative research as it deals mainly with words and their meanings in the process of analysing specific data (Bryman 2008).

According to qualitative researchers, people's ideas, their inward life and understanding of the world are of the utmost importance as humans are mindful of steps and decisions made in their life. So, it can be asserted that qualitative researchers are interested in meanings, and the picture of social reality as construed by the respondents (Burns 2000). Qualitative methods are usually utilised in order to find answers to issues that need interpretation, and to enable the comprehension of certain social events and the framework within which they have emerged (Ritchie and Lewis 2003).

4.2.3 Linking research methods

'Without a combination of approaches, we are often left with no clear way of deciding between competing conclusions' (Gorard 2001: 5). The advocates of mixed-methods research argue that this approach addresses more comprehensive research purposes than do quantitative or qualitative research alone (Newman, Ridenour, Newman, and DeMarco 2003, Sandelowski 2000). As noted by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004: 17), the logic of mixed methods inquiry 'includes the use of induction (or discovery of patterns), deduction (testing of theories and hypotheses), and abduction (uncovering and relying on the best of a set of explanations for understanding one's results).'

Although it appears that through the employment of quantitative and qualitative methods the quality of results is enhanced, mixed methods approach can also lead to serious difficulties and problems. The main challenge for the mixed method researcher is to successfully integrate the quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study. In view of the fact that more than one research question is asked in this study, each question will be answered through the use of both methods. Therefore, the framework of procedures for maximizing the incorporation of components within a single study suggested by Yin (2006) is largely reproduced in this study. The five procedures recognized by Yin refer to (a) research questions, (b) units of analysis, (c) sampling, (d) instrumentation and data collection, and (e) analytic strategies. According to him, ''the more that a single study integrates mixed methods across these five procedures, the more that mixed methods research, as opposed to multiple studies, is taking place'' (Yin 2006: 42).

4.3. Data Collection

For the purpose of this study, the quantitative data gathered from a questionnaire was followed by collecting qualitative data from interviews. This design was selected to explore the issues raised in the questionnaire in detail.

4.3.1 Questionnaire

In a questionnaire participants are expected to respond to specific questions in a written form as required. A questionnaire can be conducted in a variety of ways; however, a mail questionnaire which is sent through the internet or post is regarded as the most

beneficial and well-known. Upon completion, the participant is expected to send his answers back to the researcher (Bryman 2008). Questionnaires used to be answered by pen or pencil; however, the rise in the production and acquisition of computers has simplified the methods of contacting people, and therefore questionnaires can now be conducted in electronic form and through electronic devices. Questionnaires are appealing and widely used as they are relatively cheap to implement. In addition, they require little mental or physical effort, and they provide a time-saving advantage. A large number of researchers claim that questionnaires help them to acquire reliable data on numerous sensitive issues. However, it should be noted that questionnaires are not preferred in some cases because not all respondents act adequately. Few would-be participants tend to answer the questions and send them back to the sociologist. Amid other reasons, some researchers refer to a lack of literacy, as those who are reluctant to respond are sometimes barely able to read or write. These people prefer to avoid the study which significantly decreases the coverage and the reliability of the information (Bourque and Fielder 2003). Since the target group of this study was a highly educated stratum of the population, there were no problems with reading and writing skills. Nonetheless, following Bryman's (2012) suggestion that a questionnaire has to be comprehensible and easily answered because it is not administered by the interviewer in the process of completion the questions for this research were constructed targeting simplicity.

The questions in a questionnaire may be either open or closed. The former can help to gain comprehensive information in the participants' own 'words'. The problem with the open question is that the researcher has to spend extra time to penetrate into the depths of the given answers and make sense of every phrase. In most cases, open questions are employed to inspect the certainty and trustworthiness of the opinions. By contrast, closed questions are designed to obtain a detailed yet narrow opinion of the participants concerning the subject matter (Weitzman and Miles 1995). This study employed both open-ended and closed questions.

A questionnaire can be separated into a number of sections (Remeyi et. al. 1998). The first part is an introductory section, which gives sufficient information about the purpose of the study. It helps participants to understand the content of the questionnaire and encourages them to go ahead. Generally speaking, participants should be aware of what kind of study they are involved in and what kind of information they need to

deliver. In addition, the design of the questionnaire should embody gradualism and flow. Moreover, the questions should be relevant and comprehensible. As for the main part of a questionnaire, it should contain questions that are adequate and related to the goals of the research. Therefore the sequence of the questions in line with the resemblance of the topic is significant. If the study touches a wide range of areas, and thus has questions on diametrically different subjects, then the order of the questions needs to be arranged accordingly (Remeyi et. al. 1998). This study did not add the key information about the research to the questionnaire. Rather a separate paper was prepared in which the participants were not only introduced to the objectives of the research but also asked for their consent and consequently their signatures.

As was discussed in previous chapters, language is the most important element of nation-building policies in Kazakhstan and that is why several language-related questions featured in the questionnaire ('If you had an official authority, how would you solve the language problem in Kazakhstan?', 'In which of the following languages would you like to raise your children?'). In addition, questions pertaining to the ethnicity and belonging such as, 'Do you think that everyone living in Kazakhstan should be considered Kazakh regardless of his or her ethnic origin?', 'In your view, what are the most (M) and the least (L) important characteristics for considering a person to be a true member of the Kazakhstani society?' or 'Do you think that Kazakhs, as a titular group, should be given more privileges at the expense of other ethnic minorities in Kazakhstan?', were also included in the questionnaire (Appendix 9). For the sake of understanding the attitudes of young adults in relation to the broader issues a number of open questions were posed such as, 'Which achievements of the independent Kazakhstan are you proud of? Please, name three' (Appendix 4). In the last pages of the questionnaire participants were asked about personal characteristics; occupation and educational history; individual experiences of, and more general views on, sense of belonging and relevance of nationality; domestic ethnicity-related circumstances; language-related values; plans for the future; attitudes toward and participation in politics and social activities.

The questionnaire consisted of six pages including the covering page, and contained 20-23 questions. The questionnaire was hard copy and was written both in Kazakh and Russian. Therefore, the researcher administered the questionnaires personally, which helped him to observe the young adults' reactions towards the questions. The

questionnaire required about 30 minutes to complete and was gathered immediately after the completion. For this reason, the response rate was high. Some of the questionnaire respondents were asked if they would be willing to participate in further interviewing. A total of 30 people agreed. The qualitative interview data complemented the questionnaire data by providing an explanatory assistance to appreciating the statistical patterns that appeared.

For this study, there were a number of advantages in using a questionnaire; first and foremost, it helped to obtain a wide response range; secondly, it was familiar to most respondents and almost everyone has had some experience of filling questionnaires and it therefore did not make people uneasy; thirdly, it provided the possibility of complete anonymity, which allowed honest opinions to be obtained.

4.3.2 Interviews

The role of interviewing to obtain necessary material is so widespread and important today that Atkinson and Silverman (1997) state that we live in an 'interview society'. Interviewing takes a wide range of forms and has a variety of usages. The most regular form of interviewing includes singular, face-to-face verbal exchange, and phone surveys. Interviews can be structured, semi-structured, or unstructured (Fontana and Frey 2008).

Spradley (1979) recommends from among various types of interviewing one in which the wish to comprehend the respondent rather than to explain dominates. This type of interviewing is termed "unstructured", and it focuses on the informant's awareness of themselves, of their surroundings and of their practices. There is no standardised list of questions. It relies on and benefits greatly from the value of the social interaction between the researcher and the respondent that can be slightly readdressed by the investigator if it deviates from the research study (Burns 2000: 425). One of the disadvantages of this kind of interviewing however is that the researcher is not in a position to know an ethnographic background in which the informant's stated opinions appear (Burns 2000: 425-426). Unstructured interviews are short of consistency, as the respondent usually deviates from the topic the researcher is mostly concerned about. In addition, the data collected from the unstructured interview may lack trustworthiness, since that type of data generation requires a good relationship between the researcher and participant (Mcneill and Chapman 2005)

In a semi-structured interview, the researcher holds an interview guide, which is a catalogue of questions that highlight precise subjects; however, the interviewee is given plenty of scope to respond. The interviewer is not required to ask questions in the mode designated on the agenda. By taking into account the interviewees' answers the researcher is free to ask questions that are not included in the guide (Bryman 2008). Semi-structured interviews provide detailed information, and broaden the comprehension of the researcher in the given field (Pole and Lampard 2002). This study employed the semi-structured interview method, partly because interview questions were selected from the questionnaires, and depended largely on the unconventional or stimulating answers given by the respondents. The researcher intended to comprehend what respondents thought about nationality issues and how they arrived at the perspectives they currently hold. The individual interview was designed to embrace a more comprehensive investigation of respondents' perspectives on their futures than had been possible in the questionnaire. They were asked questions either in Kazakh or Russian, as the aim was to enable the informants to describe their views and experiences in the language they feel comfortable with and minimise the risk of using wrong or vague phrases.

There are a number of steps that the researcher should adhere to in the semi-structured interviewing process in order to achieve the objectives of the study and plan the interview questions accordingly. Firstly, the researcher should obtain the confidence of the participants in order to have an effective and productive interview. Secondly, the researcher should be able to motivate the participant to provide clear and useful answers. Last but not least, the interviewing process should not be too long or too short. The researcher has to be careful not to tire the respondents and at the same time obtain the necessary amount of relevant information (Arksey and Knight 1999). Yet, the issue of trust is much more important for fruitful interviewing. At the beginning of each meeting, the researcher tried to explain the reasons that prompted him to carry out the current research and succinctly presented his biography. This approach was massively helpful in constructing mutually confidential conversations. In this study, the selection of the interviewing venue varied from informant to informant, with many preferring to be interviewed outside (café or restaurant), and few choosing their place of work or residence. As the informants had already spent considerable time completing their questionnaire, it was reasonable to conduct a quick interview; therefore, an audio-

recorder was used with the participants who permitted the conversations to be recorded. Moreover, owing to his knowledge of Kazakh and Russian, the researcher did not rely on interpreters. The interviews generally lasted for half an hour, but in some cases the researcher had to halt the conversation due to unexpected interferences such as a phone call from the workplace.

4.4 Sampling

4.4.1 Geographical and educational context

Of particular significance to this study is Astana, the newly-emerging capital city which has recently experienced a politico-economic transformation, becoming the centre of the Eurasian continent and a bridge between East and West. Along with a large number of government officials and manual workers, through the opening of the Eurasian National University (ENU), the new capital eventually became a desirable destination for high school graduates as well.

By positioning itself as an institution where the future leaders of the independent Kazakhstan are to be raised, ENU became a focus of attention for the largest number of *Altyn Belgi* holders, a gold medal granted only to a tiny number of school graduates. For instance, whereas in 2002 only 27 of the most gifted university applicants (holders of *Altyn Belgi* Plaque) entered ENU, this number reached 555 in 2011, thus transforming the university into the leader among Kazakhstani universities in its number of "golden" applicants. When in 2005, Kazakhstan's government increased the numbers of *Bolashak* scholarship from around 500 to 3000 and greatly facilitated its accessibility; roughly 70 ENU students instantly received sponsorship to attend the best universities in the world (Kaz Pravda 2006). In 2011, almost three quarters of the students studying at ENU were reliant on the governmental scholarship and therefore, studied for free (Kazpravda 2011).

4.4.2 Participant sampling

The type of this study necessitated that the sample would consist of graduates of the ENU for a number of reasons: First, the study intended to explore the background nationality-related knowledge of participants who graduated from government-backed, highly-ranked university and thus to observe the extent of knowledge, skills and values

the national curriculum offered for the students. Second, to meet the objectives of the study, it was crucial that the participants not only were familiar with the university system but also held considerable real-world experience, so as to be able to answer critical questions related to some sensitive aspects of national identity. Third, the graduates were mostly aged between 22-30 years, a group just entering the labour market and political life; thus it was considered an appropriate group to form the business and political elite of the city and the country. By and large, this cohort of graduates was chosen because they had the opportunity to experience the government's nation-building policies in the capital city after graduating from university.

The participant sample consists of three different cohorts of young Kazakh adults who work in the capital city following their graduation from Eurasian National University. For the present study the informants were recruited through purposive and snowballing sampling because the three main groups, i.e. the graduates of the Eurasian National University, were identified deliberately. Firstly, they were selected according to the region in which they were born, secondly, by the language they chose for their university education, and thirdly by the fact that they lived in the capital city at the time of research.

Cohort 1: Russian-speaking local Kazakhs (RKs)

This group comprises Kazakhs, born and raised in the northern and eastern part of the country and who received their university education in Russian language. These two factors needed to be combined to determine the category of Kazakhs who are relatively more exposed to Russian language than other Kazakhs described below. The study asked participants to state the main language they frequently use at home, which was also helpful in identifying the genuine representatives of this group.

Cohort 2: Kazakh-speaking local Kazakhs (KKs)

Kazakhs, originally from Kazakh-dominated southern and western provinces of Kazakhstan, were chosen for this category on condition that they had undertaken their undergraduate degrees in the Kazakh language at Eurasian National University in Astana. Given that academic literature in the state language is relatively scarce, they are believed to be less competitive in the job market than graduates of Russian-language groups. These graduates were well suited to explain the extent to which knowledge of

the state language affected their careers and whether they consciously perceive their future as being in a trilingual and multinational Kazakhstan.

Cohort 3: Kazakh repatriates from China (KRs)

Kazakh repatriates from China were selected because they had experienced the most traumatic incidents associated with the language. They are believed to have suffered at university level due to the general use of the Cyrillic alphabet rather than the Arabic script in Kazakhstan. Besides, with the Russian language dominating business in big cities, including Astana, they encountered the most apparent discrimination on the basis of language. They were able to show, through their experiences, to what degree indigenous Kazakhs had changed culturally as a result of the long time they remained under Soviet rule. Then, they were in a position to discuss whether an affiliation to the titular group should matter and help Kazakhs to succeed in tomorrow's Kazakhstan.

Thus, the contextualising strategy placed these groups of young adults in relation to salient qualities of their environments by developing an understanding of the local context, including the features of the labour market, the nature of the Eurasian National University, and the local way of life. This knowledge was derived from fieldwork experience as well as from the collection of textual facts about Kazakhstan and its capital city, Astana, generally and the three language-based settings in particular.

4.3.3 Sampling for questionnaire and for interviews

Defining the survey population is the first step in the sampling process. It might be the entire population of a country, or a sub-set of that population. The purpose of this study was not to make a generalization to wider populations, but to draw comparisons across the three types of Kazakh described above. Hence, a random sample was not required, but rather a quota-sampling strategy was preferred to produce samples of young adults who matched across settings in terms of language background, region, gender, and who were representative of wider populations of young adults located within their settings. The questionnaire was completed by 40 young adults in each setting, giving a total of 120 respondents.

	Questionnaire	male	female	Interview	male	female
KKs	40	22	18	10	4	6
RKs	40	17	23	10	5	5
KRs	40	20	20	10	6	4
	100	51	49	30	15	15

In addition, the sampling process requires careful maintenance in a single study during which mixed method approach is used. Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2007) identify the relationship between the quantitative and qualitative samples as a key factor affecting the choice of the sampling unit per phase of the study. According to them, these relationships can be identical, parallel, nested or multilevel, with the nested sample specifying that the sample participating in one phase represents a subgroup of the participants engaged in the other stage. To prevent this study from disintegrating into two isolated studies, the samples of each method were nested within that of the other and designed in a sequential way. Sequential implementation indicates that enactment of one constituent follows the other constituent and the connection between the two components is dependent. Reliance occurs when the decisions made within the first phase (quantitative) affected the decisions made in the following phase (qualitative) (Teddlie and Yu 2007).

4.5 Pilot study

One of the key components to be tested in the pilot study is the relevance of the research tools and understanding whether they gather the required data in a proper way. As the questionnaire is the main data collection technique utilised by this study, the questionnaires for the young adults were comprehensively tested during the pilot study to make sure that it would evoke appropriate information and the participants would find it adequate.

The pilot study was carried out from 28th January to 28th February 2012 in the UK where six questionnaires were distributed. The sample of the participants engaged in the pilot study was chosen in order to check the selection criteria of the informants. The technique also helped to highlight certain gaps found in the collected data, so they were addressed and appropriately corrected in the following session.

4.6 Fieldwork Research in Kazakhstan

The main fieldwork research was undertaken in Kazakhstan from 1st March 2012 to May 15th. The key aim was to collect questionnaire and interview data and relevant materials in Kazakh and Russian.

Since this study selected graduates of the Eurasian National University as the only target group, the ENU was visited in the first place. As a result of meetings with lecturers, leaders of youth organizations or recent graduates employed as teaching assistants, a list of potential candidates was produced. It proved to be relatively stress-free to phone and arrange the meetings with the would-be respondents on behalf of their acquaintances at the above university. Such method of recruitment worked efficiently, as through the snowballing approach the names of many more graduates emerged in the later stages.

4.7 Ethical issues

It is widely accepted by sociologists that all sociological research needs to be fortified by six ethical regulations. First, those people participating in the research have a right to be aware of the content of the research (objectives, reasons, and consequences), and opt out of taking part in it. Second, sociologists should avoid deceitful behaviour; they have to be as honest as possible in terms of future usage of the collected information. Third, the privacy issue is of the utmost importance, and therefore, despite its difficulties it presents the researcher has to do his or her best not to make known personal data. Fourth, in order to fortify confidentiality, it is suggested that the identities of the participants be concealed. In other words, participants should not be in a position where they may be persecuted in the long term for information provided. Fifth, in the process of collecting data it is important from an ethical perspective not to cause any harm to the participants involved in the activity. It is the researcher's responsibility to protect the interests of the participants in all respects. Therefore, the researcher should be mindful of any words and phrases that may offend the participants, and influence negatively their mental and emotional condition throughout the research process. Finally, it is of fundamental significance to take into account legality and immorality; researchers must avoid being involved in any activity which is against the law (Mcneill

and Chapman 2005). This study was specifically arranged in line with the above suggestions and criteria

4.8 Data analysis

4.8.1 Statistical analyses employing SPSS

The statistical software package SPSS was used to run statistical analyses on the questionnaire findings. These findings directed further analyses comprising the usage of cross-tabulations to contrast answers across groups on single questions in the questionnaire as well as qualitative analyses of the interview data.

4.8.1.1 Cross-tabulations

In cross-tabulations the percentages of groups making detailed responses to a questionnaire item were displayed. These cross-tabulations presented a more detailed picture of the differences and similarities between the three lingo-regional settings. Cross-tabulations have the advantage of presenting survey data in a more direct and readily comprehensible way. The aim was to use these in combination with the interview data, to draw comparisons across the groups to answer the main project issues.

4.8.2 The analyses of interview data

For the researcher the first stage of the analysis was to become familiar with the substance of the discussions. The prepared transcriptions were read through for a couple of times and imported into the Nvivo software for qualitative data analysis. Nvivo was used as a tool to manage and organise the analyses.

The final stage of data analysis involved relating the research subjects to the existing notions, literature and empirical research surrounding the area of civic, ethnic and cultural aspects of national identity. The comparisons provided some indication of similarities and differences of the research arguments, theoretical works and empirical studies. The resulting narrative that is developed will help the reader to understand the national identity of Kazakhs, their perception of state-created supra-ethnic notions, their shared experiences, the salience of ethnic values and their linguistic orientations.

4.8.3 Nested analysis

According to Lieberman (2005: 438-441), nested analysis is a 'statistical analysis of a large sample of cases (LNA) with the in-depth investigation of one or more of the cases (SNA) within the large sample'. Since this study employed only 40 young adults from each category of Kazakhs explicated above, Lieberman's technique may not be applicable. However, LNA and SNA model provided the researcher with some indirect inspiration. This is because the SNA is generally used to answer those issues left undeveloped or unanswered by the LNA - either because there were insufficient data to assess statistical relationships or because the nature of causal order could not be definitely gathered and 'provide more depth and breadth' (Lieberman 2005: 438-441). This study follows the logic of LNA and SNA pattern and analyses the quantitative and qualitative data in the "nested" way.

4.9 Conclusion

To sum up, this chapter presented the general design of the research, including approaches, processes and data collection techniques. To achieve the objectives of the study, both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed in collecting the data through a survey questionnaire and a semi-structured interview schedule. With regard to sampling, including the recruitment strategy and the sample size, the study relied on quota-sampling, purposive sampling and snowball sampling as it was essential for the research sample to be identified by their birthplace, language of education and current residence so that different types of nationality-related experiences that are relevant for this study could be captured and analysed accordingly. This chapter also addressed in detail the process of analysing the data and contradictions found in the data set were investigated carefully and addressed. Then the evolving research subjects were related to existing concepts, literature and empirical research surrounding the area of national identity, issues of nation-state in post-Soviet states, and nation-building policies in Kazakhstan.

Chapter 5

Vibrancy of patriotism among young Kazakh adults

5.1 Introduction

This chapter charts the basis of lingo-regional setting and presents data and findings derived from the part of the questionnaire touching on the participants' personal backgrounds. The respondents were asked for information related to their parents' and spouses' ethnic background. This allowed not only the tracing of the social, cultural and regional qualification of respondents but also the observation of any changes over time, by comparing between the younger and older generations. This part of the study is of great help in the analysis and interpretation of the answers in the forthcoming chapters, as it portrays the key features of those who took part in this research.

5.2 Lingo-regional setting

The sample targeted young people who studied, trained and during the conduct of the research were working in the capital of Kazakhstan. Potential candidates were contacted through their college lecturers, employment services, recruiting agencies and their peers, and drawn from all schools. The 120 people making up the sample evenly represented three groups of young adults: Kazakh-speaking Kazakhs (KK), Russian-speaking Kazakhs (RK) and Kazakh repatriates (KR). These categories were defined on the basis of two main criteria: respondents' geographical region of schooling and language of education at university. The questionnaires were completed by 40 people from each cluster. Table 5.2 presents data on participants' gender, occupation and birth place. Male graduates comprised a slight majority (64 to 56). The same table shows that 60 per cent of the young adults were urban-born and the other 40 per cent were from rural areas. This figure is strongly affected by Kazakhs from China, as 87.5 per cent of them were of rural origin. The young adults represent all ages between 21 and 28, almost in equal proportions, as only one respondent was 21 years old.

			University education		
			Kazakh	Russian	
Region of birth and schooling	south-west	south	29		40
		west	11		
	north-east	north		28	40
		east		12	
	China		40		40

Table 5.1 Sample by linguistic and regional settings (q28 and q35, number of participants in each category)

	gender		birth place	
	male	female	urban	rural
RK	52.5	47.5	57.5	42.5
KK	52.5	47.5	50.0	50.0
KR	55.0	45.0	12.5	87.5
total	53.3	46.7	60.0	40.0

Table 5.2 Gender and place of birth (q30, q36 and q25, percentages in each category)

age	RK	KR	KK	Total
21.00		2.5		0.8
23.00	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5
24.00	15.0	22.5	20.0	19.2
25.00	12.5	15.0	10.0	12.5
26.00	10.0	15.0	22.5	15.8
27.00	27.5	20.0	20.0	22.5
28.00	22.5	12.5	15.0	16.7

Table 5.3 Age of respondents (q27, percentages in each category)

5.3 Social background: contrasting younger and older generations

Table 5.3 displays data on respondents' parents' educational background. Around 40 percent of their fathers had university degrees. This figure is significantly greater among Kazakh-speaking Kazakhs from south-western region of Kazakhstan (66.7 percent). In contrast, only 11.1 percent of Kazakh repatriates' fathers attended institutions of higher education. Similarly, while on average 47.8 percent of respondents had mothers with undergraduate degree, their share was significantly high among Russian-speaking and Kazakh-speaking Kazakhs of Kazakhstani origin, compared to 8.3 percent among foreign-born Kazakhs, (70 percent and 61.5 percent). All respondents had Kazakh parents and those who were married had Kazakh spouses. As shown in Table 5.4, the older generation of Kazakhs largely formed families with people born in the same geographical region. Parents of the RKs were either from the eastern or the northern parts of the country (30 percent and 70 percent). The same is true for the KKs and KRs. Only one Kazakh-speaking respondent had a parent from the east. Of 120 participants 44 were married. Though Russian-speaking Kazakhs were still building up families with residents of northern-eastern Kazakhstan as did their parents, Kazakhs from China and those of south-western extraction were branching out in different directions. A quarter of repatriates had spouses born and raised in Kazakhstan. Yet the most surprising outcome is that six KKs out of 20 had married Kazakhs of northern-eastern and even Mongolian origin. That is to say that regional divergences are lessening among the new generation.

	education					
	university		high school		Vocational high school	
parents	f	m	f	m	f	m
RK	37.5	70	12.5	20	50.0	10
KR	11.1	8.3	69.4	77.8	19.4	13.9
KK	66.7	61.5	12.8	12.8	20.5	25.6
	39.1	47.8	30.4	35.7	30.4	16.5

Table 5.4 educational background of parents (q25, percentages in each category

birth place	Parents (percentage)					spouses (number)							total
	China	East KZ	North KZ	South KZ	West KZ	China	East KZ	North KZ	South KZ	West KZ	Hungary	Mongolia	
RK		30	70				7	4			1		12
KR	100					9			3				12
KK		2.6		69.2	28.2		1	4	13	1		1	20

Table 5.5 birth places of parents and spouses (q37, q44 percentages in each category)

5.4 Language Repertoires

Here, Tables 5.5 and 5.6 show participants' age and their linguistic proficiency. Their language skills were measured using a scale from 1 to 5, with 3 or below being considered unsatisfactory. Despite this stringent criterion, almost all local Kazakhs were either bilingual or trilingual. A half of Kazakhs speaking Russian as their first language also had fluency in their mother tongue and English. This figure was 35 percent among Kazakh-phone Kazakhs; the rest used Kazakh and Russian confidently. None of the Kazakh repatriates spoke Russian at level 4, and very few mentioned English. Since their knowledge of Chinese was not asked, they qualified as monolinguals. On average, 93.2 percent of respondents shared their intent to learn foreign languages. This figure was a slightly lower among Kazakh repatriates.

	RK	KK	KR	Total
Only Kazakh			100	33.3
Only Russian	7.5			2.5
Kazakh-Russian	20.0	65.0		28.3
Kazakh-Russian-English	50.0	35.0		28.3
Russian-English	22.5			7.5

Table 5.6 Linguistic proficiency (q31, percentages in each category)

	RK	KR	KK	Total
yes	92.5	89.5	97.4	93.2
no	5.0	2.6		2.6
I don' know	2.5	5.3	2.6	3.4

Table 5.7 Intention to learn other languages (q31, percentages in each category)

5.5 *Employment perspectives*

Over 50 per cent of the group worked in the commercial sphere. A further 44.3 percent were state employees and only 5.2 percent self-employed. More female respondents were employed in the public sector than male ones (52.7 percent and 36.7 percent). Measured in terms of lingo-regional background, comparatively more RKs proved to be working in the private sphere. It is interesting to see that, all three groups are almost equally represented in state-backed infrastructures.

	male	female	total	RK	KK	KR	total
public sector	36.7	52.7	44.3	40.0	48.6	44.7	44.3
private sector	56.7	43.6	50.4	60.0	48.6	42.1	50.4
self-employed	6.7	3.6	5.2		2.7	13.2	5.2

Table 5.8 Employment by gender and lingo-regional settings (q36, numbers in each category)

In the open-ended part of the questionnaire, the young adults were asked to disclose their current salaries. To make it easier for them they were given five options. As can been seen in Table 5.9, based on their lingo-regional differences 58 per cent of respondents earned between $350-600. A closer look however showed that almost four out of five Kazakh repatriates were entitled to this amount compared with local Kazakhs. While none of the respondents born in Kazakhstan proved to have a salary of less than $350, this figure was around 15 per cent among the newcomers. In addition, among the latter no one was earning higher than $1000. No significant gender difference emerged with regard to salary amount among the respondents. Whether they worked in a public or private institution also had little impact on their earnings. The only difference is that relatively more participants earning between $600-1000 had jobs in the private rather than the public sector (31 percent and 18 percent).

Settings	Lingo-regional				Gender			Employment			
$	RK	KK	KR	Total	M	F	Total	Public S	Private S	Self-employed	Total
0-350			15.4	5	4.8	5.4	5.0	8.0	3.4		5.3
350-600	40	55	79.5	58	55.6	60.7	58.0	60.0	53.4	83.3	57.9
600-1000	40	27.5	5.1	24.4	22.2	26.8	24.4	18.0	31.0	16.7	24.6
1000-1350	10	10		6.7	9.5	3.6	6.7	8.0	6.9		7.0
1350-	10	5		5	7.9	3.6	5.0	6.0	5.2		5.3

Table 5.9: Salaries (q46, percentages in each category

5.6 Religious and political affiliations

In their answers to the open-ended question about their religion, all participants gave Islam. The majority of them visit mosques regularly. This figure was more than 90 per cent among local-born Kazakhs, while around one third of newcomers revealed that they avoid religious ceremonies. Among the female respondents one in four proved to be a non-attender, whereas the overwhelming majority of males were regular attendees.

settings	Lingo-regional			gender	
	RK	KR	KK	male	female
Yes	92.5	67.5	95.0	93.8	75.0
No	7.5	32.5	5.0	6.2	25.0

Table 5.10: Do you attend religious services? (q41, percentages in each category)

More than 80 per cent of respondents declared themselves to be apolitical. Compared with the other two groups, more Kazakh repatriates revealed party affiliation (7.5 per cent and 15.5, 27.5 per cent). A slight gender difference surfaced too, as more female participants avoided politics in relation to males (92.9 per cent and 75 per cent).

settings	Lingo-regional			gender	
	RK	KR	KK	male	female
Yes	7.5	27.5	15.5	25	7.1
No	92.5	72.5	85.0	75	92.9

Table 5.11: Are you a member of a political party? (q42, percentages in each category)

5.7 Salience of belonging

In the questions grouped in Table 5.12, the young adults were asked about the relevance of national belonging in today's world pressured by globalization trends. Overall, 79.2 percent confirmed the appeal of national identity. Compared with other two, the KRs proved to be more suspicious, as one fifth of them gave neither positive nor negative answer. This finding is consistent with respondents' responses regarding their possible emigration in future. More than 90 percent of them would not consider leaving the country. Apart from the repatriates born and raised in China, only around one third of Kazakhs had ever been abroad. Overall, 97.4 percent of participants were interested in foreign culture.

IF…	interested in foreign culture		visited other countries		agree that national belonging is irrelevant			thinking about emigration	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	I don't know	Yes	No
RK	100		35	65	12.5	82.5	5.0	5	95
KR	91.7	8.3	100		7.5	72.5	20	10	90
KK	100		40	60	10	82.5	7.5	10	90
Total	97.4	2.6			10.0	79.2	10.8	8.3	91.7

Table 5.12 Degree of interest in foreign stuff (q, percentages in each category)

In Table 5.13, the young adults were asked which countries they had visited, and to which one they would like to emigrate. Figures suggest that none of the repatriates from China have ever been outside Kazakhstan, while native-born young adults paid more visits to Western countries than to China or Thailand. The U.S. and the UK are the most attractive destinations (9 and 7). Turkey is also visited frequently (5). As for the issue of emigration, only 8 participants out of 120 singled out possible places outside Kazakhstan and preferences were varied. None of the states mentioned had overwhelming appeal. Only one Kazakh repatriate wished to go back to China, another three chose Korea, Turkey and the U.S. One KK and one RK added Saudi Arabia as a prospective place to which they would emigrate. Europe was considered by one Kazakh-speaking Kazakh only.

Country	Visited in past						Of emigration					
	China	Thailand	Turkey	UAE	UK	US	China	Europe	Korea	Saudi Arabia	Turkey	U.S.
RK		1	2		1	5				1		
KR	40						1		1		1	1
KK	1		3	1	6	4	1	1		1		
Total	41	1	5	1	7	9	2	1	1	2	1	1

Table 5.13 Countries visited and to be visited (q 47, numbers in each category)

As was discussed in Chapter 3, Kazakhstan is the only country in post-Soviet Central Asia to have produced a civic term for national identification. Along with minority ethnicities, 'Kazakhstani' identity also intended to embrace the core group of Kazakhs. In view of this, respondents were asked to define their nationality in the open-ended part of the questionnaire. This was to determine whether any of them would state the civic 'Kazakhstani' instead of the ethnic 'Kazakh'.

Since 'there are distinct terms for nationality *(natsional'nost')* and nation *{natsiia)* in the Russian language' (Schatz 2000: 87), by employing the former this study anticipated that Russian-speaking Kazakhs would state their *ethnic* identities; duly all 40 identified themselves as Kazakhs (100 percent, n=40). Given that in Kazakh *ult* denotes both ethnic and civic national belonging; it was probably expected that some of the Kazakh-phone Kazakhs or Kazakh repatriates would state their nationality differently. Neither of them chose Kazakhstani identity over Kazakh or any other one (100 percent, n=80). This finding showed that the Kazakhstani identity, newly introduced to transcend multiple ethnic identities inherited from the Soviet period, lags behind the deep-seated Kazakh identification.

5.8 Conclusion

Young adults living in Astana were selected for this study according to two main criteria: regions of their high school education and languages of instruction at Eurasian National University. Congruence of these features was necessary for the reasons presented in Chapter 4. This chapter has given a broader insight into commonalities and differences integral to participants' socio-economic backgrounds.

All participants identified themselves with the Kazakh nation. There is not a single case of mixed marriage among them or among their parents. The young adults are from the regions where their parents were born. However, they are less regionally confined in their marital sets than their parents' generation.

The urban-Russian and rural-Kazakh linguistic division proved extraneous, as the share of rural-born Kazakh and Russian speakers were almost equal. Fluency in Russian and English is prevalent among the RKs and the KKs, while it is absent among the KRs. The Kazakh repatriates also earned much less than the respondents of local origin, although they are all equally represented both in the public and private sectors.

Though almost all are interested in foreign affairs, an overwhelmingly large proportion of the KKs, RKs and KRs prefer to stay in the country and all find the notion of "nation" profoundly relevant. While Kazakh repatriates moved between China and Kazakhstan only, the substantial share of native-born Kazakhs could afford to visit foreign countries. Very few respondents would consider emigration.

All three groups defined Islam as their religion. In contrast to native-born Kazakhs, those from China were less ardent visitors of mosques; also female respondents were less frequent attendees. The majority of the young adults are not interested politics although they live in the epicentre of the country's political life.

Overall, the data suggests that the respondents are well-placed to represent a newly-emerging middle class: they are highly-educated, socially mobile and well-rewarded. With these characteristics, they differ from their parents, who are rooted to the regions of birth and have overall lower varied educational qualifications.

Chapter 6

Ethnic components of national identity: both relevant and restrained

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to examine how commonly and powerfully ethnic elements feature in young Kazakh adults' perceptions of national identity. The hypothesis was that young Kazakh adults with different lingo-regional backgrounds have a wide range of common perceptions and attitudes towards ethnic components of national identity. Their belief in the exclusivity and intransigence of the category of nation was measured in terms of their emphasis on common ancestry in admission criteria to nationhood. The weight they attached to the role of common descent in identifying co-nationals was also examined through the attitudes of local-born Kazakhs to foreign-born co-ethnics and vice versa. To assess the participants' responsiveness to nationalist slogans, they were presented with a set of highly probable political scenarios; which would show whether the younger generation of Kazakhs consider that the government should favour the titular group at the expense of minority ethnicities.

6.2 The ancestral vision of national belonging

6.2.1 Conception of ethnicity

Ethnic national identity refers to a perception of national affiliation based on ethnic principles (Kunovich 2009), among which ancestry counts as a master variable including and excluding individuals on the basis of assumed common kinship (Nieguth 1999). In Chapter 5, we saw that all the respondents declared their belonging to the Kazakh nation. Here, they were asked to select the foremost characteristic of a true Kazakh among those presented in Table 6.1.

	RK	KR	KK	Total
ability to speak Kazakh	15	10	17.9	9.2
fluency in Kazakh	5	55	56.4	37
having Kazakh parents	27.5	5	7.7	14.3
being Muslim	12.5	12.5	15.4	15.1
knowing traditions	40	17.5	2.6	24.4

Table 6.1: Most important characteristic for a person to be considered Kazakh (q3, percentages in each category)

Analysis revealed that for the majority of KKs and KRs, 'Kazakhness' indicated articulacy in the mother tongue (56.4 percent and 55 percent), while it signified awareness of traditions to 40 percent of RKs. More than a quarter of RKs specified Kazakh parentage, whereas KRs and KKs mentioned it less frequently (27.5 percent, 5 percent and 7.7 percent). Following 'fluency in Kazakh,' KRs and KKs emphasised salience of traditions and required only a moderate command of Kazakh (17.5 percent and 17.9 percent). Only one out of six respondents from each group considered the Islamic component to be central to Kazakh identity. Since 'it is possible to conceptualize features such as language, religion, and traditions as membership criteria that fall somewhere between pure civicness and pure ethnicness' (Koning 2011: 1982) in distributing national membership none of the three groups advocated either constant or extremely malleable criteria; however, all three emphasised the role of cultural integration first.

Kazakh-speakers (KKs and KRs) were more inclined to see the command of the native language as the chief element of 'Kazakhness'. This finding supports Fierman's (2010) observation that in the same way as in other post-Soviet states, the assumption that ethnic affiliation and native language should coincide dominates in Kazakhstan too. During his fieldwork, he attempted to speak with some Kazakhs in their mother tongue and those with a weak command of language expressed their sincere embarrassment. To demonstrate how deeply the notion that those who are Kazakh by birth should speak Kazakh is entrenched in people's minds, Fierman (2010) gave an instructive example from a university in a northern city of Kazakhstan. While the university offers a pay bonus to people lecturing in the Kazakh language, ethnic Kazakhs are not entitled to it.

Although in many developed countries, the degree of homogeneity is lessened not only to a common language but also to system of laws (Ben-Israel 2011), language 'is certainly more demanding than respecting political institutions' (Koning 2011: 1982). Probably for that reason, Russian-speakers (RKs) avoided mentioning language as a primary identity marker. Following Brubaker's (2013: 10) idea that 'transmission of a language…requires a major effort and carries a substantial opportunity cost … [whereas] a religious affiliation or identification does not'-we can say that RKs lower the boundaries of national identity significantly by demanding the knowledge of traditions only.

	RK	KR	KK	Total
Ability to speak Kazakh		3.3	5.4	2.8
Fluency in Kazakh	5	3.3	2.7	3.7
Having Kazakh parents	10	40	37.8	28
Ability to play the dombra	75	50	40.5	56.1
Being Muslim	10	3.3	2.7	5.6
Knowing old traditions and culture			10.8	3.7

Table 6.2: Least important characteristic for a person to be considered Kazakh (q4, percentages in each category)

The answers in Table 6.2 strongly reinforced the previous finding that Kazakh-speakers generally attach less significance to the component of ancestry in national identification. In the above table, the respondents had to cite the characteristic they considered least important for a person to be considered Kazakh. As can be observed, all three groups cited playing the *dombra*, which is a national music instrument, as the most unimportant quality. RKs showed sounder commonality than KRs and KKs (75 percent, 50 percent and 40.5 percent respectively). However, the emphasis of the latter two that, 'having Kazakh parents' does not suffice for fully-fledged qualification distinguished them greatly from Russian-speakers (40 percent, 37.8 percent and 10 percent respectively).

The fact that Russian-speaking Kazakhs cling to ancestry is rather surprising, as in the literature, they were described as 'cosmopolitan', 'civic' etc. (Surucu 2002; Danilovich 2010). Ford, et al. (2011: 1) argued that people brought up in mature and financially

secure societies 'are less likely to emphasise ancestry as an important factor in national identity'. Respondents for this study were selected from among upwardly mobile middle-class dwellers of economically booming city in Kazakhstan. However, they were not equal as repatriates earn less than local-born Kazakhs (Chapter 5). Despite this, KRs are more committed to downplaying ancestry in comparison with RKs and KKs as the above results show. So the claim of Ford, et al. (2011) does not agree with the findings of this study. On the other hand, if RKs underlined ancestry as an important factor, then their region of origin should be underdeveloped in relation to the other two. One of the latest analyses concluded that the least prosperous provinces are all in the southern part of the country, not in north or east from where RKs come (Statistical Agency 2012). This also contradicts Ford's, et al. (2011) argument. However, when the respondents were asked to describe three main achievements of Kazakhstan (Appendix 4), around half of RKs, KRs and KKs believed that 'economic development' was an achievement (45.1 percent, 51.4 percent and 48.2 percent respectively). Most surprisingly, some RKs maintained that Kazakhstan is among the world's top fifty economies, which was a premature assertion and remained a government target during the research, although none of the KRs or KKs stated this. A few KKs indicated 'social equality', 'better social conditions for youth', 'well-being of people' and the construction of the underground in the former capital Almaty, among the key successes of independence (Appendix 4). This may indicate that RKs are less interested in and poorly informed about the economic transformations, which is justified in view of their geographical origins. While KKs and KRs are newcomers to northern Kazakhstan, RKs are permanent residents of that region where the capital city is situated, which is why they might never have felt economic challenges as fiercely as Kazakh-speakers. That is to say that despite being economically more secure than other Kazakhs, RKs still adhere to the factor of ancestry more cogently. This is further evidence to Walker Connor's (1994) argument that ethnic nationalisms can surface in all kinds of economic settings, be they sophisticated or backward, prosperous or diminishing locations. In the end, the most accurate explanation may lie in the ethno-regional dissimilarities of the groups. In contrast to KKs and KRs, RKs were born and raised in Russian-dominated regions; and since they found themselves integrated into Russian culture (Fierman 2006), they had no other option but to use 'ancestry' as the only marker of distinction.

Nonetheless, the interviews revealed that 'having Kazakh parents' is an important condition for membership of the Kazakh nation not only for RKs but also for KKs. While indigenous Kazakhs came to admit lineage as the main point of departure, Kazakh repatriates earnestly linked 'Kazakhness' to native language proficiency and thus corroborated their questionnaire answers verbally. They were strongly committed to the view that one should speak his or her mother tongue competently to be called Kazakh "deservedly". KRs pointed out that some 'are Kazakhs facially not mentally, because they don't speak their tongue' (respondent 29, KR, male); 'If you are Kazakh who cannot express it in your mother tongue, isn't it shameful?' (respondent 23, KR, female). Descriptive phrases signifying immaturity and incompleteness figured in reference to Russian-speaking Kazakhs:

Q: Do you really think that one cannot be called Kazakh because of his poor language fluency? That sounds very offensive?

If a Kazakh doesn't speak his language, I call him/her a half-baked Kazakh. My words upset most of my group mates. But there were some who changed. You know all knew Kazakh but few used it. So I called them spoiled Kazakhs (respondent 25, KR, female)

Q: Do you call yourself Kazakh because you have a good command of your mother tongue?

Yes. I am Kazakh because I speak Kazakh. If you want I can call myself a pure Kazakh. And I support those who call Russian-speakers spoiled Kazakhs. I know that it is not their fault that they went to Russian schools but I think that one should learn his language afterwards. This enrages me, this infuriates me…and maybe because of this anger I call them spoiled Kazakhs (respondent 27, KR, male)

The majority of RKs and KKs changed their initial principles; those who chose cultural markers in Table 6.1 favoured ancestry in the interviews. Neither linguistic proficiency nor knowledge of past traditions outweighed the factor of descent as a primary identification marker. This was achieved as a result of a set of thorough questions (e.g. Do you call yourself Kazakh because…, etc.).

Q: So who is a true Kazakh? What is the main characteristic?

To be honest, in order to consider somebody a Kazakh, they should be ethnically Kazakh, be born from Kazakh parents (respondent 12, KK, male)

Q: You indicated that one should be fluent in Kazakh language to qualify as Kazakh. Do you call yourself Kazakh because of this linguistic factor?

... the question is a bit baffling. Today everyone who has Kazakh parents can call himself Kazakh. And I am Kazakh because both my father and mother are Kazakhs, and because I know their descent, tribe (ru). But I have more respect for Kazakh-speaking Kazakhs and find them to deserve to be called true (nagyz) Kazakhs (respondent 21, KK, female)

Q: Why you call yourself Kazakh? Is it because you know old traditions?

Of course not. Because I have Kazakh parents (respondent 17, RK, female)

Thus, Kazakh repatriates were alone in favouring the cultural factor over the ethnic one in their description of a genuine Kazakh. Although both KKs and RKs also initially noted cultural features, in due course they admitted the salience of parentage. These contradictions are a manifestation of local Kazakhs' dual membership criteria. Their outer wishes and inner perceptions are inconsistent: outsiders are welcome to the Kazakh nation on the condition that they are culturally integrated, yet insiders (KKs and RKs) are determined to identify themselves on the basis of 'blood'. Combined, the answers of the questionnaire and interview support Kolsto's (1998: 55) finding that Kazakhs are 'those who have a good command of the Kazakh language and [have] no non-Kazakhs in the family'. Considering that the ability to cite families' previous seven generations is an intrinsic feature of Kazakh tradition, and that tribal connections survived even the Soviet propaganda (Schatz 2006), local Kazakhs' current ancestral perception of ethnicity is justifiable. As for the KRs, their view of language as the foremost attribute of Kazakhness is consistent with Tyan's observation that repatriates 'see themselves as preservers of Kazakh culture and traditions, lost to [local] Kazakhs due to the Russian-Soviet influence' (2013: 2).

To sum up, all three groups of respondents send out cultural signals in the first place. This suggests favourable implications for nation-building policies in the future, because the degree of emphasis of ancestry and cultural heritage as a required condition for

membership is 'likely to have important social consequences, in particular relating to the treatment of migrants and minorities' (Ford et al 2011: 2).

6.2.2 Meeting Co-Ethnics

One of the objectives of an ethnic nation-state is to consolidate its people scattered across the world (Joppke 2005), as diasporic descendants are perceived to be part of a nation 'who have a right to return to their ancestral homeland' (Tsuda 2010: 623). While some East Asian countries have undertaken similar programmes pursuing economic benefits in the first place, European ethnic nation-states did this for ethno-national reasons (Skrentny et al. 2007). According to Oka (2013: 2), Kazakhstan's state-backed program for repatriates is similar to that of Israel, as both countries 'accept co-ethnics solely on the basis of ethnicity without setting other conditions such as language proficiency or country of residence'. However, despite this similarity, Kazakhstan is also a unique case, as it has embraced an ethnic return-migration policy directly after the fall of the Soviet Union and during a perilous transition period. Moreover, at the time of independence the titular nationality was in the minority in multi-ethnic Kazakhstan. On the basis of this fact it is possible to argue that the government looked at the diaspora abroad as an important source, not only for nation-building but also for the 'legitimization of territorial sovereignty with the help of a demographic increase of ethnic Kazakhs' (Bonnenfant 2012: 41).

On the other hand, by defining national belonging by blood ties rather than residency through its repatriation policy, Kazakhstan's leadership also provoked a public debate regarding the identity of the state and whether the ethnic understanding of citizenship genuinely replaces the civic one in nation-building policy. Given that the government was already grappling with many other socio-economic problems in the 1990s, the policy of ethnic return therefore became an additional burden (Bonnenfant 2012) and a very controversial enterprise. In view of this, those respondents who were born internally (KKs and RKs) were asked a number of questions concerning Kazakh repatriates (KRs) to investigate how close local Kazakhs feel themselves to be to their co-ethnics who lack Soviet experience and thus a certain degree of consistency.

The arrival of Kazakh repatriates….	RK	KK	Total
represents the reestablishment of historical justice and is absolutely justified	27.5	59	43.2
increasing the share of Kazakhs in Kazakhstan	25	25.6	25.3
not conditioned by political goals and represent genuine assistance to oralmans		5.1	2.5
is premature, since at the present time there are insufficient resources for their housing and employment in Kazakhstan	40	10.3	25.1
is problematic, because some Kazakhs have a different mentality, and they find it difficult to adapt	7.5		3.7

Table 6.3: With which of the statements do respondents agree most (q7, percentages in each category)

Findings revealed that 59 percent of KKs found the arrival of Kazakh repatriates to be the 'reestablishment of historical justice and to be absolutely justified,' while the phenomenon seemed 'premature' for the majority of RKs (40 percent), 'since at the present time there are insufficient resources for their housing and employment in Kazakhstan.' It is worth noting that only 7.5 percent of RKs were against the whole project. One male RK said:

> *As far as I know they have been invited in the early 1990s, and I think that we had to wait for another 5 years before letting them in. You know that the economic crisis has shattered the well-being of our own people. So when Oralmans arrived, we had many other problems (respondent 8, RK, male)*

Some RKs indicated their sympathy with foreign-born Kazakhs, as they could have been in the same position had their ancestors departed under similar conditions. However, one issue troubled them greatly, namely- the question of whether Kazakhstan was economically ready to receive the newcomers. In their answers, the RKs offered a range of comments, for example, 'it may have been more rational to bring them back when our problems were settled. I mean the issue of jobs, financial security and so on' (respondent 19, RK, male); 'it would have been wiser to launch this program in the 2000s...maybe the financial situation of the early years influenced some Oralmans to leave Kazakhstan again' (respondent 26, RK, female). One respondent described the current atmosphere in her village, which is partly inhabited by Kazakh repatriates. According to her, houses deserted following the Russians' and Germans' departure in

the 1990s were occupied by 'imported' Kazakhs, who found themselves less fortunate in the labour market and remained perpetually jobless. This triggered an upsurge in the rate of burglaries in the area and locals had become angry about declining safety. Surprisingly though, the respondent refrained from blaming Kazakh repatriates. Instead, she called for a reprove of state officials responsible for sending new-arrivals to those regions where even the local residents were struggling to find employment (respondent 6, RK, female). Other Russian-speaking Kazakhs also cited unsatisfactory state support, although in milder tones. One conceded that Kazakh repatriates were deprived of continuous support, due to the post-independence economy not being robust enough to support all those migrating to Kazakhstan from outside. He asked a rhetorical question, as to whether they were promised a better future in the new country or were invited to contribute to the development. Nonetheless, he was convinced that:

State officials should have planned their settlement properly. I know Oralmans who could not get the benefits they were entitled to on time due to the malfunction of officials (respondent 30, RK, male)

Another respondent from the northern origin reported her mother's worries:

She finds them to be workaholics, but not financially supported to the necessary extent. I don't know whether the government should help them with the creation of work, but I think that they are not given sufficient attention in general. You cannot blame the program committed to bringing Oralmans as a whole, but you can blame those people who implement the program (respondent 17, RK, female)

The Russian-speaking Kazakhs' concerns relating to the insufficiency and inadequacy of governmental support agree with the findings of Dubuisson and Genina (2011). According to them, while the central government remains committed to the program of repatriation, local-level government officials express their relations with repatriates in terms of efforts to 'limit', 'control', and 'organize'. Considering that these officials are themselves dwellers of the towns and villages which they serve, they understand the economic, social and political impact of repatriates on local communities in the framework of modernity and tradition, of cultural and linguistic *Russification* and the Soviet past (Dubuisson and Genina 2011: 477). As was argued in Chapter 2, in the 1990s some minority ethnicities intended to leave Kazakhstan for their own nation-

states. Their concerns stemmed from the worsening economic situation and political uncertainty. So if the arrival of Kazakh repatriates amid a torrent of unresolved financial difficulties appeared less sound for RKs, it seems to have been based on quite reasonable grounds.

However, the KKs were very defensive of the program. They agreed that the arrival of KRs was 'right and timely,' and 'if they are here, it is their historical homeland' (respondent 13, KK, male); 'their arrival [is] less problematic' (respondent 14, KK, male) and provided with political power one of them 'would have brought them to Kazakhstan' anyway (respondent 12, KK, male). The Kazakh-phone Kazakhs believed that Kazakhstan's government provided newcomers with essential commodities and therefore performed 'a genuine assistance'. One female respondent articulated that during recent visits to her home, she saw Oralmans (KRs) living in high-quality houses in the suburbs built from the local budget (respondent 11, KK, female). Another respondent referred to the fact that Kazakh repatriates were not only given plots of land and houses but that the government also aided school leavers in studying at local universities for free (respondent 13, KK, male). Two other Kazakh-phone Kazakhs explicated how their parents embraced the Kazakh repatriates by sharing their livestock. While accepting that state support was available, they also referred to help offered by the local community. One KK, who was born and had lived in Lenger (a city in the south of Kazakhstan) for many years prior to coming to Astana stated that his village is overseen by a clique of old people, known as *Aksakaldar Alkasy*. All local problems are settled in this circle, while funds are channelled from village entrepreneurs, who are prospering financially in nearby cities. According to him:

> *When Oralmans were sent to our area, these Aksakaldar alkasy allocated livestock and helped them to plough their land. Few of the original dwellers of the village tended to use land for cultivating vegetables. So Oralmans are now prosperous. They returned to Aksakaldar Alkasy what they were given. And now they help others too. Aksakaldar Alkasy even helps village children to study in the city (respondent 20, KK, male)*

A respondent from Turkistan, situated in the same region as Lenger, remembered his parents' words on the subject of helping Kazakh repatriates. According to them, people

generally agreed with the provision of this aid in addition to the government subsidies. Furthermore:

> *This was an intention shared by many people in the village. Those Oralmans who came then stayed permanently. But you know, the government built lots of houses for Oralmans from scratch in the desert area outside Turkistan city. Can you imagine, they were living on their own, no outsider among them. Now that area is leafy and settled (respondent 24, KK, male)*

While Kazakh-speakers seemed to be interested in the 'theory' of the project, RKs were concerned with the 'methodology'. Many authors argue that some Kazakh repatriates in Kazakhstan have conceived of themselves as 'second-class citizens' (Dubuisson and Genina 2011), and that they have been 'othered' in the employment, privatisation and naturalisation phases in Kazakhstan, where the reality of what Kazakhs 'should be' has changed following decades of *Russification* (Diener 2005a). The above findings show that KRs might have avoided social exclusion provided they were sent to Kazakh-dominated regions only. Moreover, this would have avoided what Dubuisson and Genina (2011: 478) call the 'breakdown between state policies and local priorities'. Taken as a whole, however, this would have contradicted the state objective, which was to fill the population shortage caused by outmigration of non-titular groups in Russian-dominated areas (Cerny 2010). Hence, the marginalisation ratio of Kazakh repatriates was high in the regions where their ethno-cultural affinity was weak and low where it was strong. The widespread argument that KRs struggled to integrate with the Kazakhstani community is therefore only regionally relevant.

On the other hand, it is essential to state that neither the KKs nor the RKs said anything to discredit KRs in general; rather they were keen to express their personal admiration of them and to encourage encounters with foreign-born co-ethnics. One KK said that Kazakh repatriates from China are very skilful and more prone to entrepreneurship and that they are energetic and innovative. He remembered a friend from his university years who spoke no Russian yet achieved a lot thanks to his knowledge of Kazakh, English and Chinese:

> *When we were studying at the university, he worked as an interpreter at the city council, spending time at the Ministry of Education and as an assistant at a medical centre. Then he set up a company, brought his parents (from China),*

bought a piece of land and built a house. Generally speaking, I have never seen such a guy. Maybe there are people, whom I don't know but I was amazed by his abilities (respondent 14, KK, male)

In a similar vein, another respondent mentioned the 'unassailable patriotism' of Kazakhs from China. He explained that despite facing linguistic difficulties while being settled in proximity with Russians, they strived to adapt and stay permanently. Not all managed to integrate, according to him; however the strongest ones, those who were spirited managed to find their place in the emerging society. Their poor Russian forced them to eke out a living in the private sphere rather than in public institutions (respondent 12, KK, male). Russian-speaking Kazakhs also shared their positive experiences. Newly-arrived repatriates captivated some with their conservative lifestyles. Several extracts support this account:

So far I have only forged relationships with Mongolian Oralmans, and they have left a good impression on me. When I look at them, I see Kazakhs who lived a hundred years ago, they remind us of our ancestors, in terms of worldview and traditional way of life (respondent 8, RK, male)

The first Oralman I ever met was the physical training teacher at school. He left a good impression of himself, I can certainly say, a very intelligent and handsome man. He was from China. It was the year 2002-2003 (respondent 3, RK, female)

Thus, not only the KKs but also the RKs entertained a high regard for the new-arrivals whom they had met to date. This contradicts Diener's (2005: 340) early findings that Russian-speaking Kazakhs regard KRs 'as backward and unsophisticated or rural Kazakhs'. The change of attitude may be ascribed to what Guibernau (2001: 80) called 'a common culture', which has the capacity to create a feeling of solidarity. According to him, not only 'a common historical past' but also 'a future common project, reinforces the links between the members of a given nation'.

In the interviews, the RKs and KKs were also asked to offer their own solutions to the problems preventing the integration of Kazakh repatriates. One Kazakh-phone Kazakh suggested setting up an association in charge of aiding Kazakh repatriates to obtain their financial entitlements on time and accurately. As new-comers often suffer from

lack of legal knowledge; they consistently need valuable consultations. Indeed, in reality, most Kazakhs born outside the country find themselves regularly cheated. This respondent added that though the Kazakhstan government assures *Oralmans* that they will receive help, there exist unofficial hurdles which prevent the flow of this assistance (respondent 14, KK, male). Another Kazakh from the same category talked about the 'blat system' which may help Kazakh repatriates to overcome unnecessary obstacles through illegal payment of cash (respondent 24, KK, male). By contrast, Russian-speaking Kazakhs emphasized the role of the government in solving this problem. Integration of Kazakhs of foreign origin is 'the task of the state officials, as it was their idea to bring them' (respondent 26, RK, female). Or:

> *I think one should look at this problem from the economic point of view. If their economic well-being is partly settled from above, then their integration into the society will become easy because learning Russian in the initial years is quite difficult without certain motivation; moreover, it is extremely tricky to find spare time to learn Russian. Instead of spending hours familiarising themselves with the Russian language they would prefer either to leave Kazakhstan or to look for a low-salary job. On the other hand if the government provides them with a flat and grants them some money they will try to become integrated into the Kazakhstani society (respondent 8, RK, male)*

To keep Kazakh repatriates at home, native-born participants proposed neither bottom-up nor top-down, but local solutions. In view of the recent proclamations of Kazakh elites that KRs should contribute to the homeland to curtail the government's burden (Bonnenfant 2012), KKs' idea of engaging community action may be appealing. In general, the above findings support Cerny's (2010: 224) comment that economic and social integration of KRs was hampered by 'the disconnection between the legal infrastructure and the grand vision…for Kazakhstan as a nation'.

6.2.2.1 A short stint in the country of ancestors

In the interviews, the respondents repeatedly referred to the low numbers of Kazakh repatriates in Astana and among their circle of friends in particular. The majority of them said: 'There were no Oralmans in our group and I haven't worked with any after graduation' (respondent 28, KK, male); 'I am not against their drain, but I have seen a reverse trend' (respondent 9, KK, male); 'their number is not large enough to cause any

disruption' (respondent 10, RK, male); 'so far I have scarcely met any. They don't speak Russian, so it is less probable that I could have a long-relationship' (respondent 19, RK, male). Several other extractions interested the researcher:

> *I personally hardly meet any Oralmans in Astana city or in my own city either. They are invisible. So my perception of Oralmans is entirely based on the information received from media outlets (respondent 10, RK, male)*

> *To be honest, if I see or hear about Oralmans, it is when I go home. In Astana it is difficult to meet them (respondent 22, KK, female)*

The low number of new arrivals in Astana could have been due to the shortage of universities compared with the previous capital of the country (Almaty), as one of the Kazakh repatriates 'chose Astana, in order to be recognisable' (respondent 5, KR, male). Other interviewees however indicated that although Astana is a relatively more challenging place for many to adapt to, Kazakh repatriates came to be seen more rarely than before. This is illustrated by an evolving preference among Chinese Kazakhs. One Kazakh-phone respondent who visited Kazakhs in China said that the majority of them wished to obtain their financial entitlements and did not consider staying in Kazakhstan for good:

> *...there are lots of Chinese Kazakhs who allegedly come to Kazakhstan under Oralman cover and benefit from the nation-wide aid scheme. But in the long run few of them resolve to stay in Kazakhstan; most return back to China (respondent 9, KK, male)*

Another KK, working as a lecturer at a university in Astana, shared his concerns regarding the "quality" of Kazakh repatriates. Drawing from his experience as a student in the mid-2000s, he found the younger generation of KRs to be less patriotic. According to his observations, these days:

> *...Kazakhs coming from China express their fondness of the Chinese nation. They elevate Chinese culture and so on. I think that they plan to get a free education in Kazakhstan and then carve out their careers in China (respondent 12, KK, male)*

What the young adults observed among Chinese Kazakhs seems to be relevant to the Mongolian Kazakhs too. As Dubuisson and Genina (2011) found, some Kazakhstani Kazakhs believe that Mongolian Kazakhs either return to Mongolia or move between Mongolia and Kazakhstan. Moreover, given that some of these repatriates hold both Mongolian and Kazakhstani passports, it also serves as proof of their duplicitous character. A widely held view is that Mongolian Kazakhs not only unfairly benefit from the government assistance normally inaccessible to the locals, but also tend to collect the money and then go back to Mongolia (Dubuisson and Genina 2011).

The KRs themselves corroborated changes in the number of arrivals. One of them conceded that the dramatic surge of the mid-2000s has come to an end. This respondent believed that the early birds were intent on amassing their wealth instantly, but realised the difficulty of the task upon arrival. In view of this, those living in China and hoping to move to their mother country in the future started to harbour doubts (respondent 1, KR, male). Two other respondents sought answers for the decline of the number of repatriates in China's economic performance. The economic success of China has indeed influenced the attitudes of Chinese Kazakhs to their mother country. The following is their feedback:

> *China is more appealing. My father, working as a teacher in a school, earns around $1000. In Kazakhstan you hardly get this amount of money if employed in a remote area as a school teacher. I mean, Kazakhs in China are living in far-off regions, deprived of the development of China in general. But despite this, my father earns a good sum, you see (respondent 23, KR, female)*

> *Economy matters. China has a luring power. Among my classmates who stayed in China, there are those who moved to mainland China. More opportunities are present. They know the Chinese language, unlike me. I stayed in Kazakhstan for 7 years, forgot Chinese and did not learn Russian (respondent 25, KR, female)*

According to Tsuda (2010), although diasporic return migration may be ethnically driven, most diasporic descendants do not return to their homelands to re-acquire their ethnic heritage or reconnect with their ancestral roots. Rather, they largely migrate in search of jobs, better salaries and a higher standard of living. Pressured by economic, socio-political and ecological factors, Kazakhs in China considered Kazakhstan to be an attractive destination in the early 1990s (Cerny 2010). This feeling endured throughout

the 2000s up until the Chinese government began to invest in north-western regions populated by Kazakhs (Jacques 2011). This may have influenced their opinions. On the other hand, the uniqueness of Astana where linguistic skills matter considerably might also have added to the insulation of local Kazakhs from KRs more than in remote regions. This is supported by the fact that in the previous section both RKs and KKs drew examples related to KRs from the cities or villages in which their parents currently live. Thus, cultural alienation also explains the decrease in the number of Kazakh repatriates. They indeed seem to have had their dreams of an ethnic homecoming shattered by the reality of the state's multi-cultural and largely *Russified* society (Diener 2005).

6.2.2.2 Closing gaps after a century-long isolation

The rate of ethnic intermarriage is an essential measure of social amalgamation (Lieberson and Waters 1988). Research has revealed that marriages between members of different groups are socially accepted (Kalmjin 1998) and those immigrants who marry outside their own group have a better financial status (Meng and Gregory 2005). The degree of willingness of RKs and KKs to forge interpersonal ties with Kazakh repatriates was examined in the question below, which particularly measured the willingness of parents to allow their children to marry second generation immigrants in order to determine how successful the incorporation of newly-arrived co-ethnics may eventually become.

		RK	KK	Total
neighbour	yes	67.5	90	
	no	32.5	10	
friend	yes	57.5	72.5	
	no	42.5	27.5	
children's spouse	yes	45	63.2	
	no	55	36.8	

Table 6.5: Whether Kazakh repatriates would be accepted as… (q9, percentages in each category)

While the vast majority of KKs were happy to reside in the same area with newcomers, one third of RKs stated that they were not (90 percent and 67 percent). In a similar vein,

more KKs welcomed the idea of becoming friends with repatriates than RKs (72.5 percent and 57.5 percent). Nonetheless, the issue of marriage proved slightly challenging for Russian-speakers. More than half of RKs refused to discuss the issue of marriage, whereas the majority of KKs responded saying 'Of course, yes…If the young people are educated well' (respondent 13, KK, male); 'things like this (marriage) are taking place among us. One of our relatives let her daughter marry a Kazakh from China. They went to China to celebrate it and so on' (respondent 12, KK, male).

In the interviews, sceptical KKs, who made up one third of the whole group, were asked why they opposed the idea. Most referred to differences in worldview and mentality. The following are some of their responses:

> *…there is an issue of tradition. Chinese Oralmans are like Chinese people, Kazakhs coming from Russia or Uzbekistan are close to Russian and Uzbek people in terms of mentality and traditions (respondent 12, KK, male)*

> *They are pure Kazakhs. That they brought us the "Kara jorga" dance is itself a sign of their ability to preserve our old traditions but you know some people in Kazakhstan argue that "Kara jorga" is a Chinese dance and has nothing to do with our culture. This is the degree of our Russification. We are afraid of ourselves or the people who are like us. Last century changed us. We don't understand each other properly (respondent 21, KK, female)*

One of the local KKs recalled an unpleasant incident at the marriage party of a friend of his who was originally from China. Early in the party, the respondent spoke with a grandmother. According to him, the woman asked if he was 'one of them'. He was taken aback and now he is 'not that keen to forge a close relationships with them' (respondent 9, KK, male). Such a biased approach to locals was also evident in the interviews with Kazakh repatriates. Asked if he had any friends in Kazakhstan prior to his arrival one Kazakh repatriate (respondent 5, KR, male) used the word 'kandastar', to refer to Kazakhs from China. This word in Kazakh language means 'co-ethnics' i.e. people of the same blood. It is interesting to note that the terms commonly used in Kazakhstan to define diaspora Kazakhs are: *shetel qazaqtari* (Kazakhs of abroad), *shette zhurgen qandastar* (brothers living abroad) and *shet eldegi qazaqtar* (Kazakhs abroad). These are the definitions that accentuate the ethnic 'Kazakhness' of diaspora Kazakhs who are forced to live abroad. Even so, the political and cultural elite employ

the term *qandastar*, which means brothers or those who carry the same blood, more frequently than other expressions. The word *qan*, from which *qandas* comes, means 'blood' and signifies a blood connection, between ethnic Kazakhs in Kazakhstan and those abroad, based on common descent (Bonnefant 2012: 34). The Chinese Kazakhs' descriptions above show their unpreparedness and maybe unwillingness to use the word *qandastar* in relation to Kazakhs born and raised in Kazakhstan. This shows that it is still early to argue about their full integration into the Kazakh-speaking 'Kazakh' community, let alone the Russian-speaking 'Kazakhstani' one.

Russian-speaking Kazakhs were concerned about the language of communication with repatriates and their close circle in which Russian dominates. One of them said: 'In which language do you expect them to communicate' (respondent 26, RK, female). Another respondent believed, 'it is too early to make such decisions. Judging from my experiences so far, then no…No, but *Oralmans* may change in future' (respondent 17, RK, female). One male RK said, 'It is out of the question. They are culturally distant. And you know that I speak Russian at home, parents too. So it is difficult. I don't' know' (respondent 19, RK, male).

The study also investigated the outlook of Kazakh repatriates. The majority of them found the formation of kinship with local Kazakhs not only possible but indispensable. One male respondent shared his plans to marry a Kazakh girl born in Kazakhstan. His conviction is that all repatriates need to follow the same suit as it is necessary to imbibe the Kazakhstani mentality into future generations of *Oralmans* who are deprived of it today for historical reasons (respondent 1, KR, male). A similar view was voiced by a female repatriate:

> *I think that we have to marry locals. No restriction on the part of our parents. At last, we are all Kazakhs. And misunderstandings disappear over time. Moreover, at university Kazakh repatriates have changed to some extent. They have become a little bit aware of local mentality and I think not that opposed to marrying local Kazakhs (respondent 25, KR, female)*

The KRs' belief that they have to marry with locals to ensure the future assimilation of their children is close to Diener's (2005a: 342) contention that for them 'present dissatisfaction will be endured in the hope that their children will reap the benefits of titular status'. Yet, the application of the concept of 'local Kazakhs' has proved to have

limits. Kazakh repatriates highlighted the necessity of cultural closeness. They were not as open to the idea of forging bonds with Kazakhstani Kazakhs as it seemed initially. Almost all put forth criteria similar to the responses below:

> *I will not marry someone from the northern region of Kazakhstan. A Kazakh girl who doesn't speak Kazakh is more westernised and I may have many problems in getting along with her (respondent 5, KR, male)*

> *How can I live with a Russified Kazakh? Imagine yourself. We are different entirely. Maybe facially we are the same, but...but we are generally different (respondent 6, KR, female)*

> *I think that such bonds are necessary. And I will not oppose such a tie with Kazakhs who have been educated in Kazakh and know our traditions. Southerners are closer to us in cultural terms. So I feel that people from that region will be open to the idea of marrying Kazakh repatriates from China as well (respondent 23, KR, female)*

In a recent study, 78 per cent of repatriates believed Kazakhs living in Kazakhstan to be different from compatriots living abroad (Bokayev 2013). However, the above responses show that Kazakhs of the south-western origin may be a huge exception, as they are culturally close and less likely to 'other' the newly arrivals. So Bokayev's (2013: 795) argument that 'between repatriates and indigenous Kazakhs there is a distance appearing in such basic components as culture, mentality, speech and nonverbal behaviour' is also too generalized. Given that cultures within which individuals are born determine the way they consider and organize themselves with regard to others and to nature (Guibernau 2001: 79), it is conceivable that RKs and KKs are not comparable in their readiness and inclination to integrate with KRs through marital bonds. Due to the density of their residential areas, Kazakhs in China managed to keep their national traditions, customs, cultural values and thus ethnic distinctiveness intact throughout the twentieth century (Bokayev et.al 2012). The same is partly true in relation to Kazakh-speaking Kazakhs of southern-western origins. Geographically far away from Russian borders, they remained ethnically dominant in their respective regions, less prone to the *Russification* policies of the Soviet Union (as discussed in Chapter 3), and thus "aptly" equipped to intensify the integration of Kazakh repatriates.

6.3 Nationalist rhetoric

If nationalists are those 'who take the category of nation very seriously', then people 'who merely express national identity' cannot be labelled as nationalists (Fenton 2007: 322). While the above section established that the young adults' firm sense of 'Kazakhness' is largely based on cultural elements, this section was designed to determine the degree of their nationalist stance in response to the issues that may potentially trump civic developments in Kazakhstan. The young adults' answers would shed light on some of those issues which Calhoun (1997: 6) called 'excesses of loyalty to one's nation'.

6.3.1 Promotion of Kazakh identity

The exchange of ideas, deference for the difference and the necessity to cultivate 'non-exclusive identities are the only alternatives' for the avoidance of violence (Guibernau 2001: 90), as in the contemporary world the fitting of nations and states is fundamentally challenging. In the wake of the fall of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan emerged as the most colourful multi-ethnic society in post-Soviet Central Asia. Therefore, the solitary decision of its government to forge an inclusive term 'Kazakhstani' and narrow the application of 'Kazakh' toward the titular group only, was interpreted as a progressive step internationally (Roy 2000). Nonetheless, the transcendent power of the notion of 'Kazakhstani' continuously agitated the nationalist pressure groups (Chapter 3). In the light of this, the respondents were questioned regarding the prospective replacement of civic Kazakhstani identity with an ethnic Kazakh one.

	RK	KR	KK	Total
yes	10	22.5	20	17.5
not against		20	22.5	14.2
no	90	55	57.5	67.5
don't know		2.5	20	0.8

Table 6.6: Should everyone in Kazakhstan be considered Kazakh (q1, percentages in each category)

The majority of Kazakh repatriates were critical of the imposition of Kazakh identity on citizens of Kazakhstan as intensely as Kazakhs of southern-western origin (55 percent and 57.5 percent). However, the number of RKs who opposed it was higher than them both at 90 percent. Only around one in five KRs and KKs supported this suggestion and the same number were 'not against' it.

In the interviews, Kazakh repatriates stressed the rights of minority ethnicities to preserve their ethnic names. They anticipated that non-Kazakhs would become Kazakhs willingly, without any political pressure. 'Kazakhness should be adopted, not imposed' (respondent 30, KR, male); 'If the name of one group is forcefully imposed on another, then we Kazakhs from China could experience this… very hard to accept' (respondent 25, KR, female); 'people should not be called Kazakhs if they wish to retain their own ethnic name' (respondent 29, KR, male). However, KRs also wished the door to be left open. One of them said he is 'proud when a Korean or Russian' calls himself or herself a Kazakh and does it in fluent Kazakh (respondent 29, KR, male). One female repatriate also suggested providing non-titular ethnicities with freedom of choice to become Kazakhs. If 'Russians call themselves Kazakhs', she hardly 'feels uneasiness'. Her experience is that in Kazakhstan other ethnic groups tend to call themselves Kazakhs after having an eloquent speech delivered in the national language:

> *I will be honest, I feel happy at such times. However, I don't find it correct to attach our name to everyone without their consent (respondent 23, KR, female)*

This finding is consistent with the Kazakh repatriates' emphasis of command of the native language as the most essential ticket to national membership, as seen in section 6.1. Nonetheless, their answers in both the questionnaire and interview phases here suggest their serious reservations about forceful perpetration of a Kazakh identity at the expense of a Kazakhstani one.

A large proportion of Kazakh-phone Kazakhs took a cautious stance like the KRs. Their concerns centred on the necessity of increasing the esteem of the Kazakh nation in the eyes of others. This step would allegedly simplify the integration of non-titular ethnicities. As a way of doing this, some KKs proposed to produce films, cartoons, etc. and utilize historical events, and they made more self-critical remarks, such as, 'before asking other ethnic groups to become Kazakhs, we should be proud of this name ourselves' (respondent 20, KK, male); 'one of the features of our national character is

that we adapt to circumstances. If a Russian enters our conversation, we immediately switch to Russian. We don't expect and allow Russians to speak in our Kazakh' (respondent 15, KK, male). This is in line with Smagulova's (2006) observation. According to her, in their interaction with other ethnic groups Kazakhs tend to take convergence strategies. In other words, the presence of just one non-Kazakh usually prompts a whole group of ethnic Kazakhs to switch to Russian. While the author argues that this kind of language behaviour of Kazakhs diminishes the chance of language conflict (Smagulova 2006), this study finds that some Kazakhs also see it as a factor hampering the development of their national consciousness.

Another Kazakh-phone respondent argued that the incorporation of new ethnic groups is not a new phenomenon in Kazakh history. He referred to *Hojas*, the descendants of Muslim Arabs, who stayed on Kazakh soil and became a part of the nation, so 'Kazakhs, have historical experience of incorporating minority groups and leaving their distinctiveness intact' (respondent 28, KK, male). It is not surprising that local Kazakhs are aware of this phenomenon; however, very few western scholars mention this feature of the Kazakh nation, dividing them into three *zhuzs* only.

The interviews with Russian-speaking Kazakhs exhibited their attraction to the term 'Kazakhstani' embodying everyone in the country and promising a uniform retreat of ethnic designations. For example one stated:

> *It is easy to call everyone Kazakhstani. No one is offended. But if you say Kazakhs are doing this or that then some people will understand in terms of one ethnic group doing this or that. Not all people living in the country. But if you really want to refer to one ethnic group then you can use Kazakh or Russian and so on. This means that both terms have their own sphere of application (respondent 19, RK, male)*

Another RK gave a current example from among her colleagues. She easily associated 'Britishness' with English identity; while 'Kazakhstanshipness' in her perception is less stationary and quite distinct from the notion of 'Kazakhness':

> *There is a teacher at the school where I work, and he is from Britain, he identifies himself as British. But he is Chinese at the same time. So he is British of Chinese descent. I wonder and ask him 'how can you be British if your*

> *surname is HANG. Look in the mirror, you are not British' I claim (respondent*
> *3, RK, female)*

The findings reveal that Kazakh identity has not blended with Kazakhstani identity to a degree that they can operate as alternatives. Besides, future merger is not likely to appeal to Russian-speaking Kazakhs in particular. Their interest in preserving the exclusivity of the Kazakh nation was partially observed in Table 6.1, where comparatively more RKs selected the clause 'having Kazakh parents' than did KRs or KKs as the main criterion of belonging to the Kazakh nation. Considering that appealing to all residents as Kazakhs may 'violate the sense of identity that many non-ethnic citizens of Kazakhstan wish to maintain' (Kusainova and Gleason 1998: 535), RKs seem to display a more civic attitude than Kazakh-speakers.

However, the international media frequently refers to all people living in Kazakhstan as Kazakhs, while local television and newspapers adopt the term Kazakhstani to distinguish Kazakhs. For instance, a world boxing champion better known under the name GGG, Gennady Golovkin, is widely conceived as being Kazakh in the U.S where he moved to a couple of years ago. He reinforced his affiliation with the Kazakh nation rather than Kazakhstani alternative at a recent conference in Kazakhstan on April 24, 2014 by asserting that while his father is Russian and his mother is Korean, he is Kazakh. It is interesting to note that he said the last phrase in the Kazakh language. In addition, all gold medal winners from Kazakhstan in the London Olympics were also referred to as Kazakhs by the international media, while some of them were ethnic Russians. In other words, while the term *Kazakh* is already being applied to the residents of Kazakhstan outside the country despite the government's civic nation-building strategy-the symbol of which is the notion of *Kazakhstani*, it is possible to envisage its further expansion in the future. The respondents' stance seems to be in favour of this, although in a case when it could generate misunderstanding they prefer the term *Kazakhstani* instead.

On the other hand, the percentage of Kazakh people, especially those of Kazakh-speakers within the population is rising (Chapter 3), which implies that a long-lasting domination of Kazakh culture is on the horizon. As the attitudes of young adults suggest a smooth transition to the 'recognition of the cultural identity of the majority,

the nation–state and effective recognition of the cultural rights of the minorities' (Ben-Israel: 2011)-is what would probably crystallize in the coming years.

6.3.2 Privileging Kazakhs

In most cases, politicians in multi-ethnic polities tend to be interested in privileging or promising to privilege 'the members of one ethnic group over those of any other residents of the state' (Crawford and Lijphart 1995: 188). This can be recognized as a shift from patriotic rhetoric towards a more nationalist track. In contrast to patriotism, nationalism reflects 'apperception of national superiority and an orientation toward national dominance' (Kosterman and Feshbach 1989: 271). In post-communist realms, nationalism was helpful in legitimizing an indigenous elite's control over various domestic resources, as it provided an ostensibly 'natural' way of articulating interests. Ethno-politics came to offer more legitimacy in the face of other influential competitors or power pretenders. Consequently, titular ethno-nationalism guaranteed the absolute triumph of 'a dominant nationality over competitors from socially advanced ethnic minorities' (Molchanov 2000: 266). Although Kazakhs were not privileged formally in Kazakhstan, as happened in Malaysia or India (Dave 2003; Schatz 2006), the change of demographic balance in the 2000s in their favour, led some western scholars (Dave 2003; Brubaker 2011) to appropriate the onset of 'Kazakh ethno-national hegemony'. The young adults in this study were tested for their willingness to enjoy government support on account of their ethnic affiliation.

	RK	KR	KK	Total
Yes	5	30	37.5	24.2
no	60	45	57.5	54.2
I don't know	35	25	5	21.7

Table 6.7: Privileging titular ethnic group (q23, percentages in each category)

It can be seen from the above findings that the majority of KRs refused to accept any preferential treatment, which was also a sentiment shared by the RKs and KKs (45 percent, 60 percent and 57.5 percent respectively). The KRs stated possible ramifications of opening the floodgates particularly at this moment in time. Some of them projected that the preservation of peace is 'for the sake of all' and therefore it is

precarious to advocate the protection of 'things that belong to a particular ethnic group' (respondent 1, KR, male); there is no need to privilege Kazakhs, as they are already 'fortunate' because local 'bilingual Kazakhs are the most privileged group' relative to Russians and monolingual repatriates (respondent 25, KR, female); this move may 'spark off imitation' in other countries 'where Kazakhs live' and cause 'endless dispute' (respondent 29, KR, male).

The KKs and RKs also cited motives similar to the KRs. The economic development became a reality not only because of Kazakh people, as other ethnic groups are also 'bringing investment, increasing social conditions and thus labouring equally to feather out the common nest' (respondent 14, KK, male); 'we need peace and tranquillity', but if 'Kazakhs enjoy certain advantages…this may damage our reputation abroad' (respondent 9, KK, male); the government should not privilege Kazakhs officially, since they 'make up the majority' of the population and their tribal bonds help them to strive without state support (respondent 26, RK, female). One of the RKs voiced her agitation about the preferences unofficially assigned to Kazakh repatriates. She recounted that Kazakh repatriates were served at a separate desk when entering the university a couple of years ago. This seemed an overt discrimination not only against all those standing in the queue but against Kazakh repatriates too. She said that to precipitate the integration of newcomers, no exceptions need to be exercised in their regard (respondent 3, RK, female).

Due to their numerical weight, some KRs and KKs (30 percent and 37.5 percent respectively), who favoured the idea of elevating the status of the titular group, were also questioned for their motives. Most of them justified their positions by pointing out that countries, which legalized special treatment of the core ethnicity hardly experienced financial difficulties to date. Malaysia and Israel were referred to as leading examples. Another finding from Table 6.7 is that one third of RKs decided to refrain from either supporting the case or challenging it. In the interviews, some of these respondents raised concerns about maltreatment of locals in public places while foreigners receive high-quality service. A female respondent, born in Astana when it was still a Soviet city, voiced her irritation toward double standards exercised in local restaurants. Despite the fact that equality should be applied regardless of social or ethnic status, foreign visitors enjoy open privileges. In fact, she is not going to support the project implemented by a Kazakhstani company due to its local roots. This is

because 'every competition should be fair enough to generate interest from various ethnic groups' (respondent 3, RK, female). The need to privilege Kazakhs, since overseas people obtain more respect at the expense of locals surfaced in the answer of another Russian-speaking respondent:

> *It depends on the situation. Sometimes I feel that we Kazakhs should show that this state belongs to us. Such a feeling comes when I see foreigners acting inappropriately. But sometimes I think that everyone should be treated equally because I know that some problems are better solved by competent foreigners. In fact, we have got lots of global-scale projects and to undertake them we need people of diverse backgrounds and ethnicity should be of no significance at all. Rather people should be judged according to their performances (respondent 17, RK, female)*

All three groups held the common view that official support of titular ethnicity may generate economically and politically unfavourable consequences. Equal contributions of non-titular groups to the country's progress appear to convince them that all should claim a similar stake and meaningful citizenship regardless of ethnic root.

A survey conducted in the late 1990s found that relatively more Kazakhs than Slavs believed that because of their ethnicity they should be privileged in the process of employment (27.2 percent versus 8.8 percent), entrance to university (19.2 percent versus 8.6 percent), career advancement at work (19.7 percent versus 8.6 percent), elections for managerial positions (33.5 percent versus 9.9 percent), land allocation (26.9 percent versus 5.4 percent) and during the privatisation practice (19.2 percent versus 5.3 percent) (Dunaev, quoted in Smagulova 2006). Doubtless, Russians' relatively low inclination to claim that they should be favoured in the above-mentioned ventures due to their ethnicity is a result of the new reality after the fall of the Soviet Union. However, it is also significant to mention that only around one quarter of Kazakhs suggested ethnicity-based privileges. This study also found that only a small portion of the new generation of titular nationality craves "unfair" treatment from the government in their regard.

6.3.3 Monopolizing the term 'Kazakhstan'

Renaming places and changing the names of streets and people which bring past memories, is often imbued with both positive and negative connotations, as there will be some people who are opposed to it and some who are in favour. So renaming can be a recipe for disaster (Sepota and Madadzhe 2007). This study posed a question regarding the possibility of re-naming the country. The respondents were asked how appropriate they find the change of Republic of Kazakhstan to Kazakh Republic in particular. The endorsement of the alternative could indicate the maturity of their sense of state possession.

	RK	KR	KK	Total
Yes	17.5	30	10	19.2
not against	30	45	55	43.3
No	52.5	20	32.5	35
I don't know		5	2.5	

Table 6.8: Should Kazakhstan be renamed Kazakh Republic? (q19, percentages in each category)

The majority of KRs (45 percent) reasoned in the same way as the KKs and, said that they were 'not against' the proposal; both displaying only a slight disapproval. In contrast, the RKs were unreceptive, as more than half of them opposed it outright. Among those who fully supported the idea of changing the name of the country, KRs featured relatively more than RKs and KKs (30 percent, 17.5 percent and 10 percent). This may suggest that Kazakh repatriates are indeed in favour of having the state renamed to denote the authority of the titular ethnic group.

In the interviews, "irresolute" KRs and KKs mentioned 'stability' and 'peace' as far more important assets at these times. The short extractions below are indicative of the stance of Kazakh-speakers as a whole:

> *Pains will overwhelm gains. This is what I think. Changing the name of the country is an easy task maybe. But changing the substance or internal situation is a rather more difficult one. So instead of improving external appearance I suggest solving internal problems and to do that we need stability and security. A lack of this may cause bigger problems (respondent 24, KK, male)*

Of course, I want Kazakhstan to be a Kazakh Republic, but what does it change? Does it privilege Kazakh people? No, this can be done without renaming the state. So before changing the label we had better solve numerous social problems that are of paramount significance (respondent 6, KR, female)

As for the Russian-speakers, they referred to the established brand. All achievements of the last 20 years are associated with the name 'Kazakhstan' and so 'no need to start from scratch' (respondent 30, RK, male) or 'the world community knows us by this name' (respondent 26, RK, female).

All arguments employed in the interviews highlighted how strongly all three groups of Kazakhs valued the notions of 'stability' and 'peace'. They appeared to be aware of their own small sacrifice in the name of its continuation. In evidence was their consciousness of the financial investment the government poured in for the sake of converting 'Kazakhstan' into an international brand as well. Yet, the hesitation of all three groups (43.3 percent) to fully support the proposition may be bolstered in the future provided that the initiative comes from the top. Indeed, after the completion of the field work for this study, the head of state flirted with the idea of changing 'Kazakhstan' to 'Kazakh Yeli' (Land of Kazakhs) in February 2014 and the motive was largely economic. Recalling that the country is 'mistakenly' put in the same boat with many other 'stans', and that Mongolia, which lacks the suffix, enjoys a rising FDI, the president hinted at a possible transition. This was enough to wreak havoc in global media, for instance, 'Don't Call Me Stan' is how *The Economist* (February, 2014) styled the incident. Admitting that 'the idea of renaming the country has touched a nerve' and may be expensive, the newspaper correctly noted the meagreness of popular support. Moreover, the article suggested that among the issues of real primary significance were such problems as 'the poor quality of health care, the high cost of education, widespread corruption and the shrinking value of the currency' (*The Economist*, February 2014).

6.4 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to test the hypothesis that young Kazakh adults, born and raised in different lingo-regional contexts but educated and living in Astana are developing common attitudes to ethnic characteristics of national identity. The

examination of their answers to questions testing various aspects of ethnic identity provides strong evidence that common attitudes are in the making.

The key issue that has been highlighted by the findings is the declining role of ancestry in the young adults' ethnic identification. According to the respondents, a 'true' Kazakh is not one who is born to Kazakh parents but one fluent in the mother tongue and knowledgeable about old traditions and customs. However, although the role of ancestry proves to be less important as a criterion than cultural qualities across all three groups, this study has also identified that the young adults' declaration of their belonging to the Kazakh nation is based on the fact that their parents are ethnic Kazakhs. What is significant about the findings is that they jointly advocate entry requirements to the Kazakh nation displaying strong degree of inclusivity.

The second theme examined factors that underpin relations between native-born Kazakhs and their co-ethnics from outside the country. After a thorough analysis of the responses of both "camps" this study suggests that Kazakh repatriates are gradually integrating into the Kazakhstani society. This process is not buttressed by their belonging to the same pedigree as local Kazakhs, but rather by their readiness to play by the rules. This analysis also indicates that common ancestry does not carry emotional weight and as a factor of inclusion is not likely to trump the importance of cultural proximity.

Lastly, the chapter has discussed the intensity of young adults' nationalistic rhetoric. The findings have revealed that neither the elevation of Kazakhs by privilege, nor the renaming of the state and the forceful identification of minority ethnicities with Kazakh identity have far-reaching resonance with the younger generation of Kazakhs, educated and presently living in the new capital of Kazakhstan.

Chapter 7

A new status of native language and religion: overcoming divisions

7.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to measure how young adults perceive and care for cultural components of national identity. The initial hypothesis was that despite their lingo-regional backgrounds, young Kazakh adults have a wide range of common perspectives towards the fundamentals of indigenous culture. The selection of language and religion as the primary elements of cultural national identity was based on the theoretical debates in Chapter 1 and the discussion of the importance of language in Kazakhstani context in Chapter 3. In order to see how integrated the new generation of Kazakhs is into the cultural life of independent Kazakhstan, which is structured and enriched by the input of not only Kazakh but also Russian-speaking constituents, their familiarity with personalities from musical and intellectual circles was also examined.

7.2 Language: dividing and uniting

Although today's nation-states have a strong ability to make direct appeals to individuals, the spread of global culture, goods and information is hampering states' capacity to exert the cultural control, without which the creation and maintenance of homogenous national identities are problematic (Guibernau 2001). Yet the commitment of nation-states to the standardization of practices and creation of common symbols and values, despite increasing cultural and linguistic heterogeneity and globalization processes, remains robust (Guibernau 2001). As was broadly discussed in Chapter 3, Kazakhstan's government has been exceptional in balancing indigenous (ethnic) with largely communist (civic) ethos in its nation-building venture, while also fostering the sustenance of cosmopolitan values. This multidimensional identity-creating enterprise found its reflection in the official endorsement of the 'Tripartite System of Languages', which has helped to amplify language repertoires of the new generation, as was seen in Chapter 5. However, the agitation of nationalist groups caused by the potential relegation of the indigenous vernacular (Kazakh) to the margins, pressured by regional (Russian) and then global (English) languages, is also growing (Chapter 3). This section

has been arranged to present the weight young adults give to the mother tongue and the degree of their attraction to foreign languages.

7.2.1   Language in child education

What Deutsch (1966) characterized as social communication, in which language stands as the basic criteria for the just measurement of assimilation, is decisive in the construction of a nation. The fragility of this practice partially explains why Kazakhs have been unable to translate their "ethnic pride into a coherent and widely accepted ideological defence" of their nation-state (Olcott 2002:58). Linguistic polarisation tempered their attempt to dominate the post-Soviet multi-ethnic society, forcing the government to maintain a 'balance between the Russian-speaking populations (consisting of ethnically Slavic and Kazakh elements) and Kazakh-speakers' interests' (Rivers 2002: 160) throughout the years of independence. The respondents were asked to define the languages they wished their children to master in the future. The results could reveal the language of social communication among the future generation of Kazakhs, which would probably 'come to play a dominant role in society' (O'Callaghan 2005: 211).

	RK	KR	KK	Total
Only in Kazakh	17.5	39.5	40	32.2
In Kazakh and Russian	15	2.6		5.9
In Kazakh, Russian and English	57.5	44.7	52.5	51.7
Kazakh and English		13.2	5	5.9
Russian and English	10			3.4
Kazakh, Russian, English and Chinese			2.5	0.8

Table 7.1: Language in child education (q20, percentages in each category)

It can be seen that just over half of young adults (51.7 percent) were resolved to raise their children in a multi-lingual environment. It is especially significant to see that the majority of Kazakh repatriates (44.7 percent) were poised to adopt Russian and English languages along with Kazakh. Nonetheless, the share of those who preferred only Kazakh, hence monolingual education, was substantial among both KRs (39.5 percent)

and KKs (40 percent), with only 17.5 percent of Russian-speaking Kazakhs reasoning similarly.

In the interviews, Kazakh-phone Kazakhs highlighted the language's outlook-shaping role. Therefore, they wanted their offspring to master the mother tongue first. They were also open to the idea of teaching both Russian and English, but favoured the introduction of limits. One of them saw the cultivation of children's 'worldview' in the knowledge of the Kazakh language and traditions in the first place. He did not see language as a tool of communication only, but as a source out of which culture emerges. He thought it to be his 'obligation as a Kazakh' to teach the mother tongue to his children. Yet in the process of education he was intent to introduce Russian and English on an equal basis. This respondent, born and raised in southern Kazakhstan, opposed the attempt to teach Russian literature at local schools. To him, both English and Russian could be delivered as foreign languages only. His conviction was that Russian literature should be taught as a part of world literature, 'no need to elevate the achievements' of it only (respondent 13, KK, male). Numerous examples of KKs reporting relevance of foreign languages were identified:

> *Ideally, of course, in Kazakh. I am currently teaching him Kazakh but I want him to learn Russian and another language, not necessarily English (respondent 12, KK, male)*

> *Me and my wife are from the same region. South Kazakhstan. So we speak Kazakh at home. Our children will probably learn Kazakh first. To navigate our society however they need to learn other languages. At school they will probably have such opportunity (respondent 24, KK, male)*

> *Actually, I will try to carve out necessary conditions to give my children a strong knowledge of Kazakh. As for the Russian language, it doesn't require much effort to learn, we are under Russia's information sphere, which means that one living in Kazakhstan one way or another will become familiar with the Russian language. Therefore after the Kazakh language I will focus on English, basically, I want my children to be fluent in English (respondent 9, KK, male)*

The need to subordinate foreign languages to the mother tongue was also evident in the interviews with Russian-speaking Kazakhs. Many expressed the following views:

In addition, in the questionnaire, I was asked in which language I want to raise my children. My answer was Kazakh, but at the same time I want my children speak other languages. Russian, English and so on. They have to think in Kazakh (respondent 3, RK, female)

In Kazakh, because it is their mother tongue, in Russian, because it is dominant, and English, which is necessary for their career. But I will do my best to see them learn Kazakh first. It is difficult to learn it when you are grown-up (respondent 17, RK, female)

The interviews with Kazakh repatriates revealed a collective anxiety caused by the weakening role of Kazakh language at home. Some of them stressed: 'the necessity to raise children only in Kazakh, because their parents are Kazakh' (respondent 29, KR, male), 'while prime movers in business are Kazakh-phones, they speak Russian and intend to raise their children multilingual, thus cosmopolitan' (respondent 27, KR, male). Nonetheless, the majority of KRs avoided downgrading the need for Russian and English in child education. It was their opinion that in order to gain equal respect as members of society their children should be fluent in both English and Russian.

Of course Kazakh, but if we are to stay here in Kazakhstan, then to avoid discrimination they have to learn Russian and maybe English (respondent 30, KR, female)

Kazakh, Russian and maybe English. Our relatives, who came a few years before us, consistently told my parents that we should learn Russian, as it is impossible to find a high-paid job and so on. But after spending 5 years in Astana, I have to add English as well. It makes it difficult for us Oralmans to benefit from state scholarship and study in Europe (respondent 23, KR, female)

All three groups of respondents wanted their children to be fluent not only in Kazakh and Russian, but also in English; thus they favoured multilingual education from the early years. This is a leap forward on the Kazakh linguistic front, and as such it is in contrast with Rivers' (2002) findings. Of all the participants in his study 60 percent were ethnically Kazakh and to the question 'in what language would you like to raise children in the future?' the majority (46.7 percent) mentioned 'Kazakh' with only 34.8

percent preferring bilingual or multilingual teaching. It is interesting to observe that in Rivers' report 'female respondents were disproportionately likely to express a desire to raise their children in languages other than Kazakh or Russian, and that male respondents were disproportionately likely to express the desire to raise their children in Kazakh' (2002: 167). This research has found the reverse (Table 7.2). Female Kazakhs were more disposed to monolingual-Kazakh education than males.

	male	female	
Only in Kazakh	14.5	51.8	32.2
In Kazakh and Russian	6.5	5.4	5.9
In Kazakh, Russian and English	64.5	37.5	51.7
Kazakh and English	9.7	1.8	5.9
Russian and English	4.8	1.8	3.4
Kazakh, Russian, English and Chinese		1.8	0.8

Table 7.2: Language in child education by gender (q20, percentages in each category)

It is worth mentioning that the context of Rivers' (2002) research departs fundamentally from that of this study. Firstly, he conducted his fieldwork in a southern municipality, where Kazakhs have always been dominant demographically and linguistically. Furthermore, the participants of his study were university students, devoid of real-world labour-market experience. Though his analysis is limited in scope, it is, however, instructive in terms of revealing one major fact, that is that in the 2000s discourses centred largely on how much Kazakh or Russian language should be used in child-rearing. Put more precisely, the need to learn English was not considered as urgent as it is today.

Despite the growing popularity of English in solid bilingualism (Kazakh and Russian) among local Kazakhs (Chapter 5), the idea of raising children only in Kazakh has more substantial appeal among KKs and KRs than Russian-speakers. There is a marked cultural similarity between the former two. On the other hand, Deutsche (1969: 11) also argued that, 'If languages are reasonably similar to begin with, intimate contact brings them together again'. Here the Norwegian case is illustrative and encouraging. From the nineteenth century, language was essential for the creation of Norwegian identity, as the

country was divided along two "separate" vernaculars and perspectives. In fact, the polarisation was between rural and urban forms of the same language. Although this has not caused a serious identity crisis to date, at the present time public discussion is being held around the need to incorporate two 'different' languages to avoid social division and to integrate modernity with tradition (Vikor 2000:112-117). Likewise, due to the regional and urban-rural segregation in post-Soviet Kazakhstan, learning the Kazakh language was problematic for Russian-speakers, and therefore children tended to graduate from Russian schools with low proficiency in Kazakh language (Kolstø and Malkova 1997). Given that Astana and many other cities in Kazakhstan are becoming a meeting place of Russian-speakers and Kazakh-speakers (Chapter 3), aspirant young learners of the Kazakh language are being bestowed with plenty of opportunities to practise their skills with Kazakh-speaking neighbours and friends. However, much would depend on a minimal competence in the language. In view of this, Hroch (2006) contends that only school education demonstrates how Deutsch's 'social communication' could operate as a factor in nation formation.

In this study, the young adults were asked to verbally declare the type of school they wanted to send their children to. While Russian language schools add Kazakh to the curriculum and Kazakh schools also teach Russian (Smagulova 2006), English has a vibrant presence only in international schools in Kazakhstan. Many participants reported a preference for international schools, which offer their children proper conditions in which to learn foreign languages.

> *To be honest, I haven't thought about it yet, but maybe one of the international schools based in Astana. I would want my child to study there, I assume (respondent 1, KR, male)*

> *I think Nurorda. It teaches in English and it is beneficial in terms of connections; social capital it is nowadays called (respondent 26, RK, female)*

> *If I stay in Astana and have a good salary, then international school -the cheapest one of course. My children will have few problems with continuing their education abroad (respondent 2, KK, female)*

The young adults' answers reflect the growing popularity of English-language schools in the country, which are gradually eclipsing not only "Kazakh" but also highly-

esteemed "Russian" schools. Indeed, while the euphoria of independence galvanized a dramatic influx of pupils from Russian language schools to Kazakh ones, it did not lead to a country-wide closure of "Russian" schools (Fierman 2006: 107). Observing that one in five Kazakhs continued to be educated in Russian in the early 2000s, Fierman (2006:107) professed the low quality of Kazakh-language schools. To support his claim, he contrasted the accomplishments of local schools in regional and national educational Olympiads. For instance, in the year 2002, 1172 Kazakh-language schools were able to produce only 37 frontrunners; whereas the tiny minority of 24 Kazakh-Turkish high schools succeeded in producing 45 winners in total (Fierman 2006: 114). In an attempt to demonstrate the resilience of Russian-language schools in the light of undeveloped and unproven "Kazakh" schools, Fierman (2006) drew an unsuitable comparison. He forgot to add that Kazakh-Turkish high schools (KTHSs) qualify as international schools with English as the primary language of education and that these schools stand out from both "Kazakh" and "Russian" schools in many ways. Moreover, Scientific Olympiads have a special place in the curriculum of KTHSs. Not only because responsible coordinators are appointed from among teachers to design a specific plan for Olympiad preparation classes and self-study hours, but also because the preparation programme is fixed in the academic calendar of KTHSs and followed all year round (Gaipov et al 2013). This is one of the many reasons why these schools excel in subject competitions and enjoy a wide popularity in many cities of Kazakhstan. Nonetheless, given that the late 2000s saw the proliferation of many other state-backed English-language schools across the country, the respondents' interest in international schools seems to be a response shaped not by the prestige of Kazakh-Turkish high schools only.

Yet, reminded of the high tuition fees of international schools, the respondents were offered the option of either Russian-or Kazakh-medium schools. Native-born Kazakhs mentioned the latter, while some Kazakh repatriates opted for Russian. Though their justifications were diverse, all three groups followed a common logic. Kazakh-phone Kazakhs referred to the dominance of the Russian language outside the school environment, which would aid the learning process significantly. So they chose Kazakh language schools with special concentration on English.

> If my child goes to the Kazakh-language school, it is obvious that he/she will encounter many problems with the deficiency of literature. Yes, it is not easy to

answer it. I don't want my child to be monolingual. English should be taught as much as Kazakh in the school, I think (respondent 11, KK, female)

To Kazakh language school. But it would be better if English was taught intensively. It is ridiculous but you have to admit that in Kazakhstan it is harder to learn Kazakh and English then Russian (respondent 20, KK, male)

Russian-speaking Kazakhs reported the dominance of Russian not only in public but also in their private lives. Due to their children's almost inevitable exposure to Russian at home, many RKs stated their willingness to send their children to Kazakh language schools. One RK ascribed his poor Kazakh to the fact that in his formative years Russian was the only language of communication at home and outside. His present calculations show the advantages of Kazakh-language schools and therefore he is determined to choose one of them for his children (respondent 19, RK, male). Or:

Maybe you know that we are under a Russian information zone. You can understand if you go abroad for a couple of months. Most taxi drivers are Kazakh-speaking, remember, and usually listen to radio channels in Russian. Some say it is rich. So currently you can easily reach the level which allows you to speak Russian without even going to a particular school (respondent 30, RK, male)

Both RKs and KKs admitted the dominance of Russian in the public and even in private spheres. Their selection of language-schools for children is the result of seeing and accepting this reality. The majority of Kazakh repatriates voiced similar views.

Only in Kazakh. But I want them to learn other languages as well, including Russian. I know that the quality of the Kazakh schools is not that high, but I hope that in the future ample attention will be paid to it (respondent 5, KR, male)

Definitely, I would choose Kazakh-language school, because, in Kazakhstan, it is much easier to learn Russian than Kazakh. The media is in Russian, books and so on. Everyone in big cities tries to speak Russian, even in government organizations. Moreover, I think that very few Russians, from now onwards, will leave Kazakhstan, especially Astana city (respondent 1, KR, male)

Few Kazakh repatriates cited the benefits of sending their children to Russian schools. Although this was among the most unexpected outcomes of the study, they gave "familiar" reasons.

> *I suggested my parents to send my sister to Russian school. I don't want her to see the same difficulties as I saw. Moreover, at home we all speak Kazakh, so she will not forget her mother tongue (respondent 25, KR, female)*

Due to the fact that the majority of the participants had finished their secondary educations in the early 2000s, during the conduct of the research they were probably unaware of a new dimension in the government's language policy. According to a project initiated by the Ministry of Culture known as 'Trinity of languages', Kazakh, Russian and English were jointly introduced as mediums of education in state schools in 2007 (Gaipov 2011). So far, around thirty schools have been selected for the trilingual educational program (Gaipov, et al. 2013). Instead of choosing between Kazakh and Russian-language schools or flocking to international ones in large numbers, in the near future the young adults are likely to find numerous multilingual schools at their disposal, with equal emphasis on all three languages.

Politically-endorsed linguistic diversity in Kazakhstan resembles similar developments in many European countries. Although it is axiomatic that English is successfully removing all the possible rivals standing on its way, European languages have a strong appeal in their respected political boundaries. Since children continue to be taught and instructed in their mother tongue, alongside learning English as a second language, which suggests that an average European citizen (apart from citizens of the UK) speaks at least two languages (Laitin 2001). There are many cases when one is required to have a full command of three or four languages in order to become a full citizen of the home country and the global world. Mostly this comes from the fact that the language of colonial rule in some countries holds its relevance despite losing its international position. For instance, while Russian is not ranked as high as it was decades ago (Maurais 2003), it is still influential in the weakening of other languages in its former dependencies. The respondents' answers above indicate a commonly-recognized dominance of Russian language in the public sphere in Kazakhstan. Indeed, the regional lingua franca has a more far-reaching constituency than English or Kazakh. The results of the most recent population census (2009) showed that while Kazakh is spoken by

64.4 percent of Kazakhstani people, Russian language fluency is around 95 percent (Aksholakova and Ismailova 2013).

7.2.2 English is appealing yet Russian is accessible

The respondents' penchant for English-language schools surely points to the growing status of the global lingua franca. Since it is 'the language of successful integration into the world economy and science', the government was also quick to give English a priority in the education system (Aksholakova and Ismailova 2013: 1581) as was noted above. Still, it should be mentioned that the infiltration of English is a relatively recent phenomenon, and the effect on the ground is still subtle. Although half of the native-born respondents claimed fluency in it (Chapter 5), the interviews showed their association of intellectual enhancement with Russian language in the first place. What the respondents wished for their children in the above section proved to be the future challenge not the current one.

RKs referred to: 'sufficiency of necessary information in Russian' (respondent 26, RK, female); 'books in Russian are cheaper and everywhere' (respondent 2, RK, male); 'there is no need to translate unfamiliar words, everything is clear-cut' (respondent 19, RK, male). In the course of a conversation with respondent 19, the researcher was asked whether he had had a chance to read Daniel Yergin's 'Energy'. The affirmative answer astonished the respondent, because the Russian version of the book wasn't yet translated.

One KK shared his regret for not using his Russian-language skills from the very day of his arrival in Astana. He said that he suffered not because of poor Russian rather for 'despising' the mere use of it, showing 'indifference' and 'hatred'. The following was his current conviction:

> *Today in Kazakhstan, the source of science and knowledge is in Russian. If I hadn't rejected the Russian language, I could have been much more advanced intellectually (respondent 12, KK, male)*

Another Kazakh from the same group gave a plausible explanation of why Russian is more appealing than Kazakh. According to him, whilst one's native language helps to establish connections with people, such interactions may not be supportive in sharpening skills and gaining professional knowledge. So:

One should read books and hone skills in order to become expert. Thus, the deficiency of literature in Kazakh makes the acquisition of proper knowledge more difficult. This is the main issue. The one who knows Russian has a greater opportunity to benefit from a large information sphere. Thus, they develop faster. As for the Kazakh-phones, they either read translations (from Russian) or read in Russian, and explain the material in Kazakh. Thus, the perception that Russo-phones are more sophisticated than Kazakh-phones emanates from the fact that some have more opportunities to acquire information. That is all. (respondent 13, KK, male).

The noticeable recognition by the graduates of Kazakh-language groups that they happened to receive sub-standard education due to the deficiency of modern literature and inadequacy of translated materials reinforces Fierman's (2006: 113) observations. According to him, a serious lack of textbooks for Kazakh higher education forced "Kazakh" groups to use Russian books, especially in technical subjects and therefore 'the quality of Russian-medium higher education in Kazakhstan is generally higher than of Kazakh' (Fierman 2006: 113).

Indeed, the early efforts to increase the scope of the Kazakh language started with the creation of The State Terminology Commission in 1998. However, the impact of the institution has been barely recognizable on increasing Kazakh vocabulary in cultural, economic and political spheres in subsequent years, which is not that surprising in the light of similar attempts in France. It has long been admitted that the main challenge facing French is 'developing terminologies suited to the modern technological world'. However, despite several governmental decrees to promote the use of 'French terms where they existed', ordinary people prefer foreign words, as some find them appropriate, and feel up-to-date (Judge 2000:45-82).

During one of his recent visits to Kazakhstan, Fierman (2010) came to observe another motive behind the enduring appeal of the Russian language even in Kazakh-dominated regions of Kazakhstan. While Kazakh has a much broader scope in the western cities of Atyrau and Aktau than in the former capital (Almaty) and the current one (Astana), he was surprised by the importance of Russian in public signage and by the extent to which western Kazakhs appeared to mix Russian words in their Kazakh (Fierman 2010). Despite the fact that the state law requires public signs and advertisements to be

in Kazakh, the dominance of Russian-language texts in central districts of all cities, according to him, tends to emanate from the assumption that minority ethnicities, including Slavs, have no command of the state language and that Russian is understood by the overwhelming majority of people (both Kazakhs and non-Kazakhs) in urban areas (Fierman 2010).

The profound entrenchment of the Russian language in public, which limits the further diffusion of Kazakh and English, was also identified in local Kazakhs' answers to the question below. They were asked, 'Do you think that Kazakh repatriates should learn Russian?' Few dared reply 'no' or say that Kazakh language suffices. The majority of Kazakhstani-born Kazakhs indicated that they are 'not against it', while a quarter of them believed that KRs should be taught Russian and the same proportion believed learning Russian to be unnecessary. It is observable that the distribution of supporters, opponents and those in the middle were fairly similar across all three groups.

	RKs (%)	KRs (%)	KKs (%)	Total
yes	20	25	27.5	24.2
not against	52.5	40	47.5	46.7
no	22.5	25	20	24.2
indifferent		7.5	5	4.2
I don't know		2.5		0.8

Table 7.3: Should Kazakh repatriates study Russian (q22, percentages in each category)

In the interviews, both KKs and RKs referred to the long-standing ties with the Russian language and conceded that the dominance of Russian language is a barrier to opportunities for Kazakh repatriates. Their stances were more pragmatic, as few of them expected Russian to be replaced outright; and realised a low probability of such a development. The majority of KKs and RKs thought that if Kazakh repatriates learned Russian, they could be raised out of poverty, and their marginalisation would lessen.

One Kazakh-phone Kazakh linked the chance of finding a good job and having a respectable life with a proficiency in Russian. He suggested Kazakh repatriates should 'reinvent themselves consistently'. Mentioning his job, which is teaching Kazakh at a private school, he pinpointed the need to invest time and energy into learning

languages. Expressing his hope that one day Kazakh would side-line Russian as an interethnic language, he realised this would not happen very soon, but 'after many, many years'. To encourage Kazakh repatriates further he drew attention to his recent accomplishment. It apparently took him five years to learn Turkish and now he uses it with ease. If offered a position at a Turkish school or university, he would probably secure it (respondent 9, KK, male). Another respondent was mindful of the fact that Kazakhstan is a capitalist country, therefore, Kazakh repatriates should be aware of this fact and, instead of being forced, they should learn Russian willingly (respondent 13, KK, male). Russian-speaking Kazakhs also indicated the importance of learning Russian. One female respondent said that since the Russian language is likely to stay in Kazakhstan in the coming years, Kazakh repatriates should either adopt it or find themselves marginalised. Then she added that 'today it is impossible to get rid of the Russian language entirely' (respondent 26, RK, female). The majority had opinions similar to those of the young KK male who said:

> *If you ask my inner desire, of course, I want Kazakh language to be spoken by everyone. In such a country, Oralmans could have lived comfortably, but the reality is different. So if I had the power, I would have helped them to learn Russian by preparing suitable conditions (respondent 12, KK, male)*

> *Of course, if the government through the provision of language courses helps them to learn Russian, it would be very good. If I had the chance, I would have organized it (respondent 14, KK, male)*

Both the questionnaire and interviews answers displayed the respondents' unwillingness to reject the obvious - the appeal of Russian. On paper, the majority of local Kazakhs tried to avoid yielding full support to the claim that 'Kazakh repatriates should learn Russian', but they still could not disguise the inevitability of mastering it during one-to-one talks. So the apparent rolling back of Russian in the years after the transfer of the capital city projected by Huttenbach (1998: 584-585) is not on the horizon, which confirms Matuszkiewisz's (2010) argument that the status of the Russian language has not diminished; it is still used by the vast majority of Kazakhstani people.

According to Kolsto (2003: 125-126) the presence of a *third* language, 'as the language that the members of both groups take recourse to whenever they have to communicate

with each other', secures the stability of the bilingual situation. Although in the early 2000s she conceded that the commonness of English as the language of interethnic communication in Kazakhstan amid lasting Russian-Kazakh bilingualism 'is pure speculation', the latest changes in the government's language policies and the growing interest of the younger generation in the global lingua franca, as this study confirms, may prompt her to re-evaluate the decade-old statement.

7.2.2.1 Kazakh repatriates' preference for the Chinese language

The prevalence of bilingualism among Kazakhstani-born Kazakhs, as observed in Chapter 5, is consistent with their answers to the question below (Table 7.4). Almost equal numbers of RKs and KKs rejected any experience of unjust conduct on a linguistic basis (85 percent and 87.5 percent). By contrast, 74.4 per cent of Kazakh repatriates reported having faced discrimination due to their poor Russian.

	Russo-phone K	K Repatriate	Kazakh-phone K	Total
Yes	15	74.4	12.5	33.6
no	85	25.6	87.5	66.4

Table 7.4: Treated unfairly because of poor linguistic skills (q10, percentages in each category)

In the interviews, Kazakh repatriates were asked if they saw low Russian language proficiency as the root of their financial and social problems and how determined they were to keep learning it. The majority of them pointed out that unless they mastered Russian they would have problems with applying for high-paid employment. One respondent expressed his deep regret at not speaking Russian well, as it had recently cost him a good position in a public institution:

> *If not taught, [we] will never be able to find a good job. I am 100 percent sure. For instance, there are those who graduated from the university with me, who struggle. They see the lack of the necessity for the Kazakh language (respondent 1, KR, male)*

Or

I am working at the sport centre, as a receptionist. I see you are impressed. You wonder how I got that job without knowledge of Russian. In fact, it is difficult to find a job without speaking Russian, but I got it (respondent 16, KR, male)

This respondent (16, KR, male) added that the majority of clients in his work switched to Kazakh as soon as they realized his origins. According to him, very few Russophones lack Kazakh-language proficiency. Convinced that he is a true *Oralman* they usually try to 'find Kazakh words in the corners of their mind'. He however confessed that at present his salary is around $300 and to find a high-paying job, he would need to apply his Chinese language skills. At university he was invited to partake in research projects thanks to his knowledge of Chinese. His supervisors were intent on keeping him in the Department after graduation. However, to apply for a Masters course he needed to pass an exam in English proficiency, which he failed. So, a career in academia was postponed. Yet his commitment to undertake research was alive, as he was aware of possessing an edge over others, which is fluency in Chinese (respondent 16, KR, male). Two other Kazakh repatriates referred to their knowledge of Chinese as a saving grace:

Remember that I am a Chinese Kazakh, and I know Chinese very well, so I can find a job in a Chinese companys as an interpreter. But I think that it will not be that difficult to use my knowledge of Chemistry in the oil industry; there are many Chinese companies working in this field as well (respondent 5, KR, male)

Maybe not today, but tomorrow I may use my Chinese skills. Unlike many Kazakhs who allegedly speak Chinese, I studied all subjects at school in Chinese. Most Kazakhs saw it as a foreign language (respondent 7, KR, male)

Different prognoses and scholarly researches imply that the total dominance of English is under way (Vikor 2000). However, considering that the rules and practices that govern the language of public life directly affect the material and ideal interests of people with differing language repertoires (Zolberg and Long 1999: 21), KRs appear to be forced to weigh up other options. They feel not only the cold winds of globalization in terms of learning English, but also a widening opportunity being presented in the growth of China, as they can now sell their Chinese language skills. This is a sign that Kazakh repatriates may retreat in self-defence if their integration into the Kazakhstani society continues to be blocked by their lack of fluency in Russian and English. Their

interest in Chinese is consistent with the finding in Chapter 6, where it was maintained that in Kazakhstan the number of repatriates is on the decrease, partly as a consequence of the economic boom in China.

Pondering over the fate of a few languages which had lingua franca status in the past, Laitin argued that now people have to be 'bribed' to learn French and German. According to him, the reason for this rests in the fact that modern people, who intend to benefit from technological facilities and global integration processes, tend to 'equip themselves with language repertoires that meet current needs' (Laitin 2001:86). Considering that China has demonstrated a spectacular economic development in the last decade, it is sensible to understand Kazakh repatriates' inclination to use Chinese as an alternative to the English language.

7.2.3   Knowledge of English opening global gates

Language has often been used as an instrument in the creation of new elites and attainment of political control (Smagulova 2006). In Chapter 3, it was argued that from the early days of independence Kazakhstan's government has been utterly eager to modify the political, economic and social infrastructure inherited from the Soviet Union; the foundation of which was the advent of the *Bolashak* program. Indeed, it was among the first of the post-Soviet countries to send thousands of students abroad to get a world-class education (Chapter 3), which also indicated the government's inclination to level the playing field and privilege young people with knowledge and expertise over the older generation educated in the past communist system.

In an open-ended question, the respondents were asked to name-in their own words-three principal accomplishments of their country (Appendix 4). The main achievements prioritized were of economic and political appeals, which will be discussed in the following chapter; here however the main focus will be on opportunities associated with foreign language skills. In all probability, due to their linguistic proficiency relatively more KKs and slightly fewer RKs indicated that 'educational opportunities' grew significantly after the acquisition of independence (40.2 percent and 23.2 percent). In the interviews, they pointed out possibilities of obtaining high-quality education abroad, benefitting not only from their parents' help but from the state-backed *Bolashak* program.

These days I am learning Chinese and have visited China several times. My friends do not understand me; they suggest I study English, but drawing from the global trend, I made up my mind to learn Chinese. Nonetheless, I am ready to familiarise myself with other languages as well; it is useful and quite pragmatic (respondent 9, KK, male)

And after graduating in politics and getting my degree, I applied for the Bolashak Program and managed to receive a scholarship to continue my education in the UK (respondent 11, KK, female)

However, none of the Kazakh repatriates saw the widening access to education as being among the country's key accomplishments. Instead, some of them remembered the weaknesses of Kazakhstan-based institutions.

For further education I may agree to go to China. The Chinese are ahead of us in chemistry and I may benefit from them greatly, but only if I could return to Kazakhstan at the end of the day (respondent 5, KR, male)

The interview with another repatriate showed that China may not be a favourable destination for all pursuing further learning.

When I studied in China, I remember that it was hard to familiarize myself with the cultures and languages of the other countries around the world. Such knowledge was limited and not easily accessible (respondent 1, KR, male)

Considering that young adults are helped not only legally but also financially by the government to obtain a world-class education, under the *educational opportunities,* local Kazakhs might have implied global prospects rather than local. Kazakh repatriates' comparative "analysis" of Chinese and Kazakhstan-based institutions suggests that the latter are still behind the others. Therefore, it can be argued that what the young adults tend to value is a widening political and economic opportunities in the country rather than Kazakhstan's educational achievements.

7.2.4 Political solution to the linguistic dilemma

The state cannot even approach neutrality with respect to language (Zolberg and Long 1999). Every nation-building practice privileges the dominant culture over minority cultures, most markedly by elevating one language as the official means of exchange

(Kymlicka 1995). This is an interest-driven, political choice, as a particular language is selected at the expense of other candidates (O'Callaghan 2005). Following independence, only Kazakh was ranked as a state language in Kazakhstan. However, Russian had its glorious past and was much preferred by educated Kazakhs, so kept its privileges and functioned almost on a par with Kazakh (Chapter 3). The government's attempt to preserve this degree of linguistic duality while contributing to the overall stability, made it difficult for Kazakh repatriates to become integrated into the Kazakhstani community, as the above section confirms. In view of this, the respondents were asked to share their own vision of how state policy needs to be developed.

	RK	KR	KK	Total
require everyone to speak in Kazakh and deprive the Russian language of its current status	7.5	46.2	32.5	28.6
require everyone to be bilingual, thus speak Kazakh and Russian fluently	22.5		2.5	8.4
require everyone to be trilingual, thus speak Kazakh, Russian and English fluently	65	53.8	57.5	58.8
allow everyone to make the choice			7.5	4.2

Table 7.5: Political solution to linguistic dilemma (q18, percentages in each category)

When asked what would be their solution to the country's linguistic dilemma if they had political power, all three groups of young adults wished "neutrality" to be set in stone. More than two thirds of Russian-speaking Kazakhs believed that Kazakh and Russian apart, residents of Kazakhstan should correspondingly learn English. If given political power a slight majority of Kazakh repatriates (53.8 percent) would follow suit, yet 46.2 percent of them would still deny Russian of its current status. As for Kazakh-phone Kazakhs, they (57.6 percent) also found the accommodation of all three languages to be essential for the people of Kazakhstan. Overall, 58.8 percent of young adults would continue with the government's current policy, which is to expand the scope of English language while making no change to the Constitution, where Kazakh is a state language and Russian permitted near parity. Most interviewees answered in the following way:

> *All three languages: Kazakh, Russian and English. There are lots of examples of the cohabitation of three languages within one state (respondent 8, RK, male)*

The one, who opposes Russian, finds himself trapped and much condemned. It becomes difficult to live. Not only do we have to learn Russian, but Chinese, English and so on. No need to stick to certain principles (respondent 1, KR, male)

It is important to know many languages. There is a saying, 'learn other languages, but respect your own'. We need three languages. We should know Russian, because are close to Russians. If we do not speak English, it is difficult to do anything far from home. If we do not learn Kazakh, it is pointless to remain here (respondent 14, KK, male)

Yet, a few KKs and RKs who were relatively fluent in all three languages also added their private wishes. According to one of them, Russian as an official language should not be deprived of its privileges outright. This is because many institutions currently operate in Russian. Such a linguistic change may generate unnecessary tensions, as it could paralyze their function. However, to ensure the dominance of Kazakh in future, the government should invest massively into expanding its usage area (respondent 12, KK, male). Another female respondent from the northern part of the country also opposed the idea of downgrading the status of Russian. She however contends that 'the standing of Kazakh language should be elevated as much as possible', because in today's Kazakhstan Russian enjoys enough scope to trump the state language. One is allowed to fill official forms both in Kazakh and Russian, so people mostly choose the latter version. According to her, such "equality" will hardly help to enhance the appeal of Kazakh; since it cannot compete in fair competition (respondent 3, RK, female). To reduce the authority of Russian gradually was suggested by another respondent:

I am more inclined to see the Kazakh language dominating in Kazakhstan's political and economic life in the coming future but if the government starts to eradicate Russian from social life immediately, then it will certainly lead to tensions and interethnic conflicts, which would undermine development and drag our country backwards. This means that Russian should be shorn of its status gradually. This is my view. At the end of the day, Kazakh should be more dominant not Russian, with English following right behind. Russian should be in third place (respondent 11, KK, female)

When respondents were asked to identify ways in which the dominance of the state language might be guaranteed in future, one KK said that it could be achieved by increasing the amount of high-quality literature in Kazakh. Those people intent on learning Kazakh need to know the payoff at the end of the road. Knowledge of Kazakh should either help financially or intellectually (respondent 22, KK, female). In a similar vein, another Kazakh-phone Kazakh working in a university complained about the fact that 'science is not talking in Kazakh'. If he had the authority, he would have presided over the overhaul in the book industry. He would have increased the number and content of books in Kazakh, not only through translation but also by encouraging local academicians to write high-quality works. According to him, he uses some scientific concepts, which are direct translations from Russian. So the lack of established Kazakh versions of the words produced a proliferation of different interpretations. Students reading books in Kazakh doubt the correct explanation of theoretical debates. So, 'they don't believe that books they read are 100% of high quality' (respondent 12, KK, male). The following was supported by a respondent working in the "language field":

> *If you ask me for a book that helps to learn Kazakh, I will tell that there is no book. There are lots of books, but they are all of no value. For instance, in the English language, if ask you how to learn English, you will throw HEADWAY to my face and I will learn it. No need to go to an Englishman. I can study English with the help of HEADWAY. But when it comes to the Kazakh language, there is no valuable book. Why not show people how to learn the Kazakh language? For business people in this way, for governmental officials in that way and so on. For instance, some people have money but lack time. We have to develop different methods (respondent 14, KK, male)*

The respondents' above reflections generally agree with Laitin's (2001) concerns on the subject of the state's role in the imposition of the language. His conviction is that the state is more likely to succeed in mobilising the population through imposing a specific language when it is 'already providing public education and local health services than when it was not involved in such activities' (2001: 91-92). Although Kazakhstan is a new country formed from the ashes of the Soviet Union and its nascent government has never practised the imposition of the state language at the expense of the rest, a centralised language policy is nothing new for the ordinary people. Kazakhs and other minorities had more than eighty five years of experience of several centralised language

policies repeatedly replacing one language with another. From 1917 to the 1930s there was a policy of *korenizatsia* or vernacularisation, from the 1930s to the 1980s the *Russification* enterprise, and since 1989 a program of revitalisation (Smagulova 2006). In this, Kazakhs have certain similarities with the French. Conceding that making any language compulsory is a form of oppression, Judge (2000 45-82) argues that 'French became the symbol of the power of the state over the regions, and-in the nineteenth century-over its colonies'. Because French has been glorified and imposed by force at the cost of several other languages for centuries, at the present time local people barely oppose discriminatory Jacobin policy towards minorities (Judge 2000).

By and large, 'the emotional charge' that Guibernau (2001: 79) stated individuals invest also in language in the course of identity-building, while pronounced among all three groups of Kazakhs, is contained by adverse economic and political implications. This is evident in Kazakh-speakers' inclination to see only the 'gradual' withdrawal of Russian. Their concerns largely confirm Fierman's (2006: 103) suggestion that without 'measures to raise the benefits and prestige of knowing Kazakh in public life' the linguistic division would be a cause for future tensions.

Indeed, the fear that any pressure on the Russian language would stir public outrage and lead to political and social turbulence is not new and has been widely shared from the early years of independence. To better understand the factors that have bolstered this feeling of insecurity, it is appropriate to draw a parallel between Kazakhstan and India, as both countries, after securing political independence and freedom, had to cope with the linguistic legacy of the past colonization. According to Laitin (2000)**,** India was reluctant to root out other languages besides Hindi, for the reason that the 'Indian Administrative service and other bureaucratic agencies operated entirely in English' for a long time. This made the imposition of some form of Hindi to replace English quite problematic at the time of independence (Laitin 2000: 90). Given that Kazakhstan was the most *Russified* republic to emerge out of the Soviet Union, with only one percent of local Russians using Kazakh in contrast to more than 60 percent of Kazakhs speaking Russian (Chapter 3), the early refusal of the status of the Russian language could certainly impede the functioning of the state.

The respondents' above answers show that the period of uncertainty has not yet passed. Any assault on the Russian language is still likely to cause unrest and generate

economically and politically detrimental public discussions, as it could in the 1990s. Indeed, if the language of alien *high culture* continues to compete with the indigenous vernacular, and the consequence of such a language division is the possible disintegration of the state, then bilingualism is not as challenging as it at first appears (Taylor 2002).

7.3. Recognition of the role of religion

It was Barth (1969), who stressed the role of frontiers in outlining ethnic identity. The frontiers between different ethnic groups can differ from one moment to the next, depending on the situation and on the collaboration among groups. Religion itself can be a boundary at a certain moment in time (Mitchell 2006) and lose its meaning later. According to O'Callaghan (2005: 198), with the progress of secularisation in the modern world language achieved more prominence, while religious identities paled into insignificance. However, due to the historical role of religions in shaping the individual characteristics of people and their cultures, some authors (for instance, Hutchinson 1996) projected resurgence of religions. Brubaker's (2013: 14) latest comment that conflicts over religion have intensified in recent decades, while language conflicts have somewhat eased, upholds the looming revival of religious identities. To highlight the crossbreed and 'pluralistic' feature of numerous contemporary societies and the hybrid character of the people living in these societies, Miller (2008) therefore suggests naming this age neither religious nor secular but the 'religio-secular age'.

7.3.1 Religion: an opportunity for national cohesion

Although historically Kazakhs were less religious than other Muslim people in the region and rarely practised Islam in the way required by the religion, the number of people observing it was on the rise at the time of independence despite seven decades of atheistic propaganda (Rorlich 2003; Aydingun 2007). This was evident in the number of registered mosques that rose from 40 to 2300 between 1990 and 2000. The prime movers behind 'significant growth of interest and commitment in the faith' were young Kazakhs who began to identify Islam as a key feature of their national identity. Some studies suggest that by the late 1990s more than three quarters of ethnic Kazakhs identified themselves as Muslims (Yemelianova 2014: 290). In this study, the young Kazakhs with some labour-market experience were asked whether they find sharing a

neighbourhood, forging friendship and approving children's marriage with a follower of a different religion possible.

		RK (%)	KR (%)	KK (%)	Total
neighbour	yes	77.5	59	69	72.9
	no	22.5	41	30.8	27.8
friend	yes	52.5	35.9	55	47.9
	no	47.5	64.1	45	52.1
children's spouse	yes	42.5	7.7	5	18.5
	no	57.5	92.3	95	81.5

Table 7.6: Would you accept a member of another religion as… (q9, percentages in each category)

The majority of young Kazakhs were receptive to sharing their neighbourhood with a member of another religion, while inter-religious friendship and marriage appeared less acceptable to them. Still slightly more RKs and KKs than KRs favoured friendship over religious differences (52.5 percent, 55 percent and 35.6 percent). It is interesting to observe that almost all Kazakh-speakers (KKs and KRs) identified religion as a decisive criterion in their children's marriages; while 42.5 per cent of Russian-speaking Kazakhs did not and thus proved less concerned about religious background of a would-be family member. This finding supports Edelbay's observation (2012: 211) that the dwellers of the northern part of the country are relatively indifferent to religion.

In the interviews, the young adults showed how strongly they associate Islam with Kazakhness. In their perceptions, if someone is Kazakh, then he/she is certainly Muslim. The following extracts were representative of comments made.

> *I don't think so, because I want my children to be Kazakhs and the religion they follow to be Islam (respondent 3, RK, female)*

> **Q: …somebody from a different religion?**

> *No. I will let her marry only Kazakh (respondent 12, KK, male)*

The above descriptions of the participants are consistent with the observations of other authors who also argued a strong connection between 'Muslimness' and 'Kazakhness' in public thinking (Hann and Pelkmans 2009; Ro'i and Wainer 2009). On the other hand, if religion is an identity marker that people can use as a border between 'us and 'the others' (Mitchell, 2006) in the literature, in Chapter 6 it is seen as being outweighed by other characteristics, such as 'language' and 'knowledge of past traditions' as the foremost feature of 'Kazakhness'. Here, however, all three groups of Kazakhs embrace more of a religious than ethnic or regional identities and mere linguistic differences no longer divide Kazakhs, as the above section reveals. This contradiction can be explained by Brubaker's (2013: 7) argument about the transforming power of religion as illustrated by the fact that when adults add a new language to their existing repertoire of languages, this may inflect their identity, but it is unlikely to transform it. Yet when they convert from one religion to another or from one form of religious engagement to another, this can involve a basic makeover of identity.

7.3.2 A balanced recognition of Islam in state-building

The state must privilege a particular language or set of languages, but it need not privilege a particular religion, at least not in the same way and not to the same degree (Brubaker 2013). Given that many ethnic minorities, mostly of Turkic origin, practise Islam along with Kazakhs, it is a religion common to around two thirds of the population of Kazakhstan. However, similar to the Russian language enjoying significant state-support, Orthodox Christianity has the official presence akin to that of Islam (Edelbay 2012). In the question below, the respondents were asked if only Islam should be privileged in the future.

	RK (%)	KR (%)	KK (%)	Total
yes	7.5	30.8	22.5	22.2
not against	35	25.6	27.5	29.4
no	47.5	33.3	45	42
indifferent		5.1		1.7
I don't know	10	5.1	5	6.7

Table 7.7: should Islam be the only official religion (q21, percentages in each category)

The majority of RKs, KKs and KRs were in favour of either a bi-religious or multi-religious society (47.5 percent, 45 percent and 33.3 percent). This manifestly exhibits the government's relentless attempts to promote Kazakhstan 'as a model of spiritual tolerance, inter-faith dialogue, and a meeting place of various religions' (Omelicheva 2011: 251). In addition, while only 7.5 percent of RKs agreed to the dominance of Islam, this figure was higher among KRs and KKs (30.5 percent and 22.5 percent). Here, again, Kazakhs from the northern parts of the country turned out to be less committed to the religious cause than those living in southern Kazakhstan. The reason lies in the fact that southern Kazakhs have led a more sedentary life since the eighteenth century, and have become 'more influenced by the Uzbek and the Arabic tradition of madrasa' (Büyükak, quoted in Akcali 2003) than their co-ethnics in far-off northern regions.

In the interviews, Kazakh-speakers (KKs-22.5 percent and KRs-30.8 percent), who supported the outright ascendency of Islam over other religions, conceded that it would be sound for the future of Kazakhstan if religious institutions did not enjoy excessive political power.

> *I think that Islam should be the chief religion. However, the separation between religion and politics should exist. Our state is a secular one. I don't want purely religious people to govern the country. Religious and political institutions should not be intermingled; they have to be unconnected (respondent 5, KR, male)*

> *I want Islam to be a dominant religion. But not in the political sense. I mean I don't want Kazakhstan to be an Islamic republic. Yet it is a Muslim majority country, so it should be reflected somewhere (respondent 25, KK, male)*

While endorsing the segregation of religion and state, all three groups of respondents were circumspect about the impact of other religious sects. Their concerns were vividly pronounced in their answers to the open-ended question (Appendix 5) where they indicated the danger emanating from non-traditional religious groups. In the interviews, the majority of them stated concerns similar to the quotations below:

> *I think all religions and members of different confessions can live in Kazakhstan in harmony. Tolerance exists. We don't entertain bad feelings towards other*

religions. There is not a discussion that other people should accept Islam. But there is another thing. When somebody comes to your home, he should not dictate or re-arrange the rules. I think that Kazakhs should not be recruited to other religions (respondent 12, KK, male)

I don't support the government's current loose stance in relation to different religions because some are powerful enough to challenge the existing order. I want Kazakhs to be preached to by official mullahs only. That is safe (respondent 19, RK, male)

Another notable finding was that more than half of the female respondents opposed the elevation of Islam, while this figure was one in three among male respondents (51.8 percent and 33.3 percent).

	male	female	
yes	22.2	17.9	20.2
not against	36.5	21.4	29.4
no	33.3	51.8	42.0
indifferent		3.6	1.7
I don' know	7.9	5.4	6.7

Table 7.8: Should Islam be the only official religion (q21, percentages in each category)

In Chapter 5, all respondents reported Islam as their religion. Their questionnaire and interview answers above are combination of deference and fear. Given the recent upsurge of religious radicalism in neighbouring Central Asian states (Karagiannis 2006), the respondents' concerns, particularly those of females, are understandable. According to Omelicheva (2011: 250-253), 'radical expressions of Islam are inimical to the majority of Kazakh Muslims', therefore the government's subsequent securitisation of non-traditional Islamic practices 'has served to strengthen the unity of the Kazakh nation'. What the participants of this study commonly revealed is the evidence of a broad government policy, which Omelicheva (2011: 253) described as 'accepting the dichotomous representations of Islam and embracing traditional' ones.

To be more precise, in the 1990s public debates and official statements on the need for moral regeneration gripped Kazakhstan profoundly (Rorlich 2003: 158). Yet, the state

officials were in denial about the existence of home-grown terrorists and religious extremists, as the level of religious practice among the people was rather low (Omelicheva 2011). However, since the 2000s the discourse has changed markedly, with the government widely professing radical Islam to be dangerous to the state. This led to the securitisation of Islam (Omelicheva 2011), followed by the introduction of the Soviet-era classifications of 'official' and 'unofficial' Islam (Jessa 2006). Thus, the respondents' fear expressed regarding 'religious radicalism' seems to be what the government labelled 'unofficial Islam'.

7.3.3 *Newcomers enjoy religious freedom more*

With the fall of the Soviet Union, the communist doctrine lost its meaning and application in the newly-minted ideological programs of the independent republics. Although nationalism became a potent alternative and duly won credentials from post-Soviet governments and from people on the ground, religious identities also underwent resurgence. Compared to other Central Asian republics, Kazakhstan however has avoided becoming a hotbed of radical Islamic movements, such as Hizb ut-Tahrir (Omelicheva 2011: 244). Extreme in their conduct these groups subsequently experienced repression in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan particularly and attracted global attention (Chapter 2). In spite of the moderate and generally apolitical manifestations of the religion in Kazakhstan (Omelicheva 2011: 249), the unexpected rise of political Islam on the doorsteps fuelled public suspicion regarding the Muslim way of life. In the light of this, those respondents living in the main city of Kazakhstan, which is understandably under closer surveillance than other parts of the country, were asked if they have ever been treated unfairly due to their Muslim way of life.

	RK	KR	KK	Total
Yes	27.5	7.7	30	21.8
no	72.5	92.3	70	78.2

Table 7.9: Have you been treated unfairly because of religious observation? (q10, percentages in each category)

A large proportion of young Kazakhs (78.2 percent) said that they have never been mistreated for practising their religion. Yet, more Kazakh repatriates (92.3 percent)

were free in their conduct of Islamic lifestyle in Kazakhstan than Kazakhs born and raised in Kazakhstan. The reasons for this were explained in one of the interviews:

> *Nevertheless, I am glad that I came to Kazakhstan, because there is religious freedom. In China we could hardly get any information about Islam at all. If somebody showed some interest in Islam and began to gather relevant data, he might have been expelled from school. Even their parents could suffer and be thrown into jail (respondent 1, KR, male)*

Only one respondent gave the account of such a difference in Table 7.9. However, this revelation supports the finding in Chapter 5, in which it was shown that 32.5 per cent of newcomers declared that they do not attend religious services. This figure was very low among local Kazakhs (7.5 percent and 5 percent). Kazakh repatriates arrived from a country where religion, especially Islam, is not greatly favoured. This is why one third of them do not go to mosques. Similarly, they find religious freedom in Kazakhstan more palpable than in China. According to Yemelianova (2014: 290-291), Kazakh repatriates from 'neighbouring Muslim countries and regions and especially from Afghanistan' are more prone to follow the 'unofficial', radical form of Islam after their arrival in Kazakhstan. This study confirms that Kazakhs from China are less likely to constitute this group primarily due to the "non-Muslimness" of the country they left.

However, another major force behind the proliferation of 'unofficial' Islam in Kazakhstan was the poor economic condition in the early years of independence. In those days around one quarter of young people in southern Kazakhstan were jobless and frustrated with the 'ecological, agricultural and wider socio-economic problems' (Yemelianova 2014: 291-92). Considering that both Kazakhstan and China are now thriving economically, one at regional and another at global level, Kazakh repatriates along with local Kazakhs are "doubly" unlikely to resort to religion in order to change the rules of the game in the country.

To sum up, sections 7.2 and 7.3 above show that the issue of Kazakh language is losing the strength around which nationalist groups have been rallying. The respondents are genuinely determined to learn not only Russian but also English. At the same time, while being open to other languages, they find it difficult to closely intermingle with followers of other religions. This may be an encouraging sign indicating that the country is not on the verge of disintegration on a linguistic basis as was widely

anticipated in the early years of independence. The anxiety in the1990s regarding the divisive role of language can be explained by Steiner's contention that the main factor that brings the language issue to the fore is the declining role of religion (Steiner 2001).

7.4 Popular cultural figures

In order to build a modern-day society on ethnicity only, members of a particular nation at least should be able to share a history, a culture, and maybe even some heroic ancestors (Eriksen 2004). Yet the simplest condition is the conscious recognition of the fact that one is sticking to the development of the same events simultaneously with others and is influenced in common with them (Anderson 1983). To see how intensely the young adults follow 'post-independent' trends in the music industry and to find out if there are local intellectuals who command respect across all three groups, in this section they were asked to give the names of popular intellectuals and music celebrities.

7.4.1   Music celebrities

As was mentioned in Chapter 1, according to Benedict Anderson (1983) it was thanks to the 'printed word' and 'literary products' that people began to unite on certain values and gradually became nations. However, Smith (2001: 25) adds other artistic modes of communication which may have greater mass appeal such as music, painting, film, TV, and radio. The young adults in this study were asked to give the names of music celebrities living in Kazakhstan.

When asked about superstars from the music industry, 30 percent of KRs and 25 percent of KKs considered Meirambek Bespayev as the most prominent of Kazakhstan-based singers. While none of the RKs claimed Mr Bespayev to be a top-notch musician, 17.5 percent of them paid tribute to the music band MUZART. Ironically though, Mairambek Bespayev is one of three members of MUZART, which means that Kazakh-speakers (KKs and KRs) are more absorbed in and informed of the band than RKs.

Moreover, one third of RKs put down the name of Roza Rymbayeva; only a negligible portion of KRs and KKs did so (5 percent each). Here, it is essential to state that Roza Rymbayeva is a Kazakh singer who achieved fame in the Soviet period and since then has produced songs both in Kazakh and Russian. Neither MUZART nor Mr Bespayev has ever produced Russian songs. Besides, only Russian-speaking Kazakhs (17.5

percent) regarded Makpal Zhunussova among the best Kazakh singers. Her path to prominence resembles that of Roza Rymbayeva; both celebrities are beyond their fifties.

Despite these differences, it is highly discernible that no Russian singer or Kazakh performer of pure Russian songs enjoys popularity among the new generation of Kazakhs.

7.4.2 Public intellectuals

According to Guibernau (2001: 87), a common faith requires a church, and while the 'nation' fulfils this role, intellectuals could be equated with priests. When asked who the respondents respect most among public intellectuals, the majority of them (58.8 percent) failed to give any name. Almost all RKs (95 percent) remained silent. When asked about the best politician and singer previously, comparatively few of them hesitated (20 percent and 15 percent). Thus, if Russian-speaking Kazakhs held back on giving the name of an intellectual, this could be best explained by the absence of such a person. One quarter of Kazakh repatriates and around half of Kazakh-phone Kazakhs preferred to leave the question unanswered (25 percent and 56.4 percent).

One of the reasons for the above is the low appeal of Kazakh literature which had been a major source and guardian of language for decades and which has faced a deadlock following the collapse of Soviet ideology. This also explains why Catalan made a remarkable leap and stayed firm, when the lack of literary tradition brought Galician under Castilian and hindered its development. It is not only because the 'theatre, cinema, and written publications flourish in Catalan' that the language is progressing across Catalonia, but the translation of books from other languages is also helping to secure the native language (Mar-Molinero, 2000:85-101). However, only Russian versions of 'first echelon' bestsellers circulate in Kazakhstan months after they come out in Europe or America.

Yet, some intellectuals gained far more visibility and recognition than others. The popularity of Shahanov was minimal among KKs, but KRs placed him at the top (12 percent and 22 percent). In the interviews, the young adults instead of his literary achievements, referred to Mukhtar Shahanov's stretched campaign on the language

front. One respondent, who recently attended a gathering headed by Shahanov, was asked why he had attended.

> *According to Shahanov, Kazakhs should enjoy higher status. They should be given additional financial government support because they are Kazakhs but I don't share his view. I think that everyone should be granted equal rights. No discrimination on the basis of ethnicity. Nonetheless, one thing that prompted me to participate in support of the above mentioned poet is that the Kazakh language is not operating as a language of interethnic communication (respondent 4, KK, male)*

Given that Shahanov was at the forefront of the Kazakh national-patriots' campaigns of recent years and has long been renowned for his literary contribution, Russian-speaking Kazakhs were asked regarding the issues raised by him on the whole. To some, this was a late enterprise; to others nationalist grievances need to be postponed.

> *It seems to me that they long for the elevation of the status of the Kazakh language. On the one hand, it is right, because otherwise the usage area of the state language will consistently be shortened. On the other hand, I think this struggle began belatedly (respondent 8, RK, male)*

> *It seems to me that they are victims of their emotions; very few of them engage rationally. From my point of view, we have to live in this kind of society for at least seventy years in order to be able to see shortcomings and setback and learn from our mistakes and I don't think it is right to discriminate between people on the basis of their ethnic origin, rather we have to see whether these people respect our culture and traditions or not. This is very important (respondent 10, RK, male)*

In November 2012, the newspaper *Aikap* published a ranking of thirty living Kazakh intellectuals who, according to it, enjoy not only public recognition, but at times are also capable of influencing government policies. The ranking was done on the basis of their political sway, occupation, age, technological capabilities. When *Aikap* published its results, it turned out that almost half of the highly-ranked figures are currently working for the government, but the names of a few steadfast nationalists emerged as

well. The outspoken Mukhtar Shakhanov occupied second place in Aikap's (2012) ranking, with Yerlan Karin, the then deputy secretary of the ruling party, in first place.

Another highly-regarded figure was the Kazakh writer and scholar-Mukhtar Magauin. Overall, 15 per cent of Kazakh repatriates recalled his name, while none of the Russophone and very few Kazakh-phone Kazakhs did the same. Unlike Shakhanov, Magauin was remembered for his literary impact. One of the Kazakh repatriates, a graduate of Kazakh Language and Literature, said that:

> *Magauin is the number one Kazakh writer…His novels include MEN, ALASAPYRAN, SHAKAN SHERI, and I like his short stories, as well (respondent 7, KR, male)*

Or:

> *He lives in the Czech Republic. His most recent book was on Genghis Khan. I read half of it - a very difficult one. The words he uses are very ancient. It was at the suggestion of my father's brother that I read it. Another book that was suggested to me was Zharmak (respondent 2, KK, female)*

Other names mentioned by the respondents were leading figures in particular fields of science. For instance, Askar Zhumadildayev is a Moscow-educated mathematician now based in the former capital of Kazakhstan; Kogamov was once the head of a Law School in Astana; the names of literary experts such as Zhurtbay, Zholdasbekov etc. surfaced as well.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter analysed the answers regarding cultural elements of national identity of three groups of young Kazakhs, born and raised in different lingo-regional areas and educated and living in the newly-built capital of Kazakhstan. The findings strongly support the argument that they entertain roughly similar views in relation to civic developments in the country.

This study demonstrates the special role of Kazakh language in young adults' perceptions of Kazakh identity as they are extremely keen to teach their children the mother tongue first. Even so, this is not at the expense of foreign languages. Russian, the lingua franca of the region for many decades, is not losing its lead as the gateway to

progress and professional knowledge, despite clear signs of a growing interest in English. The economic benefits of learning languages is also becoming apparent; knowledge of English opens doors to world-class education for native-born Kazakhs, while Chinese skills convinces Kazakh repatriates of an uncompromised edge over many locals. Combined, these findings suggest that economic pragmatism is one of the causes behind a dent in linguistic nationalism that purportedly threatened the unity of not only Kazakhs but also Kazakhstani people as a whole.

This study also found another reason behind a decline in linguistic nationalism, namely a strong religious awakening, which is the process occurring equally among 'culturally Russified' Kazakhs as well as among 'traditionalist' Kazakh-speakers. Although none of the groups considered religion as a crucial feature of Kazakh identity (Chapter 6), its power proved to outweigh both linguistic and ethnic similarities in marital issues in particular. As was discussed in Chapter 2, due to their nomadic lifestyle, historically Kazakhs were less religious compared with neighbouring communities in the south.

Having found a wide range of similarities, this study also revealed that Russian-speaking Kazakhs are in the course of integration into the Kazakh-speaking sphere of public life. Kazakh-language content in the music industry is successfully eclipsing products delivered in Russian and thus helping to increase commonality among ethnic Kazakhs moulding them in a more ethnic colour. That this is a fresh development is recognizable in many ways. Russian-speakers' reluctance or inability to name a local intellectual suggests their partial foray into what is indigenous.

Chapter 8

Civic 'Kazakhstani' identity: more supplement than alternative

8.1 Introduction

This chapter will attempt to measure the resonance of civic elements in young Kazakh adults' perceptions of national identity. It was hypothesised that, regardless of their different lingo-regional backgrounds, the young Kazakh graduates share common attitudes to many 'civic' developments in the country. The application of the notion of 'Kazakhstani' was investigated in the context of 'Kazakh identity'; the aim was to see whether the new generation recognizes both state-created supra-ethnic identity and counter-state ethnic identity. To consider basic motivations behind their attitudes towards national belonging, they were asked about potential admission criteria into the 'Kazakhstani' community for outsiders. The young adults' level of disposition to build close, familial relationships with non-Kazakh residents of Kazakhstan and their territorial understandings of the category of nation were examined with the aim of evaluating the possible development of cohesion among ethnic groups in the near future.

8.2 Perceptions of civic Kazakhstani identity

If civic nations are the products of states, ethnic nations are the bases for the creation of states (Nieguth 1999). Thus, members of ethnic nations have the advantage of being able to look back to a shared past, while those of nation-states 'might confront either a blank picture-simply because the nation-state did not exist-or a fragmented and diversified one-since they have belonged to different ethno-nations' (Guibernau 2001: 74-75). In its effort to build a common civic identity for all ethnic groups living in the country, Kazakhstan's government has been exceptional in Central Asia. It is true, however, that the notion of a 'Kazakhstani nation' has not been popular in nationalist circles from the very day of its introduction in 2009. Some nationalist intellectuals have been forcefully opposed to the use of the term in public (Fierman 2005), epitomising the initiative as the last nail in the coffin of an indigenous 'Kazakh nation'. Despite this, the expression 'Kazakhstani' has entered circulation, although more domestically than

internationally. The respondents, who asserted that they belong to the Kazakh nation, as illustrated in Chapter 6, were also asked about their relations to the Kazakhstani community.

	RK	KR	KK	Total
Yes	92.5	92.5	92.5	92.5
no	7.5	5	7.5	6.7
no idea		2.5		0.8

Table 8.1: Can a person consider himself/herself Kazakh or Russian and Kazakhstani at the same time (q2, percentages in each category)

The findings revealed that the respondents shared the view that all members of ethnic groups, including Kazakhs and Russians, can qualify as Kazakhstani people. In the interviews they confirmed their opinions, mentioning the names of minorities mostly inhabiting their home provinces. For instance, RKs from northern-eastern Kazakhstan often cited Russians as an exemplary case. They mentioned that 'Kazakhstani' is a diplomatic term. For instance, 'if I call Russians Kazakhstani, they concede, but if I refer to them as Kazakh, it may be interpreted differently' (respondent 19, RK, male); 'we are Kazakhs, but there are Russians, Germans and others living in Kazakhstan. So it is appropriate to call them Kazakhstani, which means residents or citizens of Kazakhstan' (respondent 17, RK, female). Another RK repeated the words of her Russian friend, who allegedly argued that, 'Kazakhstan is my motherland, but I can't be Kazakh, how can I be Kazakh when I am Russian' (respondent 3, RK, female). The most accurate and at the same time instructive account came from a male RK, who shed light on an incident which may highlight the appeal of a 'Kazakhstani nation' in the future. He said:

> *From my point of view, it is rather late to construct a Kazakh nation. We missed the opportunity in the 1990s. If the Kazakh intelligentsia came around and discussed the prospect of creating a homogenous Kazakh nation after the December events (1986), we could have drawn the contours of the future development in time, but we missed that chance and today the nationality question is not on the agenda and just let loose by the current government, no control and little earnest deliberation (respondent 8, RK, male)*

Kazakh repatriates made similar assertions. The majority of them said that ethnic communities are or should be free to maintain their intrinsic names, as that is their constitutional right. They were certain about the need to prioritize law over nationalist grievances, as the following commentaries illustrate, 'Koreans, Russians, Uzbeks…in short all ethnic groups have the right to keep their names and since they reside in Kazakhstan, they have rights to be called Kazakhstani'; 'I think "Kazakhstani" has something to do with citizenship and residence' (respondent 25, KR, female); a Kazakhstani nation 'is a new concept. It was only a proposal, I think. You can use it or not, it is up to you, but if we cannot call all people living in the country Kazakhs, then today it is better to use the term Kazakhstani; it is morally correct' (respondent 30, KR, female); 'I don't actually support this idea, but to apply the ethnic name of one group to others, it is dishonest. Imagine, if we Kazakhs living in China were called Han Chinese, I can't accept this, no' (respondent 27, KR, male).

Kazakh-phone Kazakhs were no different in their attitudes to the concept of 'Kazakhstani' than the other groups. They also believed 'Kazakhstani' identity to have a broader application; the use of which transcends ethnic names. In the interviews, most of the KKs argued for its unifying power, so suggested keeping it in the interim. They noted that, 'for the moment they are "Kazakhstanis". This sounds more uniting', (respondent 20, KK, male); 'go to the newspapers, what you see, we are all called "Kazakhstanis". So judge yourself, it is broader and encompasses everyone. You can't say that two Kazakhs and three Uzbeks declared such and such, and how can you be sure that those two are Kazakhs. On the basis of what?...Dilemma…so it is it easy to call them all Kazakhstanis' (respondent 28, KK, male). One of the KKs drew an analogy with the Soviet identity and found a personal conciliation in the following way:

> *… we lived with these people in the Soviet Union and they were Uzbeks, they were Russians and they were at the same time Soviet people. In the same way instead of Soviet has come a Kazakhstani perception. I know that some of these people long for the Soviet era but realities are realities and we do not discriminate against them. If I am called Kazakhstani, it does not anger me. I still know that I am Kazakh (respondent 24, KK, male)*

Poppe and Hagendoorn (2001: 58) describe ethnic minority group members' stronger identification with their own ethnicity without regard for the national majority group as separation or dissociation. They specify the converse practice as assimilation. On the other hand, if ethnic minority members strongly identify themselves with both the minority and the majority group, these authors call it integration or acculturation. Neither separation nor assimilation, but integration is what seems to be relevant to the Kazakhstani case, as the above answers confirm. There is no reason to believe that the government was 'insincere in its promotion of a civic nationalism based on the inclusive category of Kazakhstani' (Anacker 2004: 530); although it has kept an eye on multiculturalist and ethnic projects, trying to create 'something from above and communicating it below' (Cummings 2006:189).

In the early years after the fall of the Soviet regime, Tolz (1998) argued that the misperception related to civic and ethnic identities was particularly strong in newly independent countries, as evident in their novel constitutions and citizenship regulations. He saw the cause of this confusion partially in the fact that political institutions designed to inspire the commitment of members of a civic society were in the making and the resolution of problems emanating from the incorporation of the interests of ethnic minorities required time. The young adults' perceptions of civic-ethnic identities prove the lines to be clear-cut, i.e. the notions of 'Kazakhness' and 'Kazakhstanshipness' to be categorically different. This may suggest a smooth public acceptance of state-created identity in the face of counter-state identities (to use Brubaker's term). Particular vibrancy of Kazakh identity may also be explained by the fact that 'the Kazakhs hold the right, through their eternal connection with the land, to define the concept of Kazakhstani' (Anacker 2004: 530) and so do not see it as a destructive alternative. This is in line with Masanov's (2002) observation that the vast majority of Kazakhs conceive of only Kazakhstan as their homeland. In contrast, he argues, Russians are five times less likely to attach themselves to this country with the same intensity, although three out of four Russians were born in Kazakhstan. This is because local Russians tend to consider the whole Soviet Union or their birthplace as their homeland rather than Kazakhstan where they are living in (Masanov, quoted in Smagulova 2006).

All three groups thus surprisingly shared a common vision of Kazakhstani identity, seen as an all-encompassing, all-embracing one. Yet it is worth remembering that some KKs

and KRs were eager to see it replaced by Kazakh identity, as was found in Chapter 6. However, on the basis of interviews with Kazakh-speakers, as reported in this and previous chapters, it is possible to observe the acute awareness of adverse social implications the forceful application of Kazakh identity might generate. So their shared view can also be an indication of a shift towards the acceptance of civic Kazakhstani identity as a deterrent against inter-ethnic confrontations.

8.3 Conditions for civic belonging

In a nation–state committed to a civic version of national identity, factors such as 'living on a common territory, belief in common set of political principles, possession of state citizenship, representation by a common set of political institutions and desire or consent to be part of the nation' can, does or should unite and distinguish people (Shulman 2004: 35). With this in mind, this section investigates the main requirements for belonging to the 'Kazakhstani nation', to provide an accurate insight into young adults' degree of civic understanding of nation. Along with civic and ethnic elements, cultural aspects were also added to the list below.

	RK	KR	KK	Total
Respect laws and political institutions	32.5	30.8	20	27.7
Be a citizen	10	7.7	7.5	6.7
Considering Kazakhstan as homeland	57.5	46.2	60	54.6
Use Kazakh as main language	12.5	5.1	5	5
Be an ethnic Kazakh	4.0		2.5	0.8
Be born in Kazakhstan		2.6		0.8
Be able to speak Kazakh		5.1	5	3.4
Be able to speak both Kazakh and Russian		2.6	20	0.8

Table 8.2: Most important characteristic for considering a person to be Kazakhstani (q3, percentages in each category)

On balance, more than half of the respondents (54.6 percent) believed that considering Kazakhstan to be their homeland is the most critical condition 'for considering a person to be Kazakhstani'. Local Kazakhs accorded it more weight than Kazakhs from China (57.5 percent, 60 percent and 46.2 percent). The next criterion selected by all three groups was the 'respect of law and political institutions'; 32.5 per cent of RKs, 30 per

cent of KRs and 20 per cent of KKs regarded it as important. Nearly equal numbers of RKs, KRs and KKs thought that 'being a citizen' of the country was necessary in order to be considered Kazakhstani (10 percent, 7.7 percent and 7.5 percent). Only a tiny number of KRs and KKs expected non-natives to 'use Kazakh as the main language" (5.1 percent and 5.0 percent) or at least to show some familiarity with it (5.1 percent and 5.0 percent). It is instructive to observe that none of the Russian-speaking Kazakhs saw Kazakh language proficiency to be essential.

In the interviews, KKs and RKs referred to common practices in other developed countries. They reckoned that Kazakhs would not be exceptional in stressing 'respect of law' and 'consideration of the country as a homeland' among the foremost criteria for potential co-nationals. Their comments were similar in meaning, for instance, 'to support the law' (respondent 14, KK, male); 'feel yourself to be a part of Kazakhstani society and consider the land as your only home" (respondent 28, KK, male) 'see it as homeland. In Kazakh it is called *Otan*, and in Russian *Rodina*' (respondent 19, RK, male). Another RK put his vision in a more relative way and said:

> *For instance, if I stay in another country, first and foremost, I must respect local rules. I should be humble, because this is a different country. Extradition happens when somebody breaches local law. So it is about law and respect (respondent 19, RK, male)*

However, during one-to-one conversations KRs and some KKs added cultural components to civic ones. The reason for this addition may be that 'respect of culture' as a potential requirement did not feature in the survey question, so this might have forced a few KKs and KRs to choose more benign civic options. The interview answers demanding respect of both official and unofficial moral codes surfaced repeatedly. For example, 'if a foreigner comes from Russia or the US, he/she will be welcomed. Firstly, he should respect the laws, and know the Kazakh language' (respondent 12, KK, male); 'to respect the people living in this society and their traditions, live according to the rules' (respondent 13, KK, male); 'very simple, consider it as the only place to establish roots and blend with it entirely. In addition, one should be aware and respectful of the cultural heritage of Kazakhs' (respondent 30, KR, female); 'he should also pay regard to the indigenous people of this country, their culture, traditions, religion and so on. Not adoption but mere respect…because Kazakhs are in the position of recipients'

(respondent 7, KR, male), were quite frequent. One of the KKs however remarked that before placing "cultural" demands, Kazakhs should be conscious of their centuries-old heritages themselves, and 'pay tribute to the past' and 'value national culture so as to see others do the same' (respondent 15, KK, male).

The above responses suggest that all three groups commonly endorse the application of civic criteria. As for some KKs and KRs, their cultural rhetoric centres on the necessity of respect rather than adoption of their culture by others. The next question was designed to confirm or refute the respondents' stance regarding Kazakhstani membership.

	RK	KR	KK	Total
Respect laws and political institutions	2.5	2.9		1.8
Be a citizen		2.9	2.6	1.8
Use Kazakh as main language	10	2.9	7.9	7.1
Be an ethnic Kazakh	20	28.6	28.9	25.7
Be born in Kazakhstan	12.5	25.7	15.8	17.7
Be able to speak Kazakh			2.6	0.9
Be able to speak Russian	45	34.3	42.1	40.7
	7.5	2.9		3.5

Table 8.3: Least important characteristic for considering a person *Kazakhstani* (q4, percentages in each category)

The majority of young adults (40.7 percent) considered that fluency in Russian is not necessary in order to be considered Kazakhstani. This was an unexpected finding of the study. To observe RKs (45 percent) downgrade the role of Russian as intensely as KKs (42.1 percent) and Kazakh repatriates (34.3 percent) was also surprising. However, the interviews revealed that the survey responses were not concomitant with KKs' and KRs' real-world experiences. Most KKs, who singled out the 'ability to speak Russian' as the least necessary criterion, acknowledged the current reality to be different. Several extractions are indicative in this case.

> *I don't support it, but speaking Russian is enough. If you know Russian you can buy a house, run a business, get whatever is necessary for your life…It is*

possible to live in any city of Kazakhstan with the knowledge of Russian (respondent 12, KK, male)

So far I have met only one woman either American or English who spoke with me in Kazakh. A very impressive gesture, while guests from other countries prefer learning Russian language in Kazakhstan. But we are not Russia. If we are an independent country, foreigners should act accordingly (respondent 15, KK, male)

Today he needs Russian, but tomorrow I don't know. Maybe Kazakh will be enough. In fact I want people who wish to stay in Kazakhstan forever to learn Kazakh rather than Russian. This will be a good stimulus for Russian-speakers here. They will understand that if even foreigners are learning Kazakh, then why don't we do it? (respondent 24, KK, male)

Kazakh repatriates pointed out that 'it is nonsense to argue that Russian is not needed, but to expect the foreigner to master both Kazakh and Russian is difficult. So it is better if only Kazakh is learnt' (respondent 7, KR, male); 'in big cities it is hard to live without Russian, but there are some far-off regions where Kazakh suffices' (respondent 25, KR, female). One of the interviewees was informative in clarifying the attitude of Kazakhs from China towards the Russian language in the questionnaire.

Not only Russian, we have to learn Chinese, English and so on. No need to stick to certain principles. Chinese Kazakhs are losing in this particular issue. They argue about nationalism, they want Russians to leave and they want the Russian language to disappear (respondent 1, KR, male)

In contrast to KKs and KRs, Russian-speakers were committed to their initial views. Some argued that 'I don't think that it is important to know Russian. No need. It is enough to know the Kazakh language in Kazakhstan' (respondent 3, RK, female); 'because Kazakh is gathering momentum. In a couple of years, it will suffice' (respondent 26, RK, female). Another RK, who studied finance at university in Russian, stated that:

A few years ago I might have said that without Russian you will not succeed, but today people look at the quality of the service or product you offer. It makes no difference; language plays a very minimal role. I saw lots of monolingual

Kazakhs creating big companies and few of them feel embarrassed due to their lack of proficiency in Russian (respondent 10, RK, male)

After relegating Russian proficiency to the margins of main requirements, as seen in the table above, the respondents shared the view that one does not need to have Kazakh parents in order to be Kazakhstani. This clause was equally supported by Kazakh-speakers (28.6 percent) and slightly less by RKs (25.7 percent). The factor of 'being born in Kazakhstan' as the least necessary condition acquired confirmation among KRs more than among RKs and KKs (25.7 percent, 12.5 percent and 15.8 percent). Considering that Kazakh repatriates were born in China and might have arrived in Kazakhstan after having their school education completed, their emphasis appeared reasonable.

It is important to recall the respondents' linguistic exposure to make sense of surprising questionnaire answers from which some of the respondents retreated in the interviews. The way RKs downgrade the relevance of the Russian language is an indicator of a growing role of the Kazakh language more in their eyes than in public. This is because Kazakh-speakers, as they stated during interviews, are better-placed to appreciate the still vibrant presence of the Russian language. In general, all three groups are close in their belief that neither poor Russian nor absence of Kazakhs in the family should prevent newcomers from becoming fully-fledged members of the Kazakhstani community and this is strong evidence of an across-group resonance of civic preference.

Although the respondents were keen to go against the tide and present the futility of learning Russian due to its allegedly narrow appeal in Kazakhstan, it is also important to note that only one KK suggested that newcomers should be fluent in Kazakh. Bearing in mind that in some post-Soviet states, knowledge of the indigenous vernacular was the key requirement for citizenship (chapter 1), the participants' answers here are very revealing in terms of their degree of 'civicness'. For instance, while Estonia succeeded in stripping the Russian language of all its privileges, this policy was challenged in the course of Estonia's attempt to become a member of the European Union. As the EU is a structure that upholds the right of minority ethnicities in its member states, linguistically discriminated Russians were supported in their struggle to secure the limited function of their language (Laitin 2001). Despite this, Estonia

successfully entrenched a clause in its Citizenship Law of 1994-according to which everyone living in Estonia should master Estonian as a first priority (Carmichael 2000).

8.4 Degree of interaction with non-titular ethnicities

Apart from reinforcing the nation-state building process, nationalism carries 'the seeds of new tensions affecting national minorities…within the boundaries of already established nation-states' (Guibernau 2001: 73). A growth in titular ethnicity in the 2000s, aided by the outmigration of groups of mostly European origins and by the state-initiated inflow of Kazakh diaspora from neighbouring states, has not led to the ethnic homogenisation of the country. Kazakhstan is still inhabited by hundreds of minority ethnicities (Chapter 3). This section explores how close the respondents find themselves to these people and how poised are they to disregard ethnicity in marital issues in particular. Numerous authors have used the rate of inter-ethnic marriage as a core measure of social integration (for example, Lieberson and Waters 1988) and research has shown that children of mixed marriages tend to identify themselves less with a single group, and harbour less negative approaches towards other groups (Kalmjin 1998).

		RK	KR	KK	Total
neighbour	yes	90	92.1	97.5	96.6
	no	10	7.9	2.5	3.4
friend	yes	70	61.5	81.6	70.9
	no	30	38.5	18.4	29.1
children's spouse	yes	17.5	27.5	15.8	20.3
	no	82.5	72.5	84.2	79.7

Table 8.4: Whether respondents would accept a member of other ethnic group as… (q9, percentages in each category)

The respondents equally conceded that they would live in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods (96.6 percent), and the majority of them indicated a willingness to befriend non-Kazakhs (70.9 percent). However, more than one third of KRs would not consider inter-ethnic friendships. The apparent cause came up in the interviews. When they were asked whether they had any friends among non-Kazakhs, most KRs mentioned Uzbeks from southern Kazakhstan. Further elaboration revealed the following clarifications,

'they speak our language' (respondent 16, KR, male); and they are 'very conservative people and live in the countryside as we do' (respondent 25, KR, female). These remarks suggest the cultural preferences of KRs. Their acceptance of non-titular friendship proved to be limited, which is reinforced by the discouraging stance of 38.5 per cent in the table above.

In contrast to KRs, local Kazakhs avoided placing any boundaries on potential friendships, whatever their ethnicities are. To the majority of them, ethnicity: 'cannot be a criterion in friendships. Good people are not found among Kazakhs only and not all Kazakhs are good people' (respondent 22, KK, female), 'is not about everything" (respondent 26, RK, female) and 'is not an indication of good personal qualities. People as individuals are far more important, than their origins' (respondent 20, KK, male). One of the RKs born and raised in Astana, stated:

> *I am not too concerned about people's nationality. If I see that somebody is rushing to become a friend with me I will certainly bypass the fact that he/she is Russian. I will presumably display my wish to build a friendship as well. I mentioned a Russian friend in the workplace, you remember. I speak with her every day, on a variety of issues and feel no difference in terms of religious views and language or ethnicity. I even forget that she is Russian (respondent 3, RK, female)*

To the surprise of many KKs and RKs themselves, it turned out that they had almost no friends from other ethnic groups. It was bizarre to listen to some Russian-speakers, let alone KKs, making statements similar to the following:

> *These days I have got one Russian friend, we are friends because we work in the same school. Unfortunately, I have no close contacts with any other Russian girl or boy. In fact, I studied in a mixed school. There were Russian classes as well….I don't have Russian friends from that period (respondent 3, RK, female)*

Or:

> *Even though I finished a Russian school and studied with Russians at the university, it is difficult for me to get along with them. They rarely come together. I try to mix with Kazakh-phone Kazakhs from the parallel group. They are much more cooperative and friendly (respondent 17, RK, female)*

KKs did not ascribe the scarcity of Russian friends to linguistic disparity. Rather they just 'can't see Russians driving jeeps, they are invisible' (respondent 24, KK, male); 'don't know where Russians disappeared in Astana' (respondent 22, KK, female); 'hardly encounter them' (respondent 21, KK, male). This finding is consistent with the fall of Russians not only in number but also in "quality". According to the estimates of the mid-2000s, the Astana region has lost around one quarter of its population or 122,000 people (Peyrouse 2008) and those Russians who stayed were 'of a decidedly non-elite nature' and thus less fortunate in developing 'close ties with the newly relocated officials' (Anacker 2004: 528).

On the other hand, ethnic background proved salient in connection with options related to children's potential marriages. All three groups of respondents shared a commitment to a familial homogeneity (79.7 percent). This is in sharp contrast with their benign approach to sharing a neighbourhood and making friends with non-Kazakhs. However, in the interviews, KKs and KRs were prone to soften their initial hard stance. To the question of whether they would be able to resist pressure from their children, the majority argued that 'if they were insistent, then I would demand linguistic and religious closeness' (respondent 27, KR, male); 'I may make an exception. I think that I would let her marry, for instance, a Russian, who spoke Kazakh and knew Kazakh traditions' (respondent 12, KK, male); Another KK stated that:

> *There are Russians who are more Kazakh in terms of their linguistic and cultural background; I think I would allow my children to marry such Russians. You know it is all about respect of local values and mild adoption. Ethnicity can be ignored (respondent 18, KK, female)*

Or:

> *You know that in the Soviet period, lots of educated Kazakhs, who eventually died for the national cause, had Russian wives - Myrzhakyp Dulatov, for instance -, and these days you can see that their offspring dominate in many spheres in Kazakhstan and constitute the elite of the country (respondent 1, KR, male)*

The questionnaire and interview answers of RKs were largely consistent. They remained firm believers of 'purity of blood' and expected Kazakhs to marry Kazakhs only. The feelings of the majority of RKs were summed up in the extractions below:

> *Previously I said that we should live side by side with other ethnic groups, but I don't want my mother to be Russian and my father to be Kazakh…I think blood should stay pure. Kazakhs should not marry others (respondent 3, RK, female)*

> *My parents warned that I should never consider a marriage with anyone other than Kazakh. So I never have. Surely, I will definitely be demanding when it comes to my children's marriage as well (respondent 19, RK, male)*

In short, the young adults were in agreement with close relationships with all people regardless of their ethnic background. What is strange here is RKs' relatively conservative attitudes; for they were expected to be the last to stay utterly loyal to within-ethnic marriages. This study projected them to have a more robust perception of civic identity. As the findings in Chapter 6 confirmed, RKs are also inclined to retain the 'purity of blood', which can also be interpreted in civic terms-as recognition of multi-ethnicity of a country where every group needs to enjoy the right for distinctiveness.

Kazakh-speakers envisaged intra-ethnic families too; as a requirement they state cultural contiguity or respect towards local traditions only. In the Kazakhstani case these criteria may largely qualify as inclusive, given that major Turkic groups (Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Kyrgyz, Uighurs, Karakalpaks, and Tatars) have a higher birth rate (Dave 2003: 2), when the share of non-titular groups of European extraction is consistently falling. The internal demographic changes may also find external reflection and shift the government's foreign policy towards Turkic-speaking countries in Central Asia and Anatolia. The union of Turkic nations, which has been on the agenda for centuries, found its realization in the early years of the twentieth century, as was discussed in Chapter 2. This project is still hampered by the dominance of the Russian language and low appeal of Turkish. It is Schlyter's (2003) conviction that the Turkish language is not powerful enough to become the 'lingua franca' in Central Asia in the coming decades. Yet, he also concedes that it is demonstrating an unusually rapid expansion (Schlyter 2003:178).

8.5 Fading regional variances pose new challenges

Civic and ethnic elements are embedded to varying degrees and in diverse forms in all nationalisms. At times 'civic and territorial elements predominate; at other times it is the ethnic and vernacular components that are emphasized' (Smith 1991: 13). Yet, territorial conceptions of nation are the least restraining in the distribution of membership (Nieguth 1999). In this part of the chapter, the respondents were asked questions similar to the section above, however with a regional marker supplanting the ethnic one. It is worth remembering that besides Kazakhs, the country is inhabited by many other ethnic groups. So, it is possible to observe how earnestly the new generation of Kazakhs include non-titular persons in their 'regional' or territorial considerations. In addition, this section investigates the salience of northern-eastern and southern-western divisions characterized by the dominance of the Russian and Kazakh languages respectively.

		RK	KR	KK	Total
neighbour	yes	65	89.7	94.6	88.1
	no	35	10.3	5.1	11.9
friend	yes	62.5	79.5	89.7	77.1
	no	37.5	20.5	10.3	22.9
children's spouse	yes	67.5	87.2	87.5	80.7
	no	32.5	12.8	12.5	19.3

Table 8.5: Do respondents accept dwellers of other regions as… ?(q9, percentages in each category)

A significant majority of KKs and KRs disregarded regional differences in regard to the issues of neighbourhood-sharing, friendship-forging, and children's marriage (94.6 percent and 89.7 percent; 89.7 percent and 79.5 percent; 87.2 percent and 87.5 percent). Although most RKs responded similarly (65 percent, 62.5 percent and 67.5 percent), approximately one third of them were opposed. Yet, the most striking finding was that the respondents were not against marrying their offspring to dwellers of regions different from their own. All three groups of Kazakhs accepted inter-regional, but rejected inter-ethnic marriage, as was seen earlier. Hence, they automatically relegated non-titular ethnicities from the list of "regional dwellers". Moreover, RKs seem to have

forgotten about KRs, who are also living in Kazakhstan. This is apparent in the fact that the majority of RKs said they would refuse to let their children marry KRs in Chapter 6. Here, Brubaker's (2010a) suggestion that the practice of belonging has formal and informal stages and features may be applicable. For instance, formal membership requires the registration of nationality and citizenship by governmental officials who appeal to formal rules and follow regulations; while informal membership has nothing to do with the official institutions and personnel, and is rather administered by ordinary people during their life, on the basis of their experience and unspoken perception of 'who belongs and who does not, of us and them' (Brubaker 2010a: 65).

Thus, the respondents hold an informal view of nationhood. The doubling of the proportion of Kazakhs in Astana over the past decade (Introduction) might have impacted on their present view. Their rare encounters with Russians, as the interviews helped to uncover, is another confirmation of why they contemplate ethnic homogeneity. On the basis of these minor contrasts, it is possible to argue that under the "region" only two groups were taken into account: KKs and RKs. So in the analysis of interviews, a special emphasis was given to the lingo-geographical categories of the participants, abridged as "northerners" and "southerners". KRs were excluded from this analysis.

The revelations from the interviews confirmed the endurance of a north-south divide, yet traces of ongoing mitigation were also conspicuous. RKs referred to the different mentality of southerners; most of them show little interest in the opinions of others and try to adapt to changing circumstances quickly. One of the RKs explained that 'southerners are Kazakhs', yet 'really very different' and she stated:

> *But I like that they are more kind. It is easy to find a common language with these people. But northerners, including me, are introverts. I need time to contemplate, to weigh the risks and so on. And I hardly agree on any contract immediately. I will ask for time (respondent 3, RK, female)*

One male respondent, born in Astana long before its historic conversion, said:

> *I studied with Kazakhs from southern oblasts. We called them "ejiks" which is rooted in the Russian word "ujanin", implying "southerner". Bizarrely to my eyes, they were different in many aspects. Spoke Kazakh fluently and behaved*

with ease, as if they came with some mission and were awaited by locals. Some of them opened small shops in our district, so my parents used to see them regularly. Good and bad impressions followed, you know (respondent 30, RK, male)

Other RKs argued that southerners are 'self-motivated' (respondent 26, RK, female); 'self-reliant' (respondent 2, RK, male); 'extreme profit-seekers' (respondent 19, RK, male). KKs corroborated their own image and stated to have seen the reverse in RKs. They found northern Kazakhs to be more reliant on monthly wages and less adept at business.

My friends were selling shoes in the Artem bazaar. Considering how cold it becomes in winter times, it was very hard for me to see them standing there and shouting to the crowd to buy their shoes. I met them several times while studying at uni, and one them told me that almost all people selling with him came from the south (respondent 20, KK, male)

While northerners get up in the morning and go to work, and try not to change anything in their routine lives, they hate others who are innovators. The time of living a life of luxury has past. One should be responsive to modern day challenges. This is what I think (respondent 4, KK, male)

In addition, the young adults touched on linguistic disparities. RKs speaking Russian as their first language and KKs' with a command of Kazakh, recalled the uneasiness of the initial encounter. This is evident in comments such as, 'I understood Russian and spoke it a little bit but I did not know professional Russian' (respondent 13, KK, male); 'in the shops when I asked in Kazakh, I used to be answered in Russian but I never felt miserable. I spoke Kazakh in protest' (respondent 12, KK, male); 'lettings agencies spoke Russian and in a few instances only gave flats to students especially from Shymkent [a southern city]. So we struggled to understand why Kazakh-phones couldn't open such agencies to ease our lot' (respondent 24, KK, male); 'people used Kazakh in their everyday lives and I wasn't happy with this state of affairs, because I was more fluent in Russian' (respondent 26, RK, female). Another RK argued that even city bus conductors used to make announcements only in Kazakh (respondent 17, RK, female).

Instead of reciprocal insulation, the meeting of RKs and KKs seems to have produced linguistic cooperation. For instance, some RKs argued that, 'in 1998, nobody cared about the Kazakh language in this region. I am very serious…thanks to the southerners for bringing it' (respondent 3, RK, female); 'I had a friend from Shymkent (a southern city), who spoke with me only in Kazakh and I benefited from it' (respondent 19, RK, male). By the same token, a few KKs confessed that RKs helped them to improve their Russian fluency and were themselves interested in learning the Kazakh language: 'southerners following their arrival attempted to learn Russian, as they saw that it was impossible to live without it' (respondent 4, KK, male); 'I met some residents of these regions [north-east] who were national-patriots, so my view regarding these regions changed' (respondent 13, KK, male). Another KK stated:

> *I spoke with females students from Pavlodar, Kostanay in Kazakh. None of them despised me for this. I think they understood the growing role of the Kazakh language" (respondent 22, KK, female).*

It is essential to note that the division of Kazakhstan along linguistic lines led some scholars, for instance Fierman (1998), to consider the viability and suitability of a federalist structure for the country. In a similar vein, (Kolsto 2003) drew examples from Canada and Belgium. The bilingual situation in these countries is maintained by a political arrangement of federalism, as the major languages are given an official status in one autonomous territory. Therefore, the author argues that 'political federalism would certainly be feasible also in Kazakhstan'. Indeed, there are rather harsher precedents around the globe that resulted in secessionism. For instance, it was language that determined the fate of Schleswig which belonged to Denmark for centuries. As people for the most part spoke German in that region, Schleswig was ultimately divided between two European states (Vikor 2000). Bearing in mind that the number of Russian people continues to outnumber that of Kazakhs in the border regions up to today, the moving of the capital city of the country stimulated the settlement of Astana by ethnic Kazakhs over a couple of years (Matuszkiewicz 2010). The respondents' answers above suggest that a move of the capital from the south to the north in the late 1990s significantly minimized the prospect of state partition on a linguistic basis in Kazakhstan (the reasons why Kazakhs came to outnumber Russians in the main city of the country were given in Chapter 3).

Another indication of the declining salience of a north-south divide was found in Table 8.6. The respondents were asked if they had ever been discriminated against because of their birth place. A large number of KKs and RKs said they had not received unfair treatment whereas one third of KRs said they had. Their case was investigated in Chapter 6.

	Russo-phone K	K Repatriate	Kazakh-phone K	Total
yes	17.5	30.8	2.5	16.8
no	82.5	69.2	97.5	83.2

Table 8.6: Have you been treated unfairly because of regional background? (q10, percentages in each category)

The linguistic segregation, which Fierman (2006: 103) professed to 'have serious undesirable consequences, in particular creating greater social tension', appears to be losing steam, at least in Astana. The prevailing reality however is not a move towards the dominance of the Kazakh language over Russian, as Huttenbach (1998: 584-585) expected to happen after the relocation of the capital, but rather towards the entrenchment of both. It is highly important to observe not only the lessening of linguistic differences but also the growing change in attitudes of Russian-speakers toward those who speak Kazakh. The above answers of young adults greatly depart from Fierman's (2006) study results according to which RKs 'grown up viewing linguistic and cultural russification as valuable assets for upward educational and social mobility…looked down on the culture and language of their rural co-ethnics' (2006: 102).

8.6 State achievements

In the open-ended part of the questionnaire, the young Kazakh adults were asked to point out three main achievements of independent Kazakhstan (Appendix 4). Their answers, such as 'relocation of the capital city', 'economic development', 'interethnic stability', etc., were predominantly of a civic nature, yet the interviews allowed different understandings of the mentioned phenomena to be observed. This section explores civic, cultural and ethnic motives behind the respondents' selection of civic accomplishments.

8.6.1 Astana transforming outlooks and offering benefits

By respecting occasions and displaying symbols, which represent and elevate a sense of unity, the nation creates the boundaries that distinguish it from the rest (Guibernau 2001: 85). In the wake of the fall of the Soviet regime, the construction of a new capital in the region close to Russia was an occasion which gradually transformed into the symbol of nation-building in Kazakhstan. This strategic government decision not only laid the groundwork for the solidification of people's unity but also became a bulwark against outside claim of northern Russian-dominated cities (Chapter 3). It was not surprising to see that more than a quarter of respondents from each group (RKs 25 percent, KKs 26 percent and KRs 41 percent) considered Astana to be a success story. However, interviews showed that the respondents had different experiences of Astana and future expectations.

In the interviews, the majority of KRs revealed their belief in imminent upward mobility and were driven by economic promises of Astana. One of them highlighted the cleanliness of the 'economically booming city', and then added that few people who happened to live in Astana 'dare leave it'. He thought himself to be fortunate enough to be among the early-birds, as 'plenty of Kazakh friends in China regret not taking a risk and coming here' (respondent 1, KR, male). One female respondent, also from China, stated that beautiful sky-scrapers strengthen her commitment and hope for a better future. Her parents, living in a far-off village in Kazakhstan, are deprived of experiencing 'the economic development of the country'; while in Astana it is recognisable. A desire to stay in the emerging metropolis keeps not only her but all of her friends motivated. However, one thing makes it difficult for her to keep her dream alive:

> *...girls are less fortunate. Pressured by their parents, they try to find marriage partners as soon as possible. If they don't their parents find them from their villages or other cities (respondent 25, KR, female)*

Other KRs argued that, 'it is a window of opportunity for people like me. It is a time when new business elites are being forged' (respondent 7, KR, male); 'Astana is about future. If you think about future, then you come here and spearhead economic growth to benefit from it later' (respondent 29, KR, male).

The majority of Kazakh-phone Kazakhs talked about challenges and opportunities to be found in the capital city. One of them sketchily explained the openings that Astana city provided. He said that a spell in Astana developed his intellectual horizons and built his confidence. In the past he did not believe in upward mobility and was not dreaming of high goals. At present he is 'brave'. He can live anywhere on this planet, even in Brazil. This is because of various meetings he has had with foreigners, local ministers and city mayors. He shook hands with high-profile officials and cultivated political awareness. Even the arrival of President Bush does not cause panic, as he knows that statesmen are ordinary people, and moreover he believes that one day he could also become a mayor. This respondent shed some light on how the provincial elite tend to see the growing role of Astana and people inhabiting the city:

> *Whenever I win a tender and go to the regions to implement it, I truly enjoy people's respect. As the one who came from Astana, I am welcomed. This is just because I live in Astana. I am not a politician, a big shot and this kind of warm attitude towards me simplifies my work and helps me to finish it successfully. People help because you are from Astana but whenever they come to Astana and you tell them you can't meet them people from the regions barely get frustrated. They say that, 'it is Astana, we understand you' (respondent 14, KK, male)*

Other KKs argued that, 'here you can realise your dreams. It is an open terrain, full of opportunities. My peers are building their careers, and almost all of them are in Astana. They are the new elite, I would say' (respondent 28, KK, male); 'it is always good to be among the first' (respondent 22, KK, female).

Russian-speaking Kazakhs were less impressed than other groups by economic benefits accompanied by the conversion of the northern city into capital of Kazakhstan. Observable in the interviews was an emphasis on the way their cultural prejudices began to alter. For the majority of them, Astana was a boon, as it provided vast opportunities to meet people for whom Kazakh was a dominant language. One of the RKs recalled that in the early years nothing affected her life severely but her 'knowledge of the Kazakh language has increased substantially' (respondent 3, RK, female). Another Kazakh, born and raised in the Russian-dominated northern city, recalled his university years when he shared a room with Kazakh-phone students. He

said that in the past he used to think that southerners were slightly inferior in terms of their education and exposure to western standards compared to Russian-speaking Kazakhs who lived closer to Russia. However, his years in Astana convinced him that with the exception of language very few differences existed. Moreover, during the interview he confessed that 'if not for Astana, I would have continued to believe that southerners are mediocre. Astana brought us together' (respondent 19, RK, male). Another RK stated:

> *You know that Kazakhs who lived in this city before it became the capital were less concerned about money while studying at university. They lived with their parents. They were more concerned about the unusual mentality of the new-arrivals,; that they were less civilized and so on. At our family meals I used to share my feelings about southerners who were on my course or whom I used to see in the same corridors. These people were interesting for me and for my parents (respondent 17, RK, female)*

Russian-speaking Kazakhs see more prospects of cultural exchange in the relocated capital city, which is consistent with another result from the same open-ended question (Appendix 4). In contrast to 11.2 percent of KRs and 8 percent of KKs, 28.5 percent of RKs mentioned the 'revival of the Kazakh language' as an important achievement of independence. Their growing deference towards the state language partially corroborates Huttenbach's (1998) belief in the triumph of the Kazakh language in the capital city.

Driven largely by widening economic opportunity structures in the new building site, views of KKs and KRs corroborate Junisbai's (2010: 1697) assumptions that in Kazakhstan 'the benefits of economic growth…confined to urban centres…have yet to trickle down to small towns and villages'. Moreover, one study found that Kazakh people, as an ethnic group, seem to be 'more responsive to economic incentives' and that 'wage in the destination is the most important factor driving interregional movements in the short run'. The same study also revealed that 'only the migration behaviour of ethnic Kazakhs – not that of Russians – is influenced by wages' (Aldashev and Dietz 2014: 13-15).

8.6.2 Interethnic stability

Nations, with their logos and slogans, market themselves not just to tourists but to investors and sometimes to their own citizens (Aronczyk 2007). The early subordination of political amendments to economic reforms, reflected in the Kazakhstan President's catchphrase: 'Economy first, politics second' (Olcott 2002), distinguished Kazakhstan from other Central Asian states. Over two decades, this policy proved to have significant upsides, as economic prosperity was coupled with political stability, and an absence of interethnic conflicts not only contributed to the elevation of Kazakhstan's global status but also helped it to get ahead in the nation-building enterprise at home (Isaacs 2010). The young adults in this study also considered 'interethnic stability' to be an accomplishment. Relatively more RKs and KKs accorded it significance than Kazakhs from China (56.3 percent, 40.2 percent and 19.5 percent). Local Kazakhs described their own life experiences to corroborate the congeniality of the political situation in which multi-ethnic values are able to flourish. The following are some extractions from the interviews.

> *I think that all conditions are present for a foreigner to live in Kazakhstan. Kazakh people are tolerant. Historically lots of ethnic groups have been accommodated, embraced (respondent 12, KK, male)*

> *I remember, once I helped a Russian lady to cross the road and she said: 'I am happy to live in Kazakhstan. People here are generous and supportive. Recently I visited my son in Russia; people there are less concerned about others' (respondent 3, RK, female)*

> *At university, lecturers regularly cited the American scholar Huntington who professed Kazakhstan to be a battlefield of civilizations claiming this not to be so. We were proud of this fact. Indeed you can see no trace of racism, extreme nationalism in Kazakhstan. I think that it is a success (respondent 28, KK, male)*

Some KRs compared the country's stability to the regular disorder which exists in the neighbouring states and stated that therefore, 'one should treasure stability when it is at hand' (respondent 23, KR, female); 'it is a rare success in this region' (respondent 7, KR, male). Or:

The more you live in Kazakhstan, the more you understand the value of interethnic stability. When Uzbeks are not welcome in Kyrgyzstan, as latest events showed, they are living in peace in Kazakhstan. This should be highlighted more and more. Not only Uzbeks, but all other groups are welcome in the country. This is an achievement. If you go to China, you see Uyghur's, for instance, expressing their grievances and so blood is spilt because of it (respondent 30, KR, female)

In a survey conducted in the late 1990s, 49.8 percent of people considered interethnic relations to be peaceful, 29.9 percent of them saw them as friendly, and only 1.7 percent found them to be tense (Malinin 2001, quoted in Smagulova 2006), and this study obtained similar results. This indicates that inter-ethnic problems have been avoided for more than two decades. One reason behind the peaceful cohabitation of many ethnic groups in Kazakhstan is the economic situation in the country, as was discussed in Chapter 2.

In the subsequent open-ended question (Appendix 5), the respondents were asked to give the main factor that could negatively affect interethnic relations in Kazakhstan. More KRs and KKs cited illegal religious sects in response to this question than Russian-speakers (25 percent, 32.5 percent and 5 percent). The analysis of their answers was presented in Chapter 7.

Another survey question demonstrated more clearly that the highest percentage of young adults with varying linguistic exposure and regional backgrounds, were vigilant defenders of equality.

	RK	KR	KK	Total
Yes	100	80	92.3	90.8
no		12.5	5.1	5.9
I don't know		7.5	2.6	3.4

Table 8.7: Should everyone enjoy equal rights despite differences in gender, religion, ethnicity or language (q17, percentages in each category)

As can be observed, while all the RKs endorsed the claim that everyone 'living in Kazakhstan should have equal rights' irrespective of differences stemming from gender, religion, ethnicity or language, a slightly lower proportion of KKs (92.3 percent) and

even fewer KRs (80 percent) conveyed a similar belief. Interviews showed that the more time Kazakh repatriates spent in the country, the more convinced they became that no one should enjoy extra privilege notwithstanding such features as ethnicity, language, religion and gender.

> But when we arrived it was extremely difficult to adjust to the new realities, we couldn't get integrated into the new place immediately. People looked at us cautiously, and some found us totally alien. So Kazakhstan has not met our expectations. I can say that there wasn't any warm welcome. We had tough times; it was very difficult to get along with the indigenous people but we showed patience, and lots of young Oralmans went to university. Over the years, we got accustomed. Today, thank God, we are in a better situation (respondent 1, KR, male)

> To be honest, in the early days of arrival I expected that more or less I would be given some edge over Russian people. In my thinking Russian people were staying temporarily in Kazakhstan and me for good; so I thought that because of my commitment the government would be more eager to help me in some way. I don't know how exactly. But I was wrong. I was wrong because I saw other Oralmans who arrived before me and they were trying to accept the reality, which wasn't so welcoming. I came to the conclusion that I had to look for myself. The same happens with new Oralmans. So if some Oralmans are not happy, it is probably because they have arrived in the country recently (respondent 27, KR, male)

8.6.3 Non-confrontational foreign policy oriented towards cooperation

The respondents considered the government's decision to abandon the large amount of atomic arsenal inherited from the Soviet Union to be another significant achievement of Kazakhstan. More KRs deemed this step to be essential than KKs and RKs (19.5 percent, 16.1 percent and 10.3 percent). In addition, the designation of borders came to be seen as a noteworthy attainment by 16.1 percent of KKs and almost equal numbers of RKs and KRs (10.3 percent and 10.8 percent). Although, KRs did not mention the 'internal political stability' and only 2.6 percent of KKs took it into account, almost a quarter of the RKs stressed the robust state of home politics among the accomplishments of Kazakhstan.

All three groups of Kazakhs also pinpointed the government's success in the realm of foreign policy with almost equal numbers of the Russo-phone and Kazakh-phone Kazakhs believing the state's capacity to keep peaceful relations with other countries to be important (25.7 percent, 24.2 percent) and 16.8 percent of Kazakh repatriates. Indeed, by pursuing multi-vector foreign policy Kazakhstan set up and then strengthened ties with developed countries in various economic spheres (chapter 2). As a result of these efforts Kazakhstan was given the right to chair the Organization for Security and Cooperation (OSCE) in 2010 (Isaac 2010) and the Council of Foreign Ministers of Organization of the Islamic Conference in 2011.

8.7 An able worker, not a "brother"

As was discussed in Chapter 2, tribalism flourished in Central Asia, including Kazakhstan, following the fall of the Soviet Union. Considering the feebleness of civil society and government structures, the resurgence of tribal connections was helpful in settling local problems. Yet, it had its own dark side, as family bonds came to dominate the political and the business realms in subsequent years. In the light of this, the respondents were asked to identify the virtue they value most in an employee. Cultural, ethnic and civic features were included in the list of options.

	RK	RK	KK	Total
religion		2.6		0.8
personal characteristics such as: loyalty, sincerity	27.5	20.5	30	26.3
professional characteristics such as: knowledge, experience	70	71.8	66.7	69.5
ethnic group	2.5	5.1	2.6	3.4

Table 8.8: Valued personal features of the would-be employee (q12, percentages in each category)

The respondents did not alter their choices. More than two thirds of them (69.5 percent) would be 'concerned about an employee's professional characteristics such as: knowledge, experience, competence'. As a second priority, they chose 'characteristics such as: loyalty, sincerity'. Neither religion, nor ethnicity of the would-be employee was considered important in the business environment. Their interview answers remained the same and supported their initial stance.

Yes, generally speaking, my principle is harmony, peace. There was a question in the questionnaire regarding the qualities of the people whom you hire. In the recruitment process I do not look at nationality or other qualities. I am concerned about professionalism (respondent 14, KK, male)

How can you expect someone to be good at a particular task because he is ethnically Kazakh. No such thing is imaginable. I have an acquaintance who publishes a journal that advocates the elevation of the Kazakh language. Do you know who his driver is? A Russian. He has had a few drivers. All were Russians, except one. I asked him the reason. He says that he is more concerned about professional skills; that is turning up on time in the morning (respondent 20, KK, male)

The respondents favoured a level playing field and virtues, such as, professionalism, knowledge and integrity rather than genealogical closeness of the would-be employee. According to them, in the labour market in Kazakhstan, people should be judged and granted jobs on the basis of their skills rather than family bonds or political views or as a political favour. This is a significant finding, as the arguments regarding the persistence of 'clan politics' and 'tribalism' among Kazakh people dominate the scholarly literature (Chapter 2); reinforced by a recent research finding in which people identified 'lack of equal opportunities' as the most common root of poverty in Kazakhstan (Junisbai 2010: 1689).

8.8 Conclusion

This chapter set out to test the hypothesis that despite the impact of lingo-regional backgrounds on the nature of their national identity, the respondents' perceptions of national belonging and attitudes to civic developments exhibit many common features.

The study found that young Kazakh adults are not against maintaining ethnic names within a state-introduced notion of 'Kazakhstani', although in their thinking it is a provisional identity liable to future change. In addition, they jointly lower the bar for entry to the Kazakhstani community requiring only emotional commitment to the country, i.e. consideration of it as a homeland. There is a subtle yet common inclination to mask the reality and prove the irrelevance of knowing Russian language for this purpose; a preference also cited by Russian-speaking Kazakhs.

Despite a robust and widely-evident conviction that the Kazakhstani community is ethnically heterogeneous, the respondents were aware of Kazakhs' numerical dominance. They are inclined to picture Kazakhstan as being inhabited by their ethnic group only. The study found that this is a sign of an ongoing erosion of regional differences within the Kazakh people, which has been reinforced by linguistic discrepancy in the recent past.

The respondents did not differ in their evaluation of achievements of the country. In addition to the economic achievements, they also paid tribute to the government's management of inter-ethnic relations, security issues and commonly valued the construction of the new capital. Due to the fact that the benefits of these endeavours trickle down to the people on the ground irrespective of their ethnic origins, there is a strong validation to argue that young Kazakhs' civic spirit dominates their ethnic sensitivity.

Conclusion

In this conclusion, after presenting the key objectives of the study and illustrating how they have been addressed and achieved, I will provide the summary of the main findings. I will report on the potential contributions of this dissertation to the field of studies of national identity, particularly in the post-Soviet context. After discussing the limitations encountered during the conduct of the research, I will reflect on the nature of the study and suggest some further questions and ideas for future research.

As delineated in Chapter 1, the first objective of this research was to provide an insight into the perceptions and attitudes of young Kazakh university graduates presently living in Astana, but born and raised in different cultural and geographical settings, with regard to ethnic, civic and cultural aspects of their national identity amid multiple nation-building policies in post-Soviet Kazakhstan. I considered three groups of Kazakhs from three regions: northern-eastern and southern-western Kazakhstan, and north-western China. Their common place of study and work was the new capital-Astana.

The central finding of this study is that the construction of a new capital city, which was moved from the southern region to the north in the late 1990s amid the government's effort to moderate the ethno-linguistic division of the country inherited from the Soviet Union, coupled with the country's economic development, has solidified national solidarity. All Kazakhs, despite their different lingo-regional backgrounds, and some different views in relation to ethnic, civic and cultural components of national identity, accept the multi-ethnic and multi-lingual nature of Kazakhstan's polity.

This study has found commonalities in the way young adults assess the state's performance. It demonstrated that young Kazakh graduates follow their country's socio-economic progress with pride and place their faith in civic developments rather than solely in their own individual benefits. They refer to 'inter-ethnic stability', 'international recognition', 'capital relocation', and 'definition of borders' as the country's main achievements and find its economic growth to be exceptional. These transformations cut across ethnic affiliations and benefit all living in the country.

The second important finding is that Kazakhstani identity lags behind the Kazakh identification. The young adults know who they are ethnically, not because of the language they speak or traditions they know, but rather because of their Kazakh parents. Still, they are inclined to lower the boundaries of Kazakh identity to include outsiders if they demonstrate proficiency in the Kazakh language. Even though most of them oppose inter-ethnic marriages, it was also revealed that cultural closeness of would-be relatives may trump ethnic differences. This trend suggests that Turkic-speaking Muslim minorities, which together constitute three fourths of the whole population of the country (Chapter 3), are likely to enhance their cohesion and shift nation-building policies in the country. However, considering that the Turkish language is not as popular as Russian or English among the people of Kazakhstan and that Turkey has mainly only emotional interest in the country, with no vital economic interests, it is too premature to talk about the unification of the Turkic world.

The third major finding is that the notions of 'Kazakhness' and 'Kazakhstanshipness' are not, in the young Kazakh graduates' perception, interchangeable. The notion of 'Kazakhstani' carries political connotations and embraces all those who live in and link their futures with Kazakhstan. This study also found a degree of similarity in young adults' assertions that knowledge of the Russian language should not be a handicap for entry to the Kazakhstani society. They downplay the roles of ethnicity and birthplace too. The young adults are against the imposition of Kazakh culture on newcomers; they merely want their traditions to be respected by the foreigners. For them, the way of achieving this degree of self-respect rests in the task of strengthening Kazakhs' national consciousness in the first place.

Although, the young adults talk in terms of 'Kazakhness' rather than 'Kazakhstanshipness', the majority of them do not think in nationalist terms. This was deduced from their responses to many questions, including ones asking their views about the prospective change of the country's name, the possibility of gaining privileges based on their affiliation to the titular nation and imposition of their ethnic name on the minority groups. Noticeable was the young adults' awareness of the state's nation-building policies and unwillingness to disrupt them as they are very concerned about Kazakhstan's reputation in the eyes of the world.

One of the key findings of this research is that linguistic polarisation is no longer a stumbling block in the formation of common identity. Most of the young adults in the sample are on the margins of the language-related divergences, as they claim fluency in both Kazakh and Russian. The issue of Russian language proficiency can now be simply defined as solely a problem of Kazakh repatriates. However, it seems that on the topic of language emotions run low among the newcomers as well, as the majority of them declare willingness to send their children to schools where not only Kazakh and Russian but also English is taught at a high level. A wide penchant for English is gathering momentum, although the Russian language is successfully setting limits for its deep penetration. Russian is still seen as a language of science and technology as well as career growth. While some of the respondents want to cut back the "official" status of Russian, the majority of them view it as a ticket to modernity. The decisive factor in the dominance of the Russian language is the quality of academic literature available in that language.

Another important finding is that Islam adds a dose of national cohesion to the Kazakh nation. The vast majority of young adults in this study place religion at the core of Kazakh identity. Religion matters enormously, particularly in the issue of children's marriage. Even Russian-speaking Kazakhs show reluctance to accept marital ties with people practising religion other than Islam. Thus, the intimate lives of Kazakhs and other minority groups may remain separate as religion can sustain and reinforce barriers. However, the young adults favour depoliticised religion and show unity in the face of religious extremism. In contrast to local-born Kazakhs, those of Chinese origin had not faced discrimination on religious grounds in Kazakhstan. This is explicable given that relatively few of them practise, or visit mosques. Moreover, the political scope allocated to religious practices in Kazakhstan is wider than in China, so Kazakh repatriates' chances of experiencing restrictions to practising Islam in Kazakhstan are relatively low.

This study demonstrates that excessive exposure to higher culture (defined as *Russian*) at the expense of native (*Kazakh*) culture does not imply the weakening of ancestral commitment to ethnicity. Rather, a culturally assimilated group tends to distinguish itself from now culturally similar individuals on the basis of different ancestries. This is evident in the fact that the ethnic rhetoric of nation is more solidified in *Russified* Kazakhs than in less or *non-Russified* Kazakhs. It was interesting to observe a vibrant

presence of linguistic nationalism in Kazakhs from China, given that their home coming was primarily spearheaded on the assumption of common descent. Their current stance may be the response to the overarching role of a foreign tongue in their ethnic homeland or the role of language in the preservation of unity in diaspora.

The data revealed that native-born Kazakhs passionately give their backing to the official immigration policy and find the arrival of foreign-born Kazakhs to be justified and necessary in terms of increasing the share of titular nationality in the whole population. Alongside this finding, the study identified that the social integration of immigrants could be precipitated if they were settled in regions populated by culturally similar to them groups. For instance, Kazakh-speaking south-western-born locals are more likely to incorporate their co-ethnics of Chinese origin than Russian-speakers from the northern-eastern part of the country. It seems that a special attention to geographic areas in the settlement policy of foreign-born co-ethnics reduces not only the need for continuous government support but also helps to contain undesirable reverberation of external developments. Moreover, despite the state's ambition to amplify the share and then influence of the titular group by encouraging the return of ethnic diasporas from abroad, potential newcomers tend to be driven by material promises in the first place. Taking into account their instrumental motivation, it is not surprising that the economic growth of China is seen as presenting new opportunities for Kazakh repatriates, and therefore some, banking on their Chinese skills, are ready to leave the country or move to cities where Chinese companies operate. The government can benefit from their human capital and engage them in various politico-economic projects between Kazakhstan and China, as it will facilitate trade and increase mutual cooperation between them.

This study found that culturally-reinforced regional biases are less relevant now, as young adults from northern-eastern provinces are welcome to build close relations with Kazakhs of south-western origin or vice versa. These groups are underpinning their mutual links and form of cultural solidarity, at least, through listening to common music celebrities. Russian-speaking Kazakhs are now less marginal in cultural life that they used to be during and after the Soviet period. They tend to cite musicians, who deliver songs either in pure Kazakh or in both Kazakh and Russian. However, alongside this, it was also revealed that the territorial (civic) understanding of nation is weak among all three studied groups. The native-born Kazakhs are too obsessed with lingo-regional

differences within their own ethnic group and do not conceive of Kazakhstan to be inhabited by several other ethnicities and that Kazakh repatriates are also living in some corners of the huge territory.

The comparison of these groups' answers to questions on three aspects of national identity has helped to achieve **the second objective of the research**, which was to see whether young adults who respect ethnic values equally recognize civic and cultural ideals. For example, the careful examination of the Kazakh repatriates' responses to the language-related questions revealed not only their inclination to define language as key to Kazakh identity but also their interest in learning foreign tongues. Likewise, a strong ancestral vision of ethnicity among Russian-speaking Kazakhs does not diminish their vision of and commitment to the country's cultural and political diversity.

The last objective of the study was to make recommendations regarding the future development of national identity issues in Kazakhstan in the light of the young adults' attitudes to Kazakh and Kazakhstani identities. As was mentioned above, the centuries-old ethnic identity has stronger resonance among young graduates than recently-introduced civic one. The majority of them treat top-down projects as important and timely in terms of maintaining political stability and economic growth, yet they are still 'provisional'. Although the young adults do not intend to impose their own identity on minority groups as that could appear 'discriminatory', some of them accept and respect those foreigners who call themselves *Kazakhs* of their own free will. Considering that Kazakh people smoothly integrated the descendants of both Arabs and Mongols after the rolling back of their empires and allowed them to keep their names and some characteristics for centuries (Chapter 2), the offspring of Russian empire-builders may also be incorporated into Kazakh identity and at the same time avoid assimilation. In the future, if they concede to be called 'Kazakhs of Russian descent' instead of 'Kazakhstanis', then there would be no need for *Kazakhification* i.e. for privileging Kazakhs in Kazakhstan. Moreover, 'Kazakhs of Russian descent' are certainly going to stay as a separate "tribe" considering their different religion and the growing role of Islam in the lives of Kazakhs. So, if the admission of Russian or any other minority groups into the Kazakh nation were to depend on their knowledge of Kazakh language as Kazakh-phones advocate (Chapter 6, section 1), then Russian-speaking Kazakhs' (RKs) status would also change. To prove their affiliation to the Kazakh nation, RKs

would be equally enthusiastic in speaking their mother tongue more commonly instead of justifying their belonging on an ancestral basis as they did in this study.

This research makes a number of contributions to the theory of nationalism and to context-specific perspective in particular, namely to the literature on post-Soviet Kazakhstan. It primarily supports the latest theoretical discourses (Sekulic 2004; Janmaat 2006; Koning 2011) that people who attach importance to civic characteristics of national identity do not tend to value ethnic elements any less, or vice versa. By choosing a post-Soviet state, which unlike other counterparts in the Central Asian region, pursued more civic than ethnic nation-building policies, this study addressed these policies' implications for the titular nation by identifying the young adults' perceptions of and attitudes to various aspects of national identity. By placing these findings on a uni-dimensional continuum, ranging from ethnic to civic nationalism, with the cultural stock in the middle, this study has shown that there is no serious tension between these concepts. Groups with dissimilar doses of ethnic, cultural and civic elements are likely to compensate deficiencies and gradually develop commonality in the atmosphere of multiplicity.

Language is not, and probably will not be, the centrepiece of identity discussions among Kazakhs, which provides evidence to Brubaker's (2013:13) statement that 'language conflict has lost some of its intensity and transformative potential in recent decades, as the high noon of language-based nationalist conflicts appears to have passed.' Kazakh repatriates are still distinguishable from local-born Kazakhs by their lack of Russian language proficiency and it is a consuming anxiety for many as it stymies their chance to find decent jobs; however they are close in their perceptions that residents of Kazakhstan should have full command of these languages along with Kazakh. The declining appeal of linguistic nationalism in the country where language remains the key tool of nationalist pressure groups (Fierman 2006) further supports the fusion of ethnic-cultural-civic recognitions in the minds of the younger generation.

This study confirms Friedman's (2005: 4) thesis that stable economic progress 'fosters greater opportunity, tolerance of diversity, social mobility, commitment to fairness and dedication to democracy.' In Chapters 2 and 3 it was argued that the common view among the students of Central Asia is that Kazakhstan went for economic reform without political reform in the 1990s. The main ongoing transformation in Kazakhstan

is still economic. It is evident in the young adults' joint vision of economic success as the most significant achievement of the government and their intention to learn and teach English and Chinese at the same time as retaining Russian language skills for themselves and for their children. While its economic crystallization veered Kazakhstan toward globalisation, the young generation of Kazakhs seem to be ready to adapt to the changing circumstances and therefore reluctant to see radical political meddling. This study has also found that in the thinking of young Kazakhs the commanding heights of economic power in the country are held by ethnic Kazakhs, so they seem to be less inclined to see any motive for resorting to nationalist rhetoric. This supports Friedman's (2005) underlying argument that zero-sum games reveal the worst in people. If one believes that another's gain is his or her loss, s/he may become hostile and block the other from gaining anything. In Kazakhstan, economic opportunity structures are open to multi-linguals who are mostly Kazakhs.

It is also worth mentioning that Kazakh nationalism was harmed by the country's poor economy in the 1990s (Chapter 3). It was also not helped by its later improvement, as the young adults' general stance reveals. While the economy revived, ending desperate times for people, the new generation seems to have found itself more fortunate than their parents' generation, as the government opened a window of opportunity for them to obtain world-class education by allocating thousands of international scholarships. Yet language-based nationalist fervour is not without resonance among Kazakh repatriates, but it is mild and silenced by economic opportunities emanating from China's growth. To sum up, young Kazakh adults are well-suited to benefit from the economic boom and they are utterly aware of it.

In terms of its contribution to the knowledge, this study contributes to the body of literature on national identity in Kazakhstan. As was discussed in Chapter 1, due to the distinct position of the former capital, Almaty, in the Soviet and post-Soviet Kazakhstan, the existing literature relies excessively on the expert opinions of local intellectuals benefitting more from Russian- than Kazakh-language newspapers. This is sensible as long as the majority of western scholars consist of former *Sovietologists* who shifted their interests to Central Asia after the fall of the communist regime and aptly applied their Russian skills there. Given that Kazakhstan, like all post-Soviet states, has enjoyed only two decades of independence so far, there is little literature based on empirical researches at home and abroad. Foreign scholars are prone to use

secondary data and very few reference Kazakh-language newspapers, articles or books, despite the fact that Kazakh is the state language of Kazakhstan and used by the majority of Kazakhs. Moreover, such an overreliance on the Russian-language literature justifiably affects the way western scholars depict the ongoing transformations in the country. By selecting Almaty as an exceptional case and focusing on the relevance of north-east and south-west divide in the context of Astana, this study offers a completely different way of considering the implications of nation-building policies.

While Brubaker (1998) saw 'nationalising' policies of the states formed out of the Soviet Union, other commentators (for example, Kuzio 2002) also argued about the vibrancy of civic nationalism. In Kazakhstan, according to Sarsembayev (1999), civic nation-building policies founded on the patriotism of all Kazakhstani residents is in conflict with the covert policy of ethnic nation-building that declares Kazakhstan to be an `ethnic centre' of all Kazakhs. He even projected that providing 'Kazakhstani patriotism and Kazak nationalism appear to be incompatible in contemporary Kazakhstan, it may create a potential source of conflict' (Sarsembayev 1999: 330). This study found neither the repulsive ethnic nationalism nor the combination of civic and ethnic nationalisms, in which 'one is taken in…as long as one absorbs the culture of the dominant group' (Hall 2013: 89). What is emerging in Kazakhstan and among Kazakhs is accompanied by a general trend towards what John Hall (2013: 89) calls civility, which is 'best defined in terms of the acceptance of diverse positions or cultures'.

Moreover, by analysing the perspectives of young Kazakh graduates, this study also contributes to the existing literature on Kazakhstan's titular ethnic group. The few studies undertaken in this field have relied on qualitative or quantitative methods (most used secondary data only). This is evident in the crude descriptions such as-'civic', 'cosmopolitan' Russian-speakers, 'traditionalist', 'nationalist' Kazakh-speakers, and 'culturally unsophisticated' Kazakh repatriates-that were not based on reliable analysis (Danilovych 2010; Surucu 2002). This study, by employing both quantitative and qualitative methods, produces an entirely different insight into these groups' ethnic identification.

This study has a number of limitations. First and foremost, the use of three languages, i.e. English, Kazakh and Russian was a source of many limitations as well as a cause of an issue of validity. A combined application of three languages in any research raises

some problems, which begs clarification. Most of the literature on nations, nationalism, Central Asia and Kazakhstan that I have referred to is in English. This required the translation of all the related scholarly terms in the research instruments from English to Kazakh and Russian, which were the languages used in the field. The interviews were transcribed in Kazakh and Russian and then translated into English. Efforts were made to prevent distortion by handling back translation.

I have dealt with three very different cultures throughout this work. Certainly some terms, either in Kazakh or Russian, cannot be directly translated into English. Furthermore, while there are two separate words for "nation" in Russian, there is only one in Kazakh. Moreover, the term 'civic nation' is relatively new to Kazakhs, as it, along with other Western concepts, has been introduced quite recently. This may have caused uncertainty as to the precise implications of some concepts that are different culturally.

Apart from the size of the sample, also a limited geographical focus of the study has an inherent restraint regarding the generalization of the findings on the wider population. So it is apt to state that the analysis and inferences extracted from the data reflects best the participants of the research only. Despite this, I tried my best to have a maximum variance in the sample of the study by engaging respondents of diverse gender, age, residential setting, regions, and specialisations.

Realizing these limitations, and reflecting on how they could be addressed, helps us to see further opportunities for future researches.

A number of recent developments in Kazakhstan call for further studies. The latest breakthroughs in the field of education in Kazakhstan, which saw a state initiative to internationalise both secondary and higher educational structures by broadly recruiting teachers and academicians from around the world, though in limited numbers, have caused locally-staffed universities to lose their attractiveness and capacity to lure the brightest pupils. Education in English is gathering momentum across the country, particularly in Astana. At the time of my departure to undertake a PhD in the UK, a freshly-opened Nazarbayev University was in the process of accepting students on the basis of their English-language proficiencies in the first place. This heralds a shift from bilingual to monolingual English-language education and a wide representation of Kazakh-speaking and Russian-speaking students in the same group. In the light of this,

future studies could take the graduates of this institution (the vast bulk of them are ethnic Kazakhs) as the main target of their research and see the dose of ethnic, cultural and civic elements of national identity after their graduation and encounter with the labour market. Currently we see the emergence of a robust degree of commonality, reinforced by a deep penetration of English.

Another important event occurred earlier. As I mentioned in Chapter 3, ten thousand government-sponsored students obtained a world-class education between 2005 and 2014. When Abazov (2011:4) traced the momentum created by the program through the country's advances in the Global Competitiveness Index, he found Kazakhstan to be 'at least 20 notches better than any of the neighbouring Central Asian state'. The view of the graduates of foreign (Western) universities could also be investigated.

In the late 1990s the government announced a number of challenges the nascent state of Kazakhstan had to confront and proposed, as a way out, national unity, highly competitive economy and intellectual capacity (Yemelianova 2014). This study shows the first achievements of these three main dimensions of development. However, religion, or more generally culture, was omitted from the main state objectives and thus excluded from the nation-building materials (Yemelianova 2014: 295). Here, the young adults' responses demonstrate the salience of religious identity in their private lives and its power to trump ethnic and linguistic disparities. What this research has overlooked is the depth and variety of participants' religious affiliation. Both in the questionnaire and interview stages the young Kazakh adults were not inquired about their views regarding particular streams and interpretations of Islam. It is important to research this issue, as Yemelianova (2014: 295) argues that 'beneath the apparent cohesion of its youthful national life…there may well be powerful cultural and ideological forces at play which could one day disrupt the carefully fostered image of national unity'. It is also Rorlich's (2003) contention that although it is a vital conduit of re-islamization, 'official Islam's moral authority stands challenged' in Kazakhstan. Therefore, the Kazakh people's future re-islamization may be undertaken by unorthodox and popular Islam, as it would also confirm the democratization of the Kazakhstani policy (Rorlich 2003).

Moreover, it is worth analysing the national identity of those Kazakhs who continue to live in the regions where they were born and raised. This would be instrumental in

testing the scope of change identified in this thesis and examining the resonance of the government's nation-building policies in peripheries at large.

According to Linz (1973: 99), 'Spain today is a state for all Spaniards, a nation-state for a large part of the population, and only a state but not a nation for important minorities' (quoted in Mar-Molinero 2000: 104). This description is also somewhat applicable to Kazakhstan. This study suggests that rather than comparing Kazakhs in terms of their linguistic and regional divide, it is timely to compare them with other ethnic groups. A strong robustness of ethnic Kazakh identity and a wide receptivity to the application of civic Kazakhstani notion among young Kazakhs should also be juxtaposed with Russian-speaking and Kazakh-speaking minority-ethnicities. This would help to envisage the trajectory of the nation-building policy in the future. The readiness of minority groups to accept Kazakh identity rather than the supranational, state-created notion of 'Kazakhstani' would be decisive in the emergence of a strong nation-state, devoid of internal contradictions. Another factor that supports the necessity of exploring the perceptions of ethnic minorities regarding national identity is that unlike in many post-Soviet states, Kazakhstan allowed the Russian language to stay and gave non-Kazakhs the opportunity to participate in the economic life. According to Safran (2001:88), 'the extent to which speakers of minority languages identify themselves with the larger community (or the state) in which they reside is heavily dependent on the degree of legitimation their language is accorded'. To date, Russian-speakers in Kazakhstan have had access to schools, libraries, etc. run in their languages and so 'should have little reason to feel resentment' (Smagulova 2006). Thus, it would be interesting to observe their degree of knowledge and loyalty to the nation-building ventures in the country.

To sum up, this study confirms that the young Kazakh adults, born and raised in different cultural and geographical settings, are developing common views in relation to different aspects of national identity. The ideological uncertainty that characterised the government's nation-building policies from the early years of Soviet independence did not only not undermine political stability and economic growth but positively impacted on the young generation of Kazakhs' civic developments and their ethnic values.

Moreover, this study also suggests that due to the uniqueness of Kazakh identity which has been inclusive in its nature for centuries, the identification of minority ethnic groups

with a Kazakh rather than Kazakhstani nation could generate positive effects on nationality discourses in the future. A new generation of Kazakhs, born to Kazakh parents, will not have any reason to demand special privileges from the government on the basis of their ancestral heritage or complain about their undermined status as - in the context of the overarching civic policies - each citizen of the country will be "ethnically" Kazakh. The new reality will include all who aspire to cultural integration and it will promote fluency in the Kazakh language as a factor facilitating the participation in and contribution to Kazakh society's development.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Central Asia Map: Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan

Source: http://www.advantour.com/central-asia/map.htm

Appendix 2: Political map of Kazakhstan

. Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kazakhstan

Appendix 3.1: Astana 1999

Source: (http//:yvision.kz/post/188839) used in Arslan (2014)

Appendix 3.2: Astana 2013

Source: Arslan (2014)

Appendix 4: Three main achievements of independent Kazakhstan

	RKs (%)	KRs (%)	KKs (%)
internal political stability	23.1		2.6
first 50 developed state	38.5		5.3
educational opportunities	23.2		40.2
deserting its atomic arsenal	10.3	19.5	16.1
interethnic stability	56.3	19.5	40
revival of Kazakh language	28.5	11.2	8
membership in international organizations		2.7	13.3
achievements in foreign policy	25.7	16.8	24.2
national flag, currency, etc		5.4	2.6
relocation of the capital city	25	41.7	26.6
revival of Kazakh culture	7.7	25.5	2.6
definition of borders	10.3	10.8	16.1
chairmanship at international conferences, etc		11.4	13.4
economic development	45.1	51.4	48.2

Appendix 5: Factors that can destabilise inter-ethnic harmony

	RK (%)	KR (%)	KK (%)	Total
There is not such a factor	60	60	45	55
ignorance of people	10	2.5		4.2
outside provocation	10	5	5%	4.2
religious sects	5	25	32.5	20.8

Appendix 6: Celebrities

Intellectuals	RKs (%)	KR (%)	KK (%)	Total
Mukhtar Magauin		15		5
no one	95	25	56.4	58.8
Mukhtar Shahanov		22.5	12.8	11.8

Singers	RK (%)	KR (%)	KK (%)	Total
Meirambek Bespayev		30	25	18.3
Makpal Zhunussova	17.5			5.8
Muzart	17.5	7.5	15	13.3
Rymbayev	35	5	5	15.
no one	15	25	40	26.7

Appendix 7.1: Participant Information Sheet 1
(translation)

Research Project Title: Building a new Kazakhstani nation

My name is Bolat Yeskarauly; I am a PhD student at the University of Leicester. I would be grateful if you read this participant information sheet and help me by taking part in my research project. Before deciding to participate, it is important that you fully understand what will be required from you and what the study involves. Please read this participant information sheet carefully, and if you have any queries do not hesitate to ask me

This research seeks to explore nation-building policies and process in Kazakhstan, through examining the perception of national identity of young Kazakh adults.

You will have roughly 25 questions and you are expected to make choices from four available options or to answer by writing in the open space. Your task is to try to put your own attitude and opinion in relation to the particular issues as clearly as possible. You can leave the study, or request a break, at any time. The research has been reviewed by the University of Leicester's Code of Research Ethics. Your rights as a participant, including the right to withdraw at any point without penalty, are ensured. It is anticipated that the findings of the study will be written up for publication in a peer reviewed journal and presented at international conferences. All results will be anonymised and it will not be possible to identify individual participant's data.

Please contact for further information:

Email address: (dropped)

Contact telephone: (dropped)

Appendix 7.2: Participant information sheet 2 (translation)

My name is Bolat Yeskarauly; I am a PhD student at the University of Leicester. I would be grateful if you read this participant information sheet and help me by taking part in my research project.

Before deciding to participate it is important that you fully understand what will be required from you and what the study involves. Please read this participant information sheet carefully, and if you have any queries do not hesitate to ask me.

This research seeks to explore nation-building policies and process in Kazakhstan, through examining the perception of national identity of young Kazakh adults.

The interview will be semi-structured, i.e. I will ask not only those questions prepared before but I may request you to give me more information regarding a particular issue. With your permission, the information you provide will be recorded both in written and audio-taped form at the time of the interview. All data which is to be analysed will remain anonymous as you will be given a pseudonym. The audio tape will remain confidential and will not be heard by anyone other than myself. As a participant you are free to withdraw from the study at any time if you wish to.

The research has been reviewed by the University of Leicester's Code of Research Ethics. Your rights as a participant, including the right to withdraw at any point without penalty, are ensured. It is anticipated that the findings of the study will be written up for publication in a peer reviewed journal and presented at international conferences. All results will be anonymised and it will not be possible to identify individual participant's data.

Thank you very much for reading this participant information sheet!
If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me via email or mobile phone:

Email address: (dropped)

Contact telephone: (dropped)

Appendix 8.1: Consent Form 1

Name of Participant:

Male/Female:

Date of birth:

Researcher: Bolat Yeskarauly

I consent to participate in this study. I am satisfied with the instructions I have been provided so far and I expect to have any further information requested regarding the study supplied to me at the end of the experiment.

I have been informed that the confidentiality of the data I present will be protected. I am free to ask any questions at any time before and during the study. I have been provided with a copy of this form and the participant information sheet.

I know that I will have approximately 25 questions which I have to answer by choosing from several options or by writing in the open space. I have not been coerced in any way to participate in this study and I understand that I may terminate my participation in the study at any point I wish.

Data Protection: I agree to the University processing personal data that I have supplied. I agree to the processing of such data for any purposes connected with the Research Project as outlined to me.

Name of participant (print)………………………Signed………… Date………

Name of researcher (print)………………………Signed…………..Date………

Researcher's contact details:

Email address: (dropped)

Contact telephone: (dropped)

Appendix 8.2 Consent Form 2

Name of Participant:

Sex, Male/Female:

Date of birth:

Researcher: Bolat Yeskarauly

I consent to participate in this study. I am satisfied with the instructions I have been provided so far.

I have been informed that the confidentiality of the data I present will be protected. I am free to ask any questions at any time before and during the study. I have been provided with a copy of this form and the participant information sheet.

I know that it will be a semi-structured interview therefore I might be asked several other questions, besides those prepared before, in the course of the interview. I have not been coerced in any way to participate in this study and I understand that I may terminate my participation in the study at any point I wish.

Data Protection: I agree to the University processing personal data that I have supplied. I agree to the processing of such data for any purposes connected with the Research Project as outlined to me.

Name of participant (print)………………………Signed………… Date………

Name of researcher (print).………………………Signed…………..Date…

Researcher's contact details:

Email address: (dropped)

Contact telephone: (dropped)

Appendix 9: Questionnaire

Main Questions (some questions were dropped from the questionnaires of Kazakh Repatriates)

1. **Do you think that everyone living in Kazakhstan should be considered Kazakh regardless of his or her ethnic origin?**

   a) Yes

   b) No

   c) I don't know

2. **Do you agree that it is possible for a person to consider himself/herself to be Kazakh or Russian (or other) and Kazakhstani at the same time?**

a) Yes

b) No

c) I don't know

3. **In your view, what are the most (M) and**

4. **the least (L) important characteristics for considering a person to be a true member of the Kazakhstani society?**

a) Respect laws and political institutions

b) Be a citizen

c) Consider Kazakhstan a homeland

d) Use Kazakh as main language

e) Be an ethnic Kazakh

f) Be born in Kazakhstan

g) Be able to speak Kazakh

h) Be able to speak Russian

i) Be able to speak both Kazakh and Russian

5. **In your view, what are the most (M) and**

6. **the least (L) important characteristics for considering a person to be a Kazakh?**

a) To be able to speak Kazakh

b) To be fluent in Kazakh

c) To have Kazakh parents

d) To be able to play in dombra

e) To be Muslim

f) To know old traditions and culture

7. **Which of the following opinions regarding Kazakh repatriates (oralmans) do you agree with? (Most (M) and**

8. **Least (L))**

a) The return of ethnic Kazakhs from abroad represents the reestablishment of historical justice and is absolutely justified

b) Their return is necessary for increasing the share of Kazakhs in Kazakhstan

c) Their return is conditioned by political goals and does not represent genuine assistance to oralmans

d) The return of ethnic Kazakhs is premature, since at the present time there are insufficient resources for their housing and employment in Kazakhstan

e) The return of ethnic Kazakhs is unfair, because the state should first resolve the problems of its citizens regardless of nationality

f) The return of ethnic Kazakhs is problematic, because some Kazakhs who come from other countries have a different mentality, and they find it difficult to adapt in Kazakhstan

Which of the following actions/choices would you approve? (Questions 7, 8, 9, 10)

9. **Answer either YES or NO**

	someone from a different ethnic group	someone from a different religion	someone from a different region of Kazakhstan	Kazakh repatriate (oralman)
Would you accept as a neighbour				
Would you accept as a close friend				
Would you let your children marry				

10. **Answer either Yes or No**

	because you don't speak Kazakh well	because of the region you came from	because of the religion you practice	because you don't speak Russian well
Have you ever been treated unfairly in Kazakhstan				

11. Answer either Yes or No

	Singer you adore most	Intellectual (writer, poet, academicians) you adore most
Write down the name of the present-day Kazakhstan-based	1)	1)

12. If you were an employer hiring a new staff, which of the following characteristics would you rely on most (M)?

a) I would take into consideration whether he or she is from my own zhuz or hire the one who is more close in terms of lineage

b) I would hire the one who is from my region (oblast)

c) I would consider his or her religion

d) I would look at the personal characteristics such as: loyalty, sincerity

e) I would be concerned about his or her professional characteristics such as: knowledge, experience, competence

f) For me, one's nationality is important, I would hire someone from my own ethnic group (Kazakh, Russian, Uzbek)

g) I would look at his knowledge of languages (Kazakh, Russian and English)

13. Are you thinking about emigrating? _____ (Yes, No) If yes, then why _____and where_____?

14. Some people think that in today's increasingly globalized world national belonging is irrelevant. Do you agree with it and why?

a) Yes

b) No

c) I don't know

15. Do you think that there is any threat to the interethnic stability in Kazakhstan? (Yes or No)_____, if yes then, please name three of them

    a) _____

    b) _____

    c) _____

16. Which achievements of the independent Kazakhstan are you proud of, please, name three of them:

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

17. Do you think that everybody living in Kazakhstan should have equal rights (despite gender, religion, ethnicity, language etc)? If not then why?

    a) Yes,

    b) No_____

    c) I don't know

18. If you had an official authority, how would you solve the language issue in Kazakhstan?

a) I would require everyone to speak in Kazakh and deprive the Russian language of its current status

b) I would require everyone to speak in Russian and deprive the Kazakh language of its current status, as it is very old and not competitive

c) I would require everyone to be bilingual, thus speak Kazakh and Russian fluently

d) I would require everyone to be trilingual, thus speak Kazakh, Russian and English fluently

e) I would allow everyone to make choice

19. Do you agree with those who claim that Kazakhstan should be renamed to Kazakh Republic sooner or later?

a) Yes

b) No

c) I don't know

20. In which of the following languages would you like to raise your children?

a) Only in Kazakh

b) Only in Russian

c) In Kazakh and Russian

d) In Kazakh, Russian and English

e) Kazakh and English

f) Russian and English

g) _____

21. Do you think that Islam should be the only official religion in Kazakhstan?

a) Yes

b) No

c) I don't know

22. Do you agree with those who claim that Kazakh repatriates (especially from China and Mongolia) should learn Russian as immediately as possible?

a) Yes

b) No

c) I don't know

23. Do you think that Kazakhs, as a titular group, should be given more privileges at the expense of other ethnic minorities in Kazakhstan?

   a) Yes

   b) No

   c) I don't know

24. Do you agree with those who claim that one should speak Kazakh language in order to work in the governmental structures?

a) Yes

b) No

c) I don't know

25. Where were you born (state and city)? _____

26. Are you a citizen of Kazakhstan? _____

27. How old are you? _____

28. Where the majority of your high school education passed?

(State, oblast, city, village)_____

29. What is your nationality? _____

30. You are: male___ or female_____

31. To which degree do you know these languages? (ranking strong -5-4-3-2-1- weak)

	writing	speaking	reading	listening
Kazakh				
Russian				
English				
Other-				

32. If you don't speak well any of the above languages, do you plan to learn it in the future?

   a) Yes

   b) No

   c) I don't know

33. What was the **main** language of instruction in your school?

   a) Kazakh b) Russian   c) English d) other_____

34. Which country and city your university is located in?

   _____

35. What was the **main** language of instruction in your undergraduate course?

a) Kazakh b) Russian   c) English d) other_____

36. What is your present occupation?

   a)   public sector b) private sector c) self-employed d) unemployed

   e)_____

37. Some information about your parents:

	Nationality	University degree, College, High school diploma etc.	The place they were born
father			
mother			

38. What kind of newspapers do you read? _____

39. Are you interested in the foreign cuisine, news, cultural life or sports of another country?

a) Yes

b) No

c) I don't know

40. What is your religion? _____

41. Do you presently attend religious services (in mosque, church, etc.)?

    a) Yes

    b) No

42. Are you a member of any political party, association or organization?

a) Yes

b) No

43. If yes, which one_____

44. Are you married? (Yes or No) _____, If yes, is your spouse of the same

(Yes or _____ No)

religion	ethnicity	region

45. What language do you often speak at home? _____

46. What is your estimated monthly income? _____

47. Have you ever lived/been abroad? (Yes or No) _____ If yes, where exactly

_____ and for how long_____?

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