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# **Multiculturalism: A comparative analysis of western countries and Kazakhstan**

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## **Abstract**

The article seeks to confirm the hypothesis that multiculturalism can be viewed as the idea of nation-building in multinational post-communist countries that gained independence after the fall of the Soviet Union via comparative qualitative research methods. Based on the analysis of current domestic and foreign policy in Kazakhstan, multiculturalism is shown to be an idea of nation-building in a multinational post-communist country of the former USSR. In conclusion, the negative experience of some countries is indicative not of a failure of the multiculturalism idea, but the failed attempt to apply its liberal ideas by conservative politicians.

**Keywords:** multiculturalism, nation-building, ethno-cultural, identity, civic.

## Multiculturalismo: Un análisis comparativo de los países occidentales y Kazajstán

### Resumen

El artículo busca confirmar la hipótesis de que el multiculturalismo puede ser visto como la idea de construir una nación en países multinacionales poscomunistas que obtuvieron su independencia después de la caída de la Unión Soviética a través de métodos comparativos de investigación cualitativa. Basado en el análisis de la política nacional y exterior actual en Kazajstán, se demuestra que el multiculturalismo es una idea de construcción de la nación en un país multinacional poscomunista de la antigua URSS. En conclusión, la experiencia negativa de algunos países es indicativa, no del fracaso de la idea del multiculturalismo, sino del intento fallido de aplicar sus ideas liberales por parte de los políticos conservadores.

**Palabras clave:** multiculturalismo, construcción nacional, etno-cultural, identidad, cívica.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of multiple current ethnic conflicts in the world, various assessments are given to the theory of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism is an attempt to solve the problems of immigrants and refugees. Classically, multiculturalism is a theory of cultural liberalism, which advocates for cultural diversity, cultural equality, and tolerance within the framework of a civil community. However, in recent years there has been a negative opinion about multiculturalism as an oversimplified theory

affirming ethnic and cultural fragmentation of society and opposing the formation of a nation-wide culture (BALYNSKAYA & PONOMAREV, 2018).

With this connotation, multiculturalism is the philosophy of the European salad bowl that implies conflict-free coexistence of different cultures in one state. In this sense, multiculturalism is considered to be a theory whereby immigrants have the right to, and should, preserve their culture and originality, thus making modern European nations a cultural mosaic. This type of multiculturalism has led to the emergence of various cultural segments or enclaves of numerous immigrants in European states that do not intend to incorporate into European culture, creating a kind of cultural ghetto. Naturally, this state of affairs cannot be approved by the host country that, in turn, does not take sufficient institutional measures to integrate immigrants into its cultural and civil community.

The purpose of our paper is to rehabilitate multiculturalism as an idea of nation-building in newly independent states, such as Kazakhstan. The positive experiences of Canada, Australia, and Sweden, where multiculturalism has been the official nation-building doctrine, shows that it does not lead to cultural segregation and fragmentation of society; on the contrary, it lays the groundwork for civil integration, uniting many nationalities into a single civil community in multicultural societies.

## **2. RESEARCH METHODS**

In the course of the research, the comparative method was widely used in order to compare the Multiculturalism Policy Index in the countries of the West and Kazakhstan, as well as content analysis and analysis of documents and government programs of Kazakhstan Мәңгілік Ел and Рухани Жаңғыру.

## **3. THE RISE OR FALL OF MULTICULTURALISM? NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE EXPERIENCE**

The implementation of multiculturalism as a philosophical and political doctrine involves many specific political issues: the fight against discrimination, support for ethnic non-governmental organizations, the introduction of schooling in the languages of immigrants and ethnic minorities, and the development of tolerance (BALYNSKAYA & AMELCHENKO, 2016). In this regard, Banting and KYMLICKA (2013) consider the so-called Multiculturalism Policy Index (MPI) that includes constitutional, legislative adoption of the norms of liberalism and inclusion of ethnic diversity at the political level.

KYMLICKA (2012) notes that the MPI allows for comparative studies among countries concerning their compliance with the principles of multiculturalism. Examining changes in the Multicultural Policy Index (MPI) in 21 Western countries at three historical junctures, BANTING AND KYMLICKA (2013) note that in most European countries multicultural policy in the whole does not recede, as evidenced by an increase of the MPI in Europe and traditional immigration countries, such as Canada and Australia.

Thus, with reference to the research of BANTING AND KYMLICKA (2013), the failure of multiculturalism announced by the heads of European states in 2010 is a premature declaration. After all, multiculturalism implies not only preservation and respect of many, sometimes completely different cultures, but also their integration into a single civil community. In this process, the same responsibility rests with both immigrants, that is, people who come to a country with a different ethnic, religious and political culture and the policy of the host country that should foster the desire and duty of immigrants to integrate into a single civic and legal framework. In this respect, the efforts of the host party should be maximal.

Exploring multiculturalism in Canada, BERRY (2013) answers in the affirmative to the question if there can be both cultural pluralism and social cohesion in Canada and if the first

component is compatible with the second component. Modern psychological evidence suggests that these two components are actually compatible. Thus, exploring the dynamics of multiculturalism in Canada, BERRY (2013) makes a conclusion about compatibility of cultural diversity and civil cohesion.

Exploring multicultural policies and civic identity of different immigrant generations in European countries, IGARASHI (2019) shows that multicultural policies narrow the gap between the civic identities of indigenous inhabitants and immigrants. This proves that multiculturalism does not lead to cultural segregation and fragmentation of society, but, on the contrary, lays the groundwork for civic integration and cohesion of people of many nationalities into a single civil community (SYUKUR & NIMSAI, 2018).

In general, the successful practices of Canada, Australia, and Sweden where multiculturalism has been the official nation-building doctrine shows that it does not lead to cultural segregation and social fragmentation, but rather serves as a basis for civil integration and cohesion of many nationalities into a single civil community. MALAKHOV (2002), a researcher of the theory of multiculturalism in the West and in Russia, altered in a way the typology of RADTKE (2001) to distinguish three multiculturalism discourses: moralistic, postmodern, reactive or fundamentalist.

1) According to the first, moralistic, discourse, multiculturalism is an ideal model of peaceful coexistence of various ethnic groups in the same civil society. RADTKE (2001) refers to this type of discourse as socio-pedagogical multiculturalism aimed at fostering tolerance within the framework of liberal democratic values.

2) Postmodern form of multicultural, or culinary-cynical discourse in the classification of RADTKE (2001) is advocated by intellectuals from the academic setting under the slogan Long live the difference—but without altering the status quo. The cynicism of this approach reflects in the following point of view: We welcome your otherness, but on the condition that you remain where you are now and that our well-being does not suffer any damage. Kymlicka (2012) also refers to this perfunctory version of multiculturalism as 3S theory. Festive multiculturalism is limited only to the folkloric façade of ethnoculture.

In our opinion, the failure of multiculturalism declared by the leaders of France and Germany where the MPI is below average rather indicates a failure of its so-called culinary-cynical version with a cursory view on multiculturalism and without a major effort to integrate immigrants into a single economic, political, and civil field of activity. As a result, these governments have obtained ethnic isolationism and social fallouts of ethnic ghettos dissatisfied with their situation.



#### **4. MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY OF KAZAKHSTAN**

Kazakhstan is one of the 15 post-Soviet countries that emerged after the fall of the USSR; it is going through the nation-building process, whereby the choice of political doctrine and a national idea is a crucial issue. At this stage, the national idea of Мәңгілік Ел has been formed in Kazakhstan, which translates as Eternal Land. While Japan is called the Land of the Rising Sun, China is the Heavenly Empire, and Korea is the Land of Morning Calm, Kazakhstan is the Land of the Great Steppe. The slogan Мәңгілік Ел should be understood as the idea of continuity and historical memory of the ancestral land. The process of Kazakhstan polyethnization was accelerated during the first decades of the twentieth century. In 1915, the share of East Slavs—Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians, etc.—increased to 29.6 %, while the Kazakh share dropped to 65.1 % (ZHUMASULTANOV, 2005).

Subsequently, the polyethnization process in society accelerated during the period when Kazakhstan was a part of the USSR. While the Soviet regime was being established, representatives of various social strata were forcibly displaced from Russia and Ukraine to Kazakhstan: dispossessed peasants, clergy, opposition, and former tsarist administration officials. During the years of great terror, more than forty ethnic groups of the Soviet

Union, the so-called punished peoples, were subjected to total and partial deportation.

A singular place in the history of Kazakhstan is held by the deportation of ethnic groups that were undesirable for Stalin's regime. In 1937, more than 2.4 thousand families of Iranians, Azerbaijanians, Kurds, and Armenians were deported from Azerbaijan and Armenia to South Kazakhstan, Dzhambul, and Almaty regions. In August 1937, the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of the Bolsheviks issued an order to evict Koreans from the Far East to Kazakhstan and Central Asia. In total, 110 thousand Koreans were deported (SAKTAGANOVA, 2000: BOUIHI & BAHAJ, 2019).

In the prewar period, Poles were subjected to partial deportation. In 1940, 105 thousand Poles were deported from Western Ukraine and Belarus to Kazakhstan. In general, the number of Poles in Kazakhstan in 1941 exceeded 130 thousand. In 1943–1944, the North Caucasian peoples were subjected to mass deportation; in total, 570,000 Balkars, Karachays, Ingushes, and Chechens were resettled to Kazakhstan. According to the data, as of the beginning of 2018, Kazakhs constitute a majority of the population (67.47 %), followed by Russians (19.76 %), Uzbeks (3.18 %), Ukrainians (1.53 %), Uyghurs (1.46 %), and Tatars (1.11 %).

There are other ethnic groups, including those deported during the Stalinist purges: Ingushes, Germans, Moldovans, Mordovians, Chuvashes, Greeks, Dungans, Jews, and many others. In the modern period, Kazakhstan pursues a liberal democratic domestic policy based on the ideas of multiculturalism—the theory of interethnic tolerance and respect for the interests of all ethnic groups living within the same civil community.

## **5. RESULTS**

The Multicultural Policy Index (MPI) measures the legislative enactment of liberalism standards and ethnic diversity maintained in the socio-cultural and political level. The MPI reflects the ability of ethnic minorities to participate in the economic, socio-cultural and political life of society on an equal footing with the ethnic majority. KYMLICKA (2012) notes that the MPI allows for comparative studies among countries concerning their compliance with the principles of multiculturalism. Measuring the Multicultural Policy Index (MPI) is a research project at Queen's University in Canada. This index measures multiculturalism in 21 Western democracies. The index is based on indicators of policy towards national minorities, integration and anti-discrimination policies. The MPI includes six major criteria that score 1 point if applicable (YES), 0 points if not applicable

(NO), and 0.5 if the criterion is met partially. The six MPI criteria include:

1. The presence of federal autonomies along ethnic lines
2. The official standing of languages
3. The legal framework ensuring the representation of ethnic minorities in power
4. The public funding of schools and universities with minority languages of instruction
5. The constitutional and parliamentary affirmation of the country's being multinational
6. The international legal standing of ethnic minorities

Table 1: MPI indicators in Kazakhstan

<b>Categories</b>	
<b>NO</b> 1. Presence of federal autonomies along ethnic lines	The Constitution of Kazakhstan states that Kazakhstan is a unitary, secular, democratic, legal, and social state. Kazakhstan includes 14 territorial units—regions that have not been delimited along ethnic lines.

<p><b>YES</b> 2. Official standing of languages</p>	<p>Kazakhstan has adopted and operates bilingualism. The current language policy in Kazakhstan is carried out in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan On Languages in the Republic of Kazakhstan of July 11, 1997.</p>
<p><b>Partially</b> 3. Legal framework ensuring</p>	<p>There are no official rules to ensure the representation of national minorities in the government and the Parliament of Kazakhstan.</p>
<p><b>YES</b> 4. Public funding of schools and universities teaching in the languages of ethnic minorities</p>	<p>According to Art. 9 para. 3 of the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan of 27 July, 2007 On Education, there are 88 schools in Kazakhstan where the curriculum is entirely in Uzbek, Uighur, Tajik, and Ukrainian languages. 108 schools teach languages of 22 ethnic groups of Kazakhstan. (Kadyraliyeva et al., 2015)</p>
<p><b>YES</b> 5. Constitutional, legislative, and parliamentary affirmation of multiculturalism at the national and/or regional and municipal levels.</p>	<p>Kazakhstan is forming its own national idea Мәңгәлік Ел that is declared to be based on the ideas of multiculturalism. This is the second and sixth paragraphs of the patriotic act Мәңгәлік Ел that states that the national idea of Kazakhstan is based on the idea of national unity, peace and harmony and common history, culture and language.</p>
<p><b>NO</b> 6. The international legal standing of ethnic minorities</p>	<p>Kazakhstan is a unitary state. The ethnic groups of Kazakhstan are united into one political entity of the Republic of Kazakhstan and do not have the right to act as a separate international legal entity.</p>



				media			
United States	1	1	0	1	0	0.5	3.5
Canada	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
United Kingdom	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
France	0.5	0.5	0	0.5	0	0.5	2
Kazakhstan	0	1	0.5	1	1	0	3.5

As we can see from the comparative analysis of the MPI in Kazakhstan, its value is 3.5, which is above the average. At the same time, the MPIs in Canada and the United Kingdom are the highest, and in France, it is the lowest. Kazakhstan and the United States have the same MPIs.

This analysis makes it possible to consider the MPI in a given country and compare them with Kazakhstan.

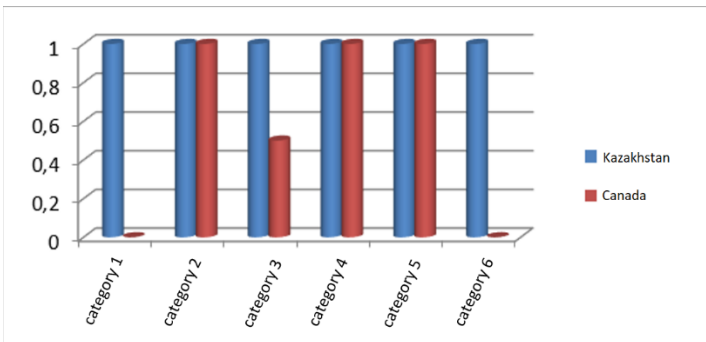


Figure 1: Comparative analysis of MPIs of Canada and Kazakhstan (KADYRALIEVA, 2015)

The figure below shows that the MPI of Canada is the highest—6, and the IMP of Kazakhstan is 3.5. Kazakhstan is behind Canada in Category 1, since Kazakhstan does not have territorial autonomies on an ethnic basis. In Category 3, in contrast to Quebec in Canada, the ethnic groups of Kazakhstan do not have the right to act as separate international legal entities. In other categories, Kazakhstan and Canada are equal.

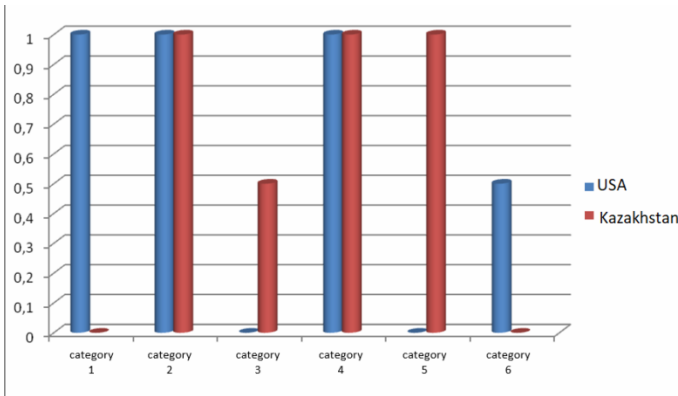


Figure 2: Comparative analysis of MPIs of the US and Kazakhstan (KADYRALIEVA, 2015)



The MPIs of the US and Kazakhstan are equal. However, in Categories 3 and 5, the United States is behind Kazakhstan. According to Category 1, the United States officially has autonomy in Puerto Rico, but the status of this island is debatable because Puerto Ricans are not eligible to vote in the US presidential elections. According to the 5th criterion, the US Constitution does not mention the pluralism of American society and the official status of Puerto Rico. Kazakhstan is behind the United States on the first and sixth MPI criteria, since Kazakhstan does not have ethnic-based federal autonomies and the ethnic groups of Kazakhstan are not separate international legal entities. At the same time, the US Constitution provides international legal personality for Puerto Rico, but Puerto American rights in domestic policy are prejudiced.

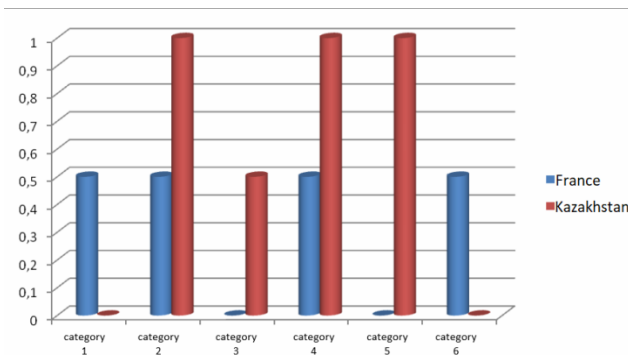


Figure 3: Comparative analysis of MPIs of France and Kazakhstan  
(KADYRALIEVA, 2015)

The MPIs of France and Kazakhstan are 2 and 3.5, respectively.

According to criteria 1, 2, 4 and 5, France meets them in part. France is a unitary state but in 1982 the country adopted the policy of decentralizing power, the process of partial devolution of authority to local and regional authorities. The state language of France is French. Regional languages are recognized but affirmation at the state level is still limited. Public funding for universities/schools/media in minority languages is partially provided. In France, the involvement of national frontier provinces at the international level has become more active in part, for example, Brittany (KADYRALIYEVA ET AL., 2015). Criteria 3 and 5 are not applicable to France. Same as before, Kazakhstan is behind in criteria 1 and 6.

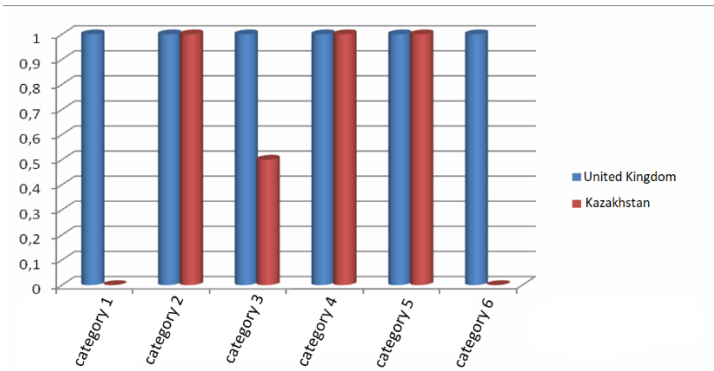


Figure 4: Comparative analysis of MPIs of the UK and Kazakhstan  
 (KADYRALIEVA, 2015)

The MPI of the UK is 6, which is one of the highest in Europe; the MPI of Kazakhstan is 3.5. The United Kingdom is a unitary state. However, each province has certain institutions of autonomous power, such as the Scottish Parliament, the National Assembly for Wales, and the Northern Ireland Assembly. English is the official language of the UK, along with which Welsh, Gaelic, Scottish, and Irish are officially used.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The hypothesis of multiculturalism as the idea of nation-building in Kazakhstan is supported by the above Multicultural

Policy Index research in Kazakhstan. According to the classification of RADTKE (2001), we can make a conclusion about the presence of moralistic, socio-pedagogical multiculturalism in Kazakhstan, which serves the idea of nation-building. Our research allows for the following conclusions and recommendations:

1. In countries that are homogeneous with the prevalence of Western Christian culture, where inter-ethnic relations mostly develop between the indigenous people and immigrants, multiculturalism was not rewarded with great success.
2. In heterogeneous countries of mass immigration, such as Canada, Australia, and the US, multiculturalism acts as an efficient nation-building idea. In Kazakhstan as a newly independent post-communist state, multiculturalism is the idea of nation-building, which unites many ethnic groups to create a new socio-cultural and political community.

The analysis of the Multicultural Policy Index (MPI) in Kazakhstan will allow for further comparative studies among countries, which is our future research objective. As guidelines, we propose to expand the MPI criteria by adding indicators of tolerance in the cultural and educational sphere of society to the four major criteria, namely:

1. Adoption of laws imposing censorship, prohibiting interethnic discord and disrespectful or inappropriate statements degrading national minorities.
  
2. The number of international peacekeeping activities aimed at combating incitement of ethnic hatred and cultivating tolerance.
  
3. Legislative protection for the freedom of conscience and the ability of national minorities to manifest their religion.
  
4. Public holidays related to the ethnic or religious holidays of the ethnic groups in the country.

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