

THE STATE POLICY OF KAZAKHSTAN FOR THE RETURNING KAZAHKS TO THEIR HOMELAND AFTER 1991

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Abstract: Kazakhstan ranks 9th in the world ranking of countries stretching over extended territorial areas. As Kazakhstan is ranked only 63rd place in the world population ranking, population growth in Kazakhstan is of strategic importance. However, in 1991, when Kazakhstan gained its independence, more than 130 nations lived on the country, and the native population, the Kazakhs were an ethnic minority in their own country. All these factors have played an important role in developing Kazakhstan's state policy to stimulate growth of Kazakh ethnic population in its own country. Only four member states of the United Nations claim as state policy the returning and settling in the country of origin of the migrant population. These countries are Germany, Israel, Russian Federation and Kazakhstan. In Kazakhstan we use the word 'oralman' for the ethnic Kazakhs who used to live abroad, but they came back to their homeland. In the recent years, after its independence the Kazakh government has developed its on "oralman policy" and thus facilitated the return to their own home of about 1 million Kazakh.

Although the Kazakh state supports the return policy, this percentage accounts for only 5% of the total population, which is considered to be a great success of demographic policy of the Kazakhstan government. This study will assess Kazakhstan's government policy and Kazakh state principles for increasing the ethnic Kazakh population from 1991 to the present.

Keywords: Kazakhstan, state policy, kazakh ethnic, oralman, migrant

Introduction

Kazakhstan's lands that are located in the heart of the Eurasia and they always have been a center of constant migrations and demographic processes for centuries. In the Soviet period Kazakhstan became the "Social Laboratory" of the Soviet Union. Nowadays, Kazakhstan is hosting representatives of more than 100 nations. Many of them are Kazakhs with 66% and Russians 21% (Ethnic Structure of Kazakhstan in 2015, Committee on Statics of the Republic of Kazakhstan). All the ethnic groups are living in friendship and tolerance, and there is respect for each other's culture and traditions. From this perspective Kazakhstan is a unique example of a country that has ensured peace and stability inside the country for people coming from different ethnic communities, speaking different languages and religions.

The political, economic and social changes in the world and especially in Eurasia at the beginning of the 90s of the XXth century led to the formation of new independent states and major migration surges. All these facts played an important role in the determination of ethnic migration policy in Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan ranks 9th in the world ranking of countries stretching over extended territorial areas. As Kazakhstan is ranked only 63rd place in the world population ranking, population growth in Kazakhstan is of strategic importance. The ethnic migration policy in Kazakhstan was developed to correct injustices such as oppression in the previous period against the Kazakhs. Also, it is

very important the considerable loss of population. In this regard, the process of ethnic Kazakhs migration to their homeland is closely linked to the formation of the nation, the preservation of national identity and culture, as well as the ensuring of internal stability. Thanks to the policy during the independence period, a total of 1.66 million immigrants, including 954,000 Kazakhs, were settled in Kazakhstan (Demographic development in 1990-2014, Committee on Statics of the Republic of Kazakhstan).

After independence, Kazakhstan's diaspora policy was focused to get back the ethnic Kazakhs into Kazakhstan's territory. The President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev (Nazarbayev, 2012:73), in his '2050 Strategy' states: "Our history teaches us: a country is strong if it's people are in unity. For this reason, the real issue for us is the union of the Kazakhs. Unity, solidarity, patience and prestige first of all what our Kazakhs need: "one people-one country-one fate". The "oralman" term is used for ethnic Kazakhs who use to live outside Kazakhstan after the independence of the Republic of Kazakhstan. In Kazakh language the meaning of "oralman" is "returning". However, the term "oralman" has a temporary social and economic character. The Kazakhs, who came back to Kazakhstan by the government support and benefited from many facilities provided by the state policy, became Kazakhstan citizenship.

The Republic of Kazakhstan develops and implements state support programs for oralmans. In this study I will examine Kazakhstan's oralman policy during the independence period, its causes, the proper process, legislation, and problems of this group.

Situation assessment and the fundamental reason of the Oralman policy

Historical events and the challenges that the Kazakh people experienced in the XX century significantly reduced the Kazakh people population. During the Tsarist and Soviet period they were the "criminal or suspected" representatives of other nations to Kazakhstan, their territory was transformed into a social laboratory for the experiment of "Soviet Individual". As a result, in 1991, when Kazakhstan gained its independence, more than 130 ethnic representatives lived in the Kazakhstan and the Kazakhs became ethnic minorities in their own lands. The proportion of Kazakhs compared to Kazakhstan's population, in the USSR, in the 20 century shows this clearly: In 1926 the population was 61.3% Kazakh, , 29% in 1959, 36% in 1979 and 40,1% of the population was Kazakh in 1989 (Bondartsova, Gumençuk, 2013). The Kazakhs were located largely in the West and South area of the country, in the North, East and in the central areas, the Russian population was dense. Kazakhs were located in the rural areas when 77% (according to 1989 census) of the Russian population lived in the cities. Considering the fact that Russian population was majority in the cities, Russian sources were using the expression of majority Russian-speaking country for Kazakhstan.

There are two solutions regarding the increasing population potential in the world: internal resources (birth rate raising, lifespan increasing), external sources (encouraging immigrants from outside the country). Starting with the first years of independence, Kazakhstan tried to carry out efficient state policy on these two issues, which have strategic importance. During the first period of independence, the Kazakh population was encouraged to settle in the northern regions in order to prevent the danger of crossing these regions to Russia, resulting from the Russian population density in the northern regions so in 1997 the capital has been moved from Almaty south of the country to Astana situated in the center of the country. Thus Central Kazakhstan, which had a lot of Russian population became a Kazakh populated region within 15-20 years. The country has long-term promotions for births and multi-child families, and government programs of social support, but naturally, the outcome of the immigrant process in the population increase seems to be faster and clearer. At the end of the first quarter of 2015, 5,5% of Kazakhstan's citizens were oralmans, the ethnic Kazakhs outside the country (2015 Jıldın 1 Kazanna Etnikalık Köşi-Kon Turalı Akparat, 28.10.2015).

Who are the oralmans?

According to the current Law No. 477-IV on “Immigration” adopted on 22 July 2011 the official statement for “oralman” is following: “Oralman, an ethnic Kazakh who resides outside the country at the time of proclaiming independence of the Republic of Kazakhstan, who is a foreign citizen or who is not a foreign citizen, who moved to independent Kazakhstan for a permanent residence and who registered his status in accordance with the relevant legislation, and who was born outside Kazakhstan, a children who came to Kazakhstan for residence”.

The amendment dated 10 December 2013, 153-V Act, states : “Oralman, an ethnic Kazakh who resides outside the country at the time of proclaiming independence of the Republic of Kazakhstan, who is a foreign citizen or non-citizen, who has been moved to permanent residence in Kazakhstan and settled in the territory designated by the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, children who are born abroad, who are permanently residing and who come to Kazakhstan for residence”. The settlement areas of the oralmans were determined by the decision of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated March 20, 2014 and numbered 248: Akmola State, Atyrau State, Eastern Kazakhstan State, Western Kazakhstan State, Kostanaj Province, Pavlodar Province and North Kazakhstan State. Analyzing the map, we see that it is the provinces north of Kazakhstan and bordered by Russia except Akmola State, Akmola State is the province where Astana is the new capital city of Kazakhstan. The reasons for this decision can be described, that the population in general in these regions, especially the Kazakh population is low, and this was in a way measure against the negative effects of political events in the region in the recent period.

However, taking into account the status of the oralmans and the territories in which they are located, all 14 provinces of Kazakhstan, excluding Almaty and Astana, have been identified as settlement areas for oralmans by decision of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated July 8, 2014 and numbered 783.

Kazakhstan legislation and the Oralmans

The immigration policy and legislation in Kazakhstan, which was established within the framework of the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan and international standards, made it possible for immigrants to migrate to Kazakhstan.

One month before the declaration of independence of Kazakhstan, on November 18, 1991, the Government of Kazakhstan declared “Regulations on the Movement of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic from Other Republics and Foreign Countries to the Rooted / Indigenous Representatives Who Want to Work in Rural Areas” (Status of Oralmans in Kazakhstan,2006:10). At that time, this was the only way for Kazakhstan to help its former citizens to find a job in their own country, because Kazakhstan had no legal feasibility for international agreements. This decree was intended to regulate migration to Kazakhstan, as well as the development of the agricultural sector and rural areas facing a deep crisis. As a result, 61,609 ethnic Kazakhs arrived in Kazakhstan between 1991 and 1992 (Status of Oralmans in Kazakhstan,2006:10). On 26 June 1992 the “Law on Immigration to the Country” was adopted. According to the Article 1 of the Law, ethnic Kazaks are entitled to return to their “historical homeland”. In order to control the expected large migration flows, the law envisages setting the immigration quota and establishing a specialized administrative unit for ethnic migration issues.

For the Kazakhs who want to return to their homeland since 1993, the state started to set quotas for each year. While determining the immigration quota population, economic and financial situation of the country are taken into account. The rate determined separately for each calendar year was approved

by the decision of the President of Kazakhstan. With the inhabitant number allocated by the government in 1993, 10,000 families (about 40,000 people) could return to Kazakhstan. Depending on the economic situation of the country, in the 90's the share has changed significantly and was falling. In 1999 and 2000 it has decreased to 500 families. With the improvement of economic conditions in Kazakhstan, the inhabitant number started to increase since 2002. In 2005 the oralmans number has reached to 15.000 families and in 2009 to 20.000. The system has been implemented till 2012.

Applications for inclusion in quota may be made before entering Kazakhstan abroad in the diplomatic or consular missions of the Republic of Kazakhstan or after entering Kazakhstan by applying to Immigration Committee.

The implementation of the system does not restrict return of oralmans to Kazakhstan. This helps them to benefit from the social package provided by the government. Unlike other countries such as Germany, Kazakhstan does not seek the inclusion of quota to enter and reside in the country. For this reason, the number of Kazakhs who came and settled apart from the inhabitant number increased in Kazakhstan in some periods.

On 13 December 1997, the "Population Immigration Law" No. 204-1 was adopted by the Republic of Kazakhstan, and the law defines the statute of oralmans, duties and responsibilities, the immigration process, the facilities recognized and the responsibilities of the concerned bodies. The law regulated the social relations in the field of migration, legislation, economic and social bases of the immigration process, as well as the provision of necessary living conditions in the new settlement for individuals and families returning to their homeland. One of the basic principles of immigration regulations has been cited as providing comprehensive support for the return of Kazakhs to their historical homeland, the organization of placement, employment and other social assistance.

With the resolution dated August 28, 2007/no. 399 by the decision of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan was adopted "The Concept of Migration Policies of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2007-2015". This concept aims to improve the quality of the existing management mechanisms and the development of new management mechanisms in the migration processes in the Republic of Kazakhstan. Among the conceptual objectives are "to encourage the return of Kazakhs living abroad"; "Facilitating and encouraging rapid adaptation and integration of migrants"; the state's "optimization and promotion of immigration settlement in accordance with the regional development strategy".

With the decision of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated 02 December 2008 and numbered 1126 state program called "Nurlı Köş" (bright migration) has been approved. The aim of this program, prepared for 2009-2011, is to provide support to ethnic migrants who come from poor territories of the country and to former Kazakhs citizens for the rational resettlement and employment in the territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Since 2009, the oralmans number has risen to 20 thousand families and 130 million dollars have been allocated in the budget for social support.

Until 2009, more than 200 laws and legal documents related to immigration processes were adopted in Kazakhstan legislation (FIDH Kazakhstan Report, 2009:34). These include budget allocations for social expenses of oralmans, social assistance and support given, land for housing construction, temporary settlement centers, oralman status and number, etc. legal documents. These are the most important of the many support and facilities provided to those who receive the "oralman" statue in Kazakhstan

(http://egov.kz/wps/portal/Content?contentPath=/egovcontent/citizen_migration/citizenship_of_rk/article/oralmans_rights_conditions&lang=ru accessed: 11.04.2018):

- For employment, to help to improve knowledge etiquette and learning a new profession;
- Providing conditions for learning the state language and the Russian language;

- Exemption from military service in accordance with the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan
- Higher and vocational education institutions entrance examination quota (2% from the general positions)
- Provision for primary and secondary schools, pre-education institutions and along with it quotas at social security institutions.
- Provision of pensions and social allowances in accordance with the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan.
- Those who reclaim their citizenship can procure compensation for the victims of mass political oppression.
- Exemption from consular fees for entry visa to Republic of Kazakhstan
- Free of charge health services in accordance with the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan.
- Provision of the state aid that is provided to citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan.
- Possibility to cross the border without paying customs taxes and allowances.
- Free transportation for himself and his property (including animals) to the place of permanent residence.
- Financial support for housing at residence and financial support once.

In accordance with the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the local governing bodies have the right to provide facilities and compensation to the oralmans and their family members coming to the country outside the quota. In accordance with the territorial legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan, land for the oralmans and family members for the purpose of agriculture, horticulture and home construction is provisioned from the rural arable land, immigrants land fund, private land fund and reserve land funds (Report the Human Rights in Kazakhstan in 2012, 2012:20).

According to the information of the authorities, 78.6% of all incoming oralmans were provided with housing, 28.5% were given lands for individual housing construction, and 91.2% were employed. It's was set up the Oralman Councils beside the provincial governorships to help oralmans. The councils are interested in finding, analyzing and resolving the problems of oralman issues in new living conditions. However, the creation of the "Oralman" database has begun and is being developed.

The Abroad Kazakhs and the Returning Process

There were several different views on the number of ethnic Kazakhs living outside Kazakhstan. Prof. Dr. Kozina claims that there are 3.5 million Kazakhs living outside Kazakhstan (Kozina, 2007:80). According to the Language Committee of the Republic of Kazakhstan, more than 4 million Kazakhs live in 40 countries outside Kazakhstan (Bondartsova, Gumenchuk, 2013:5). Some scientists argue that there are 5.5 million Kazakhs living outside the country (Kabuldinov, 2012:193). According to the World Kazakhs Assembly, it is estimated that there are 4-4.5 million ethnic Kazakhs in more than 40 countries outside Kazakhstan (Baltabayeva, Mamashev, 2015:6). About 1.5 million Kazakhs live in Uzbekistan, 1.5 million in China, close to 1 billion in Russia, 100,000 in Turkmenistan, 80,000 in Mongolia, and 45,000 in Kyrgyzstan. An important part of the Kazakh diaspora has settled in Turkey, Afghanistan and Iran. A few Kazakhs also live in Western Europe, Asia, North and South America (Speech of Kazakhstan President Nazarbayev at the 3rd World Kazakh Congress, 25.09.2005).

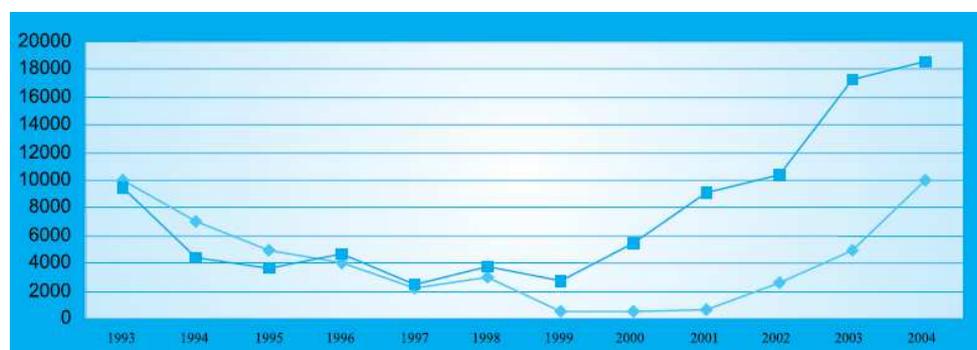
Return of ethnic Kazakhs to Kazakhstan began in 1991. According to the Migration Committee of the Ministry of Labor and Social Security of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 97 Kazakhs who returned from Mongolia in 1991 were the first oralmans (Sibagatullina, 2012:225). Between 1991-1992 after a decree of the Government of Kazakhstan dated November 18, 1991, "On the Order and Conditions of the Movement of the Former / Native Representatives of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic from

Other Republics and Foreign Countries to Work in Rural Areas" 61.609 Kazakh returned to Kazakhstan (Status of Oralman in Kazakhstan, 2006:10).

Since 1993, a quota has been introduced for the acceptance of ethnic Kazakhs from abroad in the Republic of Kazakhstan. But, as it's been already pointed out, unlike other countries in Kazakhstan, ethnic Kazakhs can enter the country apart from the total number and then applied for. Thus, there were two groups of oralman formed: those who came within the total number and those outside the total amount. Oralman who come to Kazakhstan outside of the total amount can still apply for a Kazakh citizenship and benefit from social support provided by the state to oralman. But this support is still limited compared to those who came within the total number that's been set (for example they are not exempt from customs duties and also pay for transportation costs at their place of residence). The difference between the emigrants became clearer in the end of 1990s and at the beginning of 2000s.

Oralman moving to Kazakhstan between 1993-2004

Graph no. 1.



—♦— quota rate —■— total rate of returning oralman
accessed: (Status of Oralman in Kazakhstan, 2006:11)

As we can see from the chart, the number of arrivals to the country until 1995 was less than the rate. Since 1996, the number of those returning to the country has begun to exceed the total number. In 2001, the number of returners exceeded the quota by almost 15 times. Despite the increase in the number of families covered by the quota in 2002 by more than 2,000, the number of oralman was almost four times higher. Even when the total number increased to 10,000 families in 2004, the total number of immigrants was more than 86%. The difference and increase in the number of people can be explained by the rapid economic growth in Kazakhstan and the increase in living standards compared to the neighboring countries. However, in 2004-2006 there was a heavy flow of oralman from the southern neighbor of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, especially from the southern disaster areas of the Aral Sea. The main reasons for the transition to Kazakhstan include the desire to contribute to the development of ethnic Kazakhs in their homeland and to contribute to the development of the country after the liberation of Kazakhstan's independence, the instability of economic conditions in the countries where they have lived before. Besides rapid and stable economic development of Kazakhstan, and the state support to Kazakhs outside the country and the policies towards oralman, influenced the intensity of the return.

Under the state program directed by President Nursultan Nazarbayev, and adopted in 2009 "Nurlu Köş" aiming facilitating the rational administration, settlement and integration of ethnic migrants under this program they started settlement projects, in the city of in southern Kazakhstan Province Shymkent, where oralman were compactly settled they built Asar district for 575 families, in the village of Krasniy Yar in Akmola Province Settlement projects for 279 families, in Kurchatov city in East Kazakhstan Province for 200 families.

With the cancellation of implementation of the quota and some financial support in 2012, there has been a significant decline in the number of oralman who come to the country in recent years. 33,952 oralman in 2013, 8,147 oralman in 2014 and 3,012 oralman settled in Kazakhstan until 01 October 2015 (Oralmandar Jönindegı Akparat,16.03.2015; 2015 Jıldın 1 Kazanına Etnikalık Köşi-Kon Turalı Akparat, 28.10.2015; Senat Halıktın Köşi-Konı jane Jumıspen Kamtıluvı Maseleleri Boyınşa Zan Kabıldadı, 05.11.2015, Ministry of Health and Social Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan).

In November 2015, the Senate of the Parliament of Kazakhstan adopted a new "Migration and Employment Law" envisaging a new social package for Oralman, in order to prevent this fall and encourage ethnic Kazakhs to return home. With Social package it became easier to giving Oralman status and benefiting from social assistance (Kazakistan'da Oralmandar İçin Yeni Sosyal Paket, 2015:1).

According to Ministry of Health and Social Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan since 1991 till 01.10.2015, 260.325 family totally 955.894 oralman has moved to Kazakhstan (2015 Jıldın 1 Kazanına Etnikalık Köşi-Kon Turalı Akparat, 28.10.2015, Ministry of Health and Social Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan). And this 5,5% of Kazakhstan population. Most of oralman 61,6% came from Uzbekistan, 14,2% from China, 9,2% from Mongolia, 6,8% from Mongolia, 4,6% from Russia and 3,7% other countries. 95% of Kazakhs who come to Kazakhstan are productive or will contribute to future development of the country.

Worldwide Kazakhs Congress and worldwide Kazakhs Assembly

In the first years of independence of Kazakhstan, upon the initiative of Kazakhstan President Mr. Nursultan Nazarbayev there was organized the First Worldwide Kazakhs Congress. At the First Worldwide Kazakhs Congress held in Almaty on 29 September 1992, the President invited all Kazakhs to consolidation and to return to historical homeland to Kazakhstan. The delegates from thirty-three countries took the decision to form the Worldwide Kazakhs Assembly and unanimously elected Nursultan Nazarbayev as the President of the Assembly.

The Assembly develops its activities by establishing links with cultural centers established by Kazakhs abroad. For example, 43 Kazakh cultural center in operates Russia, 16 in Europe, 12 in Turkey, eight each Uzbekistan and Mongolia, two cultural centers in the US (Baltabayeva, Mamashev, 2015:407).

Conclusion

The consolidation of the Kazakh people is the strategic objective of Kazakhstan's national security. For Kazakhstan, that has vast lands but small population and because of the political developments that caused mass immigration of Slav population to country at the end of 20th century, the most natural way of preventing loss of population was providing immigration of ethnic Kazakhs. However, the most efficient and quick measure to ensure the majority of the Kazakh people, who became minorities in the country, was their come back to the country. The Republic of Kazakhstan, which understands this very well, has been carrying out "Oriental politics" since 1991, and it has been able to provide return of about 1 million Kazakh. This is a huge achievement for Kazakhstan.

The return of ethnic Kazakhs to Kazakhstan is the basis of state migration policy for the protection of Kazakh language and Kazakh culture. Oralman who are a part of the Kazakh diaspora have preserved Kazakh culture, traditions and lifestyle. The simplest example is that in addition to western dressing, which is common in Kazakhstan, women are more conservative, wearing headscarves that raise awareness and remind the national character of the Kazakh people.

Kazakhstan's oralman policy has greatly contributed to ensuring the migration balance, which has been significant negative from the mid-90s, and it changed to positive since 2004. As of 2015, Oralmans accounted for 5.5% of Kazakhstan's population. The Republic of Kazakhstan is stable about ensuring the consolidation of the world's Kazakhs and the continuing of its oralman policy.

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