

The Descendants of Lithuanian Immigrants in Kazakhstan: Contours of Ethnic Identity*

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Research on the forced migration of Lithuanians to the east of the former Soviet Union in the 1940s and early 1950s throws up a wide range of issues. Methodologically, most of such studies are similar in terms of the sample chosen, which consists of the former prisoners of gulags and exiles who have returned to Lithuania, but it usually disregards those who stayed. Accordingly, the Lithuanian diasporas that emerged in the east after the forced migration, including in Kazakhstan, have not been studied in detail. In this article, our aim is to answer the questions of how and in what private and public contexts processes of the ethnic identification of the Lithuanian diaspora in Kazakhstan are determined, how ethnic boundaries are drawn, and what cultural and social resources are used for this purpose. As the research revealed, the conceptualisation of ethnicity implied by the Kazakhstan state that has been adopted by our informants eliminates its cultural content, or at most reduces it to forms evident in festive culture, as well as the need and possibilities for its expression. As a result, ethnic identity is constructed on the basis of what is almost the sole criterion: Lithuanian descent in the form of 'root' or 'blood'. For most of our informants, 'roots' are just a fact of origin, as shown in the practice of entering Lithuanian ethnicity in personal documents, an officially required practice which does not have and does not presuppose any enactment of ethno-cultural differences. Ethnicity, which is seen as 'in-rooted' but also as culture-less and as muted by a doubling of roots among ethnically mixed families of origin, enables a whole spectrum of manipulations of ethnic identity. One such manipulation is attempting to profit from the Lithuanian ethnic identity by turning it into a resource for acquiring benefits. The practice of profiteering from the Lithuanian ethnic identity, and thus its transformation into a resource for gaining benefits in the forms of Lithuanian citizenship and a hope of being repatriated to Lithuania, is probably the most frequent factor in becoming Lithuanian by remembering Lithuanian roots and activating the Lithuanian ethnic identity.

Keywords: Lithuanians in Kazakhstan, ethnic identity, descent, diaspora

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INTRODUCTION

A large number of studies on the Lithuanian diaspora focus on Lithuanian communities in the West, which were mainly formed as a result of economic emigration. Research on the forced migration of Lithuanians to the East is also taking place and covers a wide range of issues, in particular focusing on the traumatic experiences of forced migrants to Siberia and Central Asia, including Kazakhstan, in the Soviet period (Leinarte 2012; Balkelis 2012; Budrytė 2012; Čiubrinskas 2022; Gailienė 2008, 2015; Vyšniūnas 2022, etc.). Methodologically, most of such studies are similar in terms of the sample chosen, which consists of the former prisoners of gulags and exiles who have returned to Lithuania, but disregards those who stayed.

In terms of sociological and anthropological research *in situ*, locally situated German diasporas of forced migrants in Kazakhstan have probably been studied most of all (Sanders 2021; Diener 2004; Brown 2005). This article also focuses partly on the Lithuanian descendants of forced migrants to Kazakhstan, which consisted of the political prisoners who were sentenced to gulags in the late 1940s and were forced to stay there as exiles after Stalin's death. In the 1990s, after the restoration of the Lithuanian State, the latter supported the return of Lithuanian political prisoners and exiles, but for various reasons many descendants have chosen to stay. Another group, the largest among the contemporary Lithuanian diaspora in Kazakhstan, is made up of the descendants of Lithuanians who came to work in Kazakhstan in the 1950s and 1960s. The descendants of forced migrants and labour migrants therefore seem to form distinct groups, but the conditions of living in a totalitarian state and in post-Soviet Kazakhstan brought both groups closer to one another, enabling them to make a single target group of Kazakhstani Lithuanians.

In this article, using a sociological perspective, we aim to analyse the ethnic identifications of the Lithuanian diaspora in Kazakhstan (in the case of Karaganda) by investigating the resources and practices used in maintaining ethnicity in private and public contexts by comparing the processes of ethnic socialisation among different generations of the diaspora, as well as the influence of multicultural public space on the Lithuanian community.

The empirical data were obtained through semi-structured interviews with Kazakhstani Lithuanians, mostly conducted in Karaganda during the fieldwork in November 2021. The sample of informants was drawn using both targeted and snowball sampling. Using the first method, the search for informants in Kazakhstan started by establishing contacts with the head of the Lithuanian community in Karaganda. Before the researchers arrived in Karaganda, the head of the community posted information about our arrival and us as researchers, as well as our ongoing project on the community's social networks, and invited those interested in participating in the research to meet the researchers. Later, informants were also recruited through snowballing. The main criterion for the selection of informants was their Lithuanian origin. A total of 27 interviews were conducted. The sample was intended to include members of the first and later generations, but we were only able to find and speak to one first generation informant. The bulk of information about the first generation therefore came from the stories told by the second and third generations. The second and third generations are equally represented in the study: 13 interviews were conducted with each generation. As our aim was to compare the ethnic socialisation processes of different generations, we did not intend to interview different generations within one family. Three second-generation informants were related to three third-generation informants by family ties. The first generation informant was over 90 years old, the second generation of informants

ranged from 53 to 65 years of age, and the third generation of informants ranged from 17 to 41 years of age. The study involved 15 women and 12 men. According to the research focus, the narrative analysis method was chosen to analyse the empirical data. Most of the interviews were conducted in Russian and only a few informants were able to speak some Lithuanian. The first generation informant and about one-third of the second generation informants come from ethnically endogamous families; the rest of informants of the second generation and all of the third-generation participants in the study, according to their parents' descent, grew up in ethnically mixed families.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Most research on ethnicity emphasises its constructivist nature and its relation to identity as a key analytical category enabling ethnicity to be scrutinised by focusing on the analysis of the processes of identification, categorisation, self-understanding, commonalities and differences, bonding and grouping. Thus, drawing on boundary making between different ethnic groups deserves our attention, as according to F. Barth (1969), descriptions of cultural differences do not explain when, how or why ethnicity, as a dimension of social relations, is constructed. Therefore, he claims that what is important in the study of ethnicity is not the cultural content specific to a particular group but the drawing of social boundaries between groups (*ibid.*). However, it is cultural differences that are used to draw the boundaries. T. H. Eriksen, who stresses that ethnicity is an aspect of relations between people (Eriksen 2010: 16), also explains that social relations have an ethnic element when cultural differences are used in group relations (Eriksen 2010: 17). Thus, the concept of boundaries emphasises the importance of cultural and social differences that are highlighted in people's everyday social interactions in the process of ethnic identity formation. Ethnic identity expresses a group's perception that other groups are not the same as their own group. In other words, socio-cultural differences reinforce the boundaries of identity (Alba 2005: 22).

The strategies and successes of the integration of immigrants into their host societies are significantly influenced by the nature of the sociocultural boundaries that the society draws between different ethnic groups (Plaza 2006; Modood, Webner 1997; Alba 2005). The boundaries can be clear and transparent, meaning that the differences used to draw them are clear and that individuals can easily determine on which side of the boundaries they are positioned (Alba 2005).

However, the boundaries drawn between ethnic groups can also be blurred. Such boundaries mean that the milestones between which the boundaries are drawn are not clear, nor is there any clear positioning of the group or individual in relation to the boundaries. In the case of blurred boundaries, individuals and groups are seen as simultaneously belonging to groups located on different sides of the boundary (Alba 2005).

According to R. Alba (2005: 24–25), second-generation immigrants often find themselves in such a situation. The ambivalence of cultural positioning promotes and empowers the construction of hybrid or hyphenated identities (Alba 2005: 24–25), which are defined and constructed through social interactions both within and outside the ethnic environment (Plaza 2006: 214), as is the case with the second and third generations of Kazakhstani Lithuanians.

Ethnic identity researchers agree that ethnic identity, like other identities, is situational and contextualised. Therefore, in order to understand and explain processes of identification, it is also important to study the political, social, economic and historical contexts in which ethnic identities are constructed.

Thus in migration research, multiculturalism, among many other factors, is considered to be a particularly important contextual framework that determines the process of constructing ethnic identities (Webner 2012; Hollinger 1995).

The political management of multiculturalism promotes the recognition of difference as in the case of Kazakhstan, but it can also be marked by an essentialist approach which tends to reify ethnicity and regard it as an almost natural and unchangeable phenomenon (Giordano 2011: 62). According to A. Simmons and D. Plaza (2006), the politics of multiculturalism creates a context in which cultural boundaries become flexible and changing leading to the construction of hyphenated, hybrid, etc. identities (Jurva, Jaya 2008). It is usually assumed that in a multicultural regime immigrants do not feel either formal or strong informal pressure to undertake assimilationist strategies to incorporate them into the host society (Plaza 2006). Actually, the multicultural context has a twofold impact on the construction of ethnic identities. In some cases, depending on the context, multiculturalism enables the use and preservation of an ethnic identity, while in other situations it devalues ethnicity, making it an unimportant dimension of relations between people (Kuznecovienė 2014).

HOME OF THE KAZAKHSTANI LITHUANIANS: THE MARGINALISATION OF ETHNIC CULTURE

In research on immigrant integration and segregation, home is seen as the most important context for building an ethnic identity. Ethnicity in immigrant homes is constructed using multiple resources: the use of the mother tongue, the celebration of traditional holidays, preparing dishes of ethnic cuisine, using memory narratives, symbols of ethnic culture, etc. (Bocagni 2017; Hamilton 2017; Miller 2001; Liubiniienė 2009; Kuznecovienė 2018).

When comparing the enactment of ethnicity in the private lives of Kazakhstani Lithuanians, differences exist between the homes of both ethnically endogamous and mixed families. The reason for migration and settlement in Kazakhstan – exile or economic migration – did not play a decisive role in the informants' attitudes towards preserving Lithuanianness at home.

The homes of endogamous first-generation Lithuanian families echo the patterns of ethnic culture that have been *brought* from the home country by drawing clear ethno-cultural boundaries between *their* culture and *the outside* culture. They spoke Lithuanian, read Lithuanian newspapers and magazines, cook ethnic food, etc.

However, in most endogamous first-generation Lithuanian families, the dominant Russian culture soon found its way into the private space. This was even more the case within the first generation of mixed families, who eliminated the Lithuanian culture from the home space almost immediately after the marriage or allowed it to become marginalised: a situational process that did not 'disturb' the culture of the non-Lithuanian spouse. The main reason for this was Kazakhstani Lithuanians' conflicts and broken relations with their kin living in Lithuania, who would not accept ethnically mixed families. Another reason was the firm decision never to return to live in Lithuania and also the desire to speed up the integration of their children. The first generation's openness to cultural assimilation therefore created permeable, unclear boundaries of cultural difference for second-generation descendants trying to navigate rapid cultural assimilation. At least those who grew up in endogamous families were still able to speak Lithuanian, although quite poorly, and they had emotional ties with Lithuania due to their memories of childhood trips there.

Regardless of the ethnic composition of the family and ethnic patterns of home life, an interest in Lithuanian ethnicity appears among those of the second and third generations of the diaspora who plan to repatriate themselves to Lithuania. This gives a strong motivation to

be interested in and follow events in Lithuania over the media, to seek out relatives there and to communicate with those who have already been repatriated.

The third generation is more active in this respect than the second one. By following their incentives to find *Lithuanian roots* closely related to their plans for repatriation, they would enroll in courses in Lithuanian, browse internet portals from Lithuania, and establish friendships with their peers in Lithuania.

MARGINALISATION OF ETHNICITY IN PUBLIC SPACE

Although Kazakhstan presents itself as a multiethnic state with 130 ethnic groups, multiethnicity in Kazakhstan has its own specific characteristics.

One of the factors that has had the greatest impact on inter-ethnic relations in Kazakhstan is the politics of russification of the country, which was carried out by various methods during the Soviet period from the mid-19th to the end of mid-20th century. For example, in 1959 ethnic Kazakhs in Kazakhstan accounted for only 30% of the country's population (Zharkynbekova et al. 2015: 291). In 1989, about 1% of ethnic Russians living in Kazakhstan spoke Kazakh, and about 63% of ethnic Kazakhs communicated in Russian (ibid.).

After Kazakhstan regained independence in 1991, the ethnic politics of Kazakhstan has changed and continues to change. For example, the 1995 Constitution of the Republic established Kazakh as the sole state language (Zharkynbekova et al. 2015: 293). Russian was given the status of an inter-ethnic medium of communication, but it was specified that Russian, as an official language, could be used alongside Kazakh in state institutions and local government (Sanders 2021: 48–49). According to the 2021 census, Kazakhs make up 69.1% of the country's population (Tlepbergen et al. 2022: 1).

In 1995, the Assembly of Peoples of Kazakhstan has been established focusing on the idea of 'unity in diversity' (Kadyraliyeva 2019). This official ideology provides a background for the ideology of celebration of the 'friendship of all nations' in the country, as well as structuring the public context and influencing the processes of ethnic identifications in the country.

By describing inter-ethnic relations in Kazakhstan, all our informants would mention ethnic diversity and the long list of ethnic groups living in Kazakhstan as a distinctive feature of Kazakhstani society. The 'absence of differences between nationalities' was emphasised as an exceptionally positive feature of ethnic relations between the country's different peoples:

'When I went to school, <...> there were Lithuanians, Germans, and other nationalities. But we made no differences, no one said you are Lithuanian, you are German. There was no such thing in school' (Vytautas, the second generation).

For most informants, the best evidence of Kazakhstan's multiethnicity and good relations between ethnic groups is the 'Celebration of Nationalities'.* This festival illustrates the ethnic politics of the state and has its enactments in Karaganda city, where exclusive annual events designed to show how many 'nations' live in Kazakhstan give the opportunity to each ethnic group to 'show off itself' (Artur, the third generation) and to confirm the 'friendship of nationalities':

'We just got to the national parade.... All nationalities gather... that are located on the territory of Karaganda <...> That is, they demonstrate their national costumes ... dancing and national dishes are served. And in this way they show that we [all nations] are all friendly people' (Igor, the third generation).

Despite the euphoria of 'national parades', the everyday experiences of daily inter-ethnic relations reported by our informants reflected the discrepancy between festive, cultural

representations of ‘multiethnicity’, sponsored by the state, and the role of ethnicity in everyday interactions between people. Actually, there are not many signs of ethnic or cultural diversity in everyday interactions. As most informants told us, until the recent past, the public space and everyday life of Kazakhstan was heavily russified: in the cities, almost everyone spoke Russian:

‘We lived in the Soviet Union, and everyone spoke Russian. The Kazakh language was pushed back. Almost no one knew Kazakh, not even the Kazakhs themselves. It was not used anywhere. We had been studying [it] maybe since the seventh grade, but we didn’t learn it’ (Nijolė, the second generation).

Moreover, ethnicity and ethnic-cultural identities were imperceptible in public space, as if no one was interested in them:

‘Here in Kazakhstan, I think, a person is not very attached to nationality in terms of relations with each other ... you live in the world of other nationalities in Kazakhstan, and therefore, since childhood, we are accustomed to the fact that nationality does not matter to us. And, accordingly, we have relations not at the level of national relations, but human relations’ (Igor, the third generation).

In everyday interactions, the factor of ethnicity is reduced to an individual identity, and even a person’s name and surname are not perceived as a marker of ethnicity or hint at it. For example, Rasa said that, although her name and surname are both Lithuanian, the ethnic entry in her passport stated that she is of Russian nationality (ethnicity) without her being asked. In the city where she lived in, ‘everyone was Russian’, so no one reacted to her Lithuanian surname at school either: ‘it was the norm’ and was taken for granted:

...‘There used to be a lot of Germans where I lived in the area. A lot, that is ... And I think it was all mixed. I think there was no reaction. Most likely this was the norm’ (Rasa, the second generation).

So the public space of social relations in Kazakhstan, dominated by the state’s ethnic politics of ‘multiethnicity’, influences the construction of the Kazakhstani Lithuanian identity in two ways. On the one hand, the state’s ethnic policy and the dominant discourse create unquestioning and habitually positive attitudes to inter-ethnic relations, which are perceived by informants as exceptionally friendly and conflict-free and as of outstanding value to the Kazakhstan society. On the other hand, contrary to the dominant discourse, Kazakhstan’s public space was and still is heavily russified, lacking significant signs of a multiethnic society. Recently, as third-generation informants reported, more ethnic Kazakhs *appeared* in the public sphere, the status of the Kazakh language is being promoted, and citizens of non-Kazakh origin cannot get a job in the state institutions:

...‘The state apparatus, of course, the officials and the police, of course, there are only national [ethnic Kazakh] cadres’ (Artur, the third generation).

THE ROLE OF THE LITHUANIAN COMMUNITY

Second- and third-generation social networks have long been created without taking ethnicity into account. According to informants’ accounts, fundamental changes took place around a decade ago, when attitudes to emigration in the diaspora became stronger. For many of our informants, this led them to become involved in the Lithuanian community. Participation in the community restructured individual second- and third-generation social networks and expanded them through contacts with the people of Lithuanian descent living in Kazakhstan.

The role of the ethnic community is seen as one of the most important ways of expressing ethnic identity (Jurva, Jaya 2008; Kasa al. 2019). The organisation of the Lithuanian community called 'Lituanica' is well-known, visible and active in the public space of Karaganda and Kazakhstan for its representative role, but our informants have different stories about their involvement and participation in it. Although it was founded more than two decades ago, only a few informants participate in its activities from its establishment. The majority of our informants have joined it just recently, two to four years ago. Only a few of them, such as Markas and Aleksandras, adhere to the community as the most important resource for affirming their Lithuanianness:

'And then the second time, [I came to Lituanica] I was already more active,... I already realized my belonging to Lithuania ... that I am a Lithuanian' (Artur, the third generation).

The largest number of informants consider the community's assistance in processing the Lithuanian citizenship and repatriation documents as its most important activity. The community is also used as a place for the exchange of personal experiences and information, for getting on the community's WhatsApp group and learning how to process citizenship or repatriation paperwork.

'We heard about the Lithuanian community for the first time on TV in Karaganda. And then we touched ... then somehow life brought us together ... when they started doing paperwork [for Lithuanian citizenship]' (Anton, the third generation).

Still those who used to come to the community in the hope of getting help in preparing documents for migration to Lithuania or obtaining the Lithuanian citizenship rarely participate in community activities, justifying their passivity with reference to the lack of time they had due to their workloads in holding down 'two jobs'.

THE ETHNIC IDENTITY OF KAZAKHSTANI LITHUANIANS: FROM DOCUMENTATION TO PROFITING FROM ONE'S 'ROOTS'

The Kazakhstani Lithuanian identity construction is challenged by ambivalence between the inscription of ethnicity in official identity documents and ethnic self-identification based on the descent or ancestry in the form of 'roots'. Several informants, in response to a question about their ethnic identity, emphasised the difference between the 'nationality' (ethnicity) recorded in their identity documents and their self-identification. For example, Rasa believes that nationality is determined by 'roots', not by inscription in a passport. However, she critically reflects the following:

'Although I have Lithuanian roots, Lithuanian culture does not exist in me' (Olga, the second generation).

'Roots' or descent as a resource of ethnic identity are manipulated in different ways: the descendants of ethnically endogamous families perceive 'roots' as a self-evident trait that the person cannot choose. For informants from mixed families, the 'root' criterion raises the question of 'whose roots' – those of the father or the mother – should play a decisive role in determining one's ethnicity and possibly one's ethnic identity. About half of our informants from ethnically mixed families argue that the ethnicity of the person is determined by the ethnic descent of the father, while for the other half either the father or the mother can be involved.

For instance, Aušra has chosen to 'be a Lithuanian' because of her mother, but her sister, following her father's descent, has chosen to be Russian. Aušra's daughters also consider themselves to be ethnic Lithuanians, following their mother's decision.

Only for some informants – particularly those who grew up in families which kept some 'Lithuanian culture' at home or have memories of visiting Lithuania in their childhood – is an emotional bonding to Lithuania as important as *roots*, if not more so:

'It is the love of Lithuania that defines a Lithuanian as a Lithuanian. I would even say that a Lithuanian can be a Lithuanian without Lithuanian roots and without Lithuanian blood, but if he loves Lithuania, if he likes Lithuanian culture, he is a Lithuanian' (Artur, the third generation).

However, quite a number of informants are eager to enact their Lithuanian descent in order to instrumentalise it by aiming to improve their family's or their own well-being and/or pave the way to a 'good education' for their children. 'Roots' can therefore be used for profit as an instrument ensuring the acquisition of Lithuanian citizenship and repatriation. At the time of our fieldwork in Karaganda, many interlocutors had submitted documents and were waiting for a response regarding the granting of Lithuanian citizenship. Some were already proud of having obtained it and having double citizenship.

Actually about a quarter of informants confess that their Lithuanian descent was 'recalled' only in anticipation of the benefits that Lithuanian ethnicity can bring. For example, one young man in his early twenties was happy to explain that in the family in which he grew up never a word was uttered about their being of Lithuanian descent. However, when he turned sixteen and it was time to obtain a passport, in which the holder's ethnicity was entered, his grandmother told him about his Lithuanian descent. She suggested that he should find the necessary documents to prove this in the archives to give him a clear explanation for why he had chosen the Lithuanian ethnicity:

'It was unexpected, but interesting to know. And now, you know, we have very bad education. Everything is corrupt... that's why I'm thinking of [moving to] Lithuania' (Anton, the third generation).

For many third-generation informants, the goal of acquiring an education in Lithuania was a desirable incentive to 'recall' the Lithuanian identity in one's personal biography. For example, Vytas was not sure whether his son was consciously aware of his Lithuanian descent. Although the Lithuanian ethnicity was inscribed in his son's passport, it was only after Vytas learned about the 'Lithuanian House'** in Vilnius and the opportunity for his son to go to Lithuania for studies that he decided to encourage him to go:

... 'Already he [Vytas' son] supposedly knew who he was by nationality. And, of course, I told him that our roots are from Lithuania and that you are Lithuanian. If you want your fate to be with Lithuania in the future, then your life ... He, I must say, without much thinking, but naturally, immediately said 'Yes, I will go to study' (Vytas, the second generation).

CONCLUSIONS

In this article, we have aimed to answer the questions of how and in which private and public contexts the processes of ethnic identification of the Lithuanian diaspora in Kazakhstan are determined; how the boundaries of ethnicity are drawn; and what cultural and social resources are used for this purpose.

In analysing the ethnic identity construction of the Lithuanian immigrants' descendants in Kazakhstan, the private space was seen as a key context providing resources for its preservation, reproduction and practice. However, as most studies show (Bocagni 2017; Hamilton 2017; Miller 2001; Liubinienė 2009; Kuznecovienė 2018), that usually applies to the first generation of immigrants, who reproduced their 'culture of the homeland' and who drew clear boundaries between themselves and culture(s) outside the home. According to our research, this pattern applies only to the first generation and to ethnically endogamous families. However, such families were in the minority, and their ethno-cultural 'homogeneity' was broken down when their children started school. In fact, the first generation of Lithuanians had already blurred the ethnic boundaries around them by opening themselves up to the dominance of russification in the public space and thus 'encouraged' the cultural assimilation of the second generation. In ethnically mixed families of the first and second generations, expressions of Lithuanianness were, at best, limited to the narratives of positive memories of trips to Lithuania.

Practicing of Lithuanian ethnicity in public space is thus filled with discrepancies between Kazakhstan's officially proclaimed over-estimates of 'multiethnicity' and its under-estimates in everyday ethno-cultural interactions as reported by informants. Although Sanders (2021), who studied the ethnic identity among Kazakhstani Germans, noted that the Kazakhstani state's ethnic politics treats ethnicity as a private matter, our research shows even more how ethno-cultural differences are not only eliminated from the Lithuanian diaspora's home environment, but also ignored in everyday interactions in the public space by marginalising ethnicity almost to the point of denying its usefulness.

However, the state's ethnic politics has become entrenched through the inscription of ethnicity into one's identity documents and also through state-sponsored festive culture events and public holidays, like the 'Celebration of Nationalities.' This turns ethnicity into an occasionally entertaining, politically correct representation of what are in reality unpracticed cultural differences.

As a result, ethnicity is reduced to a minimum, and ethnic identity is constructed on the basis of what is almost the sole, and for the majority of Kazakhstani Lithuanians the most acceptable criterion: Lithuanian descent in the form of 'roots' or 'blood'.

For most of our informants, 'roots' are just a fact of descent, an entry in personal documents which does not have and does not presuppose any enactment of ethno-cultural differences. For only a small number of informants, 'roots' are treated as an 'inborn' and fundamental trait. To others, ethnicity is seen as both 'in-rooted' and as 'inscribed' in documents, as culture-less and as muted by a doubling of 'roots' (those from mixed families), which enable a whole spectrum of manipulations with ethnic identities. Some construct hyphenated ethnic identities out of this. However, hyphenation does not refer to cultural hybridity, but to the hyphenation of 'roots', which they understand very narrowly as knowledge of their origins and descent.

One such manipulation is attempting to profit from the Lithuanian ethnic identity by turning it into a resource for acquiring benefits. This is the most common factor in 'becoming Lithuanian': 'remembering' one's 'Lithuanian roots' and enacting one's Lithuanian identity. Many of our third-generation informants have chosen the entry on ethnicity to be filled with 'Lithuanian' in their personal documents when they reached adulthood. This practice was based solely on the incentive of benefitting from it to enroll in studies in Lithuania free of charge and to repatriate to Lithuania by obtaining the Lithuanian citizenship. In this case, 'Lithuanian roots' are not only 'remembered', but also 'discovered' in the archives. Only a few informants with firm 'roots' or identity are motivated to affirm and practice their ethnic identity in ethno-cultural ways.

NOTES

* Kazakhstani People's Unity Day is a public holiday (on 1st of May) to celebrate peace and mutual respect between the ethnic Kazakhs (or the Kazakhstan nation) and all the ethnicities living in the country (Knanyshbayeva 2013).

** The higher education school in Vilnius for the children of the Lithuanian descent.

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Lietuvių emigrantų palikuonys Kazachstane: etninės tapatybės kontūrai

Santrauka

Priverstinės migracijos iš Lietuvos į Sovietų Sąjungos rytus tyrimai apima platų nagrinėjamų klausimų spektrą. Metodologiniu požiūriu, šiuos tyrimus vienija tyrimo imtis, kurią sudaro grįžę į Lietuvą buvę Gulago / Karlago kaliniai ir tremtiniai. Tačiau po prievartinės migracijos Rusijoje, taip pat ir Kazachstane susidariusios lietuvių diasporos ir jų per kartas perduodama etninė tapatybė nėra išsamiau tirtos. Straipsnyje, remiantis kokybinių duomenų rinkimo metodais, siekiama atsakyti į klausimą, kaip ir kokie socialiniai, politiniai ir kultūriniai kontekstai lemia lietuvių diasporos Kazachstane etninės identifikacijos procesus, kaip braižomos etniškumo ribos, kokie kultūriniai ir socialiniai ištekliai tam naudojami. Kaip atskleidė tyrimo duomenys, Kazachstano valstybės implikuojama ir informantų habitualizuota etniškumo samprata, eliminuojanti iš jos struktūros kultūrinį turinį ir jo raiškos poreikį bei galimybes, etniškumo konstravimo išteklius susiaurina iki vienintelio, *šakny* kriterijaus. Tačiau daugumai informantų *šaknys* – tai tik kilmės faktas, o lietuviškumas – tik įrašas asmens dokumente, neturintis ir nenumatantis kultūrinių skirtumų. *Išaknintas* ir *iškultūrintas* etniškumas bei *dvigubos šaknys* (nes dauguma yra gimę etniškai mišrioje šeimoje) įgalina visą spektrą manipuliacijų lietuviška etnine tapatybe. Lietuviu (-e) *tampama* pasirenkant tėvo arba motinos *šaknis* priklausomai nuo individualaus požiūrio į *šakny* perdavimo liniją arba pasitelkiant naudos, kurią gali suteikti buvimas etniniu lietuviu, kriterijų. Lietuviškos etninės tapatybės *profitizacija* – jos pavertimas naudos gavimo ištekliumi, visų pirma dėl galimybės įgyti Lietuvos pilietybę ir į ją repatrijuoti – bene dažniausias tapimo lietuviu, lietuviškų *šakny prisiminimo* ir lietuviškos etninės tapatybės aktyvavimo veiksnys.

Raktažodžiai: diaspora, lietuviai Kazachstane, etninė tapatybė, kilmė