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## The ethno-demographic structure of Kazakhstan's population and its representation in domestic and foreign historiography

In this article a contextual overview of historiography on key historical periods and events underlying the formation of Kazakhstan's ethno-demographic structure from the late 19th century to the present is provided. Researchers are categorized into two main groups: domestic and foreign. Three primary research centers specializing in historical-demographic studies in Kazakhstan are identified as productive and effectively operating as distinct scholarly schools (Almaty, Karaganda, and Ust-Kamenogorsk). International historiography is primarily represented by English-speaking authors. Additional criteria, such as research schools, thematic directions, and contributions to the topic, are introduced for more detailed classification. The article underscores the importance of understanding the dynamics of Kazakhstan's population formation for demographic analysis and in illuminating the processes shaping national identity and the country's political landscape. Literature addressing key historical periods — imperial, Soviet, and independence — is analyzed. By incorporating domestic and international historiography, the authors highlight differences in perspectives between these groups on Kazakhstan's ethno-demographic development, its role in nation-building, identity formation, and contemporary sociopolitical realities. The article also emphasizes the importance of interdisciplinary approaches and comprehensive methodologies in studying Kazakhstan's complex demographic history and current trends.

*Keywords:* Kazakhstan, historical demography, ethno-demographic structure, domestic historiography, international/ English-language historiography.

### *Introduction*

Kazakhstan, a country characterized by its vast expanse and strategic location at the heart of Central Asia, boasts a rich tapestry of ethnic groups that have coexisted and interacted for centuries. Its ethno-demographic composition is a complex mosaic, reflecting the intricate history of migrations, the rise and fall of empires, and the subsequent influences they had on the region. Understanding the ethno-demographic structure of Kazakhstan's population is not merely an exercise in demographics but a critical inquiry into the historical processes that have shaped the nation's identity, social fabric, and political landscape. Studying Kazakhstan's population structure from a historical perspective has several advantages. It offers invaluable insights into the social dynamics, cultural transformations, and political strategies that have underpinned the nation's development. By examining the demographic shifts over time, one can discern the impacts of major historical events, such as the Russian Empire's expansion, the Soviet Union's nationality policies, and the post-Soviet nation-building efforts, on the composition and distribution of ethnic groups within Kazakhstan. During the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the ethnic structure of the population of Kazakhstan underwent significant changes. One of the starting points for this study was the Russian Empire census of 1897 and its historio-

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graphical analysis by Soviet, Kazakh, and foreign authors. The large-scale resettlement of peasants during Stolypin's agrarian reform changed the ethno-demographic structure of the population of Kazakhstan. The national liberation uprising of 1916, the revolutions of 1917, and the Civil War, which led to the establishment of the Kazakh Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, brought about profound demographic shifts in the population of Kazakhstan. The most tragic events in Kazakh national history — the famine of the 1930s, the mass deportations of the 1930s and 1940s, and the immense human losses during the Great Patriotic War — have been thoroughly examined by both domestic and international scholars.

The ethno-demographic composition of Kazakhstan and the broader Central Asian region underwent significant changes between the population censuses of 1970 and 1989, a crucial period leading up to the major geopolitical shifts that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union. These changes set the stage for the wide-ranging ethnic reconfigurations seen in the region after the Soviet era. The present study examines these shifts, highlighting the complex dynamics that transformed the ethnic landscape of Kazakhstan and its neighbors during the final decades of Soviet rule.

The aim of the present study goes beyond a mere documentation of these changes; it seeks to grasp their impact on the socio-political and cultural context of the region. Thus, this study contributes to bridging a gap in historical scholarship, providing fresh perspectives on the ethno-demographic currents that have influenced the development of modern Central Asian societies with a particular focus on how Kazakhstan has transitioned from a Soviet republic to a nation-state marked by a rich and varied ethnic composition.

#### *Materials and Research Methods*

This historiographical research focuses on analyzing a variety of scholarly works to understand the historical narratives and interpretations of Kazakhstan's socio-political and demographic developments. The initial stage involved gathering materials authored by domestic scholars, as these provided essential insights into key historical periods and themes. Authors such as M.K. Kozybaev, M.Kh. Asylbekov, T. Omarbekov, A.N. Alekseenko, V.V. Kozina, Zh.B. Abylkhozhin, F.N. Bazanova, Z. Saktaganova and S.I. Kovalskaya, were instrumental in exploring topics like migration, famine, collectivization, and demographic trends. These works allowed us to approach the subject from within the framework of Kazakh historiography, grounded in local perspectives and historical contexts.

After analyzing the domestic materials, the study expanded to include the works of foreign scholars to provide comparative viewpoints. Researchers such as S. Cameron, M.B. Olcott, S.G. Wheatcroft, S. Akiner, N. Pianciola, L. Benson, I. Svanberg, and C.A. Werner offered perspectives that connected Kazakhstan's history to broader regional and global frameworks. These sources provided insights into the influence of external political structures, identity formation, and cultural transitions, enabling a comparison with the conclusions drawn from domestic research.

This study adopts a comparative approach, synthesizing the perspectives of both domestic and international scholars to illuminate diverse interpretations and methodologies within the historiography of Kazakhstan. Drawing from a wide array of materials — including books, journal articles, encyclopedias, and conference proceedings — the research aims to present a balanced and nuanced analysis, reflecting the breadth of historical scholarship on this topic.

The core to the study is a robust methodological framework that emphasizes the critical examination of historiographical sources to investigate the ethno-demographic structure of Kazakhstan and its depiction in historical literature. By leveraging an extensive range of secondary sources, such as scholarly articles, historical texts, and previously published census data, the research constructs a detailed understanding of demographic trends and transformations. This comprehensive approach enables a critical evaluation of prevailing narratives and interpretations regarding Kazakhstan's ethno-demographic evolution, ensuring a depth of analysis without direct reliance on primary archival or census data.

Our methodological approach is predominantly qualitative, focusing on the interpretation of texts and the comparative review of historiographical contributions from both Kazakhstani and international scholars. This qualitative focus enables an in-depth exploration of the narratives, themes, and methodological orientations that characterize the historiography of Kazakhstan's demographic history. By relying solely on supporting sources, the study navigates the historiographical landscape, identifying discontinuities, biases, and areas of contention, with the aim of synthesizing these findings to offer a nuanced understanding of how Kazakhstan's ethno-demographic structure has been conceptualized and documented over time.

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*Discussion and Results*

The discussion section commences with a detailed exploration of Kazakhstan's ethno-demographic evolution, tracing its development from the end of 19th century to the contemporary era. This narrative arc captures the complex interplay of migrations, political shifts, and economic transformations that have collectively shaped the demographic landscape of the region. It begins with the pre-Russian Empire period, examining the indigenous compositions and early migrations that established foundational demographic patterns. The colonization by the Russian Empire marks a cardinal turn, initiating significant demographic shifts through policies of settlement and integration. The Soviet era further accelerated these transformations, with state-led policies, industrialization, and urbanization, driving profound changes in the ethnic composition and distribution of the population. The period following Kazakhstan's independence is characterized by the reassertion of Kazakh identity and sovereignty, alongside continuing demographic shifts influenced by migration, economic policies, and global integration. In analyzing these historical periods, key factors such as migration patterns, state policies, and economic shifts are scrutinized for their roles in influencing demographic changes. Furthermore, the discussion extends into a critical examination of how Kazakhstan's ethno-demography has been represented in both domestic and foreign historiographies. This includes an analysis of major themes and narratives, methodological tendencies, and the challenges faced in documenting and interpreting Kazakhstan's demographic history. A comparative analysis of domestic versus foreign perspectives reveals not only the diversity of approaches and interpretations but also underscores the influence of geopolitical context on the historiography of Kazakhstan's ethno-demographic structure. This comprehensive discussion aims to illuminate the multifaceted nature of Kazakhstan's demographic evolution and the varied scholarly lenses through which it has been viewed.

The journey of nation-building in Kazakhstan is deeply influenced by its Soviet history and the challenge of fostering cohesive national identity amid considerable ethnic diversity. The ethno-demographic landscape of Kazakhstan has changed significantly since the first census of the Russian Empire in 1897. In order to gain further insight into Kazakhstan's population dynamics, data from important census years, namely, 1897, 1926, 1939, and 1989, as well as the most recent census, will be analyzed.

*Study Overview and Analysis*

To ensure a thorough analysis, the main section of this study categorizes the historical overview into key periods and critical events. The work of domestic historical demographers is divided into specific analytical categories, while contributions from international researchers often shed light on lesser-known aspects of Kazakhstan's national history. This chronological structure encompasses the Imperial, Soviet, and Independence periods, each defined by distinct demographic and political shifts.

The Imperial period (1731–1917) laid the groundwork for Kazakhstan's demographic and societal transformation. After annexing Kazakh territories in the early 18th century, the Russian Empire introduced a series of administrative measures to strengthen its control. One significant change was the Steppe Statute of 1891, which introduced large-scale land reforms, encouraging Russian and Ukrainian peasant migrations through Stolypin's Agrarian Reform (1906–1914). This influx of settlers altered the demographic profile of the Kazakh steppe, with agricultural communities becoming central to the economy.

This era also witnessed notable conflicts, including the 1916 Central Asian Revolt, a response to forced conscription policies and deepened tensions between the Kazakhs and the colonial administration. This revolt and the subsequent Russian Revolutions of 1917 catalyzed significant shifts as civil unrest paved the way for the integration of Kazakh lands into the Soviet Union, leading to the creation of the Kazakh Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic in 1920 [1].

The Soviet Period (1917–1991) was characterized by transformative demographic and industrial developments. The forced collectivization campaigns of the early 1930s had catastrophic effects, leading to the Kazakh Famine of 1931–33, which resulted in the deaths of over a million Kazakhs and reshaped the region's ethnic composition. Concurrently, this period also saw rapid industrial growth, exemplified by large projects such as the Turkestan-Siberian Railway and the development of industrial hubs across Kazakhstan. During World War II, Kazakhstan's strategic role expanded, hosting relocated industries and military facilities. Sites like Baikonur and Semipalatinsk became key Soviet sites and left lasting environmental and health impacts on local communities [1]. The Virgin Lands Campaign (1954–1965) spurred further population growth, with settlers from Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus and other Soviet Republics moving to the Kazakh steppe [2].

During these periods, both domestic and foreign historiographies offer valuable perspectives for comparative analysis. However, the historiography of the Soviet period presents unique challenges due to the suppression and censorship of certain historical events. For example, severe incidents such as the above-mentioned famine were not acknowledged in Soviet-era domestic historiography and only became subject to open study and discussion after Kazakhstan gained independence. In contrast, foreign historiography often addressed these suppressed events during the Soviet era, offering insights into events that were omitted or distorted in domestic accounts. Divergences between foreign and domestic historiographies are particularly evident in discussions on the misrepresentation of national policies, harsh climatic conditions, and other politically sensitive issues. This comparative approach highlights both the gaps and overlaps in historical documentation, emphasizing the importance of reevaluating Soviet-era historiography in light of new information and post-independence scholarship.

The Independence Period (1991 – Present) marks a significant phase in Kazakhstan's demographic and political evolution. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan experienced notable shifts in migration patterns. This era was characterized by the repatriation of ethnic Kazakhs, or Oralmans, from various countries, particularly Mongolia, where many had settled after being displaced during the Soviet era. This migration aimed to bolster national identity and counteract the demographic impacts of previous Soviet policies. The return of Kazakh repatriates from Mongolia has been extensively documented, with a focus on the complexities of their reintegration into Kazakh society, including the socio-economic challenges they faced [3].

Simultaneously, non-Kazakh ethnic groups, including Russians, Ukrainians, and Germans, also began to return to their ancestral homelands. Meanwhile, the Kazakh government actively promoted the repatriation of ethnic Kazakhs, which not only reinforced national identity but also sought to address demographic imbalances [4].

The post-independence period in Kazakhstan ushered in substantial political and economic reforms that facilitated rapid urbanization and growth in various sectors, including energy, finance, and education. This era was also marked by a cultural renaissance, with a renewed emphasis on the Kazakh language and identity, which become central to the nation-building efforts [5].

The return of repatriates and the subsequent repopulation of Kazakhstan during this period offer vital insights into the dynamics of migration, identity, and state policy. These movements are critical for understanding the contemporary demographic landscape of Kazakhstan and the ongoing process of national consolidation.

### *General Studies in Domestic Historiography*

Kazakhstan takes great pride in the significant contributions of its scholars to the field of historical and ethno demography, a testament to the impactful works produced by scientists and the collective achievements of its ethno-demographic schools. The examination of Kazakhstan's ethnodemographic structure through the lens of domestic historiography has led to noteworthy advancements which can be categorized into three prominent schools, each with its own regional focus: (1) the Ethno-Demography School of Almaty, (2) the Ethno-Demography School of Oskemen, and (3) the Ethno-Demography School of Karaganda. However, to attain a more comprehensive understanding, it is essential to include additional works and scholars that have yet to be fully acknowledged.

It is important to clarify that the categorization of scholarly approaches presented in this article does not imply that each school operates independently; rather, the division serves to aid the reader's understanding. This classification also highlights prominent figures and influential contributors in the field. Nonetheless, the work of emerging historical demographers, who continue to build upon the foundational contributions of these established scholars in Kazakhstan's historiography, is also significant and warrants acknowledgment.

***Ethno-demography School of Almaty:*** The Almaty School has made significant strides in the field of ethno-demography, featuring prominent scholars such as Malik-Aidar Asylbekov, Makash Tatimov, Zhulduzbek Abylkhozhin, and Galy Azimbay. These researchers have laid a solid foundation for understanding Kazakhstan's demographic evolution, particularly focusing on social and demographic processes during the Soviet era. A notable contribution from this group is Asylbekov and Azimbay's seminal work, *Sotsialno-demograficheskie protsessy v Kazakhstane (1917–1980 gg.)* [6], which provides a detailed analysis of demographic shifts and social transformations in Kazakhstan throughout this tumultuous period.

*Malik-Aidar Asylbekov* is a renowned Kazakh historical demographer and ethnographer; a prominent figure in the study of Kazakhstan's demographic dynamics, he has played a critical role in shaping the field

of ethno-demography in the country. Asylbekov has conducted extensive research on various aspects of demography, including population trends, migration patterns, and the socio-cultural factors influencing demographic changes. His academic contributions are characterized by their comprehensive approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative methodologies to analyze demographic phenomena. One of Asylbekov's notable achievements is his role in advancing demographic education in Kazakhstan, particularly at the university level. He has been contributed to training a new generation of historical demographers and social scientists, ensuring that the field continues to evolve and adapt to contemporary challenges. His work has emphasized the importance of understanding the historical context behind demographic changes, particularly in relation to Kazakhstan's diverse ethnic composition and the impacts of historical events on population dynamics.

Although *Zhulduzbek Abylkhozhin* does not specialize in demography per se, his work has enriched the understanding of Kazakhstan's socio-historical context, particularly in relation to demographic shifts. His research covers a diverse range of topics, including the impacts of collectivization and the socio-political forces that have shaped the Kazakh population. Abylkhozhin's expertise in Kazakhstan's history offers valuable insights into how state policies and historical events have influenced demographic trends. His publications explore the connections between demographic developments and cultural identity in detail, shedding light on the evolution of Kazakh identity during and after the Soviet period. Through his extensive body of work and collaborative efforts, he has greatly enhanced the understanding of Kazakhstan's ethno-demographic landscape. Although not a demographer, Zh. Abylkhozhin, alongside K. Aldazhumanov and M. Kozybaev, played a crucial role in raising awareness about the issue of hunger in Kazakhstan by co-authoring an article in 1989. Their work was groundbreaking, being the first to address this critical issue during the Soviet era, highlighting their significant contribution to social discourse at the time [7].

In the wake of Kazakhstan's independence, domestic scholars have increasingly focused on the historical context of the 1930–1933 famine, a catastrophic event that profoundly altered the demographic landscape of the region. Notably, M. Koigeldiev has provided critical insights into the socio-economic factors behind the famine, including the effects of forced collectivization, flawed agricultural policies, and adverse environmental conditions. His research emphasizes the severe human suffering, experienced during this period and the long-term socio-economic ramifications for Kazakh society. Koigeldiev's findings enrich existing historiographical narratives on the Soviet famine, fostering a deeper understanding of this tragic chapter in Kazakhstan's history [8].

*Makash Tatimov* has concentrated his research on the socio-cultural determinants of demographic processes in Kazakhstan, emphasizing the interplay between demographic trends and socio-economic environments. His scholarship has provided crucial insights into migration, urbanization, and demographic policies, particularly during the collectivization period [9].

*Galy Azimbay* is an influential figure in the field of ethno-demography, whose research explores the interplay between ethnopolitical discourse and demographic development in Kazakhstan. He has critically examined the main trends, challenges, and prospects of ethno-demographic evolution in the country. His work underscores the importance of understanding the socio-political context in which demographic changes occur, especially concerning ethnic relations and identity formation. Azimbay's research sheds light on how demographic policies and practices affect ethnic groups within Kazakhstan, contributing to a nuanced understanding of the country's multicultural dynamics. His insights into the challenges of integration and social cohesion among various ethnic communities offer significant implications for policymaking in Kazakhstan. By addressing issues related to migration, demographic shifts, and national identity, Azimbay's contributions are essential for scholars and policymakers aiming to navigate the complexities of Kazakhstan's demographic landscape [10].

In discussing the contributions of scholars to the study of famine, it is important to acknowledge the significant role played by *Talas Omarbekov*, a leading Kazakh historian who has deepened understanding of the impact of Soviet policies on Kazakhstan, particularly through his work on the 1931–1933 famine. His research is particularly valued for its utilization of archival sources within Kazakhstan which were previously inaccessible during Soviet rule. These sources helped him to uncover the devastating effects of these policies on the Kazakh population and culture. Omarbekov's work has brought attention to the Kazakh famine as a key event in Soviet history, framing it not merely as an unfortunate byproduct of agricultural policies but as a profound demographic and cultural loss for the Kazakh nation. His research is widely acclaimed for its role in fostering a critical reevaluation of Soviet historical narratives, especially concerning Central Asia's distinct experiences under Soviet rule [11–13].

The formation of new historical narratives within the field of historical demography has been profoundly influenced by various scholars. One key figure in this area is G.M. Mendikulova, the founder of diasporology, who specializes in the study of Kazakh communities abroad [14].

B. Zhanguutin, another well-known historical demographer from Kazakhstan, has greatly advanced our knowledge of the country's demographic dynamics. His scholarly efforts have been important in addressing the country's major historical issues, yielding key insights that can contribute to the development of effective growth strategies [15].

***Ethno-demography School of Karaganda:*** The Ethno-demography School of Karaganda has produced significant scholarship from notable researchers such as Faina Bazanova, Valeriya Kozina, and Zauresh Saktaganova. Their work has extensively examined the demographic history and urban development of Central Kazakhstan, with a particular focus on the post-war era.

*Faina Bazanova* has dedicated her research to unraveling the complex demographic patterns of Kazakhstan, focusing her research on the revolutionary upheavals of the early 20th century. Her work charts the historical shifts in population composition, detailing how socio-economic transformations have shaped the demographic landscape. One of her notable contributions is her examination of the ethnic diversity of Kazakhstan's prerevolutionary population, which has laid the groundwork for understanding contemporary ethnic relations and dynamics within the country. Bazanova often draws on historical data and archival sources, which enable a robust analysis of demographic trends over time. By analyzing the impacts of policies such as collectivization and industrialization, she sheds light on the significant demographic disruptions that occurred during these periods. Her publications serve as valuable resources for scholars interested in the historical underpinnings of Kazakhstan's demographic evolution, linking past population shifts to present-day ethnic configurations [16]. Together, Bazanova, and Kozina provide a comprehensive understanding of Kazakhstan's demographic dynamics, from its prerevolutionary roots to contemporary challenges. Their research not only enriches the historiography of Kazakhstan but also serves as a foundation for future studies exploring the complex interplay between historical events, socio-economic transformations, and demographic changes. By elucidating these connections, their works foster a deeper appreciation of Kazakhstan's diverse population and the historical forces that have molded its demographic identity.

*Valeriya Kozina* has similarly advanced the field of demographic studies in Kazakhstan, notably through her book *Demograficheskaya istoriya Kazakhstana* [17]. This comprehensive analysis details the demographic evolution of Kazakhstan, spanning various key historical periods and examining their corresponding impacts on population trends. Kozina's work is distinguished by its systematic approach, marked by a meticulous examination of the interplay between social and economic factors that shape demographic processes. A notable example of the collaboration between Kazakhstan's schools of demography is Kozina's professional association with Asylbekov. Working together as established experts, M. Asylbekov and V. Kozina have co-authored multiple influential works, with the aforementioned book standing out as one of their significant joint contributions. In this work, they analyze demographic trends within the Kazakh ethnic group during the 1980s and 1990s, placing these trends within the broader context of Kazakhstan's population dynamics. The study explores patterns of population growth, territorial distribution, age and gender structures, natural population changes, educational attainment, professional trends, employment, and migration [18]. Kozina's research focuses on demographic trends in Central Kazakhstan during the transformative period from the late 19th to early 20th century, analyzing population changes, migration, ethnic composition, and socio-economic factors like education and healthcare. Alongside Asylbekov, she records the development of demography as a discipline in Kazakhstan, examining the impacts of Soviet policies and post-independence demographic shifts. Her work, which provides critical insights into how historical and economic factors shaped the nation's social fabric, is widely cited for its academic significance.

*Zauresh Saktaganova*, affiliated with Karaganda Buketov University, is one of distinguished researcher specializing in the historical and social dynamics of Kazakhstan, with a particular focus on Soviet-era policies, women's roles, and the development of non-governmental organizations. Her scholarly contributions encompass Soviet state interventions, labor mobilization during wartime, modernization and the socio-economic life in Kazakhstan. Her monographs, work, published in notable journals, reflects a rigorous analysis of Kazakhstan's historical transformations, and her high citation record underscores her impact on Kazakhstan and Central Asian historical studies [19].

Indeed, the leaders in this subject are still being followed by new scientists today. But the main goal of this conversation has been to draw attention to the contributions made by the elder generation of academics who established this institution. The Karaganda School's rigorous examination of these historical events con-

tributes significantly to a broader understanding of Kazakhstan's demographic evolution and the intricate interplay between policy, ethnicity, and urbanization.

***Ethno-demography School of Ust-Kamenogorsk:*** *Nikolai Vladimirovich Alekseenko* made noteworthy contributions to the field of demography in Kazakhstan, in addition to his work as a historian and educator. His achievements in this field include: (1) Pioneer of Demographic Studies: Alekseenko played a foundational role in establishing demographic research in Kazakhstan. He was among the first to systematically examine demographic changes in the region, particularly in regard to the impact of Russian colonization on the local population; (2) Founding the first Demographic Institute: Under his leadership, the first demographic institute in Kazakhstan was established, marking an important milestone in the development of scientific research in the country. This institution became a center for training specialists and conducting advanced studies; (3) Published Research: Alekseenko authored numerous articles and monographs analyzing demographic shifts related to migration and the ethnic composition of the population. His research provided profound insights into the historical factors influencing demographic processes in Kazakhstan; (4) Methodological Innovations: He developed new methods and approaches for studying demography, both in regard to statistical data analysis and field research. This contributed to a more nuanced understanding of the demographic situation in the country; (5) Public Engagement: Alekseenko was actively involved in public initiatives aimed at addressing demographic issues, such as migration and the integration of various ethnic groups.

His legacy in the field of demography continues to influence contemporary scholarship in Kazakhstan and beyond, emphasizing the importance of a comprehensive approach to studying demographic changes in historical and cultural contexts [20, 21].

*Alexander Nikolaevich Alekseenko* is distinguished Kazakhstani scholar in demography, as well as an esteemed educator and public figure, holding a Doctorate in Historical Sciences and a professorship. Born in Ust-Kamenogorsk in the East Kazakhstan region, he began his career as a lecturer after graduating from a pedagogical institute. He later defended his doctoral dissertation at the Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh SSR.

Continuing his father's pioneering legacy in the field of historical demography in Kazakhstan, Alekseenko organized and led a demographic laboratory, focusing on migration issues, national composition, and population distribution. One of his key achievements is the methodology he developed for estimating the number of victims of the 1930–1933 famine in Kazakhstan.

Alekseenko also established the International Summer School on Demography, fostering connections with scholars from Central Asia, and chaired conferences on ethno-demographic processes in Kazakhstan. His academic contributions include creating a department of sociology and demography at the East Kazakhstan State University (VKGU), training specialists, publishing, and conducting research related to demographic policy, ethno-demography, and migration in Kazakhstan [22–24].

The next generation of scholars from this school, including Zh. Aubakirova, E. Stolyarova, and G. Sarsembayeva, continue to advance the field by examining the complex relationships between cultural practices and fertility patterns in contemporary Kazakhstan. Their contributions reinforce the role of Ust-Kamenogorsk as a leading center of ethno-demographic research. The cumulative efforts of these scholars underscore the value of integrating both historical and contemporary socio-cultural perspectives in the study of demographic shifts in Kazakhstan, offering a nuanced understanding of the factors influencing these transformations. *Zh. Aubakirova*, in particular, continues the legacy of earlier demographic scholars in Kazakhstan by building upon foundational studies of population trends and ethnic composition. Her work has advanced the understanding of the “Kazakh demographic phenomenon”, a concept previously explored by researchers exploring Kazakhstan's unique population growth dynamics. These foundational scholars laid the groundwork by examining birth rates, family structures, and migration patterns, which Aubakirova has furthered using modern methodologies and digital tools through her leadership role at the International Research Center for “Digital Social Research” at East Kazakhstan Technical University. Her research reflects and expands on earlier inquiries into the reproductive behaviors and demographic safety of Kazakh communities. She investigates how economic and cultural shifts influence birth rates and population distribution, with a special focus on intergenerational differences in reproductive choices between rural and urban populations. Aubakirova's contributions not only honor the intellectual path set by her predecessors but also extend it with contemporary data and digital analyses, adding depth to Kazakhstan's demographic studies in ways that guide policy decisions for sustainable growth [25].

In this section we have aimed to highlight the most influential figures who have been instrumental in shaping regional schools of demographic research in Kazakhstan, where historical-demographic studies are

advanced by a broad network of scholars across the country's various regions. In addition to those previously discussed, it is worth mentioning other notable regional schools, such as those led by M. Sydykov in Oral and A. Esimova in Shymkent, who continue to make impactful contributions in this field [26, 27].

### *Contributions of Foreign Scientists to National History*

International researchers examining Kazakhstan — many of whom are political scientists rather than historians — have tended to engage with themes that critique Soviet historiography, highlighting adverse demographic trends. To emphasize the importance of their contributions to Kazakh history, we have categorized their works based on the topics they addressed rather than their specific academic backgrounds, a classification which proved to be a complex endeavor for the authors. Three thematic categories were established based on the research areas: (1) Historical and Socio-Political Analysts; (2) Famine and Demographic Change Specialists; and (3) Ethnic Identity and Nationalism Researchers. Collectively, these scholars have enriched the historiography of Kazakhstan by examining its historical, social, and political transformations, particularly in the context of famine and demographic shifts. This nuanced body of work, represented by scholars such as Lawrence Krader, Martha Brill Olcott, Sarah Cameron, Niccolò Pianciola, Bhavna Dave, Stephen G. Wheatcroft, Robert Kindler, and others, contributes to a deeper understanding of the region's complex historical developments and evolving national identity.

(1) Lawrence Krader, Zev Katz, Martha Brill Olcott, Sally Cummings, and Shirin Akiner can be identified as prominent representatives of the first category of researchers. While their contributions could also align with the third category, their work corresponds more closely with the focus and characteristics of the first group. Lawrence Krader, in particular, is regarded as one of the earliest and most well-known scholars on the subject.

Krader's extensive research on the peoples of Central Asia provides a profound understanding of the region's social and ethnic compositions. His seminal work, *Peoples of Central Asia* published in 1963, offers a comprehensive analysis of the diverse groups inhabiting the region, shedding light on their historical developments, cultural practices, and social structures. Specifically, Krader's research on the Kazakh people delivers valuable insights into their nomadic traditions, social organization, and the impact of Soviet policies on their way of life [28].

Zev Katz's 1973 work is one of the earliest studies on Kazakhs during the Soviet era, offering foundational insights into their societal conditions and experiences. Katz's analysis emphasizes the socio-political and cultural dynamics affecting Kazakh identity within Soviet policies, highlighting the impacts of these policies on nomadic lifestyles and demographic shifts. His critical research into Soviet nationalities illuminates the transformations in Kazakh society, particularly through collectivization and other state actions. Katz's use of primary sources and ethnographic methods enriches his portrayal, making his work a key contribution to understanding Kazakh identity within Soviet studies and the broader historiography of Kazakhstan [29].

*Martha Brill Olcott* was one of key scholar in Central Asian studies, whose work shaped both academic discourse and policy debates on Kazakhstan's history, politics, and society. Her research covered nation-building, identity politics, economic development, and regional geopolitics, with a focus on Kazakhstan's post-Soviet transition. Her works were the culmination of a significant research project that produced multiple scientific papers. As part of this initiative, her book *The Kazakhs* synthesized extensive archival research to provide a profound analysis of Kazakh identity. Additionally, *Kazakhstan: Unfulfilled Promise* delved into the challenges of state-building in the country. Olcott also co-directed the Project on Ethnicity and Politics at Carnegie, which examined the complexities of post-Soviet ethnic dynamics, further demonstrating the scholarly impact of her contributions. Her expertise extended to advising U.S. agencies on policy and promoting understanding of cultural and religious diversity of Central Asia through collaborations with Michigan State University. Olcott's work continues to influence Eurasian studies [30].

*Sally Cummings* is a distinguished scholar in the field of Central Asian studies and is recognized for her contributions to the understanding of Kazakhstan's political landscape. One of her significant works, *Kazakhstan: Power and the Elite*, is a groundbreaking exploration of the political dynamics and elite structures in Kazakhstan following its independence in 1991. Her research is notable for its extensive use of original materials and interviews with over 150 members of the national and regional elite. This comprehensive approach shed light on the internal political mechanisms and broader geopolitical context in which Kazakhstan operates, emphasizing its strategic importance in Central Asia and its relations with both Western powers and neighboring countries. Cummings' work is particularly valuable for scholars interested in the intersec-

tion of history and politics in Kazakhstan, as it situates contemporary issues within a historical framework, highlighting the challenges and complexities faced by the nation [31, 32].

Shirin Akiner, British scholar, who has made notable contributions to Central Asian studies, particularly on Kazakhstan. Her work focuses on Kazakh identity, political change, and cultural dynamics in post-Soviet Central Asia. Through an interdisciplinary lens, Akiner provides valuable insights into Kazakhstan's national identity formation, socio-political development, and regional stability, examining its balancing act between influences from Russia, China, and other global powers. She also analyzes the role of moderate Islam in Kazakhstan's national policies. Her notable works, including *The Formation of Kazakh Identity* and studies on regional stability, are essential resources for understanding Kazakhstan's unique position in Central Asian geopolitics and nation-building [33, 34].

(2) The second category of researchers includes those dedicated to famine studies, who analyzed the severe socio-political implications of Soviet policies in Kazakhstan. Scholars such as Stephen G. Wheatcroft, Niccolò Pianciola, Robert Kindler, and Sarah Cameron are representatives of this group.

*Stephen G. Wheatcroft*, one of eminent historian, is well-regarded for his research on Soviet history and the demographic impacts of Stalin's policies, particularly the Great Famine. His analysis of Soviet policies, including forced collectivization and sedentarization, is highly relevant to understanding the 1931–1933 Kazakh famine and its effects on Kazakh society and identity. Wheatcroft's work sheds light on the long-term demographic changes in Kazakhstan, offering a critical assessment of the famine's causes and its impact on nomadic populations. His publications provide essential insights into the historical narratives surrounding Soviet policies and their ethnic consequences in Soviet Union [35].

Italian scholar *Niccolò Pianciola* has made one of impactful contributions to Kazakhstan's ethno-demographic studies, focusing on nationalism, migration, and informal economies to deepen understanding of Kazakhstani identity and social dynamics. His interdisciplinary work includes a major analysis of the 1920s–1930s demographic crises, particularly the 1931–1933 famine. In his article, *Famine in the Steppe*, Pianciola examines Soviet policies' devastating impact on Kazakh herders, leading to over a million deaths. He also explores Kazakh labor migration to Russia, analyzing the socioeconomic effects on Kazakhstani identity formation [36, 37].

*Robert Kindler* is a historian whose work on Soviet-era Kazakhstan focuses on the impact of Soviet policies on nomadic populations, especially during the collectivization period and the 1931–1933 famine. His book, *Stalin's Nomads*, details how forced sedentarization and collectivization devastated Kazakh nomadic lifestyles, causing demographic and cultural tragedies. Using primary sources, including classified archives, Kindler reveals the profound effects of Stalinist policies on Kazakh society, highlighting the link between state actions and catastrophic demographic shifts. His work reshapes narratives about Kazakhstan's history, particularly the experiences of nomadic peoples, offering a nuanced view of Soviet policy impacts on Kazakh identity [38].

*Sarah Cameron*, a historian focused on the 1920s and 1930s, critically examines Kazakhstan's Soviet-era transformation in her book *The Hungry Steppe: Famine, Violence, and the Making of Soviet Kazakhstan*. She highlights the catastrophic impact of Soviet policies, particularly the 1930s famine caused by forced collectivization and sedentarization, which aimed to dismantle the Kazakh nomadic lifestyle. Cameron argues that these policies led to mass starvation and profound cultural and demographic shifts, showing how Soviet economic restructuring intertwined with ideological repression. Her work underscores the long-lasting effects of Soviet violence on Kazakh identity and society, contributing a vital perspective on Central Asian history. In memory of Talas Omarbekov, Sarah Cameron emphasizes his crucial contributions to Kazakh historiography, particularly on the 1930s famine that decimated 25% of Kazakhstan's population. Omarbekov, a leading historian and public intellectual who passed in 2021, was notable in advocating for the rehabilitation of Stalinist repression victims and declassifying Soviet archives. His 1989 article, *Golochyekin's Genocide*, argued that the famine was an act of genocide against Kazakhs, sparking significant debate and reshaping Kazakhstan's historical narrative. Post-USSR, Omarbekov continued impactful research on the famine, Kazakh identity, and the legacy of Stalinism, a legacy Cameron urges to be further explored in honor of his work [39–41].

(3) Alexander Bennigsen, Linda Benson, Ingvar Svanberg, Bhavna Dave, and Michaela Pohl be included as representatives of the third category of scholars: Ethnic Identity and Nationalism Researchers.

*Alexander Bennigsen*, one of the leading scholars on the Muslim communities within the Soviet Union, contributed substantially to the study of Islamic identity and ethnic affiliation in the USSR and former Soviet states. In his work *Muslims of the Soviet Empire: A Guide*, Bennigsen, along with co-author Chantal

Lemercier-Quelquejay, explores the social, political, and religious aspects of life for Soviet Muslims [42]. Published in 1983, the book examines how Muslim communities managed to maintain their identity and religious customs, despite Soviet pressure towards secularization and cultural unification. The book describes how Soviet state repression and ideological pressure affected the Muslim population, examining the resistance and adaptation among these groups. The work emphasizes how ethnic ties, combined with religious identity, shaped Muslim relations both with the Soviet state and with other ethnic groups. In her monograph, Svetlana Kovalskaya presents an analysis of how foreign historiography has often interpreted the Soviet legacy through the lens of national minorities, primarily examining the relationship between titular ethnic groups and suppressed minority populations. This contrasts sharply with domestic scholars' historical emphasis on interethnic cohesion, examining the formation of these relationships and the significant moments that shaped interethnic bonds. She notes that scholars like Martha Brill Olcott have similarly explored these dynamics, focusing on the constraints imposed on ethnic majorities by minority groups. Kovalskaya highlights that while foreign scholars typically frame ethnic majority-minority relationships in terms of dominance and suppression, domestic researchers offer a more integrative perspective, exploring the foundations of interethnic relations and their complexities within the Soviet framework [43].

*Linda Benson* is a distinguished scholar in the field of Central Asian studies, with particular emphasis on the Kazakh people. Along with Ingvar Svanberg, she co-authored *China's Last Nomads: The History and Culture of China's Kazaks*. This work explores the history, culture, and social structures of Kazakhs in China, with a focus on their nomadic lifestyle, the impacts of historical changes, and their adaptation to modern circumstances. The book is regarded as a valuable resource for understanding the Kazakh identity and their place within both Chinese and Central Asian contexts. In addition to this text, Benson's work published in 1988, further examines socio-cultural aspects of Kazakhs, highlighting their resilience and the challenges they face due to political changes in China. Through these publications, Benson has enriched the understanding of Kazakh history and culture, providing insights into their unique identity and the complexities of ethnic minority status in contemporary China [44, 45].

*Ingvar Svanberg* is Swedish researcher and scholar who has made significant contributions to the study of Central Asian history, including that of Kazakhstan. His work predominantly focuses on the social, cultural, and political aspects of the region, providing insights into the historical dynamics that have shaped contemporary Kazakhstan. Possessing a keen interest in cultural and ethnic studies, he explores the complexities of cultural identity and ethnic relations in Kazakhstan. He also examines how historical processes, including Soviet policies, have influenced the formation of these identities. Svanberg has co-authored various works that investigate the intersection of Soviet history and Central Asian studies, often emphasizing the experiences of ethnic minorities and the impact of state policies on these groups. Through his research, he frequently addresses the themes of modernization and societal change in Kazakhstan, analyzing how historical events, including the Soviet era, have shaped the trajectory of Kazakh society [46].

*Bhavna Dave's* *Kazakhstan: Ethnicity, Language, and Power* offer a detailed analysis of the complex relationship between ethnicity, language, and political power in post-Soviet Kazakhstan. She explores the challenges of nation-building and ethnic representation, particularly in relation to the Kazakh government's policies promoting the Kazakh language and culture. Dave examines how these nationalizing policies have sometimes marginalized non-Kazakh ethnic groups, especially Russians, and highlights the tensions between promoting a Kazakh national identity and maintaining social cohesion. Additionally, she situates Kazakhstan's ethnic dynamics within broader geopolitical contexts, considering its strategic position and relations with neighboring powers like Russia and China. Her work emphasizes the delicate balance the Kazakh government must strike in fostering a unified national identity while ensuring ethnic inclusivity [47].

*Michaela Pohl*, an associate professor of history at Vassar College, specializes in Soviet and Central Asian history. Her research examines ethnic relations, Soviet identity, and the social impacts of Soviet policies in Kazakhstan and Central Asia. One of her notable works investigates the transformation of ethnic identities during the Soviet Union's Virgin Lands campaign, a project that brought millions of settlers to Kazakhstan, markedly altering the ethnic landscape and identity dynamics of the region [48]. Pohl's scholarship provides insight into the development of Soviet identity policies and their impact on both majority and minority ethnic groups across Kazakhstan, investigating how Soviet initiatives like the Virgin Lands resettlement sought to create a cohesive Soviet identity while also preserving ethnic distinctions.

These international researchers have significantly enriched the historiography of Kazakhstan by examining its national identity through various lenses. Their works underscore the importance of understanding the socio-political dynamics at play during key historical periods, reflecting a broader interest in how nation-

al systems evolve in response to external pressures and internal transformations. Through their analyses, they have provided critical insights that contribute to our comprehension of Kazakhstan's complex historical narrative, fostering a more nuanced understanding of its identity and social dynamics in the contemporary era.

### Conclusions

In summary, this article elucidates the complex ethno-demographic evolution of Kazakhstan from the late 19th century to the present, emphasizing the interplay between historical events and demographic changes. By distinguishing between domestic and foreign researchers, this article provides a nuanced framework for understanding the diverse perspectives that inform our understanding of Kazakhstan's population dynamics.

The analysis reveals that studying Kazakhstan's demographic landscape transcends mere statistics; it also entails a thorough exploration of the historical processes that have shaped national identity and influenced socio-political contexts. Key historical events, including Russian colonization, Soviet-era policies, and post-independence developments are shown to be intricately linked to shifts in the ethnic composition of the population. This connection highlights the significance of interdisciplinary approaches in grasping the interconnectedness of history, culture, and demographics. The study identifies historiographical gaps in existing literature, advocating for an interdisciplinary approach to uncover the diverse influences on Kazakhstan's population dynamics. It underscores the value of integrating diverse scholarly perspectives to confront biases, especially those stemming from differing research contexts. Previously, domestic historians were limited by Soviet constraints, while foreign researchers often explored topics that were absent in the local discourse.

The present article notably highlights how the Kazakhstan's independence has served as a bridge between these two historiographical "continents", allowing collaborative research that reflects Kazakhstan's evolving identity. Furthermore, it calls for continued study into Kazakhstan's demographic history, promoting a more nuanced and inclusive understanding of the country's population composition and historical trajectory. This endeavor not only enriches the academic discourse on Kazakhstan but also challenges traditional narratives that have tended to overlook the region's significance within both Central Asian and global contexts. As scholars continue to investigate these topics, they will bring to light the complex, interconnected forces that have shaped Kazakhstan's demographic and cultural landscape, contributing to a broader appreciation of its historical and contemporary significance.

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### Қазақстан халқының этнодемографиялық құрылымы мен оның отандық және шетелдік тарихнамадағы репрезентациясы

Мақалада XIX ғасырдың соңынан бастап бүгінгі күнге дейінгі Қазақстанның этнодемографиялық құрылымының қалыптасуына негіз болған негізгі тарихи кезеңдер мен оқиғалардың тарихнамасына контекстік шолу жасалған. Бұл саладағы зерттеушілерді авторлар екі негізгі топқа бөлген: отандық және шетелдік тарихшылар, олардың әрқайсысы осы тақырыпты зерттеуге қосқан үлесіне қарай әрі қарай жіктеледі. Қазақстандағы тарихи-демографиялық зерттеулердің үш ғылыми орталығы анықталды, олар ұзақ жылдар бойы жемісті жұмыс істеп келеді және маңыздылығы бойынша дербес ғылыми мектептерді қалыптастыруға негіз болуымен ерекшеленеді (Алматы, Қарағанды, Өскемен). Шетелдік тарихнаманы негізінен ағылшын тілді авторлар құрайды. Тольғырақ жіктеу үшін ғылыми мектептер, зерттеу бағыттары, белгілі бір кезеңдерді зерттеуге қосқан үлестері және т.б. сияқты қосымша критерийлер енгізілді. Қазақстандағы халықтың қалыптасу динамикасын түсіну тек демографиялық талдау үшін ғана емес, сонымен қатар елдің ұлттық болмысы мен саяси ландшафтын қалыптастыратын процестерді көрсетуде маңыздылығын атап өткен. Мақала аясында отандық тарихтың негізгі кезеңдері: империялық, кеңестік және тәуелсіздік кезеңдері туралы әдебиеттер талданды. Отандық және шетелдік тарихнамашыларға сүйене отырып авторлар, зерттеушілердің екі тобының арасындағы Қазақстанның этнодемографиялық дамуы мен оның ұлттық құрылымы, бірегейлік пен қазіргі заманғы әлеуметтік саяси шындықты қалыптастырудағы маңызы туралы көзқарастарындағы айырмашылықтарды көрсетеді. Қазақстандағы күрделі демографиялық тарих пен қазіргі заманғы демографиялық үрдістерді зерттеуде пәнаралық тәсілдер мен кешенді әдіснамаларды қолданудың маңыздылығы талқыланған.

*Кілт сөздер:* Қазақстан, тарихи демография, этнодемографиялық құрылым, отандық тарихнама, шетелдік/ағылшын тілді тарихнама.

Н.Н. Абдинасыр, С.И. Ковальская

### Этнодемографическая структура населения Казахстана и её репрезентации в отечественной и зарубежной историографии

В статье предоставлен контекстуальный обзор историографии по ключевым историческим периодам и событиям, которые лежат в основе формирования этнодемографической структуры Казахстана с конца XIX века до наших дней. Авторы разделили исследователей на две основные группы: отечественных и зарубежных. Выделены три научных центра по историко-демографическим исследованиям в Казахстане, которые плодотворно работают на протяжении многих лет и, по сути, представляют собой самостоятельные научные школы (Алматы, Караганда, Усть-Каменогорск). Зарубежная историография представлена преимущественно англоязычными авторами. Статья подчёркивает значимость понимания динамики формирования населения Казахстана не только для демографического анализа, но и для изучения процессов, формирующих национальную идентичность

и политический ландшафт страны. Проанализирована литература по ключевым периодам отечественной истории: имперскому, советскому и периоду независимости. Сравнительный анализ отечественной и зарубежной историографии позволяет выявить различия во взглядах двух групп исследователей на этнодемографическое развитие Казахстана, его значение для строительства нации, формирования идентичности и современных социополитических реалий. В статье также обсуждается важность использования междисциплинарных подходов и комплексных методологий в исследовании сложной демографической истории и современных демографических тенденций Казахстана.

*Ключевые слова:* Казахстан, историческая демография, этнодемографическая структура, отечественная историография, зарубежная/англоязычная историография.

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