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THE EVOLUTION OF THE KAZAKH NOBILITY IN 19TH CENTURY

Abstract. Regional features played a critical role in determining the nature of the transformation of peripheries under imperial rule and the particularities of their integration into that larger polity. Essential to this process was the manner in which distinct societies adapted to the empire's socio-political system—that is, their individual way of embedding themselves within a uniform imperial model. As with many other cases, Kazakh nomadic society had an individual way of adapting and entering into the imperial system. Yet if regional political transformations of the Kazakh steppe in the 19th century have been the object of historical investigation, then problem of social change in this region at the time remains largely unstudied. This essay represents an attempt to fill this designated lack. It explores social transformations in the second half of the 19th century, when certain members Kazakh nomadic society embraced the social system of the empire. The essay seeks to show how the historically closed Kazakh elite began to acquire the characteristics of an imperial estate and furthermore opened to ordinary Kazakhs. It argues that the integration of ordinary Kazakhs into the empire's privileged estates—principally the nobility and so-called honored citizens—is the proof of evolution of the Kazakh nobility. The research work based on methodology as new imperial history, social history.

Key words: social history, estates, the Kazakh steppe, the Kazakh nobility, honored citizenship.

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19 ғасырдағы Қазақ дворяндығының эволюциясы

Аңдатпа. Шет аймақтардың империялық билік аясына өту мен империя үлгісіне сай өзгерудің ерекшеліктерін анықтауда аймақтық өзгешеліктер шешуші рөл атқарды. Бұл үрдісте алуан түрлі қоғамдардың империяның саяси әлеуметтік жүйесіне бейімделу тәсілдері, яғни олардың ортақ империя үлгісіндегі жүйеге енудегі жеке жолдарын жасауы маңызды орын алды. Басқа да көптеген жағдайлар сияқты, қазақ көшпелі қоғамының да Ресей империясы жүйесіне енуі мен бейімделуінде индивидуалды жолы болды. 19 ғасырдағы Қазақ даласындағы аймақтық саяси өзгерістер бүгінгі таңға дейін тарих ғылымында жеке зерттеу объектісі болғанымен, бұл территориядағы әлеуметтік трансформация үрдісі әлі зерттелмеген. Берілген мақала тарих ғылымындағы осы мәселені толықтыруға арналады. Бұл мақала қазақ көшпелі қоғамының белгілі бөлігінің империя жүйесіне сай әлеуметтік өзгерістерге ұшырау кезеңін, атап айтқанда 19 ғасырдың екінші жартысындағы әлеуметтік өзгерістерді зерттейді. Мақалада тарихи жабық сипатта болған қазақ элитасы императорлық сословие жүйесінің ерекшеліктерін сіңіргенін, сонымен қатар қазақ қоғамының барлық мүшелеріне ашық бола бастаған үрдісі зерттеледі. Зерттеу жұмысы қазақ көшпелі қоғамындағы қара халықтың империяның артықшылыққа ие сословиелеріне – ата тегінен бергі дворяндық және құрметті азаматтар құрамына енуі қазақ дворяндығы эволюциясының дәлелі болып табылатыны тұжырымдалған. Зерттеу жұмысы жаңа империология, әлеуметтік тарих сияқты тарихи ұстанымдарға негізделген.

Түйін сөздер: әлеуметтік тарих, сословиелер, Қазақ даласы, қазақ дворяндығы, құрметті азаматтық.

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Эволюция казахского дворянства 19 века

Аннотация. Региональные особенности играли решающую роль в определении характера преобразования периферий под имперским правлением и особенностях их интеграции в имперское пространство. Важным в этом процессе были своеобразные способы, которыми разные общества приспособлялись к социополитической системе империи – то есть, их индивидуальный путь включения в однородную имперскую модель. Как со многими другими случаями, у казахского кочевого общества был свой путь в адаптации и инкорпорации в систему Российской империи. Все же, если региональные политические преобразования Казахской степи в 19 веке являлись до этого времени объектом исторического изучения, то проблема социальных изменений в этом регионе остается все еще не исследованной. Данная статья является попыткой восполнить этот пробел в исторической науке. Она исследует социальные преобразования во второй половине 19-го века, когда определенные представители казахского кочевого общества адаптировались к социальным преобразованиям по системе империи. В статье делается попытка изучить вопрос как исторически закрытая казахская элита начала приобретать особенности императорской сословной системы, и кроме того, становилась открытой обычным казахам. Исследовательская работа утверждает, что интеграция обычных казахов в привилегированные сословия империи – потомственное дворянство и так называемое почетное гражданство – является доказательством эволюции казахского дворянства. Исследование базируется на таких подходах как новая империология, социальная история.

Ключевые слова: социальная история, сословия, Казахская степь, казахское дворянство, почетное гражданство.

Introduction

In contemporary research on the Russian Empire as a multinational state, more scholars are directing their attention to the empire's regions. Regional features played a critical role in determining the nature of the transformation of peripheries under imperial rule and the particularities of their integration into that larger polity. Essential to this process was the manner in which distinct societies adapted to the empire's socio-political system—that is, their individual way of embedding themselves within a uniform imperial model. Scholars have demonstrated the ways in which different borderlands of the Russian Empire entered into this system—a process that depended on the directed policy and the attitude the imperial state. Many historical works explore this process of the socio-political incorporation of particular borderlands into the central orders of the empire (Central'naia Azia, 2001; Zapadnye okrainy; Severnyi Kavkaz, 2007; Kusber, 2008). As with many other cases, Kazakh nomadic society had an individual way of adapting and entering into the imperial system. Yet if regional political transformations of the Kazakh steppe in the 19th century have been the object of historical investigation (Abdrakhmanova 2010; Zimanov 2009), then problem of social change in this region at the time remains

largely unstudied. This essay represents an attempt to fill this designated lack.

The formation of new estates [*soslovii*] in the Steppe, and in particular the emergence of a Kazakh nobility, was the result of social differentiation of society. The empire's regional policy in the 19th-century Kazakh steppe aimed to integrate this emerging group into the political and social order of the Russian empire. With large-scale reforms on administrative management of the Steppe, St Petersburg introduced considerable change into the social structure of local society throughout the century. Among the most important alterations was the formation of new estates among the Kazakh people: officials, nobles, and honored citizens. Naturally, these estates, which combined both traditional nomadic and imperial characteristics, had their own specific properties. Nevertheless, the formation of new social groups, such the Kazakh nobility and honored citizens, challenges claims that the Kazakh nomadic society did not incorporate into imperial social space (Kappeler, 2001: 94; Kappeler, 2007).

Kazakh society up to the beginning of the 20th century continued to lead a nomadic lifestyle, and the imperial state maintained several levels of local government that were rooted in traditional patrimonial ties. This socio-economic particularity represented the main reason for the incomplete in-

tegration of Kazakh nomadic society into the imperial social system. But fundamental changes in the Kazakh Steppe and the emergence of the new social phenomena and groups influenced and gradually changed public consciousness of the Kazakh nomadic society throughout the 19th century. To be sure, traditional clans continued to exist, but Kazakh officials adopted new priorities in managing the empire's social space. So in the second half of 19th century, in line with the empire-wide policy designed to standardize estates all over the empire, the Russian administration in the Steppe tried to weaken the influences and advantages of the local elite and to strengthen a role of the Russian officials in non-Russian regions. This policy opened a door to Kazakhs who lacked aristocratic origin but aspired to be a part of the imperial privileged estate. Indeed, this process cardinally changed the consciousnesses of Kazakh nomads about enjoying elite status. The result was an absolutely new structure of society, an alternative type of culture on the basis of traditional nomadic society. How did this process of social adaptation of some Kazakh nomads to the empire's elite features occur? How could the ordinary Kazakh become a part of the empire's privileged estate?

This essay explores social transformations in the second half of the 19th century, when certain members Kazakh nomadic society embraced the social system of the empire. It seeks to show how the historically closed Kazakh elite began to acquire the characteristics of an imperial estate and furthermore opened to ordinary Kazakhs. It argues that the integration of ordinary Kazakhs into the empire's privileged estates—principally the nobility and so-called honored citizens—is the proof of evolution of the Kazakh nobility.

New estates in the Steppe

The purposeful incorporation of the Kazakh Steppe into the system of the Russian Empire began with administrative-territorial reforms in 1820s. These reforms were an important indicator of the imperial state's political aspirations, which in the 19th century entailed an effort to promote a more uniform system in all aspects of the state. But at this stage tsarist rule could realistically aspire only to external homogenization of structures of rule and in fact intentionally maintained a variety of structures and institutions among the people of the empire. A formula “equivalent in form and not equal in status” (Kivelson, 2017: 126) became an important element in imperial policy in relation to different groups. The process of the Kazakh steppe's inclusion into a

uniform imperial system of rule and social order is a striking example of this statement: legally, Kazakh society came to approximate the imperial model, but in fact new estates among the Kazakh population had a distinct character in which more traditional features prevailed.

Those Kazakhs who held imperial positions became enmeshed in the rank system of the empire and thus acquired a way to attain the status of noble or honored citizen. Tsarist social policy at the time promoted inclusion of the Kazakh steppe into the empire's legislative space, and efforts to incorporate the region into the system of all-imperial rule necessitated reorganization of local administrative-territorial management of the Steppe. Through changes in local administration, tsarist rule entered the imperial social order. In the steppe the government created several jurisdictions with different political forms of rule: Kazakhs of the Siberian department (*vedomstva*), governed by so-called “senior sultans” [*starshie sultany*]; Kazakhs of the Orenburg department (*vedomstva*), headed by so-called “sultans-governors” [*sultany-praviteli*]; and the Bukeev (or Inner) Horde, ruled by a khan and his council. All these new or transformed positions represented imperial power in the steppe region, and those inhabiting them now received imperial ranks based on the all-imperial “Table of ranks.” In this way the imperial state also supported the advantaged position of the local elite. In line with these innovations, Kazakhs received ranks and moved ahead in state service, thereby becoming officials of the empire.

It is notable that in the course of reforming the Kazakh steppe the imperial government authorized a curious combination of traditional and modern elements and outlooks between “traditional” and “new”. Kazakh officials holding positions in local administration remained nomads and continued to live a tribal existence. Even having attained the high rank of a noble status, a Kazakh sultan, first of all, remained chingissid, or a representative of the nomadic aristocracy. Especially at the beginning of the steppe's social transformation, tsarist statesmen continued to accentuate traditional values and features of nomadic life and culture. Thus the particular nature of new social groups among the Kazakh nomadic society as officials, noblemen and honored citizens reflected the intertwining of the “nomadic” and the “imperial.” Most notably, traditional aristocracy asserted its numerical majority within the new privileged estates. Wishing to keep elite privileges and features, the Kazakh nomadic aristocracy adapted to the new order within

imperial ruling system. Its members assumed the principal positions created by imperial government, entered into the imperial system of ranks, submitted applications for gaining status as nobles or honored citizens in hopes of making use of the associated privileges, and furthermore played a critical role in acquainting other Kazakhs with the imperial order and tsarist conceptions of imperial power. It is interesting that even as they embraced the estate prerogatives of the tsarist order, representatives of Kazakh privileged estates nonetheless sought to preserve their traditional lifestyle. For example, in petitions at the end of 19th and begin of 20th centuries, Kazakh noblemen and honored citizens invoked the “faithful service” and “noble origin” of their family as a foundation for requesting the government to allocate land “in the increased norm” for the preservation of traditional nomadic economy of themselves and their descendants. Tsarist officials, in particular the general-governors, considered these applications as noteworthy, moreover remarking, as Orenburg military governor wrote, that “the interests of the state demand not deterioration, but improvement of development conditions of cattle breeding farms” (TsGA RK, F.25, Op.1, d.3092: 1.) Thus the Russian administration in some cases tried to support developing huge nomadic farms. The Great War intervened before much could be done on this score, however.

In short, then, political transformations and the appearance of the imperial system of rank in the Kazakh steppe not only eliminated the traditional political system among Kazakhs, but also transformed their social system. The incorporation of the local Kazakh aristocracy (sultans) into the empire’s privileged estates through service represented the initial stage in the transformation of the steppe’s social structure in 19th century.

The evolution of the Kazakh nobility: from sultans to “common” people

The next stage of this transformation was the incorporation of other, non-aristocratic elements of nomadic society into the empire’s social structure. This process was decisive turn in nomadic society and represents the evolutionary nature of social transformation of the Kazakh society on imperial model in 19th century.

The Kazakh nobility included all major types of the Russian noble estate: hereditary [*potomstvennoe*], private [*lichnoe*], and titled [*titulovannoe*] nobilities. These different types of nobility enjoyed essentially the same privileges in imperial laws, except that

only generations of the titled nobility could study in certain prestige educational institutions like the Corps of Pages [*Pazheskii korpus*]. Dzhangher khan’s generations, at the time candidates for khan’s title in Bukeev Horde, were representatives of the titled Kazakh nobility. In comparison with other Kazakh noblemen, who gained noble title by service, representatives of the titled Kazakh nobility had complete noble estate privileges. This was a function of their khan origin. After the death of the last Bukeev khan Dzhangher in 1845, the tsarist government strove to assimilate the system of rule there more closely to imperial rule system and therefore granted Dzhangher’s descendants princely title rather than that of the khan. In this way the Dzhangherovs were included into the empire’s nobility and acquired its privileges. Thus in this case we can see that the Kazakh nobility had differences in acquisition noble title and its privileges. How, then, did Kazakh noblemen differ from ordinary nomadic social groups? How did they gain the noble title and what kind of estate privileges they enjoy?

In the second half of the 19th century, with changes in the government’s political intentions and the emergence of a new order in Kazakh society, the Kazakh nobility and its relation to estate system of the empire was also transformed. The incorporation of local elite into imperial estate system represented the initial step in the process of integrating the Steppe into the Russian Empire. Initially, imperial rulers regarded regional elites as a key source of social support in borderlands and therefore showed a willingness to accept existing local social categories. Subsequently, however, with border territories substantially more secure, the imperial government evinced less willingness to maintain local features. So in the second half of 19 century imperial officials took a different tack in ruling the Steppe, whereby the local administration should be constituted on the basis of personal qualities of Kazakh officials, in particular the highly appreciated characteristics of “fidelity to service”, “honesty”, “education”, etc. These changes in regional rule can be explained by a general trend of the empire on the standardization of estates in the period of “Great Reforms,” a tendency that was accompanied by efforts to strengthen a role of the Russian officials in non-Russian regions. In this regard, representatives of ordinary Kazakhs acquired the right to occupy positions in the regional administration and an opportunity to enter the highest estate of the empire through faithful service.

There were two main reasons for extending access of non-aristocratic elements of the Kazakh society to privileged estates of the empire. First, as

part of reforming the political system of rule in the Steppe in the second half of the 19th century, imperial powers found it desirable to weaken the local elite; and second, the expansion of knowledge within the Kazakh society, in particular among Kazakh officials, about the estate system of the empire and the kinds of positions that were available drove Kazakhs themselves to seek new opportunities.

Kazakhs gained the status of nobles and honored citizens through military and civil service, so that social changes within regional administrative positions altered the composition of the Kazakh nobility. Although the reform of Siberian Kazakhs in 1822 rendered the position the senior sultan an elective office (§18) (PSZRI: 419), at this early stage the Kazakh steppe was not ready to embrace significant change, and the senior sultans were therefore generally elected from sultans' lineages. We observe the same for the election of volost' sultans: for example in 1831 in the Karkaralinsk district [*vneshnii okrug*] 18 of 20 volost' rulers had sultan origin (Institut volostnyh, 2018: 11). But in 1840-50s the situation changed: local ruling positions filled by representatives of common Kazakhs, i.e. officials who received awards, *Biy* and Elders (*starshiny*), or Kazakhs who simply enjoyed particular respect.

In general Kazakh noblemen from non aristocratic social group had similar characteristics with noblemen from sultan's origin. But notable that existed several distinctions in an acquisition process of the nobility by non-aristocratic Kazakhs. In 1841, in response to Chairman's of Border ruling [*Pogranichnoe upravlenie*] petition to give a certificate of hereditary nobility to the senior sultan, Dzhilgar Baytokin, (The Kokchetav district) noted, that "Baytokin held the position of senior sultan from September 1824 to June 1826, and has held it since 28 August 1839 until the time of petition, and that lieutenant colonel Baytokin holds the senior sultan position not by election, but according to the appointment of the administration" (Kazakhskie chinovniki, 2015: 95). He was not descended from a sultan family, but was instead the son of simple Kazakh. Further, the petition indicated that Baytokin, as an ordinary Kazakh and without serving three terms in the position of senior sultan, did not yet have legislative grounds to receive the nobility. Nevertheless, Border ruling [*Pogranichnoe upravlenie*] left this proposal to the governor's "own decision" (TsGA RK, F.345, d.234: 11-13). As a result, Dzhilgary Baytokin became a member of the empire's hereditary nobility: the government designed a coat of arms for his noble family and

sent a certificate as the evidence of his noble title. Yet this result was achieved only after the imperial administration had considered the case for some 10 years (1841-1851), and in the end it was Baytokin's son Musa who received noble diploma, because the father had died in the meantime. In comparison, the sultan major general Mukhamedzhan Baymukhamedov received his noble title in a year. Thus ordinary Kazakh officials had some difficulties in gaining a noble title in compare with sultans who got an answer for petitions immediately.

Yet another ordinary Kazakh, lieutenant colonel Turdybek Kochenov, received noble title in 1854. Border ruling [*Pogranichnoe upravlenie*] petitioned to the main governing of Western Siberia about the acquisition of nobility by Kochenov, basing on his service at the rank of lieutenant colonel. Much like Dzhilgarin, Kochenov received his noble status only after long discussions of the Russian administration, in his 13 years after the original petition (TsGA RK, F.345, d.1660: 8-11).

As these examples show, Kazakh officials who were not originally members of the local elite gained nobility through military or civil service. In general, they acquired the same estate privileges as nobles of sultan origin enjoyed, but the process of receiving that status differed: cases involving ordinary Kazakhs took a very long time to resolve.

Thus across a number of years there was a gradual process of changing the social content of local rulers in the Steppe, whereby the principle of elite origin was replaced by that of "loyalty to the empire." Through faithful service, ordinary Kazakhs could become a part of imperial elite. Such changes in the Kazakh society, on the one hand, demonstrate the evolution of social integration of nomadic Kazakh society into the imperial system, and, on the other, reveal an example of adaptation of nomadic society to imperial orders.

Changes in perception of the noble status

The imperial government tried to implement a bureaucratic rule system that was traditional for the Russian Empire, according to which persons most suitable for the activity held administrative posts. However, in practice the colonial system in the steppe experienced strong influence from the traditional ruling system of nomads. The political or social actions of the imperial power ultimately changed depending on perception of local nomadic society. As Virginia Martin notes, Kazakh nomads were active participants in the exercise of the colonial power in the Steppe—a point that she

makes with regard to customary law of Kazakhs continued to exist within colonial rule, answering to challenges of the new socio-political order (Martin, 2001). Kazakh nomads perceived the new social differentiation entered by the imperial government through their own expectations. Kazakh nomadic society gradually adapted to the social norms of the empire and was co-opted into the structure of estates and officials, noblemen and honored citizens, but at the same time that society preserves important traditional foundations in these new conditions. Even while entering into the structure of the highest estates, the Kazakh elite tried to keep not only elite privileges, but also tribal the communications, economic practices, cultural values that were traditional for nomadic society. For example, the Kazakh officials in local administration tried to maintain the principle of heredity rule, even though imperial authorities regarded this negatively. So, the sultan-ruler of the Western part [*Zapadnaia chast'*], Baymukhamed Aychuvakov's son Mukhamedzhan, also held the same position in the Middle part [*Sredniaia chast'*] of the Orenburg Kazakhs, and descendants of the nobleman Derbisali Berkimbayev for several years held the position of the volost' sultan. Kazakh people supported this transition of power from father to son and the creation of a dynasty of officials among Kazakhs.

The process of traditional Kazakh nomadic society's adaptation to the structure of the Russian imperial system throughout the 19th century occurred also through changes in Kazakhs' consciousness, the transformation of traditional culture, and the formation of a new program of activity for representatives of the Kazakh elite through the emergence in the Steppe of new social groups, such Kazakh officials, the Kazakh nobility, honored citizens. As Gulmira Sultangalieva claims, Kazakh officials' awareness of the principles of interaction with the Russian state and their adoption of new forms of cooperation with the Russian administration are the evidence of substantial integration of Kazakhs into the realities of the imperial bureaucratic system (Sultangaliev, 2005: 674). In this regard, for the 19th century we can observe a transformation of mental values, customs, and behavioral models among representatives of the Kazakh nobility. If in the first half of the 19th century comparatively few Kazakh officials who were entitled to acquire noble title actually submitted petitions for this purpose, in part because they were not aware of ways to acquire noble title and its privileges, then in the second half of 19th century the set of petitions of the Kazakh officials asking the nobility and honored citizenship

significantly increased. This demonstrates the spread of understanding about the rank and class system of the empire among Kazakhs. During the same period Kazakhs' conceptions about secular Russian education changed as well. From the second half of the 19th century, representatives of the Kazakh administration tried to give to their children Russian secular education and acquired a greater appreciation for nobles' privileges in the educational sphere, thereby erasing ideas about the "danger" of Russian education. It is not difficult to notice such changes in the applications and letters of Kazakh noblemen and honored citizens to the Russian administration about accepting their relatives into the empire's educational institutions. For example, the Kazakh prince Sahib Girey Chingisov asked the Russian government to accept his brothers to at the Corps of Pages because, he proposed, this prestige educational institution corresponded to their social status (Mukataev, 2003: 27). This circumstance reveals this Kazakh prince's awareness about prestigious imperial educational institutions and also the privileges of the titled nobility.

Social dynamics took place in the Kazakh steppe throughout the 19th century. Representatives of the Kazakh new estates (the nobility and honored citizens) tried to use those privileges which were clear to them and corresponded to their traditional Kazakh outlooks. Kazakh officials who received secular education and were thereby incorporated into imperial regional rule urged others in the population to accept new social values, as they otherwise would be not capable of self-government. In Kazakh society of this period we thus see noticeable changes in representations, technologies of knowledge and power, and adaptation to the imperial estate order.

Conclusion

To summarize the main conclusions of this article, several propositions may be highlighted here:

- In comparison with elite origin, loyal serve played decisive role from the second half of 19th century for Kazakhs seeking to acquire estate privileges.

- The differentiation, namely dividing into hereditary [*potomstvennoe*], private [*lichnoe*] and titled [*titulovannoe*] nobilities existed within the Kazakh nobility throughout the 19th century.

- An increase in the number of Kazakh noblemen and the expansion of knowledge among Kazakhs about noble privileges show the evolutionary nature of the Kazakh nobility.

– As a result of the political intentions of the government, Kazakhs' knowledge and understanding of the imperial estate system, and their attempts to adapt to and embed themselves within the imperial system, the structure of the Kazakh nobility changed, so

that ordinary Kazakhs entered into the imperial elite groups.

– The social origins of a candidate for the nobility did not influence his noble rights and privileges. In expanding noble estate privileges a loyalty was decisive than the origin of a candidate.

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